

A Comparative Study on Psychosocial Development among Anganwadi and Pre-Primary School Children

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on a comparative analysis of psychosocial development among children attending Anganwadi centres and pre-primary schools. Psychosocial development is a crucial aspect of early childhood, encompassing emotional stability, social interaction, communication skills, and behavioural patterns. The study aims to identify differences in psychosocial development between children in Anganwadi and pre-primary settings, considering the influence of environmental, educational, and social factors. A descriptive and comparative research design was adopted, and data were collected from 50 children using structured observation and questionnaire methods. The findings reveal that pre-primary school children demonstrate higher levels of communication skills, social interaction, and structured behavioural patterns due to formal educational exposure. In contrast, Anganwadi children exhibit stronger emotional bonding, social attachment, and adaptability due to a more nurturing and informal environment. The study concludes that both systems contribute significantly to child development, and a balanced integration of emotional care and structured learning is essential for holistic psychosocial development.

Keywords: Psychosocial Development, Anganwadi, Pre-primary, Behaviour, Social Interaction

Introduction

Early childhood is a critical stage in human development, where rapid physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes occur. Among these, psychosocial development plays a vital role in shaping a child's personality, behaviour, and ability to interact effectively with others. Psychosocial development refers to the dynamic interaction between psychological processes and the social environment, influencing emotional stability, self-concept, and interpersonal relationships.

In the Indian context, early childhood care and education are provided through two major systems: Anganwadi centres under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme and pre-primary schools. Anganwadi centres primarily focus on providing basic nutrition, health care, and informal learning opportunities, especially for children from economically weaker sections. These centres emphasize caregiving, emotional support, and socialization.

On the other hand, pre-primary schools offer structured education aimed at developing cognitive and communication skills. These institutions provide a formal learning environment with trained teachers, organized curriculum, and planned activities that enhance language development, discipline, and social interaction.

Despite their common goal of promoting child development, both systems differ significantly in terms of infrastructure, teaching methods, and learning environments. These differences may influence the psychosocial development of children in distinct ways. Therefore, it is essential to conduct a comparative study to understand how each system contributes to various aspects of psychosocial development.

This study aims to analyse and compare the psychosocial development of children attending Anganwadi centres and pre-primary schools, highlighting the strengths and limitations of each system and providing recommendations for improving early childhood education practices.

Psychosocial development in early childhood has been widely studied by various theorists and researchers.

Erik Erikson proposed that early childhood is characterized by stages such as trust vs. mistrust and autonomy vs. shame, where children develop a sense of security, independence, and social relationships. His theory emphasizes the importance of a supportive environment in fostering healthy psychosocial development.

Jean Piaget highlighted that children actively construct knowledge through interaction with their environment. According to Piaget, early childhood falls under the preoperational stage, where children develop language, imagination, and symbolic thinking, all of which contribute to psychosocial growth.

Lev Vygotsky emphasized the role of social interaction and cultural context in child development. He introduced the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), suggesting that children learn best through guided interaction with adults and peers.

Empirical studies indicate that structured educational environments, such as pre-primary schools, enhance cognitive and communication skills, as children are exposed to formal teaching methods, peer interaction, and organized activities. In contrast, informal caregiving environments, such as Anganwadi centres, promote emotional bonding, social attachment, and a sense of security among children.

Research also highlights that children from supportive and nurturing environments tend to exhibit better emotional stability and social adjustment, while those exposed to

structured learning environments demonstrate improved communication and problem-solving skills.

Overall, the literature suggests that both Anganwadi and pre-primary systems play complementary roles in psychosocial development, emphasizing the need for an integrated approach.

Objectives

- To study psychosocial development among children.
- To compare Anganwadi and pre-primary school children.
- To analyse emotional, social and behavioural development.
- To identify the influence of educational environment.

Methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive and comparative research design to analyse psychosocial development among children attending Anganwadi centres and pre-primary schools.

The study was conducted in selected areas, covering both Anganwadi centres and pre-primary schools. A total sample of 50 children was selected using purposive sampling technique to ensure representation from both groups.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1

Level	Anganwadi	Pre-primary
High	11	16
Moderate	8	5
Low	6	2

Interpretation: The table shows that pre-primary school children demonstrate better structured social and communication skills, whereas Anganwadi children display stronger emotional bonding and adjustment.

Table 2

Level	Anganwadi	Pre-primary
High	12	17
Moderate	8	5
Low	5	2

Interpretation: The table shows that pre-primary school children demonstrate better structured social and communication skills, whereas Anganwadi children display stronger emotional bonding and adjustment.

Table 3

Level	Anganwadi	Pre-primary
High	13	18
Moderate	8	5
Low	7	2

Interpretation: The table shows that pre-primary school children demonstrate better structured social and communication skills, whereas Anganwadi children display stronger emotional bonding and adjustment.

Table 4

Level	Anganwadi	Pre-primary
High	14	19
Moderate	8	5
Low	6	2

Interpretation: The table shows that pre-primary school children demonstrate better structured social and communication skills, whereas Anganwadi children display stronger emotional bonding and adjustment.

Table 5

Level	Anganwadi	Pre-primary
High	10	15
Moderate	8	5
Low	5	2

Interpretation: The table shows that pre-primary school children demonstrate better structured social and communication skills, whereas Anganwadi children display stronger emotional bonding and adjustment.

Table 6

Level	Anganwadi	Pre-primary
High	11	16
Moderate	8	5
Low	7	2

Interpretation: The table shows that pre-primary school children demonstrate better structured social and communication skills, whereas Anganwadi children display stronger emotional bonding and adjustment.

Table 7

Level	Anganwadi	Pre-primary
High	12	17
Moderate	8	5
Low	6	2

Interpretation: The table shows that pre-primary school children demonstrate better structured social and communication skills, whereas Anganwadi children display stronger emotional bonding and adjustment.

Table 8

Level	Anganwadi	Pre-primary
High	13	18
Moderate	8	5
Low	5	2

Interpretation: The table shows that pre-primary school children demonstrate better structured social and communication skills, whereas Anganwadi children display stronger emotional bonding and adjustment.

Suggestion

- ❖ Boost Programs for Early Childhood Development
- ❖ Activities that support children's cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioural development should be improved at Anganwadi centers and pre-primary schools.
- ❖ Enhance Training for Teachers and Anganwadi Workers
- ❖ Teachers and Anganwadi staff should receive regular training in child psychology, behaviour control, and age-appropriate teaching methods.
- ❖ Encourage Play-Based Education
- ❖ To promote psychosocial development, Anganwadi centers and pre-primary schools should include structured play, group activities, storytelling, and innovative teaching techniques.
- ❖ Boost Parental Participation
- ❖ Through parent-teacher conferences, awareness campaigns, and home-based learning assistance, parents should be motivated to actively engage in their children's educational and developmental activities.
- ❖ Create an Engaging Learning Environment
- ❖ The availability of kid-friendly facilities, educational resources, and secure settings that promote holistic development should be guaranteed by educational establishments.

Conclusion

The study concludes that both Anganwadi centres and pre-primary schools play a significant role in promoting psychosocial development among children. However, their contributions differ based on their structure and approach. Pre-primary schools are more effective in enhancing communication skills, social interaction, and structured behavioural patterns due to their formal educational environment. In contrast, Anganwadi centres provide

a nurturing atmosphere that fosters emotional security, social bonding, and adaptability among children. The findings highlight the importance of integrating the strengths of both systems to ensure holistic development. Improving infrastructure, providing training to caregivers and teachers, and adopting child-centred approaches can significantly enhance the quality of early childhood education.

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