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THE CURRENT STATE OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN THE ETHIOPIAN KINDERGARTENS

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SHEWAKENA CHERINET

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SHEWAKENA CHERINET

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS

Ambaye Tsehaye	
CHAIRMAN, DEPARTMENT GRADUATE COMMITTEE	SIGNATURE
Ambaye Tsehaye	
ADVISOR	SIGNATURE
Yeklehaimanot Haileselassie	
EXMINER, EXTERNAL	SIGNATURE
Qbebe Bekele	
EXMINER, INTERNAL	SIGNATURE

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TABLE OF CONTENT

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to survey the current state of the learning environment in the Ethiopian Kindergartens to obtain a clear picture of the situation of preschool education at the national level. To this end, three data gathering instruments(observation scales, questionnaires, and interview) were employed, while fifteen kindergartens, fifty-six teachers teaching in those kindergartens, head of kindergarten teachers training institute, and pertinent officials in the six sample urban centers were used as the subjects of the study. Percentage and mean scores were employed to analyse the data.

Findings made clear that the distribution of child areas with regard to indoor space is below standard in the kindergartens of Awassa, Dire-Dawa, and Dessie with the average mean scores of .30, .32, and .32 respectively, while kindergartens in Jimma and Nazareth have proper distribution of child areas with the average mean scores of .48, and .46 respectively; eight kindergartens (two from each towns of Awassa, Dire-Dawa, Dessie, and Nazareth) are inadequate in bathroom facilities with the mean scores ranged from .14 to .29, while two kindergartens in Jimma are adequate scoring .50 and .57 respectively. Problem solving and creative construction materials have been found to be poor with the mean scores which ranged from .14 to .34 while the rest have been in a good working conditions their scores being in between .37 and .60. In all the studied kindergartens information and literary materials are meager and in poor conditions with the mean scores that ranged from .14 to .36. Props for sociodrama, musical toys and equipment, and hard surface play area equipment are scant in most of the kindergartens the mean scores being .14 and .36. Significantly higher proportion of the teachers (68 percent) have not got inservice or refresher courses; and the majority of the teachers (80 percent) have got only a three months training.

On the other hand, encouraging results have been documented as regards staff facilities, distribution of child areas in outdoor; and arrangement of the available toys, equipment, and materials.

Finally, prolonging the duration of the training to at least one year; giving adequate time for practice teaching, and field based observation; providing opportunities for further training of teachers through seminars, workshops, summer courses, etc.; applying a shift-system; attempting to keep the norms set whenever kindergartens are established; and equipping kindergartens with at least the toys and equipment that could easily be prepared locally as the major recommendations in order to help improve the existing deplorable conditions.

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the problem

The wide range of literature in the area of early childhood education seem to reflect the significance of the program and the prominent roles that it plays. Several studies have been conducted on different aspects of early childhood education in various parts of the world. However, it has been indicated that research emphases in early childhood education have shifted through time. For instance, the twenties and thirties were designated by the gathering and interpretation of a wide range of normative data about child growth, development, learning, and adjustment. This was followed in the late thirties and the forties by great research interest in human needs and their effects on motivation (Fuller, 1960: 393-396). Consequently, today abundant literature on kindergarten education which are descriptive and expositional are available. These include aspects such as the physical plant, organization, housing and equipping; financing and budgeting; the curriculum, teachers' training; planning and administering; methods to be employed in pre-school education; etc., (Forest, 1949; Gurrey, 1963; Todd, 1964; Marguarita, 1965; Berieter, 1966; Katherine, 1966; Standing, 1971; Nanette, 1972; Manning, 1971; Alastar, 1979; Fontana, 1984; Decker & Decker, 1988; Isenberg & Jalongo, 1993; etc.)

Findings, in general, give evidence that pre-school education is valuable in light of later school adjustment, progress, and all areas of a child's development. It is revealed that there is a growing conviction that a child's early years are of great importance to his later development. Since early life experiences influence later development, the quality of early childhood experiences is felt to determine, to a great extent, how effective later development can be (Arthur, 1925; Malley & Morrison, 1935; Moustakas, 1952; Allen & Masling, 1957; Bonney, 1958; cited in Gore & Koury, 1964; and Decker & Decker, 1988). Besides, it has been emphasised that good kindergartens for children below seven years old lay the foundation for their later education. A good kindergarten is characterised

by its adequate and well-trained teachers, adequate and appropriate facilities, adequate and well-prepared curriculum materials. As scholars in the field express "the envisaged benefits of pre-school education hinge on obtaining adequate teachers, facilities, and curriculum materials"(Gorman, et al., 1988:91)

A review of school quality across educational levels in various Third world countries proved that student achievement was related to teacher's level of education and years of experience as well as teacher personality characteristics such as the degree of self-sufficiency, initiative, and resourcefulness; type of management; and course content (Avalos & Haddad, 1981 cited in Gorman, et al., 1988:92).

In this regard, evidence from studies in the field indicated that many countries in the world have responded to a widespread demand for pre-school provision and have established expensive college based initial teacher training courses to professionalise teachers and upgrade the standards of pre-school education. Government policies recognize the potential of pre-schools for community development.

A survey made on the training program of pre-school teachers among member states of UNESCO showed that the methods for training pre-schools teachers are varied and range from post graduate courses to non-degree diploma courses of one or more years of training, as well as to very short courses or orientations of a few weeks (UNESCO, 1985: 5)

In the United States of America most states require a four-year professional program for certification in early childhood education or kindergarten. A few states have developed a five-year program. Several states are offering certification for teaching pre-school handicapped children (Decker & Decker, 1988:182).

In France and Italy pre-school teachers mostly have been trained at the teacher training colleges. Prospective kindergarten teachers follow a

three year course. At the end of the third year the students sit the state examination leading to the pre-school teaching diploma. Similarly, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and South Africa train pre-school teachers in two-year colleges (UNESCO, 1985).

The aforementioned information shows that the pre-school teachers' training programs vary from country to country and within the same country. Besides, it has been pointed out that as there are countries that give special emphasis to the training of pre-school teachers, there are also a number of cases where the training is underestimated.

For instance, throughout Latin America and Cameroon teachers mostly have no specific training in the field of early childhood education, or they may lack training altogether (Avalos & Haddad, 1981 cited in Gorman, et al., 1988:94). In Ethiopia a limited three month pre-school teachers' course is offered.

Here, it is worth noting that since pre-school age is crucial, it would be unquestionable that adequate training is of paramount importance. Short period course could not be satisfactory for a number of reasons. Teachers of pre-school children are expected to be highly versatile, possess knowledge of child-care and psychology, teaching method, using appropriate equipments and materials in teaching, etc. (Kuzin, 1972:37). Thus, in order to gain the necessary skill and to be effective in application time constraints have to be avoided. It is true that the more attention is given to the training of the teacher, the better and more valuable will the result be (Gurrey, 1963:3).

Another area that could reflect government involvement in pre-school education might be coverage rates. The UNESCO/ UN data indicate the pre-primary education coverage rates of 47 developed and developing countries which range from less than 1 percent to 99 percent. In general, it has been documented that European countries have high coverage rates-

Belgium, France, and Germany 99 percent and Czechoslovakia and Hungary 93 and 98 percent respectively. Nevertheless, there are several European countries with fairly low or moderate coverage rates (e.g., 23 percent in Portugal, 24 percent in Denmark, 42 percent in Switzerland). Extremely low coverage rates have been documented for developing countries (e.g. 6 percent in Cameroon, 3 percent in the Congo, and 2.1 percent in Ethiopia) (Olmsted, 1989:44-46).

The finding concerning Ethiopia is really shocking since 2.1 percent pre-school education coverage is quite insignificant and is the least of almost all the countries in the provision of early childhood education services. However, several countries give due attention to pre-school education and attempt to help their children meet the most important developmental needs. This in turn implies that there is an ever increasing emphasis upon the value of early years. To this end, it appears evident that so much has been done and is still endeavoured to facilitate and refine pre-school educational undertakings.

On the other hand, some countries including Ethiopia neglect pre-school educational program. Recent evidence from studies of pre-school education in Ethiopia indicates that the effort made so far is considerably low (UNICEF, 1991:85). Findings revealed that the 1989 enrolment represented a mere 2.1 percent out of the 4.1 million children of pre-school age group. Enrolment declined to about 1.5 percent in 1992 owing to the dismantling of the 'kebele' association which managed and financed the early childhood education program (UNICEF, 1994:86).

Moreover, studies made in pre-schools of Addis Ababa pointed out that the learning environment (the physical set-up of the kindergartens in general and the classrooms in particular) was not conducive for proper implementation of the curriculum; basic facilities and equipment were considerably lacking; and the training as well as competencies of the teachers were inadequate (Bizunesh, 1983: 54-56; Dereje, 1994: 136-141).

