A Study of Parenting Education Programme

A dissertation Submitted

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Table of Content

Contents	Page
Prelude	
Cover page	1
Table of content	2
Acknowledgements	4
List of Abbreviation	5
Chapter I: Introduction	6
Background and rationale of the study	6
Statement of the problem	8
Research Question	9
Objectives of the study	9
Operational definitions of the terms	10
Delimitations of the study	10
Chapter II: Review of Related Literature	11
Positive Parenting	11
National Early childhood Care and Education	11
Parent intervention approaches	13
What is Potali Project – Parenting Education Programme	17
Chapter III : Methodology of the study	21
Research design, Population of study, Sample of the study, Tools and techniques used, Procedure of the data collection, Procedure of data analysis	21
Chapter IV: Analysis and interpretation	23
Baseline situation	23
Issues identified and addressed regarding child care and education	23
Changes in parents	24
Parents' feedback	24
Finding from the domain wise change in children data	25
Difficulties experienced during implementation	26
Chapter V: Summary and conclusions	28

Study Brief: Brief restatement of the problem, objectives, hypotheses, delimitations, methodology of the study	28
Major findings of the study	29
Discussions of Results	29
Implications and conclusions of the study	29
Suggestions for further research	29
Bibliography	30

Acknowledgments

List of Abbreviation

S. No	Abbreviation	Full form
1	ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
2	NGO	Non-Government Organisations
3	ICDS	Integrated Child Development Scheme

Chapter 1- Introduction

Background Rationale of the study:

a) Parenting and child development:

"Long before formal education, parents have nurtured their children, modelled for their children, and taught their children. A child's first teacher is his or her parents "(Berger, 1991). Parents, Families and communities are very essential social structures for development in everybody's life. Parents play an important role in anchoring and nurturing the overall development of their child. It is the right guidance of parents that develops the character of the child. As children develop from infants to teens to adults, they go through a series of developmental stages that are important to all aspects of their personhood including physical, intellectual, emotional social and moral development. Parents are the first teacher of their children and often remain their best teacher throughout life. Functioning as a coach, the parents support their children with age-appropriate challenges to encourage development and realise their full potential.

In Indian society combined families a child was looked after many adults and siblings. Every family member provided the necessary care and support and nurturing. But with the industrial revolution and urbanisation the tradition of combined families is collapsing and being replaced by nuclear families, single parents and working parents. With this parents and caregivers have to learn to give quality time for their children and be more skilled in proving all the care and learning needs of the child.

According to Garrett (2008) the paramount period of interest for educational researchers regarding the impact of parental involvement on student academic achievement occurred during the 1980s and 1990s. Consequently, a consensus regarding the need for parental and community involvement was readily agreed upon in pedagogical circles (Epstein et al., 2009).

The education system has valued this important role of parents and encouraged parents' participation through Parent Teachers associations. Although the Parents Association was active in developed countries for over 100 years, in 1986 the Indian education system made it essential involve parents and community members in schooling and education. During past three decades through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan parents' involvement became mandatory in school administration also. Through these efforts' parents are trained and empowered to contribute effectively to the educational development of their children. Unfortunately, this parent's engagement and empowerment is limited to the parents of school and preschool going children. Development of parenting skills of parents of young children is not given same priority and importance. Recently people are awakening to this lacuna.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) refers to the development of care and education of children from birth through eight years old. Caring for and educating young children has always been an integral part of human societies. Every culture developed its own system for fulfilling this responsibility in families and society. The care structure in family and community often depends on the social and economic backgrounds and roles of women and men. Until 19th century education and care of young children was very much informal in nature and responsibility of families. In developed countries in 18th and 19th century formal structures like Kindergarten envisioned by Fredrick Frobel, Preschool education envisioned by John Robert Herbert and Montessori Schools envisioned by Maria Montessori started to emerge and spread across the world. This trend was followed by the development of Nursery schools, Crèches and or child care centers. These structures were not only helping the children's development but also assisting women to become free from these responsibilities so they can go in to other jobs created by Industrial Revolutions.

In Indian context the concept of early childhood learning, Preschools and Anganwadi was pioneered Gandhi, Tagore, Aurobindo, Gijubhai Badekha, Tarabai Modak and Anutai Wagh. These Early Childhood Care and Education structures came in more demand and became commercialized as their importance increased in light of school readiness. Despite of all these efforts most of the work was done for the development of children above 3 years to 8 years. Education and care of children of first three years remained neglected until recent couple of decades.

"Early childhood is a period of enormous growth and development. Children are developing more rapidly during the period from birth to age 5 than at any other time in their lives. They are shaped by their experiences in the world. These early years of development are critical for providing a firm foundation in cognitive, language, and motor development, as well as social, emotional, regulatory, and moral development" (**NRC and IOM 2000).** Stimulating, nurturing, and stable relationships with parents and other caregivers are of prime importance to children's healthy development, and the absence of these factors can compromise children's development.

b) **Initiatives for ECCE of Birth to Three age group:**

In past two decades Governments NGO and organisations around the world have developed many institutionalised programmes like Birth to 3, Zero to Three, Head start, early interventions, to ensure proper comprehensive care and education developmental of young children. In India ICDS and Anganwadi programmes are providing assistance for young children. With the Information technology and internet new field of scientific knowledge and professional expertise is now available for individuals and organisations. Now it has been proved that parenting education can definitely contribute to supporting development of infants and toddlers. Educationists and organisations are having been working on parenting education for intentional care, learning and development skills from birth to first 3 years. Compared with the western

countries in India and Maharashtra the educational programmes for Birth to three age group children and their parents has lot of scope for development. With this research I intend study the one such Parenting Education Programme implemented in rural area of Pune District and asses its impact on parents and their children.

c) **Potali Project - Parenting Education Programme:**

For past five years one such Parenting education Programme called "Potali Project" is being initiated through two NGOs in partnership in Maval Taluka of Pune district. The organisations are Aditi Learning Centre and Kishor Mitra running this programme from rural centre based in Khusgaon. The Programme has reached villages and towns in the area surrounding Kamshet, Wadgaon and Talegaon. The programme has reached over 1600 parents in over 10 locations in villages and towns. Formally the programme is still implemented in its initial forms and structures but in reality, many things were changed to suit the changing situation. With this research it is intended to be reviewed in its all aspects so that the programme can learn for the success be formally evolved to enhance its effectiveness, efficiency and impact.

