

A Comparative Study of Selected Assamese and English Medium Pre-Schools in Guwahati

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Abstract

Assam has made considerable progress in pre school education during the last five years. In the recent years, a number of franchised English Medium School and also a number of Assamese medium pre schools like have also grown up. The investigator found it necessary to make a comparative study on these two types of (medium) pre schools, as pre-school is the base for the all round development of the children.

The present study has been conducted in Guwahati City of Assam and the data has been collected from 18 head masters/mistresses through interview and 36 school teachers through questionnaire from the selected 18 sample schools. The main aim was to make a comparative study about the status of those selected two types (medium) of schools (Eng. =9, As.=9). The other objective was to make a comparative study in respect of school activities, teaching equipments, evaluation, teacher's training etc. The results indicate that, in both types of schools there are lack of facilities, trained teachers, infrastructure etc. However, it is revealed that, English medium schools provides better activities for developing motor, gross motor, social and emotional development, language, alphabet, numbers as well as the sense training than that of the Assamese medium schools. English medium schools have better equipment, infrastructure, trained teacher, evaluating procedure than that of the Assamese medium schools. Both types of school are however lagging behind in fulfilling the overall objective of pre primary education.

Pre primary education is rapidly growing all over the world. All the psychologists and educationists agree that, the pre school years are the most important and

crucial in determining the future progress and success. Comenius (1592-1670) was the first to advocate a school of infancy where special attention would

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be given to eat, sleep, fresh air and exercise. Robert Owen (1771-1852), Friedrich Frobel (1782-1852); Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952) developed methods which laid emphasis on developing a child's initiative and sense perception through freedom of movement.

Pre-primary education in Assam has made considerable progress during the last five years. In the recent years, there is a mushroom growth of these privately managed pre schools in the state of Assam. A number of franchised English medium pre schools like Euro Kids, Kidzee, Discovery Kids along with Montessori schools have grown up with colourful standardised classroom. Apart from these English Medium schools, the prominent Assamese medium schools like Axom Jatiya Vidyalaya, Navodaya Jatiya Vidyalaya, Sankardev Sishu Niketan etc. have also grown up. These pre schools, particularly the English Medium schools are upgrading themselves and are increasingly being evaluated and assessed as spring boards for facilitating entry into the best primary cum secondary schools. Few studies on these types of schools have been done so far. Some studies related to this study are worth mentioning. Muralidharan R. (1978), in the study "Development Studies of Indian Children of 2½ years to 5 years of age found that children from urban areas were faster than the children from rural areas in the adaptive, language, personal-socio and motor development of children. Rao, S. R. "A study of the effects of pre-school education on Primary and Secondary Education" (1980) found that the achievement of children with pre-school education was higher than others.

Asi Surjeet K. "Tiny Tots: Their Learning Readiness (with and without), Pre Primary Education". Independent study: SCERT (1989), observed that, pre-primary education helped in the all round development of the child. P. Yashodhara: Attitude of parents and teachers towards various aspect of pre-school education find that parents and teachers preferred pre-school education in English medium than Vernacular medium.

Talukdar, Mridula (1994), on the study "Growth of Nursery schools in greater Guwahati and its impact on Society" remarked that only by taking some measurable action for establishment of the nursery education which can provide a quality oriented scientific pre-primary education to our blooming tiny tots. Pathak Pallavi (2007) studied on "Influence of pre schools under Montessori Method on Motor development and personal-social behaviour of children", viewed that, Montessori methods has great influence on motor and personal-social behaviour of children. Most of the schools in Guwahati, though named as Montessori schools, but they are of mixed type and donot follow purely the modern methods of teaching.

On the basis of the above discussion and the review the following objectives have framed for the present study.

Objectives

1. To make a comparative study regarding the status of privately managed English and Assamese medium pre schools of Guwahati city, Assam.

2. To make a comparative study of these two types of school in respect of (a) School activities (b) Method of teaching, (c) Availability of teaching materials, (d) Evaluation system (e) Training of Teachers, (f) Parent teacher relation.

Tools

1. Interview schedule for the Head of the institutions of both types of schools to know the status of the school.
2. Questionnaire for the teachers to cover the areas like – (a) School activities (b) Method of teaching (c) Teaching materials, (d) Evaluation system (e) Training of teachers, (f) Parent teacher relationship.

Sample

The present study was conducted on a representative sample of 18 pre-schools selected from the different parts of Guwahati city, Assam. 25 teachers and all the Head master/Head mistress were included for the study. The area wise selection of the schools were –

In the present study, the investigator selected the descriptive survey method.

Administration of the Research Tools

The investigators personally visited the schools and met the Head master/Head mistress of the selected schools and took their interview. Questionnaire was distributed among the teachers and collected the same by the investigator.

Results

The result will be presented in the following sequence: We begin with the responses of the Head master/mistress following by the teachers.