On the whole, it has been detected that adequate and scholarly researched materials on pre-school educational programs of Ethiopia are quite few and limited in scope. Especially when viewed in light of the value attached to pre-school education, these local studies are insignificant. Secondly, it has also been documented that pre-school education in Ethiopia has not got due attention. Thus, these two major problems, apparently observed in the very important sector; i.e., pre-school education, initiated the researcher to dwell on it.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Being in a world where the pressure is high for upgrading the quality of early childhood education in general, and for more highly specialised, pedagogically trained graduates in particular, the effort made so far in Ethiopia is found to be significantly poor. This is proved mainly by the coverage rate which is 2.1percent - the least in the world and extraordinarily low; and by the teachers' training program being short with a duration of only three months. In addition, obtaining a good deal of scholarly presented local literature in the area of pre-school education in Ethiopia appears to be unlikely. The available few studies are very limited in scope and have been conducted in Addis Ababa and Pawe only. These studies aimed at assessing the implementation of the kindergarten curriculum and the effects of the program on the children who joined the elementary schools.

Other essential aspects of pre-school education are the learning environment, i.e., physical, and human environment as well as toys and equipment. These are likely to affect the realization of the intent of the kindergartens for (a) they have direct relationship with the emotional aspects of the child - to feel at ease or to be disturbed; (b) the child's overall activities can be determined by the facilities available, the teacher's capability to create a conducive atmosphere, and the attractiveness of the environment as a whole. However, local researches hardly exist in the area

that can give a clear picture of the situation in order to improve the pre-school education. Hence, it appears timely to assess the learning environment in the Ethiopian kindergartens.

To this end, this study attempts to seek answers for the following basic questions:

1. How far conducive are the physical environments for instruction?
2. To what extent are kindergartens equipped with the necessary toys and equipment?
3. How far proper is the arrangement of available toys and equipment?
4. How much adequate is the training that the teachers of the kindergartens received?

1.3 Significance of the study

This study is hoped to be significant for the findings could help those who are interested in the field to obtain accurate and comprehensive information on the current state of the learning environment in the Ethiopian kindergartens. It is also hoped that the study helps policy makers to compile information which can be used in the planning and development of kindergartens at regional as well as national level.

Besides, the researcher hopes that the findings of the study provide concerned party with a clear insight into as to how the kindergartens in Ethiopia rate functionally and in what characteristics they are deficient and suggest possible means necessary to make up any deficiencies which may appear.

Other than these, it is the researcher's hope that this study will serve those who need local literature in the area of pre-school education in Ethiopia and stimulate further research.

1.4 Delimitation of the Study

The study is delimited to the investigation of the current state of the learning environment in kindergartens run by 'kebele' association and non-government organizations found in selected major urban centres of Ethiopia- Nazareth, Jimma, Diredawa, Awassa, and Dessie. These major urban centres are selected mainly because, though there are a number of kindergartens in these places, the documents in the library shelves demonstrate that researches were conducted in the kindergartens found in Addis Ababa only. Though it is true that most of the kindergartens are found in Addis Ababa, the cases of those historically most important towns with regard to the establishment of kindergartens need to be studied. For this reasons, the study is delimited to the investigation of the learning environment of kindergartens in the above mentioned towns.

Furthermore, private kindergartens and those run by mosques & churches are excluded from the study on the assumption that:

a) they may lag farm behind the kindergartens sponsored by NGO's and the public in obtaining the necessary facilities for they are established on profit basis; and

b) they may have shortage of trained teachers for they do not have their own training centres.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

The inclusion of emotional environment; i.e., the degree of the teachers' expressions of warmth, enthusiasm, and friendliness as well as the degree of the teachers' perceptiveness of children's needs, and sensitivity to the child's personal needs and concerns in the actual situation would have made the findings of the study more meaningful.

Besides, the findings of this study would have been more meaningful if the trainers of prospective kindergarten teachers have been observed in

the actual teaching- learning process. However, since such a study requires more time and money than allowed, it is limited to only the physical environment (distribution of indoor and outdoor space per child, bathroom facilities, and staff facilities), the provision of indoor and outdoor toys and equipment, and the adequacy of the training (preservice and inservice) the kindergarten teachers obtained.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Equipment - Furniture and other large and expensive items such as easels, climbing structures, merry-go-round, slides, etc.

Kindergarten - a school for the preprimary years preceding the first grade - between the age of four and six.

Learning environment - the milieu in which the teaching-learning transaction takes place including teachers, equipment, materials, supplies, etc.

Materials - Smaller, less expensive items such as puzzles, books, games, and toys.

Nursery School -an educational enterprise for the pre-primary year or years prior to kindergarten.

Pre-school education -the educational experience of the child from birth to entrance into the first grade. The term ` early childhood education' and 'pre- school education' are used interchangeably.

Supplies - consumables like paint, paper, glue, etc

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Much effort has been exerted by a number of theorists, researchers, educators, and the concerned organizations in devising appropriate means and ways of upgrading early childhood education. Quite considerable body of recommendations have been forwarded to this end. There is also a range of literature dealing with the topic " early childhood education". In this review, literature that is relevant to the study will be presented so as to have an insight into the core elements and to briefly expose the readers to some of the basics of the subject under consideration. Accordingly, it will be dealt under the following headings: historical roots of early childhood education, values of early childhood education, and the learning environment of a preschool.

2.1. Historical Roots of Early Childhood Education

Education is believed to have an extensive history, and the long development of educational theory and practice extends from the Greek philosophers, such as Socrates (469-399 B.C), Plato (425-347 B.C) and Aristotle (384-322 B.C), through the Roman Empire, into the Middle Age, the Renaissance, and on to more recent centuries(McCarthy and Houston, 1980:3; Feeney, et. al., 1987:10).

Nevertheless, early childhood education as a distinct discipline had its beginning with Johan Pestalozzi (1746-1827) as the nineteenth century began. Then, it can be said that early childhood education is a fairly new field, though it has old roots. It develops out of a long historical tradition. Many of the significant aspects and practices found in today's programs were suggested by philosophers, writers, and teachers of the past (McCarthy and Houston, 1980:3; Feeney, et. al., 1987:10).

To begin with, Plato and Aristotle recognized the importance of beginning education with young children. Plato argued that children have

to be taken from their homes at an early age and be looked after by people specially trained in the care and education of young children. In this regard he suggested that children should not be forced towards learning, instead they ought to be directed to it by what amuses their minds so as to discover with accuracy the unique natural skill of each.

John Amos Comenius (1592-1670) too stressed the significance of educating children while they are young and advocated learning by doing and learning through play(Feeney, et al., 1987:12).

During the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, European philosophers wrote about educating the young child. Rousseau (1712-1778) gave special attention to the concept of childhood. He felt that childhood is a unique time where a child should not be considered just as a small adult-filled with original sin, instead he has to be seen as natural being in his own right who needed complete freedom to grow and develop. Rousseau, then, was most concerned with helping the child to develop naturally, to unfold and blossom to the greatest extent possible. According to Rousseau, the best education for the child was education which least hampered the development of the pupil's natural ways (Austin, 1976:177).

Pestalozzi, a swiss, was influenced by Rousseau. He devoted his life to education, especially for the orphaned and poor; he developed a home for the poor and a school for refugees. He believed that education should be based on the natural development of children and that every child was capable of learning; he rejected the practice of memorization and recommended sensory exploration and observation as the basis of learning (McCarthy and Houston, 1980:4; Feeney, et al., 1987:12).

Robert Owen (1771-1858) a disciple of Pestalozzi being concerned with the poor conditions of families who worked in the cotton mills during

the Industrial Revolution established an infant school in Scotland in 1816 to improve the lives of their children. His school, the first in England for children three to ten years of age, had a warm and friendly atmosphere. Own was against the view of pressuring children to learn or punishing them; instead, he supported the idea that gives due attention for showing children the negative consequences of their actions. Besides, many of the practices originated in Owen's schools are still available in today's early childhood programs. These include emphasis on a warm, nurturing, and nonpunitive teacher; the use of play as a good instrument for learning; and periods of time during which children choose their activities (Feeney, et al. , 1987:13).

Friedrich Wilhelm Froebel (1782 - 1852) a German philosopher, like Pestalozzi and so many others before him, was deeply concerned with the education of children. By opening the first kindergarten, in 1837, he created a very great change within the emerging field of early childhood education.

Froebel's view regarding the education of children was highly advanced. For instance, he was of the opinion, like many modern psychologists, that a child's early experiences have a very great effect upon the development of an adult personality; he believed that activity was the basis for knowing, and that play was an essential part of the educational process; and he understood that individual differences in interests and capabilities ought to be considered in designing a curriculum, and that any educational curriculum had to be related to the child's own experience. Moreover, he believed that educating children was similar to cultivating plants and so he invented the term " kindergarten" meaning garden of children. In this regard, it has been stated that Froebel was the first in attempting to create early childhood programs that were relevant, effective and enjoyable, and he is considered the father of the modern kindergarten

(Austin, 1976; 276-277; McCarthy & Houston, 1980: 6-7; and Feeney, et al., 1987:14-15).

Maria Montessori (1870-1952) the first woman physician in Italy, is one of the most famous of early childhood educators. She was of the opinion that children learn best through their own direct sensory experience of the world; and that children have an inborn desire to explore and understand the world in which they live. Accordingly, the basis for learning in a Montessori classroom is firsthand experience, and children learn by observing and by doing. The physical environment in a Montessori classroom is attractive, child-sized and equipped with movable furniture and didactic materials. The didactic materials according to Montessori, ought to be relatively simple, quite interesting, and self-correcting (McCarthy & Houston, 1980 :10-14; Feeney, et al., 1987 :16-17).