Statement of the Problem:

From birth to age 5, a child's brain develops more than at any other time in life. Early brain development has a lasting impact on a child's ability to learn and succeed in school and life. The quality of a child's experience in the first few years of life – positive or negative- helps shape how their brain develops. 90% of brain Growth happens before Kindergarten. At birth, the average baby's brain is about quarter of the size of the adult brain. Incredibly, it doubles in size in the first year. It keeps growing to about 80% of adult size by age 3 and 90% - nearly full grown- by age 5.

In the earliest years of life, especially from pregnancy to age three, babies need nutrition, protection and stimulation for healthy brain development. Recent advances in neuroscience provide new evidence about a baby's brain development during this time. As a result, we know that in their earliest years, babies' brains form new connections at an astounding rate – according to Harvard University's Centre on the Developing Child more than 1 million every single second – a pace never repeated again.

In the brain-building process, neural connections are shaped by genes and life experiences – namely good nutrition, protection and stimulation from talk, play and responsive attention from parents and caregivers. This combination of nature and nurture establishes the foundation of a child's future.

Yet for one reason or other many children are not getting proper food, Health care, nurturing, play, emotionally positive parenting or learning environment. Parenting

problems are seen in all walks of life but are worse in poor or illiterate families. In Indian or Maharashtra parents from disadvantaged or marginalised background are so preoccupied with their own problems regarding earning, poverty, discrimination, exploitation, domestic violence or addiction that they cannot give necessary attention and care to children. Traditionally, in the same looking after young children was considered women's job hence ignored by male parents. Uneducated parents lack knowledge and skills for active parenting. Even educated parents don't seem to care for children's brains and heart in the same way they care for their bodies. Properly designed training and awareness programme and support can help parents overcome these problems and offer best possible positive and responsive care and education to children.

Research Question:

The research questions will be aimed at assessing success and shortfalls of the project in terms of effectiveness and impact of the Potali Project - Parenting Education programme on parent and children. Similarly, to derive learning for the future improvement.

The research question will be of three-fold as followed;

1. What is the Potali Project - Parenting Education programme, its strengths and weaknesses?
2. What are important changes in parent's knowledge, attitude, practice and behavior of parents as a result of parenting education programme?
3. What are changes in children's lives, learning and development due to changes happened in parents through parenting education programme.
4. What are effective ways to educate parents for becoming actively responsible for nurturing and development of children during first three years.
5. Learnings and future implications for improvement in future.

Objectives of the study:

The following objectives are formulated for the proposed study:

1. To study the level of impact of Potali project - Parenting Education Programme on parents and children.
2. To finding out learnings for developing and promoting more effective Parenting Programme to develop parent's knowledge, skills and competencies needed to carryout comprehensive child nurturing responsibilities.
3. To provide young children with experiences and opportunities that promote and enable optimum learning and development.

Operational definitions of the terms:

- ***Parenting Education Programme:*** Training and awareness programme designed to provide scientific knowledge and skills to parents which will enable them to assist children for maximum learning and development during first three years.
- ***Early Childhood:*** Children of age group of birth to six years. In the research project the study will focus more on children of birth to three years age group.
- ***Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):*** ECCE refers to the development of care and education of children from birth through eight years old.
- ***Potali Project:*** Potali Project is a parenting programme implemented by Aditi Learning Centre and Kishor Mitra Trust in Pune district. It is a four month Curriculum implemented through Home visits, Neighborhood meetings and Parent meetings

Delimitations of the study:

The study was limited to the Potali Project- Parenting Education Programme implemented in Waksai village of Maval Taluka, District Pune, during December 2019 to March 2020. The study observation was primarily focused on 214 parents and 74 children from 63 families who participated in the programme.

Chapter II: Review of Related Literature

Positive Parenting:
Alvin N. Eden (2007) in his book Positive Parenting pointed out that "During the first few years it is particularly important that a close non-rejecting, stimulating, trusting and responsive relationship be established between parent and child. If this close and enduring relationship is not developed, lasting detrimental effects on the future emotional and intellectual growth of the may result. Many studies have clearly shown that early exposure to factor that stimulate a child's interest and motivate her to higher and higher achievement influence and affect her level of functioning when she starts school. Parents should do everything to possible to encourage their children to share their ideas and accomplishments with them. This kind of environment is a most important ingredient in the development of intelligence. A baby's intellectual development is closely tied with her feelings. The two really cannot be separated. Therefor in order to develop to the fullest intellectually, the child not only needs activities and stimulation, but also the confidence to know that she can do it (self-esteem). Building up sufficient self-esteem and self-worth early on in your in your child's life is probably the most important way to nurture and guarantee her future emotional health and wellbeing".

National Early Childhood Care and Education:
National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Curriculum Framework (2013) developed by Ministry of Women and Child Development, India narrated following rationale, theoretical foundations and objectives for ECCE.

Rationale for ECCE:
The first six years of life are critical since the rate of development in these years is more rapid than at any other stage of development. Research in neuroscience confirms the importance of the early years in a child's life particularly since 90% of brain development has already taken place by the time a child is six years of age. Research also indicates that the development of brain is influenced not only by health, nutrition and quality of care but also the quality of psycho-social environment the child is exposed to in these early years. A psycho-socially deficit environment or emotional neglect can lead to negative consequences for a child's development, which may even be irreversible. This places a very large percentage of children from poorer or marginalised families, 'at risk', in terms of their life chances and opportunities. Supportive ECCE services enable to bridge the gap that can lead to more positive long-term outcomes for individuals and society than later interventions.

Scientific research also indicates that within the span of the early childhood years, there are certain 'sensitive periods' or 'critical periods' for development of some cognitive, linguistic, social and psychomotor competencies. These have significant implications for planning of a framework for children's learning and development.