[1] Analysis on the basis of the Head Master's / Mistress Response

(A) General Observation

1. 44% of the pre primary schools are nursery type of school, 24% are Montessori schools and the rest are of mixed type among the selected schools.
2. 80% of the schools do not have their own school building, 60% do not

<i>Name of the schools</i>	<i>Area covers</i>	<i>Nos.</i>
ENGLISH		
Eurokids	Silpukhuri, Maligaon, Lachitnagar, Beltola,	4
Kidzee	Beltola, Bharalumukha, Ulubari	3
Discovery Kids	Beltola Hatigaon	2
ASSAMESE		
Asom Jatiya Vidyalaya	Noon Mati, Jalukbari, Hangrabari, Silpukhuri	4
Novoday Jatiya Vidyalaya	Beltola, Hangrabari, Japarigog, Zoo Road	2
ShankarDeV Sishu Niketan	Borbari, Zoo Road, Maligaon	3

- have playground. Those who have playground, it is not big in size for the children to move freely.
3. 60% of the schools have 1:15 teacher student ratio. In English medium the ratio is 1:30.
 4. 90% of the schools are housed in the residential area (i.e. in rented house), where the environment is not proper.
 5. 90% of the Assamese and 70% of the English medium schools have single row type of classroom – (traditional).
 6. All the head of the institution opined that 100% teachers are trained, but from teacher's responses it was observed that in English medium 70% and in Assamese medium only 44% teachers are trained.
 7. From the head master/mistress views, it was found that teacher's are given in service and orientation programme, but from the teacher's responses, it was observed that only 50% in English and 20% in Assamese medium schools provide training programme to the teachers.
 8. All the Head of the schools in both medium opined that, there exists a healthy relationship between the parents and the teacher. This is done by organising parent teacher meetings, various kinds of co-curricular activities, celebration of some important days/dates festivals etc.
 9. Almost 90% of the head of the schools opined that there is a special provision of slow learners, but from the teacher's view it was observed that no such provisions are available in both types of school.
 10. 80% head of the schools opines that, every class teacher's are provided with one assistant to help her to carry out school activities, but from teacher's responses only 20% in English medium and not a single school in Assamese medium school teachers are getting one assistant.
 11. 40% teacher's in English medium and 20% in Assamese medium use innovative method for teaching.
 12. Most of the head of the schools are female and roomed the schools in their own house. As these are privately managed, so there is financial crunch.
 13. Though all the head master/mistress viewed that they have proper equipment and infrastructure in their school, but from the teachers responses, it was observed that 50% English medium and 20% Assamese medium has proper equipments in their schools.
 14. 90% of the head master/mistress of the schools viewed that it is not possible for them to provide ample freedom and opportunity to learn through manipulation.
 15. 60% English medium and 90% Assamese medium schools are not monitoring the children's progress regularly.
- [2] Analysis on the basis of the Teacher's Response of both medium schools:**
- [A] School Activities**
- All the schools activities like motor, gross motor development, social and emotional,

sense training, and language development. Teaching alphabets, teaching number are observed in both medium schools. The findings are as follows –

(1) Regarding motor development activities

Like colouring painting. 81.8% in English medium and 60.66% in Assamese medium, cutting 81.81%, 40.66%, followed by joining dots 68.18% and 30.18%, lacing patterns 60.15%, 1% are respectively taken by both medium schools. But activities like pouring water 31.81% and 1% and rolling mats 36.36% and 20% are being neglected.

In comparison of motor activities – 86.36% English medium and 28.18% Assamese medium schools provided different types of motor activities to the children.

(2) Regarding the gross motor skills like

Ball play (59.09%) and (20%), hopping (50%) and (20%), climbing (22.72%) and (0.2%), running (68.18%) and (24.10%), physical exercise (63.63%) and (25%), jumping (59.09%) and (15%), rhymes with action (100%) and (52.06%), somer saulting (13.63%) and (0%) are provided in the selected English and Assamese medium schools.

As a whole (82.95%) English medium schools and (26.13%) Assamese medium schools provided gross motor activities.

(3) Social and emotional Development Activities

Regarding the Social and Emotional development activities the observation are as - 88.80% and 68.80% celebrates important events, 68.18% and 62.08%

gives activities for developing social values/social behavioural patterns, 36.36% and 16.06% gives exercise for practical life i.e. dusting, pouring water, folding napkins, washing etc., 31.81% and 12% give activities like role play, drama etc. 13.63% and 12% teach the children to keep things in their proper places and 13.63% and 10% encourage group work in English and Assamese medium schools respectively.

In comparison, 62.04% English and 23.45% Assamese medium school provides activities for development of social and emotional skills.

(4) Language Development Activities

Language development activities are mostly given in both medium schools. However, 68.18% and 26% give story telling 72.72% and 52.06% picture reading, 68.15 and 50% schools gives, rhymes and song in the English and Assamese medium schools respectively.

Thus it has been observed that 90% English medium school give importance on language teaching where as 42.42% Assamese medium schools give importance on language teaching.