Montessori offers much more attention to the crucial nature of the child from birth to six years of age. She highly emphasized that the period of infancy is the richest and extremely valuable which ought to be utilized by education in every possible way. Because, as she states, the waste of this period of life can never be compensated (Cllremont, 1973:5).

In the same vein, the two sisters Margaret and Rachael McMillan become involved in preschool education being aware of the deplorable condition of the neglected children of poor parents. They felt that something has to be done for these children before they reached school age, and accordingly established the first nursery school in London in 1909 for children from two to six years of age. The program of their institute was much alike to that of Montessori's; i.e., emphasis is given to cleanliness and health care. Nevertheless, the McMillans offered greater emphasis on emotional development and creative activities like art work and play (Langford, 1960:16; McCarthy & Houston, 1980:16).

2.2. Values of Early Childhood Education

Research findings evidenced that early childhood education for children below 6 years old lay the foundation for their later education. Findings of the twenties, for instance, proved the significance of kindergarten education in relation to later school adjustment and progress putting the following facts: (a) children with kindergarten attendance tend to make relatively great improvement than those without kindergarten attendance; (b) the number of first grade failures is much greater in those who did not attend kindergarten programs than those who attended; (c) in grades 1-3, those who attend kindergarten show a considerable progress in the speed as well as comprehension of reading; (d) children who attended kindergarten in first grades excell in speed and quality of their handwriting; and (e) children with kindergarten experience tend to form better person-to-person and person- to-group relations than those who did not have kindergarten experience (Foster and Headley, 1966:32).

After reviewing 157 research studies Dickerson concluded that a full description of the value of preschool education was impossible. Nevertheless, the findings in general proved that preschool education has a favourable influence on later academic achievement; safeguards health; fosters social development; develops physical skill, coordination, and power; gives emotional strength; and provides healthy self- concepts and an opportunity to increase intellectual achievement and competence (Dickerson cited in Gore& Koury, 1964:1-2).

In the same vein, Moustakas has made a comprehensive summary of the research on the motor, social, emotional, intellectual, and general adjustment of children with nursery school experience. And he reported an advantage in motor development and adjustment in favour of nursery school children. Results from the studies of social development showed that

with increase in kindergarten attendance children become more sociable and more active, engaged in more constructive activities, chose friends with similar interests, engaged in less solitary play, and were more persistent (Moustakas, 1952 cited in Gore & Koury, 1964 :2-3)

In the area of intellectual development , the evidence showed that attendance advances language development and that kindergarten children with at least 100 days of attendance are significantly better than those who did not attend on information, reading-readiness, and vocabulary tests. Moreover, it has also been pointed out that children ranging from 5 to 7 years of age who had attended kindergarten were seen by their classmates as having more prestige, being more free and spontaneous, more confident, and more independent of adults (Allen & Masling, 1957 cited in Gore & Koury , 1964:3).

Similar results have also been reported by a number of researchers emphasizing that there are fewer failures in later grades among children who attended kindergarten and that they tend to excel in reading, arithmetic, oral language, and social achievement (Arthur, 1925; Malley, 1935; Morrison, 1935; East, 1953; Hammond, 1957; and Bonney, 1958 cited in Gore & Koury, 1964:3)

Recent findings in various countries, too, confirmed the value of kindergarten experience. In Europe, for instance, Rye and Hundeide conducting an evaluation of the Alfragide children's project in Lisbon, Portugal, investigated the long-term effects of a high quality early childhood education program and reported that 3 years after the conclusion of the project, the group receiving the program still maintained a significant IQ gain over the group not receiving the program (Rye & Hundie, 1987 cited in Olmsted, 1989:28).

In Brazil, an evaluation of early childhood education program showed that 73.5 percent of the program children passed first and second grade, compared with 59.5 percent of the nonparticipants (Halpern and Mayers, 1985 cited in Olmsted, 1989:30). In another evaluation report it has also been indicated that the academic performances of children with two years' exposure to the program was consistently better than that of the nonparticipant group(Berg and Brems, 1987 cited in Olmsted, 1989:30).

Similarly in India, two research groups have evaluated the early childhood educational program and reported that the students who passed through the program were significantly better than the nonparticipant in academic performance, attendance, and general school behaviour (Myers, 1988 cited in Olmsted, 1989: 26-27).

In the same vein researchers in Nigeria have conducted four studies investigating the relationship between participation in preschool education programs and later performance in primary school. In all four studies students who participated in preschool programs performed better than students who did not participate in such programs (Myers, 1987 cited in Olmsted, 1989: 25-26).

On the whole, recent literature too-developed by the theoretical writings of Bruner (1960), Hunt(1961), Bloom(1964), and Piaget (1963) and supported by data taken from over 200 research based projects- clearly unfolds the growing conviction that a child's early years are of deciding importance to the later development. It appears evident that early life experiences, influence later development, and therefore the quality of early childhood experiences is hoped to determine, to a great extent, how effective later development could be (Decker and Decker, 1988:2).

The findings that preschool education has a positive influence on later academic achievement; safeguards health; fosters social development , etc. gained support from Lodetti's & Pelamatti's and D'Arca's (1992) study conducted in Ethiopia.

Lodetti and Pelamatti examined the effects of the 1987-88 kindergarten program on the children who joined the elementary schools in the Beles valley resettlement area. So as to arrive at the intended objectives the researchers interviewed 23 teachers of the first grades of four elementary schools in the village. Results showed that almost all the children who completed the kindergarten program scored high and satisfactory marks; that many of the children are good in all activities; more active in sport, music, and art; and excell in performance and behaviour (Lodetti & Pelamatti, 1992: 359-370).

Subsequently, D'Arca reported that in early 1989 a health survey was carried out among 1, 139 children in five kindergartens of the Beles resettlement area in cooperation with the Italian Medical team. Results indicated that the health situation of the children assisted in the kindergartens is relatively good (D'Arca, 1992:371-380).

Another local study by Gedalas has also confirmed the above findings. In his study which aimed at exploring the relationship between pupils' participation in kindergarten and their later academic performance Gedalas uses a total of 120 students (60 of which have kindergarten attendance and 60 without kindergarten attendance) taken from six randomly selected elementary schools in Addis Ababa. Findings indicated that those children attended kindergarten education had obtained better average yearly grades than without kindergarten experience in the first three grades of elementary school (Gedalas, 1992:41).

In sum, it may be concluded that kindergarten or preschool attendance has prominent place in various spheres of the life of children - intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development. The accumulation of evidence shows that kindergarten attendance favourably influences later progress and achievement in general. This, indeed, calls for the need of well organized and suitable learning environment for the kind of experience children could gain in preschool depends on this. Besides, the learning environment of the kindergarten; i.e., site, the building and equipment as well as other necessary facilities play quite significant role. Therefore, so as to benefit from childhood education it would be pertinent to give due attention for the planning and organizing conducive learning environment.

2.3 The Learning Environment of Preschool

A kindergarten program, so as to be successful requires detailed and efficient organization at every phase of the learning environment; i.e., the physical plant, the play equipment and materials, and staff efficiency.

As revealed by literature, the idea that the physical environment is strongly effective influencer of behaviour is not new. Froebel, for instance,, believed strongly in the power of the environment, likening the kindergarten to a garden for children, where they could grow as naturally as the flowers in a carefully handled garden" (Seefeldt, 1980:100-101).

Continuing throughout the history of preschool education, the environment received the attention of educators. The whole program of Montessori, for example, focuses on preparing an ordered environment.

The twentieth century has, indeed, witnessed remarkable contributions to the knowledge of human growth and development and the way in which learning takes place. The findings of research and the careful

follow up and analysis of trained professionals working with young children have highly expanded the horizons of knowledge in the field.

With this , early childhood educators, psychologists, and psychiatrists advocate that the learning environment of preschool has to be both physically and psychologically safe and healthy for children if the desired objectives are to be attained.

It is believed that in a psychologically safe and healthy environment children are comfortable and feel secure. And this sense of safety is dependent on warm, kind, approachable, and well-trained teachers who could understand the way children grow, think, behave, and learn.

Physically safe and healthy environment is hoped to provide children with basically sound facilities, equipment, materials and etc. Hence, professional training of teachers careful planning and selection of the site, the type of building, equipment, materials, and facilities would be quite essential to attain the objectives of a preschool

2.3.1 Training of Preschool Teachers

Teachers are the key persons in the overall teaching learning environments. Several studies indicated that the influences coming from teacher's behaviour in the classroom have far reaching possibilities for good or evil. Teachers' behaviour affects children's sense of security, freedom from tension, etc. (Lambert, 1960:28; Pitcher, et al., 1966:4).

Lambert further argues that everything the teacher does in the classroom has meaning to children. For instance, through the manner of reacting to the mistakes of children, the teacher can either give children the feeling that they can proceed to build and grow or the feeling that errors are

bad events, sign of failure and lack of proper learning. It has been, however, recommended that mistake has to be viewed as an element of learning rather than as a major tragedy.

Hence, in order to attain the desired objectives professional guidance and leadership is said to be the most essential requirements. This calls for qualified teachers who have broad academic backgrounds, desirable personal qualities, and professional competencies (Gore & Koury, 1964:20-21; Feeney, et al., 1987:32).