Sensitive periods for Early Development Source:
Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) makes a positive contribution to children's long-term development and learning by facilitating an enabling and stimulating environment in these foundation years of lifelong learning. Therefore, it

becomes important to provide a framework for planning for each sub-stage within the early childhood continuum up to the age of six years. A good learning programme at the early childhood stage helps to ensure appropriate opportunities for holistic learning and development particularly in these sensitive periods. Early intervention is of particular significance for children with developmental delays, infants with disabilities and children growing up in impoverished environments, by counteracting biological and environmental disadvantage, since Plasticity in the brain allows circuits in the brain to organise and reorganise, in response to early stimulation.

Theoretical Foundation:

Philosophers have speculated about the nature of childhood and the process of socialisation. Western thinkers like Rousseau, Froebel, Dewey, and Montessori, have been pioneers in the movement of early childhood education. While Dewey emphasized on the wonderful learning opportunities everyday experiences provided and believed that the child's own instincts, activities, and interests should be the starting point of education, Froebel believed that action and direct observation were the best ways to educate children. Their ideas have opened the way for sensorial and practical activities forming the curricular content. Their insights into the importance of exploration and play, art, rhythm, rhyme, movement, and active participation of the child led to the inclusion of these elements in classroom dynamics.

Indian thinkers have also been guided by their observations concerning young children and their findings about the child's interest in activities using different materials. Gandhi, Tagore, Eurobond, Gijubhai Badekha, and Tarabai Modak were the first Indians to conceptualise a child-centred approach to the care and education of young children. They were of the view that education must be imparted in the child's mother tongue and should be connected with the child's social and cultural environment and the community should be actively involved in the learning process. Since language is the true vehicle of self-expression a child can freely express its thought in mother tongue/vernacular language.

In more recent times, scholars in Developmental Psychology and Child Development like Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky, Urie Bronfenbrenner and Gardner have further emphasised, based on their research, play and activity as the child's natural modes of learning and that children living and learning in multiple social and cultural contexts influence children's learning and development. While Piaget emphasised that children constructed their knowledge by assimilating the experiences and then accommodating within their own understanding and that children are adjusting and using new information constantly to make sense of perceptions and experiences. Vygotsky viewed that children are actively engaged in social and cultural experiences and there is active interaction between children and more experienced others in the process of learning and development. Further Jerome Bruner proposed that children represent information and knowledge in their memory in three different but interrelated modes such as action-based, image based and language/symbol based.

In other words he explained how this was possible through the concept of the spiral curriculum which involved information being structured so that complex ideas can be taught at a simplified level first where children learn more through concrete

experiences, and then re-visited at more complex levels later on. Therefore, topics would be taught at levels of gradually increasing difficultly (hence the spiral analogy).

Their basic tenets are that learning is an active and interactive process in which children learn through play and through interaction between children and more experienced others. Children are actively engaged in their social and cultural experiences; they constantly adjust and use new information to make sense of perceptions and their experiences. Most importantly play leads to learning and development in children.

Based on the insights and philosophies of these practitioners and thinkers, early childhood care and education programmes should be based on an understanding of the patterns of development and learning that define the essential nature of childhood.

Objectives of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):

The aim of Early Childhood Care and Education is to facilitate optimum development of the child's full potential and lay the foundation for all round development and lifelong learning. While parents and home have the main responsibility of the welfare of the child, a strong partnership between the community and the ECCE centres is important for the wellbeing of the child and in achieving the following objectives.

Parent Intervention Approaches:

When offering parenting interventions to families, providers need to decide which intervention approach to use. Following the framework proposed by Gordon, parenting interventions can be either indicated, selective, or universal (Fonagy, 1998; Gordon, 1983). These three approaches are explained by Maiken Pontoppidan 2016) in the thesis "The Effects of Universally Offered Parenting Interventions for Parents with Infants" as followed.

Indicated approach:

Indicated interventions are offered to families where the child is perceived to have a disorder or where there is a high risk of the child developing future psychopathology (Fonagy, 1998; Gordon, 1983; Offord, Kraemer, Kazdin, Jensen, & Harrington, 1998; Offord, 2000). Some advantages of the indicated approach are that the intervention is offered to the group with the highest needs, the intervention is more likely to be appropriate for the select group, and the potential for high levels of provider and subject motivation. The disadvantages are that screening procedures for identifying the indicated group are costly, compliance is low, families are subjected to labelling and stigmatization, and it is often difficult to accurately identify the high-risk group (Gordon, 1983; Hutchings, Griffith, Bywater, Williams, & Baker-Henningham, 2013; Offord et al., 1998; Offord, 2000; Rose, 2001). It can be difficult to correctly identify indicated groups because many high-risk families are able to cope well, while low-risk families can experience difficulties without ever being detected (Fonagy, 1998; Rose,

2001; Spoth, Kavanagh, & Dishion, 2002). Child behaviour problems tend to be normally distributed across the population, and many families experiencing problems would be overlooked by a targeted approach based solely on demographic risk factors (J. Patterson, Mockford, Barlow, Pyper, & Stewart-Brown, 2002).

Selective approach:

Selective interventions are typically offered to families who belong to a distinguishable subgroup or live in environments that are known to be characterized by risk factors, such low-income neighbourhoods with high crime rates (Fonagy, 1998; Gordon, 1983). The primary advantage of the selective approach is that the intervention is offered to a group that will potentially benefit from it, and it is relatively easy to select eligible participants. The disadvantage of the selective approach is that the families who agree to participate in the intervention may not be those in the greatest need (Hutchings et al., 2013).