(5) Teaching Alphabets

72.73% and 24% give importance on writing on dots 63.64% and 20%, scribbling/basic stories 45.45% and 65% orally, 36.36% and 2% tracing in sand paper, 27.27% and 35% making shapes letter from clay in both English and Assamese medium pre-schools respectively for teaching alphabets.

(6) Teaching Number

72.73% and 92.6% in writing on dots, 45.45% and 12% tracing in sand

paper, 36.36% and 98% orally, 36.36% and 12% counting on concrete objects 18.18% and 10% arrangement of number cards are allowed for number in English and Assamese medium schools respectively.

(7) Sense Training

31.81% and 10% gives grading activities, 40.90% and 22% gives colours cubes cylinders etc. 18.18% and 92%, noise box, musical bells, 81.81% and 50% help children to taste sour, sweet, bitter etc. in English and Assamese medium schools.

90% English medium schools in comparison to 50% Assamese medium schools give some activities for sense training.

[B] Methods of Teaching in English and Assamese Medium Schools

26% English medium schools follow Montessori Method, 49% follow a mixed method like story telling, playing with toys, and building blocks etc. but most of the schools follow traditional methods. Whereas few schools i.e. only 6% Assamese medium schools follows the innovative methods of teaching. Montessori Method (24%) is more popular in English medium schools whereas 34.8% Assamese schools adopt Pancamukhi, Sishu-Katika methods prescribed by Vidya Bharati.

[C] Comparison of the availability of teaching materials between English and Assamese medium schools

63.63% of the English medium school have excellent audio visual aids, whereas in Assamese medium schools only

27.27% schools have excellent AV. Aids. 34.54% and 64.04% have indoor and outdoor game facilities. Assamese medium schools have better facilities. Availability of puppets in most of the English medium schools are excellent (81.81%) as compared to only 18.18% in Assamese medium. Regarding story 90.90% English medium and 72.72% Assamese medium have the story books.

Comparison of the Teacher's having training

In English medium schools 81.81% teachers are found to be trained in comparison to only 36.36% Assamese medium school teachers.

[D] Evaluation System

59.09% of the English medium schools assess their children's performance quarterly, 18.18% monthly and 22.72% twice in a year, whereas 40.40% quarterly, 2% monthly and 0.9% twice in a year. No English medium schools are found to assess their children's annually where 80% Assamese medium schools assess their children annually.

[E] Parent Teacher Relationship

79% parents in English medium schools, and only 39% parents of Assamese medium schools have good relationship with their teachers. Sixty five per cent and fifteen per cent parents of both medium schools respectively attend the parents-teachers meeting or school functions.

The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes present a picture of plurality, with government, non-government (voluntary sector) and private agencies providing a variety of

services. However, the coverage of these programmes is extremely narrow, and the quality of services provided is variable and largely poor. A vast majority of children, especially those belonging to poor and marginal groups, are not covered by early care programmes and are left to fend for themselves. Pre-school programmes range from those that subject children to a dull and monotonous routine to those where children are exposed to structural forms of learning, often in English, made to do tests and homework, and denied their right to play. These are undesirable and harmful practices that result from misguided parental aspirations and the growing commercialisation of pre-schooling, and are detrimental to children's development and motivation to learn. Most of these problems derive from the still 'unrecognised' status of ECCE as a part of the mainstream education system. Polarised services both reflect and perpetuate the multiple overlapping social divides in our country. The deep gender bias and pervasive patriarchal values in Indian society are responsible for the failure to recognise the need for creches and day-care facilities, especially for children of poor rural and urban working women; this neglect has also had an adverse impact on the education of girls.

Good quality ECCE programmes have a positive impact on children's all round development. This in itself is reason enough to demand that all children have a right to ECCE, and it is hence unfortunate that the 0-6 age group has been excluded from the purview of Article 21. In addition, ECCE is also seen to have

critical linkages with enrolment of children in schools and learning outcomes. To provide ECCE of equitable quality to all children, it is not only necessary to vastly enhance the funds committed for the purpose, but also to address through different strategies the five basic dimensions of quality, namely, developmentally appropriate curriculum, trained and adequately rewarded teachers, appropriate teacher-child ratio and group size, infrastructure supportive of children's needs, and an encouraging style of supervision. While there is need for decentralisation, flexibility and contextuality in these programmes, there is also an urgent need to evolve appropriate norms and guidelines and set in place a regularity framework so that children's development is not compromised. Capacity building at all levels in relation to the plurality of roles that different functionaries play, as well as fair wages, must also be ensured.

Conclusion

The present study portrays a vivid picture of the status and problems of pre primary education in the greater Guwahati area of Assam. The study reveals that the pre primary schools of both medium has yet to play a great role for all round development of the child by introducing innovative methods. Though, parents now a days in large numbers take part in pre school programme but in case of Assamese medium schools awareness of the parents regarding this pre primary schools yet to be developed. However, there is an urgent need to regulate pre primary schools in the state of Assam.

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