2.3.1.1 Personal characteristics of the Teacher

The good preschool teachers possess personal qualities and competencies which enable them perform well with children and adults. According to Gore & Koury the effective teacher of children:

- Likes and respects young children
- Enjoys working with children and their parents
- Maintains warm and friendly relationships with children and parents
- Is calm, sensitive, thoughtful of others, and has a genuine sense of humour
- Understands how young children grow, think, behave, and learn.
- Is sensitive to the growth and learning needs of the individual child and helps him move forward according to his own rate and level of development.
- Values the process of learning through which children develop independence, resourcefulness, creativity, responsibility, and the ability to solve problems.
- Is skilled in observing children; ... guiding play so that it challenges their capacities...plans and modifies the program according to the needs of an individual child and the group.... (Gore & Koury, 1964:20 -21).

Similarly, Witty has also pointed out that having cooperative and democratic attitude; kindliness and consideration for individuals; patience; good personal appearance and pleasant manner; fairness and impartiality; sense of humour; interest in child problems; flexibility; use of recognition

and praise; and proficiency in subject matter are the most important qualities of the teacher (Witty, 1947:662-71).

In the same vein, Foster and Headley gives a comprehensive list of desirable attitudes and traits a preschool teacher ought to have ; i.e., "being alert, altruistic, approachable, charitable, clean, co-operative, courageous, democratic, dependable, dignified, fair, faithful, generous, happy, honest, impartial, just, kind, modest, open-minded, optimistic, patient, poised, sensitive to humour, strong (physically), sympathetic, tactful, well-trained, and experienced etc." (Foster and Headley, 1959:43).

In this regard, several authorities held similar view and stressed the importance of the foregoing attributes and thereby recommended to be part of a teacher of children (Symonds, 1947; Langford, 1960; Pitcher, et al., 1966; Hertzberg & Stone, 1971; and Feeney. et al., 1987:32).

The aforementioned list of personal qualities which a teacher of children has to possess seems to indicate that the career of a preschool teacher is quite big and strenuous business since he is expected to play so many, varied, and challenging role. And above all, the list appears to show that the teacher has grave responsibility in providing children a wholesome atmosphere in which to grow. This in turn implies that specialized professional training in early childhood education is rather helpful.

2.3.1.2 Professional Training of Teachers

It is hoped that professional training helps a teacher of preschool so as to be competent enough in identifying the possibilities and limitations of different materials with which a school may be equipped; to be skilful in arranging and caring for these various materials; to be skilful in employing methods which have proved most effective in teaching children; and to be able to give the necessary growth experience for children.

Scholars in the field emphasized the significance of training preschool teachers saying that " preparation for teaching in the nursery school or kindergarten is a special kind of training, with emphasis on developmental learning and a background of understanding of children and the entire program of early childhood or elementary education"- (Gore & Kourey, 1964:21). As they further explained, the qualified teacher ought to be a graduate of an officially recognized 4-year college with major work in early elementary education, completed either at the graduate or postgraduate level. The professional training in this field has to include course to develop basic knowledge of human growth, development and learning, mental and physical development, health, and nutrition; School, parent, home, and community relationships; curriculum content, methods, materials and equipment, experiences, and resources; current problems, history, and philosophy of education; and the administration and organization of schools (Gore & Koury, 1964:21, Marguarita & Cohen, 1984:15).

A cross-cultural survey of early childhood education conducted in eight countries (Belgium, Canada, Federal Republic of Germany, France, England and Wales, Italy, The Netherlands, and Sweden) has pinpointed that the course work taken by students preparing to be preschool teachers is quite similar in all these nations. The courses given are the study of the psychology and development of young children, sociological history, philosophy, and theory and method of preschool education, geography, math, natural science, hygiene, the language of the country, music, art, home and family life, and practice teaching (Austin, 1976:53).

However, as the survey indicated, there was variation among these eight countries regarding age of admittance and years of study to be a preschool teacher. Teacher training begins at the youngest age in Italy, at 14, and takes about 3 years. Canada and Germany have the lowest

requirements for teacher training, as little as 1 year after the junior or senior Canadian high school. German preschool training consists of a 2-year program in a technical school. The most strict requirements are found in France, where there is a strong professional teachers' organization. France requires 4 years of training with a secondary school education and 2 years with a baccalaureate, plus an examination (Austin, 1976:53).

Another survey of teacher training programs related to early childhood education in the United States indicated that most states require a four-year professional program for certification in early childhood education. A few states have developed a five-year program. (Feeney, et al., 1987:31-32; Decker and Decker, 1988:182-183).

The survey further stated that the general requirements for early childhood education certification are the following:

- Approximately sixty semester hours in the areas of physical and biological sciences, language and literature, mathematics, the social and/or behavioral sciences, and humanities.
- Between twenty-four and thirty semester hours of professional education courses, including introduction to education and/or early childhood education, including history and philosophy;
- At least three (or five to eight in some states) semester hours of student teaching in an early childhood education program and additional student teaching in a primary or intermediate level or grade.
- Course electives in the areas of psychology of the exceptional child, abnormal psychology, psychology of learning, mental hygiene, parent/community relationships, linguistics, nutrition, speech correction, and school administration and/or supervision (Decker and Decker, 1988:183).

Besides, a survey made by UNESCO on the current situation of preschool education in the world (88 countries - 17 from Africa, 15 Asia, 11 Arab states, 24 Europe, and 21 Latin America and Caribbean) revealed that subjects such as child development, health and hygiene, teaching methods, music and movement, theory of education, handicrafts, and curriculum

development are included in pre-service teacher training course in almost all the countries. On the other hand, subject parent education is available in only almost half of the countries (59.4%) preschool teachers training program. Moreover, some countries, specially those where the standards of general education are not high enough, need to upgrade the trainees' knowledge of the academic subjects and included in their pre-service training of preschool teachers' program language, mathematics, science, social studies(history, sociology, civics, economics), domestic science including children nutrition, environmental studies, and physical education (UNESCO, 1995:49-51).

The survey further indicated that most of the countries (93%) used theoretical training., observation or visits, and teaching practice as methods in pre-service training of preschool teachers. With this, twelve countries reported that they employed other methods in addition to the foregoing-workshops used in 5 countries (Bahrain., Colombia, Israel, Malta, Thailand); discussion method used in Bahrain and Grenada; project method in Cote d'- Ivoire, Cyprus, Israel, and Canada; micro-teaching used in Ireland and Newzealand; and active learning methods in Indonesia.

Finally, a very new technique was reported by Ukrainian in which they organize "Conferences on experience exchange" and also arrange trainees' meetings with painters, musicians, children's writers, mass media representatives as well as radio and television workers.

Regarding the availability of in-service training for preschool teachers most of the countries (70%) reported that it is compulsory. Yet, the durations of in-service training courses reported from 1-2 days (St. Vincent)to 2 years (in the case of Afghanistan and Congo) and to 8 semesters in the case of Colombia.

In light of the training of preschool teachers in Ethiopia studies made in Addis Ababa showed that the great majority of the teachers have got only three months training in preschool education. With this, the training as well as competencies of the teachers were found to be inadequate (Bizunesh, 1983:54-56; Dereje, 1994:136-141).

The aforementioned facts show that the training of teachers vary from country to country and within the same country. Besides, it also becomes evident that as there are countries which give great emphasis to the training of preschool teachers, there are also cases where the training is underestimated.

Here, what has to be noted is that since preschool age is crucial as stated earlier, provision of adequate training for teachers would be a must to help children attain the desired objectives. Short period course could not be satisfactory for a number of reasons. For instance, teachers of preschool children are expected to be highly versatile, possess knowledge of child-care and psychology and of educational methods, etc (Kuzin, 1972:37). Therefore, in order to obtain deep knowledge and to be effective time constraints ought to be avoided-during the training.

In sum, teaching young children is challenging and rewarding since the responsibility is directed to influence the lives of children from day to day during their most formative years. This is a profession in the truest sense of the word. It is believed that the results of the teaching will have long range implications for the child, the family, and the nation. So, special training is required in order to do well. As Hymes puts it "a teacher has to be smart and very well informed to teach young children well..." (Hymes, 1974 in Seefeldt, 1980:19) . With this, updating the knowledge and skill on the field is essential.

Preschool teachers have to be masters of many things. They have to be trained in psychology, sociology, health and nutrition, family counseling, and have knowledge of all of the curriculum content areas including: geography, mathematics, science, reading, art, music, and dance. Above all, they are expected to apply ethical procedures in dealing with children. Teachers ought to have sensitive and understanding personality that is warmly outgoing and self-confident. The profession needs happy, intelligent, energetic, and creative teachers to guide it through the years ahead for it is during the early childhood years that the basis for a whole personality is made. Stressing the importance of qualified and trained preschool teachers Marguarita and Cohen say: " The early childhood teacher must grow as a thoughtful, professional person if the education of young children is to be vital and meaningful" (Marguarita and Cohen, 1984:6). Similarly but in different words it has also been said "the quality of a preschool program depends to a great extent upon the teacher" (Academic American Encyclopedia, 1986:521).