Universal approach:

Finally, universal interventions are offered to all families in a population, regardless of existing risk factors or identified problems, and therefore have the widest reach (Fonagy, 1998; Gordon, 1983; Offord et al., 1998; Offord, 2000). There are several advantages to universal interventions. For example, they can be offered to all families in a non-stigmatizing way, the quality of the intervention tends to be high due to middle-class participation, they can be a valuable tool for identifying families who need extra support, and may be an effective method of reducing the overall levels of child maltreatment and developmental problems within the general population (Barlow & Stewart-Brown, 2003; Barnes, 2003; Fonagy, 1998; Offord et al., 1998; Offord, 2000; Prinz & Sanders, 2007; Rose, 2001; Sanders, Cann, & Markie-Dadds, 2003). Applying universal interventions also has disadvantages: they are expensive, they might not appeal to the public and policy-makers, they may not be appropriate to either the low- or high-risk population, the individual benefits tend to be small, and it is difficult to demonstrate overall effects (Offord, 2000; Rose, 2001). Further, social inequality may be increased if low-risk families benefit the most from the interventions (Offord, 2000; Rose, 2001).

Ideally, interventions should only be offered to families who need them. However, although this sounds quite simple, correctly identifying who needs help is difficult. This phenomenon is described as Rose's prevention paradox: "A preventive measure which brings much benefit to the population offers little to each participating individual" (Rose, 2001, p. 432). Because the high-risk group is small, only a minority of cases will come from the high-risk population; the majority of cases will come from the low- or moderate-risk population, which is a much larger group (Rose, 2001). An effective prevention strategy needs to incorporate all three intervention approaches (Offord, 2000; Rose, 2001). If we only offer intervention to the high-risk group, there will be large numbers of families with needs who do not get any intervention.

As the indicated approach is the one most commonly applied within family interventions, some researchers argue that the universal population-level approach is

the most appropriate level of intervention, and that there is a need for this kind of intervention in order to provide the best framework for preventing child developmental problems (Barlow & Stewart-Brown, 2003; Fonagy, 1998; J. Patterson et al., 2002; Sanders et al., 2003). The Incredible Years parenting programs The Incredible Years (IY) Training Series was developed by Carolyn Webster-Stratton in 1980.

Parent Support Programmes:

Carol M. Trivette, PhD, Carl J. Dunst, PhD (2014)   explained the parent support programme in "Community-Based Parent Support Programs" as followed.

Parent support programs aim to support and strengthen existing parenting abilities and promote the development of new competencies so that parents have the knowledge and skills needed to carry out childrearing responsibilities and provide their children with experiences and opportunities that promote child learning and development. Kagan SL . Home visiting programs and community-based parenting support programs are two different approaches to enhancing parents' abilities to support their children's development. Family Resource Coalition. Guidelines for family support practice. Chicago, Ill: Family Resource Coalition, Best Practices Project; 1996.

The primary goal of parent support programs is to provide support and information in ways that help parents become more capable and competent.2,3 Research now indicates that to reach this goal, it is necessary that staff use practices that are family-entered as opposed to professionally-cantered, and capacity-building as opposed to dependency forming.4,5,6,7 The key characteristics of family-cantered practices include: treating families with dignity and respect; providing individual, flexible and responsive support; sharing information so families can make informed decisions; ensuring family choice regarding intervention options; and providing the necessary resources and supports for parents to care for their children in ways that produce optimal parent and child outcomes.8,9,10,11 H

Barriers to Parent Involvement:

Kimberly McDowell Wichita (2018) talked about the barriers of parent involvement in "Parent's Involvement in Pre-Kindergarten and the Effects on Student Achievement" as followed.

Although parental involvement is crucial to the academic success of students, there are factors that create barriers and inhibit parents from being involved in their children's education. Federal policy has sought to strengthen parental involvement, particularly in urban, low-income and disadvantaged communities, but barriers continue to subsist (Smith et al., 2011). These barriers include poverty/socioeconomic status (SES), race/ethnicity and cultural differences, language barriers, parents' level of education, and logistical limitations.

Parents who come from poverty and low SES backgrounds are often faced with work schedules that do not allow for involvement; lack the resources needed to be involved, such as money or how to help; unreliable transportation; and stressors stemming from

living in disadvantaged and unsafe neighbourhoods. Poverty is often accompanied by stressors such as struggling to make ends meet and mental health issues that may negatively impact parent's self-perceptions, or feelings about themselves and their ability to parent, which can indirectly affect their ability to become involved when they are struggling to support their family (Mayo & Siraj, 2015). Poverty can have an effect on mental health, which in turn can have an effect on how involved and aware parents are—their focus may be on how they are going to provide the basic needs for their children, rather than how they are performing academically in school (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

Research has shown that parent involvement may look different in families from diverse or ethnic backgrounds, but may not be universally recognized as involvement; their predispositions and perceptions of involvement may vary from the norm (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Several researchers have found that sociocultural values and cultural narratives are a form of involvement in some diverse cultural/ethnic groups, and that these families often use strategies unfamiliar to others that are supportive of their children's educational achievement

The parents' levels of education can also pose as a barrier to involvement in their children's achievement. Parents may not place value in education due to their own upbringing or lack of success in school themselves (LaRocque et al, 2011). Or, parents may have a negative view of school from their own experiences (Lee & Bowen, 2006). This can lead to avoidance of school, which may be associated with their hesitance to question teachers or schools because they feel inferior (Lareau, 1996).

Logistical barriers such as inflexible work schedules can physically inhibit parents from being involved. Families are dependent on their jobs for income, health insurance, and other benefits, therefore making it difficult to take time off for fear of jeopardizing their employment (LaRocque et al., 2011). Employment barriers may also limit their involvement making it difficult for them to be involved during school hours and inhibiting the amount of participation, unlike their counterparts who may have more stable, salaried employment (LaRocque et al, 2011). In turn, parents that are less able to participate in school functions and less visible may be deemed as uncaring or uninvolved, which may present negative attitudes towards parents and students (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Researchers Hill and Craft (2003) assert that teacher perceptions indicate that parents that are involved at school place value on education, whereas the opposite conclusion could likely be placed upon parents that are unable to attend school functions or volunteer their time.

Learning from Television among Infants and Toddlers:

Katherine Hanson, (2017) described the effect of television in "The influence of early media exposure on children's development and learning" as followed.