2.3.2 Location → Planning of the Site

The area where the school premises is situated in would have its own impact upon the children, the teacher, the learning teaching activities, etc. So, attempt has to be made to select the best location as far as possible to implement the program effectively. In this regard it has been suggested by a number of scholars in the field that the first step has to be preparing an evaluation checklist that could help to select and obtain a favourable and suitable site. And the checklist has to embrace (1) drainage capabilities, (2) access to utilities, (3) size and shape, (4) type of soil, (5) playground features, (6) roadways traffic conditions, (7) residential surroundings, and the like (Herrick, et. al., 1956:287; Castaldi, 1969: 154; Engelhardt, 1970: 263; Koivula, 1983:11-15; Harris, 1985: 143-144, and Hallak, 1990 : 209).

Besides, these scholars further argue that school buildings in general, should be located remote from unnecessary noise, air pollution and other impediments such as places of amusement, taverns, dance halls, cemeteries or other installations which would in any way demoralize, or adversely affect children's attitude.

It is certain that these neighbours could spoil the smooth running of the program and the learning environment on the whole. Excessive noise causes irritation and emotional disturbance on the children. Then a site needs to be far away from sources of loud, continuous, and sharp noise such as heavily travelled highways, airports, and factories. Moreover, it has also been recommended that the location of a school is surrounded by residential areas than business and industrial areas (Wills & Stegeman, 1954:253-262; Engelhardt, 1970:263; Seefeldt, 1980:100-119; Koivula, 1983:15).

In sum, what has been already stated concerning location implies that determining the most suitable site is indispensable and has to be based on careful research. A site located without considering the essential aspects would highly hinder the attainment of the objectives of the program.

In this regard, it has been stated that poorly sited schools are worthless in their educational contribution and selecting educationally inadequate site is wastage of human and material resources (Herrick, et al., 1956:237). So, a well planned and designed site is necessary to fulfill inspiring and desired educational objectives (Davis and Lovels, 1981:1-2).

2.3.3 Indoor Space

Since the major characteristics of young children is their need to be physically active, plenty of space; i.e., a large unobstructed room for the indoor kindergarten is rather important. The recommended floor space,

energy. And this narrow view perpetuates the neglect of the outdoor environment as a valuable setting for children's creative growth and development (Gore&Koury, 1964:57; Decker and Decker, 1988:267; and Isenberg & Jalongo, 1993:189). These scholars further argued that since the outside environment, like the indoor, is a learning laboratory for children, it needs the same systematic attention to space, materials, and equipment. Good outdoor environments offer so many uses for children of all ages-give opportunities to engage in various forms of play (Frost, 1986, 1988; Isenberg & Quisenberry, 1988; and Wortham& Frost, 1990 cited in Isenberg &Jalongo, 1993:189-194). Besides, a wide range of activities is carried on out of door, such as painting; listening to music and stories; building with large blocks; gardening; taking walks to observe nature soil, rocks, animals, plants; and etc. (Gore & Koury, 1964:57).

To this end, it has been suggested that outdoor space has to meet the following criteria:

- The design should be based on the needs of the children. Ellis notes that children play for stimulation, need increasingly complex activities, and learn in social groups... Sutton-Smith believes that play serves three functions: exploration, testing, and creative needs ...
- Outdoor space should provide opportunities for activities similar to those conducted in the indoor space. There should be places that challenge the children to mental activity, social interaction, and physical activity. Almost every activity that can be carried on indoors is equally appropriate outdoors;...
- ... Outdoor space should be aesthetically pleasing.
- The outdoor space must be safe. Enclosure of the space, proper arrangement of equipment, appropriate surfacing, and adequate supervision help mitigate danger;... (Decker & Decker, 1988:267-268)

In this regard, Frost and Klein have identified that equipment and materials, safety, and storage are the three primary characteristics of high-quality outdoor play environments. Equipment and materials in a very good outdoor play environments capture children's attention for a long period of time and enable them to engage in various forms of play (Frost, 1986; Frost & Klein, 1977,1979 in Isenberg&Jalongo, 1993: 194).

The foregoing ideas imply that a safe, well-supervised outdoor environment be an important aspect of the early childhood learning environment. Whereas, various studies show that today's preschool playgrounds are extremely bad, they are poorly designed, out of dated, and inadequately maintained; they lack storage facilities; neglect features children prefer such as dramatic play materials and nature areas; focus entirely on motor activity; are developmentally inappropriate; and are employed without safety orientation for staff or children(Frost et al., 1991; Thompson, 1991; Wortham&Frost, 1990; and Bruya, 1988; cited in Isenberg & Jalongo, 1993:196).

In light of the above findings, Frost has suggested guidelines for better safety and supervision as well as storage as follows: a teacher has to circulate around the area rather than standing in a group and talking; a teacher has to give special attention to swings or climbers, where there is a lot of activity and potential for injury; a teacher has to put 8-10 inches of fall-absorbing material, such as pea gravel, shredded tires, and etc. under and around all moving equipment (e.g., swings and rotating devices) since falls from high places are found to be the major cause of playground injuries to children; and attempt has to be made so as to make storage child scaled to facilitate taking out and putting in equipment (Frost, 1986 cited in Isenberg & Jalongo, 1993:197).

Moreover, it has also been stressed that outdoor play space ought to be fenced in the interest of safety- since it has two major advantages for children- they are not tempted to run into the street, and the fence prevents stray animals from wandering in. Besides, the playgrounds have to be readily accessible; i.e., adjoin the kindergarten room; and the space should include a hard- surfaced area for wheel toys, and soft surfaces for gardening and digging, and grass covered surface for activities like games and stories. On the whole, the playground has to be well drained and free from rocks,

ditches, and other accident hazards (Wills & Stegeman, 1954:258; Lambert, 1960; 19-20; and Decker & Decker, 1988:268-271).

2.3.5 Equipment and Materials

2.3.5.1 The Role of Equipment and Materials in Preschool Education

Equipment and materials are items used in children's activities, both play and education proper. In play, equipment and materials are the "toys" the child wants to give quality to his spontaneous activities and help him to get emotional balance. Education wise, they provide a basis for action (Mialaret, 1976:39).

Feeney, et al. too, state the part played by equipment and materials as follows: " equipment and materials suggest direction and provide raw materials for children's exploration, development, and learning" (Feeney, et al. 1987:162).

It has been further argued that through interaction with well-designed equipment and materials, children sharpen their power of perception and there by further their knowledge of the world; they develop large and small muscle coordination, creativity and self-expression, social skills, and self-awareness (Mialaret, 1976:39; Feeney, et al., 1987; 162)

Research findings have also proved that the equipment and materials children use have a great impact on their total development. Some materials, such as wind-up toys, talking dolls, and colouring books are considered convergent since they direct children to think about a single or correct way to use them. On the other hand, materials like blocks, sand, and water reinforce thinking about multiple uses and many possibilities and then considered to be divergent materials (Guilford, 1967 cited in Isenberg and Jalongo, 1993:215).

In the same vein, a number of scholars have supported that divergent or open-ended equipment and materials invite children's exploration, experimentation, and original thinking. It has been further specified that blocks, carpentry tools, dress-up clothes, paints and markers, modeling dough, mud, sand, and water are usually the most valuable (Hendrick, 1988; Isenberg & Quisenberry, 1988; Kamii&Devries, 1980; Sutton-Smith, 1986; Tegano, Sawyers & Moran, 1989 cited in Isenberg and Jalongo, 1993:215).

2.3.5.2 Categories of Equipment and Materials

It has become evident from the foregoing that equipment and materials play prominent role in the lives of children. This implies that teachers are responsible to support children's growth by providing a range of materials which are age-appropriate. Here, then, knowledge of various equipment and materials valuable for kindergartners would be relevant.

There are several classifications of equipment and materials. Nevertheless, this paper deals with the two recent ones for the sake of convenience. To begin with, this classification of equipment and materials is as follows: (1) skill/concept; (2) gross motor; (3) manipulative; (4) construction; (5) self-expressive; and (6) natural and everyday materials (Johnson, Christie, & Yawkey, 1987 cited in Isenberg & Jalango, 1993:217-218).

According to their view, skill/concept materials include picture books; simple and repetitive stories and rhymes, animal stories, simple science or information books, wide variety of musical recordings, picture bingo or dominoes, flannel board with pictures, letters, and storybook characters. With these children commonly practice skills like eye-hand coordination, sorting, classifying, or counting.

Gross motor materials include push and pull toys like wagons, wheelbarrows; ride-on toys like tricycles, three-wheeled vehicles, cars, trucks, balls of all kinds; slide and climber; rope ladders, old tires, sand and water materials. Children use these materials mainly to explore and practice motor abilities.

Manipulative materials include toys to put together and take apart; stamp and printing materials, fingerpaints, modeling dough; colored cubes, magnetic board/letters/number and shapes; toys, globe, flashlight, magnets, scales, etc. These materials are believed to develop small muscles, basic concepts, eye-hand coordination, and provide a foundation for early literacy and numeracy development (Feeney & Magarick, 1984 cited in Isenberg & Jalongo, 1993:218).

Construction materials include small and large unit blocks large hollow blocks, interlocking plastic blocks with pieces of all sizes and woodworking materials- workbench, hammer, preschool nails, saw, sandpaper, pounding benches, white glue. It has been pointed out that these materials offer innumerable possibilities and support coordination and creativity (Feeney & Magarick, 1984 cited in Isenberg & Jalongo, 1993:218).