Many parents bought into the educational claims made by the producers of infant directed videos, reporting that they considered educational videos important for their children's intellectual development (Garrison & Christakis, 2005). However, of the

studies that have directly tested the educational efficacy of commercially produced baby videos, none of them found evidence of substantial learning (Deloache et al., 2010; Kremar, Grela, & Lin, 2007; Robb, Richert, & Wartella, 2009; Vanderwater, Barr, Park, & Lee, 2010). Many baby videos are too fast-paced and complex for infants' and toddlers limited cognitive abilities, and include edits and transitions that are even difficult for pre-schoolers to comprehend (Goodrich, Pempek, & Calvert, 2009).

Children under 3 years of age, for example, generally perform worse on tasks that they have learned from video compared to an equivalent live experience (Anderson & Pempek, 2005). This phenomenon, known as the video deficit, has been found across different research paradigms from imitation (Barr & Hayne, 1999) and object retrieval (Schmitt & Anderson, 2002; Troseth & Deloache, 1998) to word learning (Krcmar, Grela, & Lin, 2007). More recently, it has been called the transfer deficit because the problem is not specific to video but to transferring information from a two-dimensional space to a three-dimensional space (Barr, 2010).

Media's Effects on Children:

 Given that children under 3 years of age comprehend and learn very little from television on their own, it is not surprising that a majority of research indicates that media exposure during infancy exerts a negative influence on children's development. Though, a few studies have demonstrated no relationship between early exposure and cognitive outcomes (e.g., Schmidt, Rich, Rifas-Shiman, Oken, & Taveras, 2009). However, most 9 correlation-based studies have found a relationship between early television viewing and poorer language outcomes, attention, and executive function skills (for a review, see Anderson & Pempek, and 2005). Such studies assume a direct effect of television on children, such that in its presence, children's everyday activities are disrupted, thereby hindering healthy development. Everyday activities, such as playing or interacting with others, provide children with the opportunities to gain knowledge and practice skills that contribute to their development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Gibson & Pick, 2000; Piaget, 1936; Vygotsky, 1978).

A number of developmental theories emphasize the importance of these early interactive processes between children and their environment. In terms of brain development, for example, the first few years of life are a time of enormous change and growth. Although genetic factors set development in motion, experience shapes its trajectory (for a review, see Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Environmental interactions influence and strengthen neural connections in the brain, which in turn, engender more complex behaviours between infants and their environment (Nelson, 1999). That is, as children engage with their environment, they construct their own intelligence through these direct, hands-on experiences (Piaget, 1936). Given the developmental literature, it is not surprising that many concerns regarding children's media use deal with the amount of time that children spend with television due to its potential to displace important social interactions and experiences (Wartella & Robb, 2008). Displacement occurs if media replace or disrupt time spent.

What is Potali Project – Parenting Education Programme

Potali Project History:

The Potali Project is an Indian adaptation of two Early Childhood programmes developed in USA for Parents and children of birth to three years age group. Its initial links are with the Learning Basket Programme developed by The Institute of Cultural Affairs; USA in Chicago in the leadership of Dr. Elise Packard. Later on, Dr Elise Packard developed similar programme called the International Family Literacy through partnership of ProLiteracy Worldwide USA. In India the partnering organisations decided to call it the Potali Project, since it uses a bag full of learning objects as one important resource. The Potali Project is implemented in Maharashtra since 2008 through multiple NGOs as partnership project. Aditi Learning Centre and Kishor Mitra trust started the Potali Project in 2012. Their Potali Project has worked with 1590 families, over 1700 children and in 23 villages of Mawal Taluka.

Potali Project Aim:

While working with the parents, families and children from birth to first three years the Potali Project Parenting Education Programme aims to achieve following overall aim:

- To give the parents the knowledge, tools and the methods to create an enriching learning environment at home using everyday objects
- Create awareness among the parents and the community about the need to invest time and care during the early childhood days to ensure all round growth and development
- Establish a "teaching-learning" network of parents to learn from and provide support to, each other.

The Programme design:

The Potali Project is a Parenting Education Programme that works with parents, families, children and neighbours through meetings and Home visits. The project works through 10 to 12 trained practitioners. The practitioners receive 6 days of initial training before they are selected for this work. Then they get regular training input during the monthly meetings and annual training. The project organises Parent Groups of 15 to 20 families to work with for four months. A team of two Practitioners work with one Parent Group for four months. Each Parent group is offered 12 training awareness sessions through Parent group meetings followed by 12 Home visits to each family. Sometimes small Neighbourhood meetings are conducted in place of Parent Meetings if houses are scattered and parents do not attend central Parent Meetings. Every family gets one home visit to demonstrate learning activities specific to their child. The programmes uses a curriculum of 12 subjects that covers key areas related to early child development. The programme is concluded with a combined Parent Gathering of all the parent groups in that village or locality. This meeting is organised to provide guidance from expertise related to the particular issues noticed during the four months.

The Potali curriculum:

The Potali project - Parent education programme draws upon the pioneering work of many thinkers and educationists. Following are few "The Image" by Kenneth Boulding (1956), Theory of cognitive development by Jean Piaget (1936) Learning theory of Paulo Freire, " Pedagogy of the oppressed" (1970), Mastery Teaching by Madeline Hunter (1982), " The FourMat System" based on learning styles By Bernice McCarthy (1980), and Theory of multiple intelligence by Howard Gardner (1983), "Triune Brain" (MacLean, 1990).

Key underlying concepts:

The Potali Project approach is based on four concepts, they are as followed;
1. Parents and care givers are baby's first teachers and can come to see themselves and their children as eager and enthusiastic learners.
2. Children learn through play and multiple sensory interaction
3. The first three years are extremely important in a child's cognitive, social, emotional and imaginal development.
4. Simple objects can be teaching and learning tool (or media) when used interactively.

The twelve-week curriculum:

The Potali Project uses twelve-week curriculum which includes following topics;
1. Needs of a child
2. Brain Development
3. Stages of development
4. Thinking skills
5. Skills of expression
6. Physical development
7. Self-worth
8. Social abilities
9. Positive self-image
10. Emotional well being
11. Spiritual roots
12. Review and feedback

Eight Domain Model:

The Potali Project uses Eight Domain model for ensuring comprehensive development of the children.

Eight Domains		Six aspects of Domain development					
1	**Body Development**	Hearing	Seeing	Smelling	Testing	Gross Motor	Fine Motor
2	**Emotional Wellbeing**	Trust in relationship	Respect	Knowing temperament	Expressing emotions	Sensing security	Regulating emotions

3	**Social Competency**	Confidence and humility	Place in community	Relationship with others & community	Ideas in to action	Relationship with nature	Relationship with objects
4	**Expression Skills**	Art	Reading	Writing	Listening & speaking	Moving & Dance	Music & Rhythm
5	**Positive Image**	World	Time & space	Community	Self	Others	Nature
6	**Thinking skills**	Focusing attention	Cause and effect	Object permanence	Problem solving	Organising	Choice making
7	**Self-worth**	Family identity	Community identity	Individual identity	Home culture	Dominant culture	Global culture
8	**Emotional roots**	Wonder / Awe	Silence	Values / meaning / wisdom	Forgiving / healing	Imagination / Creativity	Ritual / Practice

Potali Project Learning Resources:

The Potali Project uses following learning resources

1. Parent as teacher Book
2. Play to Learn - Activity Cards sets
3. Potali Bag with 30 types of Learning Objects
4. Additional Books for reading

Parenting Education Programme used for Study:

The Potali Project implemented Parent education programme in the village of Waksai in Maval Taluka, of Pune District during 2Nd December 2019 to 10 March 2020. This Parenting programme was used for this study. The project conducted a 12-week Parenting Education Programme through six Parent Groups in same village. Each parent group was facilitated by two practitioners through weekly home visits and neighbourhood meetings. The project worked with 77 families, 214 parents and 91 children. The parent group learning activities were concluded with a parent meeting of all the six Parent Groups.

Details of Waksai Parent Group Activities and Participants:

S. No	Parent Group	Practitioners	# of Families	# Boys attended	# Girls attended	# Children attended	# Home visits	# Parents involved in Home visits	# Neighbourhood meetings	# parents involved in Neighbourhood Meetings	# parents involved in Parents Meeting
1	Parent Group A -	Savita Jadhav Sonali Wadekar	14	11	6	16	140	33	8	40	
2	Parent Group B -	Sunita Jadhav Arati Chaudhari	9	7	7	14	99	26	9	29	40
3	Parent Group C	Rewati Chopade Vaishali Khollam	15	9	8	17	120	48	11	58	

4	Parent Group D –	Nagina Hingade Komal Walunjkar	14	5	9	14	128	52	11	60	
5	Parent Group E -	Priyanka Chopade Shobha Chaudhari	11	8	7	15	**165**	**25**	**21**	**30**	
6	Parent Group F	Punam Chopade Priti Bhavar	14	8	6	14	154	30	8	21	
		TOTAL	77	48	43	91	806	214	68	238	40

Chapter III: Methodology of study

Methodology:

This would be a basically descriptive study of one Parenting Education Programmes conducted with 214 parents through six parent groups in Waksai Village. Descriptive survey method was used to identify baseline situation of selected families regarding child care and education, Feedback forms were used to get parents feedback on the impact and benefits of the Parenting Programme. Focus Group Discussions was conducted with the practitioners to assess the success and impact of the programme, selected case studies were written on the basis of interviews or feedback of the parent. An observation based rating chart was used to find out improvement in children's competencies and skills. Finally, previous report and documents were studied to acquire information in overall framework of the programme and additional information on impact.

Population:

214 parents, 91 children from 77 families who have participated in the Potali project – Parenting Education Programme in Waksai village were observed for changes during four months of input. All the parents were asked to give written feedback about their experience. Their change was also recorded by practitioners throughout the process.

Sample:

A comparative change of Domain wise improvement in competencies was recorded of 28 students as sample survey. The practitioners wrote case studies of significant change in selected 12 parents and 12 children through interviews. The 12 practitioners themselves used Focus group discussions to discuss the process on change in the parents and children.

Tool:

One questionnaire was developed for recording baseline situation about child care in each family. A feedback form questionnaire was developed for parents to give written feedback. Case study format was created to write the impact of programme on parents and children through discussion and interviews. Observation based rating tool was developed to measure impact on children. One questionnaire was created to conduct Focus Group Discussions with Practitioners who are delivered the programme.

Procedure and Data collection:

Data pertaining to parent's feedback will collected by the practitioners at the end of the programme. Data related to impact on children was collected by the practitioners through observation based assessment tools. Overall data regarding programme

implementation was collected from Practitioner staff through Focus Group discussion at the end.

Procedure of data analysis:
Family baseline survey form, Children's improvement rating charts, and parent's feedback forms were collected as they were completed. They were discussed with the practitioners. All the data was computerised and consolidated and analysed by the researcher. The quantitative data was analysed by using percentage, average, highest and lowest rating. The finding was discussed with practitioners and the NGO heads who are monitoring the programmes.

Chapter IV: Analysis and interpretation

Baseline situation:

Following are common points observed from the Family Baseline survey. Statistical figures are based on sample from one parent group.

- Most of the parents have established a sort of routine schedule for the children.
- All the families have purchased some kind of toys. But some families do not give them to play because either they are rather expensive and get damaged while playing.
- 1/3 children play during morning, 1/3 during afternoon and 1/3 during evening
- Most parents engage with children through talking, telling stories. About 50% parents engage in playing activity.
- There is no common preferred way to make children happy. All though majority find taking out make children happier.
- Discussing and question and answer is more preferred way to stimulate children's thinking.
- Male child brings more happiness in family compared with female child, only with exception if the family already has male child and want to have female child or if they have not had any child and girl's child came after long waiting.
- There is a small number of families who do not wish to send children to play or interact with neighbors
- Usually all parents have figured out likes and dislikes of the children.
- 2/3 children eat staple food and vegetables. 50% take readymade snacks or fast food.
- All children take regular vaccinations and immunizations
- 1/3 families use TV and mobile for engaging and entertaining children
- Although the Potali Project programme is targeted for the birth to three age group the parents want preschool going children to attend the programme

Issues identified and addressed regarding child care and education:

- Parent's unwillingness to have child interact with grandparents, neighbors or other people.
- Grandmother attends all the home visits but mother shows no interest at all or rather kept away from attending it.
- Parent's unskilled way of imposing restrictions on children.
- Out of overprotective feeling parents keep children inside the house and deprive them from social interaction with outsider people and world.
- Lack of knowledge and skills in teaching Toilet habits to children.
- Misunderstanding about children's need about toys and playing at age 3.
- Neglecting children's social interactions with neighboring adults and children.
- Less Spoken mother who avoids speaking with child results in child developing very limited vocabulary.