Self expressive materials consist of realistic dolls, dress-up clothes, realistic tools, toy camera, telephone, household furniture, puppets, auditory and musical materials like smelling and sound boxes as well as rhythm instruments, large crayons, paint, paste, glue, chalkboard and chalk, collage materials, markers, modeling dough, and blunt scissors.

And finally, the natural and everyday materials comprise sandbox tools, bubbles, water toys, old clocks, radios, cameras, telephones, mirrors, doctor kits, magazines, measuring cups, etc. Along with these, bathroom

supplies are recommended to be included and the toilet facilities have to be located near to playground and main room with doors leading to both, and they need to be child-size. Sinks ought to be low and large enough so that there would be adequate space for several children to wash their hands at the same time. The toilet room have to be well lighted and ventilated, and arranged so that it can be kept clean at all times and supervised easily. Ratio of one toilet and washbowl for each ten children is generally recommended (Wills & Stegeman, 1954:257; Lambert, 1960:17).

The above recommendations appear to get recognition and applied in several countries. For instance ' article 4' of the decree of the Republic of Senegal establishing regulations for kindergartens reads as follow:

> All taps in play centers and kindergartens shall be supplied solely with drinking water. Institutions shall have the requisite toilet facilities for the children, consisting of washbasins at a height of about 50 cm. above the floor, one tap being provided for every ten children or so... (UNESCO, 1976: 17).

These, being the ideal learning environment of a preschool suggested by a number of distinguished scholars, have been serving as guidelines to run preschool. However, the case of Ethiopia as revealed by Bizunesh (1983) and Dereje (1994) is rather deplorable.

Bizunesh (1983) evaluating the implementation of the kindergarten curriculum in Addis Ababa using direct observation, questionnaires, interviews, and written documents as instruments of the study indicated that the implementation of the curriculum was not being carried out effectively. And the major causes for this were found to be (1) the absence of conducive physical set-up of the kindergarten in general and the classrooms in particular; (2) the inadequate training of teachers together with their dissatisfaction, mainly due to the diversified payments for similar qualification; (3) the negative attitudes of parents towards children play;

and (4) the severe shortage of the curriculum guides themselves and other basic facilities.

Similar result was also reported by Dereje(1994). Dereje investigated the underlying causes that account for the existing disparity between the demand and the educational opportunity of the preschool age children of Ethiopia in general and that of Addis Ababa in particular. He employed questionnaires, checklists, and interviews where the samples of his study were preschool teachers, their principals, and concerned officials at various levels. Findings pointed out that the qualifications of most preschool teachers were low, with a training duration of three months; chances for upgrading programmes were very narrow; teacher child ratio was very high whose average is 1:43; material and financial resources were considerably limited; play and learning equipments were far behind the number of children in each kindergarten; and basic health and safety facilities were either so little or non-existent.

Above all, as commented in the study, though financial sources for the programme are children's parents, the government's role is very minimal, being limited to some technical assistance. Follow up and assessment have not been practiced adequately and systematically. Thus, the success as well as the benefits of the preschool education cannot certainly be recognized, with regard to the children and the society at all. It has been remarked, then, the root of the problem be that the government and the people in general have not given due attention to the program.

CHAPTER THREE

3. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

3.1. Sampling

The main purpose of this study is to explore the current state of and the learning environment of Ethiopian kindergartens. To this end, five major urban centres were selected based on different geographical parts of the country, as sample towns (Dessie from Northern Ethiopia, Awassa from South, Diro Dawa from East, Jimma from West and Nazareth from Central Ethiopia). Major urban centres were selected for the obvious reason that kindergartens in Ethiopia are available in big towns.

15 kindergartens, three from each of the five towns, were selected by using stratified random sampling. The selection of the kindergartens from each town was made after obtaining the necessary statistical information concerning kindergartens from the Zones School Offices.

To select the sample kindergartens in each town, the list of the available kindergartens was prepared and stratified by sponsorship (government, nongovernment and public or 'Kebele'), and one kindergarten from each strata was selected using random sampling technique.

56 teachers teaching in the sampled kindergartens were also taken as another data source. Besides, head of the kindergarten teachers training institute, heads of kindergarten education department in Ministry of Education as well as schools' offices of the five towns were also used as subjects of the study for additional information.

Of the 56 teachers 52 were female. The teaching experience for teachers ranged from 3 years to 16 years with a mean of 9.5 years. 45 teachers were trained for kindergarten education, while the rest 11 teachers

were not trained for kindergarten education, Their age ranged from 20 to 42 years with a mean of 31 years.

3.2. Instruments

A multiple system of data collection was employed: observation, questionnaire, and interview.

3.2.1. Observation scales

Observation was the main instrument used to explore the learning environment of the sample kindergartens. To this effect, observation scales designed by Fowler (1980) were adopted with slight modification (See appendix E&F) The scales consist of two forms : Form 1- used to assess physical environment and form 2- toys and equipment.

Form 1-a scale which uses to assess physical environment has two major categories: i.e., indoor and outdoor space distribution of child areas in square feet per child as well as per adult. Indoor space has three subcategorizes; namely, distribution of child areas in square feet per child, bathroom facilities, and staff facilities. Each of these subcategories embraces a number of dimensions to be assessed - distribution of child areas has seven; bathroom facilities have two; and staff facilities too have two. Outdoor space has one subordinate category that involves four dimensions. The categories, subcategories, and the dimensions of each subcategory are demonstrated well in appendix E.

Form 2 - an observation scale which employs to assess toys and equipment involves three main categories; i.e., indoor, outdoor, and arrangement. Indoor has four subordinate categories - (problem solving and creative construction materials, information and literary materials, props

for sociodrama, and musical toys and equipment) with a total of fourteen dimensions. Outdoor embraces two subcatgories; namely, hard surface play area equipment and soft surface play area equipment which have a total of four dimensions - two in each. Finally, arrangement of materials and equipment involves four dimensions. The details of the dimensions of each category are presented in appendix F.

Each of these subordinate categories in the scales embraces a number of dimensions defined interms of seven-point scales, ranging from a low value of one to a high level of seven. Every dimension has three basic levels, the extremes of low and high, or one and seven on the scales, and the center level of the scale midpoint of four. The lowest level, one represents poor, well below minimum standards for the dimension in question, point four represents moderate performance or adequate quality, while the top level, seven represents very high quality. Values from three to five inclusive would be a normally expected operating range. A value of two would represent a clear deficit for a specific dimension, though not as grossly deficient as the lowest value of one. From six to seven, would be definitely above average.

The observation scale form 1 has a total of fifteen items while form 2 has twenty-two items defined interms of seven-point scales as mentioned above.

The rationale for such item descripancy, that is, form 1 - physical environment has fifteen items while form 2 involved twenty-two items, is that form 1 intends to assess mainly the distribution of child areas in indoor and outdoor spaces plus bathroom facilities and staff facilities only. Whereas, form 2 - toys and equipment - deals with the availability, number of types, number of unit per child, quality, and arrangement of indoor as well as outdoor toys, materials, and equipment in kindergarten.

3.2.2. Questionnaire for Teachers in the Kindergartens

A questionnaire which has two major parts containing a total of sixteen questions were prepared to collect relevant data concerning the training of kindergarten teachers, their experience, etc. Part one covered some necessary personal particulars like age, sex, educational status, years of service as teacher in the kindergarten of the respondents.

Part two contained eleven questions - open-ended and close-ended related to the pre-service and in-service training of teachers ingeneral and the courses offered during pre-service training in particular. Questions 5,8, and 11, which were open-ended, were employed to collect additional information regarding as to why the respondents consider the training-term inadequate and suggestions for improving the existing teachers training program.

3.2.3. Interview for the Head of the Kindergarten Teachers' Training Institute.

This instrument was developed to obtain additional information concerning the teaching method mostly employed during the training; the time allotted for practice teaching and its adequacy; adequacy of the training period; efficiency of the institute; and major problems of the institute.

3.2.4. Interview for the Heads of Kindergarten, Special, and Primary Education in the Ministry of Education and the Sample Towns Education Offices

This instrument was prepared to gather supplimentary information related to the training of kindergarten teachers, equipment and materials in the kindergarten, planning the selection of sites and building of kindergartens.

3.3. Try-Out

The try-out of instruments was carried out in Arba-Minch town from Demcember 5 to 15, 1995. The main purpose of the try-out was to pilot the observation scales, the interview schedules, and the questionnaire as instruments. Three kindergartens in the town were taken for the try out. Seven kindergarten teachers and two officials of kindergarten education department were included in the try-out.

From the observation scales form 2 four items were deleted, and two items were added. One item was included in form 1, only slight changes in wording some of the items were necessary for form 1. The four items were deleted since they appear luxurious as far as the objective reality of the country is concerned.

From kindergarten teacher's questionnaire one item was cancelled out and two were reformulated too. Besides, two items were added. The interview schedules were also revised and only a few number of small modifications were made. These all corrections were made based on the feedback obtained from the tryout inorder to refine the items to serve their purposes.

Following the try out and the amendments made, attempt was also made to get feedback from the reasearch advisor and colleagues to address face validity (that the instruments look good) and content validity (that the instruments involve relevant content geared to problem of concern). In this regard the instruments were commented several times before they were finally used.