- Change in demanding and stubborn and demanding child.
- Child's unwillingness to play with other children and share toys with them.
- Extreme Gender discrimination and neglect of girl child.
- There was one family who did not take pregnant women to hospital for checkup until 7th month. The mother did not know until 7th month of pregnancy that she is having twins. Even then the family chose to do the delivery at home only.
- Parents stop girls' education; particularly if she fails.
- Excessive use of mobile and TV to keep children engaged

Change in Parents:

- Some parents use to think that children do not understand anything so there is no need to talk with them. After listening to Potali project information they understood the importance of talking with children at all age; even if they cannot talk back. Now they talk with children, engage in dialogue with them.
- Parents are taking children out for walk and exposure. There was strong hesitation to allow relatives or neighbors to interact with young children of 2 or 3 months. But now they are also bringing children out to interact with neighbors.
- Some parents who came from other states had inhibition of interacting and mixing with local neighbors. They use to impose restrictions on their women children to avoid mixing with neighbors. Sometimes local people also showed some distance from them. Because of Neighborhood meetings they started to interact with each other and they overcome their hesitation and mix with each other.
- Parents, especially male parents started to take out time to play with children.
- Overuse of mobile and TV came down.
- Mothers and Fathers started to read books. Now they can tell more stories to children.
- Parents getting angry on children and hitting them got minimized.
- Parents are allowing children to interact and play with neighbors and their children.

Parent's Feedback:

Generally speaking all parents and families are very appreciative of the programme and the scientific knowledge they get. Following are few examples.

- We as parents should not shout at children or hit them. If we give them negative experience, they won't be able to develop positive connections of neurons in their brains. Because of this learning I will not shout at my daughter or hit her. I try to understand her and give her more time. – Ashvini Sagar Janhere.

- These parents were of short temper regarding handling children. They could not control their anger. Out of anger sometimes they use to shout at their children or also beat them. Sonam Yewale the mother says that "because of Potali we learned that we have to learn to control our anger. Beating children has negative effect on their mind. We try to discuss things with children instead". – Sonam Yewale

- We have learned how to make children think. What to do for the development of children. I particularly liked how physical development helped through five senses and motor skills. I enjoyed doing learning activities with my children. - Urmila Yewale
- Because of this programme I learned how to behave with children. How to understand them. I understood importance of introducing and interaction of children with other people. It is necessary to take them out for a walk. I have committed to give time to children and play with them – Kanchan Dotonde

- We learned how to stimulate thinking of children. We learned to do activities with our children. We let our children find solution to their problems. We also learned about nutrition, social skills development, in future I will avoid getting angry on children. I will try to understand them - Jayashri Sonawane

Findings from the Domain wise change in children data

An observation-based Domain wise competency progress was rated with 28 children on the scale of 1 to 5 progressively. 1 rated for Never demonstrated the competency, 2 for seldom, 3 for sometimes, 4 for often and 5 for always. Following are the results of that rating.

a) **Observation based rating before the programme:**

Summary chart of Pre Programme rating						
Age Group	**Communication**	**Social emotional**	**Intellectual Development & thinking skills**	**Physical Development**	**Total**	**Age wise Average**
0 to 6	49	46	41	38	174	**44**
6 to 12	29	32	33	33	127	**32**
12 to 18	46	44	36	41	167	**42**
18 to 24	53	56	54	65	228	**57**
24 t 36	25	28	23	29	105	**26**
	202	206	187	206	801	
						40
Domain wise Average	**40**	**41**	**37**	**41**	**38**	

b) **Observation based rating after the programme:**

Summary chart of post programme rating

Age Group	Communication	Social emotional	Intellectual Development & thinking skills	Physical Development	Total	Age wise Average
0 to 6	94	98	77	85	354	**59**
6 to 12	58	63	51	59	231	**58**
12 to 18	74	66	62	69	271	**54**
18 to 24	103	113	107	122	445	**56**
24 t 36	58	59	56	69	242	**60**
	387	399	353	404	1543	
						57
Domain Average	**77**	**80**	**71**	**81**	**77**	

c) Conclusions derived from the domain wise progress data:

- Domain wise development average has improved from 38 to 77' which is 202 % improvement.
- Age wise development average has improved from 40 to 57, which is 142.5 % improvement.
- Domain wise highest improvement is seen in Physical Development and Emotional & Social development. (The activities show that more intentional input went in Emotional- Social development)
- Age wise highest improvement is seen with age group of 24 to 36 months.
- Domain wise lowest improvement is seen in Intellectual development and thinking skills.
- Age wise lowest improvement is seen with 12 to 18 months age group.
- Compared with Domain wise baseline or Pre-test development of Communication has improved by 37 points, Social Emotional by 39 points, Intellectual development and thinking skills by 34 and Physical development by 39 points.
- Compared with Age group wise baseline average 0 to 6 age group show improvement by 15 points, 6 to 12 months age group show improvement by 26 points, 12 to 18 months age group by 12 points, 18 to 24 months age groups stays same, and 24 to 36 months age group shows improvement by 34 points.

Difficulties experienced during implementation:

- This village did not have fix timing of when water comes. Several Home visits and neighborhood meetings were disturbed because of this unexpected water supply.
- Many women were of habit sleeping during afternoons.
- Some women went out for domestic work. They could not attend home visits or neighborhood meetings
- Some women listened to the Child care information carefully but did not develop closeness with practitioners. They preferred that practitioners should not interact with the child concerning his homework.