As regards reliability, the try-out confirmed that the reliability of ratings between observers were high r=.87 which is almost similar with that reported by Ontario Institute for studies in Education r=.91. This high level

of reliability of ratings between observers show that the observation scales are dependable instruments which could be readily used to evaluate a kindergarten.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

The data collection was carried out in the five sample towns by the researcher and his assistants. The assistants were well oriented on the objectives of the study and the instruments employed. All the necessary data were collected in five rounds. During the first round the researcher collected data from Jimma(January 26 - February 14). In the second round (February 18 - March 6) data were collected from Awassa; during the third round (March 9 - March 27) from Dire-Dawa; in the fourth round (March 30-April 18) from Dessie; and finally from Nazareth (April 25-May 13).

Letters were written to the sample towns schools' offices so that the concerned personnels would cooperate in the process of the study. Producng the letter whenever necessary, the researcher held interview with the heads of Kindergarten Education Department. After collecting the necessary information and the list of kindergartens in the towns sample selections were undertaken.

Then the directors and the teachers in the sample kindergartens were informed about the objectives of the study and were requested to participate actively to provide data. The researcher together with his assistants distributed the questionnaire for the teachers.

After having completed and collected the questionnaire, observations of the learning environments in the kindergartens were carried out using the observation scales - form 1 & form 2.

The observation scale form 1 for assessing the physical environment of the kindergarten contained fifteen items defined in terms of seven-point scales, ranging from a low value of one to a high value of seven. During the observation, the researcher rated each item from 1 to 7. Each item had a highest possible score of 7 points. So the total possible score of a kindergarten regarding physical environment would be 7x the dimensions of each subcategory. For instance, since distribution of child areas (indoor) has 7 dimensions, the total possible score regarding this category would be 7x7 = 49.

The observation scale form 2 for assessing toys and equipment in a kindergarten included twenty-two items defined and rated in the same fashion as form 1. The total possible score of a kindergarten regarding toys and equipment would be 7x the category in question. For example, since problem solving material has 5 dimensions, the total possible score of this category would be 5x7 = 35.

Finally, in the Ministry of Education and the Kindergarten Teachers Training Institute, having informed the purpose of the study for the concerned party the researcher requested them to be interviewed.

Since the researcher gave complete description of the objectives of the study for those who are concerned at all levels before conducting the interview, the observation, and administering the questionnaire he got special cooperation and succeeded in obtaining the necessary data. All the questionnaires from teachers were filled in and returned.

3.5. Data Analysis

Since three types of instruments (questionnaire, observation scales, and interview) were used in this study, the analysis of data was treated

separately. The following method was used for the analysis of the data gathered.

The total scores of each subordinate categories obtained through each observation scale was divided to the total possible scores of the category in questions to get the mean score and tabulated accordingly.

Example:

The category "distribution of child areas (indoor)" has seven dimensions. Since each dimension is rated in terms of seven point scales, the total possible score of this category would be 7x7=49. thus, the sum of the scores obtained in this category would be divided by 49 to get the mean score of the observed kindergartens as regards distribution of child areas.

Kindergarten (1) in Awassa for instance scores 8 out of 49. Then, the mean score of this happened to be 8 divided by 49 = .16. Analysis was made based on the term of reference forwarded by Fowler (1980) which is indicated hereunder:

0.14 -- 0.36 = Low

0.37 -- 0.79 = Adequate

0.80 -- 1.00 = Excellent

Secondly, the kindergarten teacher respondent's returns of completed questionnaires were tabulated and a frequency count was taken for each questions. Then, the percentage for each and every close-ended questions was calculated and analysis was made using percentage. Finally, qualitative data obtained through interview and open-ended questions were presented summarizing the words of the respondents followed by discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. *PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION*

This chapter examines the presentation and discussion of the findings obtained through three kinds of instruments; i.e., questionnaires, observation scales, and interviews. The first part of the chapter deals with the observation scales prepared for assessing the learning environment of kindergartens; and the second and third part deals with the questionnaires and interviews.

4.1 Data Obtained Through Observation Scales

Table 1

Distribution of Child Areas in Square Feet Per Child (Indoor)

Towns	Mean scores of Kindergartens			Ave. Mean
	1*	2*	3*	
Awassa	.16	.20	.55	.30
Nazareth	.39	.45	.53	.46
Dire-Dawa	.22	.24	.49	.32
Jimma	.41	.47	.55	.48
Dessie	.22	.31	.43	.32

1* & 2* - are Kindergartens sponsored by public.

3* - Kindergartens sponsored by NGOs.

As table 1 above indicates the results of distribution of child areas in square feet per child ranged from very low(mean score of .16) to adequate (mean score of .55). Among the fifteen kindergartens observed two from Awassa have been found to be very poor in their indoor space distribution of child areas with the mean score of .16 and .20 respectively. Similar results have also been obtained in Dire-Dawa and Dessie. Two of the three kindergartens observed in each town have been found to be inadequate in

their distribution of child areas as regards indoor space-the results being .22 and .24 in kindergartens of Dire-Dawa, and .22 and .31 in kindergartens of Dessie. One kindergarten in each town (Awassa, Dire-Dawa, and Dessie) has adequate distribution of child areas with the mean scores of .55, .49, and .43 respectively.

On the other hand, all the six kindergartens observed in Nazareth and Jimma have got adequate child areas, the scores being .39, .45, and .53 for the three kindergartens of Nazareth, and .41, .47, and .55 for the three kindergartens of Jimma respectively.

In general, it is apparent from the data that distribution of child areas with regard to indoor space is below standard in the kindergartens of Awassa, Dire-Dawa, and Dessie with the average mean scores of .30, .32, and .32 respectively. However, kindergartens in Jimma and Nazareth have proper distribution of child areas regarding indoor space with the average mean scores of .48, and .46 respectively.

It appears evident that minimal required standards for the amount and kind of space in early childhood physical environments grow out of the belief that the physical environment influences behaviour. The belief later on has been proved to be true by several research findings and the minimum number of square feet of space to be provided per child indoor as well as outdoor has been specified. Accordingly, it has been suggested that there need to be at least thirty-five square feet of indoor space per child at an average of those required for several kinds of indoor activities. But from the results of the observation on the distribution of child areas in indoor, it is possible to say that most of the kindergartens are unable to provide the children with desirable indoor spaces.

This lack of space, therefore, seem to influence children's actions, language, the making of choices, relationships with others, and the like negatively. Because, children who are physically, intellectually, socially,

and emotionally active require adequate space in order to have the opportunity they need for their full development. Otherwise, in such overcrowded conditions it would be difficult for the children to acquire wholesome experience.

There are several research findings which have proved the impact that space has. For example, Cannon has pointed out that when there is a lack of space and too many children within any one space, fewer pro-social behaviors and more aggressive acts occur(Cannon, 1996 cited in Seefeldt, 1980: 106-108). Ramsey & Reid (1988) too have indicated that spatial or crowding affects children negatively, especially when space ratios are below twenty-five square feet per child(Ramsey & Reid, 1988 cited in Cruikshank, 1992: 380).

In an earlier investigations of the effect of crowding, it has been reported that the level of social interaction, including aggressive acts, increases as space decreases (Hutt & Vaizey, 1966; Smith, 1974; and Smith & Connolly, 1972 cited in Phyfe-Perkins, 1980: 93).

Table 2

Bathroom Facilities

Towns	Mean scores of Kindergartens			Ave. Mean
	1*	2*	3*	
Awassa	.14	.14	.43	.24
Nazareth	.43	.29	.29	.34
Dire-Dawa	.14	.14	.43	.24
Jimma	.50	.21	.57	.43
Dessie	.14	.14	.29	.19

As can be seen from the table, bathroom facilities in most studied kindergartens are extremely minimal. Six kindergartens, two from Awassa,

two from Dire-Dawa, and two from Dessie, have the least mean scores; i.e., .14 each. Two kindergartens in Nazareth, too, are inadequate in bathroom facilities which have the mean score of .29 each.

However, of the three kindergartens observed in Jimma, two of them have adequate bathroom facilities which scored .50 and .57 respectively. Besides, three kindergartens in Awassa, Nazareth, and Jimma(one from each) have been found to be adequate in bathroom facilities.

The average mean scores indicate that it is only Jimma which has kindergartens that have proper bathroom facilities with average mean score of .43. Whereas, kindergartens in Awassa, Nazareth, Dire-Dawa, and Dessie are of low bathroom facilities having the average mean scores of .24, .34, .24, and .19 respectively.

The suggested provisions concerning bathroom facilities; i.e., toilets and washbasins need to be child-sized and the ratio has to be a minimum of 1:7 to 1:5(Decker and Decker, 1988: 262). However, findings clearly show that bathroom facilities are sadly ignored in the studied kindergartens. Besides, the sanitary condition in most of the kindergartens is alarming.

Similar results have been reported by Dereje (1994) in the study conducted in Addis Ababa pre-schools who commented that "children's toilets are not only inadequate but their sanitary condition is also very low" (Dereje, 1994: 112).