- Strong conflict between mother in law and daughter in law resulted in them going back to their village
- A Grandmother insisted that she should be listened to during the Home visit. She became disturbance to the Practitioners.
- Some males considered Practitioners' knowledge as inferior because they were women.
- Some traditions and superstitions creates hindrances for child development

Recommendations for future:

- Use Videos   for explaining things that are difficult for parents to understand
- Conduct 2 or 3 Parent Gatherings so more issues can be addressed by experts.
- Consider 3 and half months' time frame for a Parent Group duration to conduct proper survey and reviews and documents.
- Consider a special activity to address Male parents' group
- Develop and maintain complete documentation system including hard paper and computerized.
- Reconfigure the Practitioners Teams after some interval.
- Make sure to have equal number of parents; even if it means forming only five groups instead of 6 groups.
- Use one remaining team for follow-up activity with the old parent group members.
- Follow-up activity can include working with next level of age groups. Introducing Calendars, providing books on Child nurturing, addressing special issues etc.
- Developed more learning materials and handouts for parents to study.
- Consider making using more scientific tools for measuring improvement in children and parents.

Chapter V: Summary and conclusions

Study Brief:

While the formal education system has recognised the importance of involving parents in educating children their effective engagement in early childhood development is not give similar importance. Early childhood development of preschool or Kindergarten age group has been well developed to become formal structure. Because of its prospect in business potential parents' engagement in Preschool and Kindergarten has also received due attention. But early childhood development of birth to three years and its parenting has been still neglected area in developing countries. This research is to study one such parenting programme implemented in Maharashtra. The Potali project Parenting Education programme is being implemented in Maval Taluka of Pune district. It is well appreciated by the parents since past 8 years. The study was aimed at finding out effectiveness and impact of this programme on parents and children so that efforts like this can be promoted on large scale and many more parents' and children can experience enhanced process of learning and development.

The research used the approach of descriptive study. Project one Parenting Education Programme of four months, implemented in Waksai village was selected for the study. Programmes impact on 214 parents and 91 children was observed and analysed to assess the impact of the programme. Questionnaires and tools were created for identifying baseline situation, Progress in children, parent's feedback and discussions with the staff. All though the programme did have long history the study was limited to one Parent Group of 77 families from Waksai village who participated in the programme during January December to March 2020.

Major findings from the study:

- The Potali Project –Parenting Education Programme is well-designed and delivered programme.
- The NGOs and the field staff practitioners are very dedicated and committed to the cause.
- The project uses good comprehensive curriculum to introduce and inspire parent's involvement in early childhood care and education.
- The Practitioners have developed good level of skill to take this programme to the communities. Even educated people, Teachers or nurses have expressed appreciation for the programme.
- Children show accelerated and optimized growth because of the intentional intervention of practitioners and parents.
- The Potali project has proved to be very good Women Empowerment programme also for the practitioners. Several practitioners have continued the journey of being a school dropout to becoming a graduate and become financially valuable asset in family.
- Since becoming parent and affection for children is a natural instinct, the parenting programme has demonstrated the potential for addressing difficult

issues like family disputes, domestic violence, addictions, child abuse or neglect, gender discrimination in more skillful way.

- The programme has scope in developing further in terms of developing documentation system, study materials, using scientific tools to assess and majoring progress and impact on parent and children.

Discussion on Results:

Parenting Education Programmes definitely help parents to improve their contribution in early childhood care and education. This helps more to the parents who are living in nuclear family, working parents, male parents or those who are blinded by stereotypical mind-sets and blind faiths. Nurturing by skilled and conscious parenting can improve the speed, ratio and potential of child development. Even educated parents can benefit from programmes like this because parents from every background have some sort of limitations in their mind-sets and behaviour that can inhibit the development of their children. Although this is a very valuable programme there are some difficulties that the programme has to face as challenges. Problems like conflicts of In-laws, negative elders, Gender discriminations, old traditions about child care, parents not being able to give time to children, are experience by the practitioners on top of practical problem of reaching to villages and parents. The Parenting Education programme has a potential of being replicated and becoming part of mainstream learning system.

Implications and conclusions of the study:

It seems that the Aditi Learning Centre and Kishor Mitra trust have gained enough experience and skills in implementing the Potali project Parenting Education programme that they can consider equipping themselves for scaling up or organisational replication. In India and Maharashtra unlike preschool and Kindergarten Parenting Education of children of Birth to three years age group is still in its exploration phase, this pioneers in this work needs to develop its every aspect with more research and scientific methodology so that both Early Childhood Care and Education of Birth to Three years age group and its parenting is given more importance.

Suggestions for further research:

Future studies regarding Parenting Education of the children of birth to three years age group need to find out and describe the process of change in relation with input and outcomes. Documenting the success with the "Theory of Change" process with further scientific approaches and methods so that the indicators and evidences of the short term and long term impact on children in academic achievement future life is documented and highlighted. This will help in highlighting the necessity and importance of this programme.

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Appendices

Approval of Dissertation Proposal

MAE16/2019-2/06 | Bhimrao Laxman Tupe | 198868230

School of Education

Appendix-IX

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PROFORMA FOR APPROVAL OF M.A (EDUCATION) DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Note: i) Please ensure that all entries of the proforma are correctly filled-in.
  ii) The filled-in proforma along with the dissertation proposal should be submitted to the concerned Regional Director for approval.

(To be filled in by the student)

Dissertation Proposal No......................
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2. Title of the Dissertation ...... A Study of Parenting Education Programme.

3. Name and Address of the Guide ..... Dr. Anita Belapurkar , MCES H.G.M. Azam College of education, 2090/B, K.B Hidayatulla Road, Azam Campus, Camp Pune 411001

Signature of the student

Date:.........................

Signature of the Guide

Date:.....................

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☑ Approved

☐ Not Approved

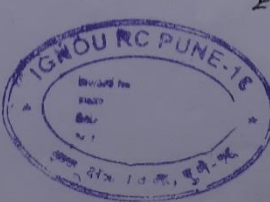(If not approved, please give suggestion for Reformulating the proposal in the enclose sheet)

Signature, Designation, Stamp of the Dissertation Proposal Evaluator
Date............................

Signature of the Regional Director
Date and Stamps:

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