Therefore, based on the findings, it appears reasonable to assume that the current state of bathroom facilities in most of the observed kindergartens would affect the health of the children in the program mainly because children are highly vulnerable due to close physical contacts among their peers as well as they lack understanding on how to protect themselves from infectious diseases.

Table 3

Staff Facilities

Towns	Mean scores of Kindergartens			Ave. Mean
	1*	2*	3*	
Awassa	.57	.57	.93	.69
Nazareth	.53	.93	1.00	.83
Dire-Dawa	.14	.57	.93	.55
Jimma	.57	.64	.93	.71
Dessie	.57	.57	.93	.69

As regards staff facilities findings indicate that all the kindergartens under investigation but one have been found in an interesting condition. It is only one kindergarten in Dire-Dawa that has got a mean score of .14 which is low. Otherwise, the rest fourteen kindergartens have scored high points ranged from the mean score of .53(which is regarded as adequate) to 1.00 (which is excellent).

Similarly, as can be seen from the table, in the five towns studied staff facilities of the kindergartens are of quite stimulating with the average mean scores that ranged from .55 (adequate) to .83(excellent).

It has to be noted here, however, that the figure happened to be very high for the very reason that the number of teachers in a kindergarten is few so that staff facilities such as the distribution of space in lounge and office as well as the chair-teacher ratio would be logically elevated. Anyway, staff facilities in the studied kindergartens are encouraging since they meet the requirements of the teachers.

Table 4

Distribution of Child Areas in Square Feet Per Child (Outdoor)

Towns	Mean scores of Kindergartens			Ave. Mean
	1*	2*	3*	
Awassa	.29	.46	.68	.48
Nazareth	.50	.61	.71	.61
Dire-Dawa	.32	.50	.68	.50
Jimma	.64	.50	.68	.61
Dessie	.50	.61	.75	.62

In the same vein, good results have been documented in the light of outdoor space distribution of child areas. Only two kindergartens(one from Awassa and the other from Dire-Dawa) have been found to be below standard, the mean scores being .29 and .32 respectively. Nevertheless, the remaining thirteen kindergartens have been found to be adequate and to the required standard with the results ranging from the mean scores of .46 to .75.

On the whole, as can be seen from the table, the average mean scores that ranged from .48 (of Awassa) to .62 (of Dessie) show that kindergartens mostly do not have problems as regards outdoor space.

Based on the results of the observation, it would be possible to realize that in most of the kindergartens involved in the study distribution of child areas in outdoor space could be well-balanced and in a good condition. Hence, it seems likely that children have opportunities to engage in all forms of play-exercise, dramatic and constructive play, and various games in line with their interest.

Table 5

Problem Solving and Creative Construction Materials (Indoor)

Towns	Mean scores of Kindergartens			Ave. Mean
	1*	2*	3*	
Awassa	.17	.29	.60	.35
Nazareth	.34	.40	.49	.41
Dire-Dawa	.31	.31	.46	.36
Jimma	.43	.34	.63	.47
Dessie	.14	.37	.46	.32

Regarding the availability and quality of problem solving and creative construction materials almost half of the fifteen sample kindergartens (two from Awassa, one from Nazareth, two from Dire-Dawa, one from each Jimma and Dessie) have been found to be poor with the mean scores which ranged from .14 to .34 that are labeled as low.

Quite differently, the other eight kindergartens have been in a good working conditions their scores being in between .37 and .60. However, as can be seen from the table it is only Nazareth and Jimma which have kindergartens that are equipped adequately with problem solving and creative construction materials with the average mean scores of .41 and .47 respectively.

It has to be commented at this point that the state of problem solving and creative construction materials has to be reconsidered in the kindergartens in general, and in those seven kindergartens where these materials are lacking in particular. This is because the materials under consideration are usually the most valuable and need to be available.

Researches proved that problem solving and creative construction materials play significant roles in that they-enable children to use their

imaginations in original and satisfying ways; offer children freedom for creating, manipulating, and experimenting; encourage children to work cooperatively; build self-esteem since they would be failure-proof; and offer endless possibilities and support coordination and inventive thinking(Hendric, 1988; Kamii & De Vries, 1980; Sutton-Smith, 1986; cited in Isenberg & Jalongo, 1993: 216; Isenberg & Quisenberry, 1988: 138-145; Tegano, Sawyers, & Moran, 1988: 92-97).

This being the case, the children in those deficient kindergartens would undoubtedly be unfortunate to obtain these mentioned opportunities. In other words children's most important developmental needs could be thwarted by the lack or unavailability of problem solving and creative construction materials.

Table 6

Information and Literary Materials

Towns	Mean scores of Kindergartens			Ave. Mean
	1*	2*	3*	
Awassa	.14	.21	.25	.20
Nazareth	.21	.21	.25	.22
Dire-Dawa	.21	.21	.25	.22
Jimma	.25	.21	.36	.27
Dessie	.14	.25	.25	.21

As can be seen from the table, quite startling findings have been documented as regards the availability and the quality of information and literary materials. In all the fifteen kindergartens it has been observed that information and literary materials are meager and in poor conditions, the mean scores ranged from .14 to .36. Besides, the average mean scores, too confirmed this state, ranging from .20 of Awassa to .27 of Jimma.

In an attempt made to disclose the very cause for the shortage and absence of information and literary materials in the kindergartens, the researcher finds out that there is a commonly held opinions among the staff which consider children to be unable to read at this stage and regard information and literary materials to be unnecessary prior to first grade.

It is worth noting at this point that since information and literary materials are of immense value to children's physical and motor, affective, social, and cognitive development the current observed deplorable state has to be changed.

There are ample research evidences that underscore the importance of information and literary materials. Children who have had regular exposure to children's literature have been found to use more complex linguistic structures (Chomsky, 1972) and to develop reading abilities earlier and more successfully than children who lack such exposure (Cohen, 1968; Durkin, 1966; Plessas & Oakes, 1964 cited in Dopyera & Dopyera, 1990: 354).

McCarthy too emphasized that reading to children helps them become more ready to read themselves. He further argued that children see the obvious value of being able to read, develop the ability to sit, to listen, and to follow a story line if there is ample exposure(McCarthy, 1980:256).

Furthermore, the contributions that information and literary materials can make to children's all round development have been elaborated by Dopyera & Dopyera (1990). They say children often naturally imitate the movement and activities they hear in stories and thereby facilitate their motor development. Literary materials can also contribute to children's emotional development since they provide children with beauty through words, images, and ideas as well as vicarious experience which results from identifying with the major characters. Along this, information and literary materials can also play a crucial role in helping children

appreciate and understand their own feelings in social relationship and consider alternative responses to social situations and thereby contribute for social development (Dopyera & Dopyera, 1990: 358-366).

The aforementioned researchers thus seem to reflect the need for provisions of information and literary materials in quality and quantity so as to foster children's developmental needs effectively.

Table 7

Props for Sociodrama

Towns	Mean scores of Kindergartens			Ave. Mean
	1*	2*	3*	
Awassa	.14	.24	.52	.30
Nazareth	.29	.43	.52	.41
Dire-Dawa	.14	.29	.62	.35
Jimma	.33	.29	.48	.37
Dessie	.14	.33	.52	.33

Table 7 shows that out of the fifteen sample kindergartens, only six have adequate props for sociodrama with the mean scores ranging from .43 to .62. In the remaining nine kindergartens props for sociodrama are scant, the mean scores being between .14 and .33.

Generally, findings indicate that it is only Nazareth (average mean score of .41) and Jimma (average mean score of .37) that have been found to have kindergartens which are adequate as regards props for sociodrama. Here it has to be noted that Jimma appears to be adequate on the average due to the fact that the mean scores of the two kindergartens approach to the desired level and the mean score of one of the kindergartens being a bit high. So, the figure is misleading because out of the three kindergartens

studied in Jimma two are below standard as regards the availability and quality of props for sociodrama.

It is apparent from the data that Sociodramatic play is neglected in most of the kindergartens included in the study. This in turn implies that children are denied of the benefits they could obtain from this play.

The benefits of sociodramatic play for kindergarten are many and varied. Educators and researchers recognize that sociodramatic play is relevant for children's motor, emotional, social, language and cognitive development.

In fact children's physical endurance is more likely to be encouraged through participation in dramatic activity than by any other means. Because in normal plays they are not likely to sustain their activities for as long as they will when playing a role. It is also possible to find ways of promoting eye-hand coordination and use of unfamiliar small-muscle skills in the dramatic play activities.

In sociodramatic play children are free to deal with their particular concerns and to pursue their interest and then develop emotionally. Besides, children often have more opportunities to work cooperatively with a greater variety of children than they do in the home and neighborhood and hence contribute to social development.

Finally, it is also possible to observe that while children are engaged in dramatic play, they often attempt to better integrate new and puzzling encounters and situations into their understanding. Dramatic play puts great demands on children's language abilities, and at the same time motivates them to become more precise in their use of language and thereby contribute to cognitive and language development.

It is based on these unique contributions of sociodramatic play that educators and researchers acknowledge it as the cornerstone of early childhood education program(Paley, 1981; Smilansky, 1968 cited in Hoorn, 1992:354).

So, inorder to help children have these opportunity provision of ample props in the kindergartens ought to be encouraged. To foster and extend children's play there need to be adequate props.

Since sociodrama is considered as cornerstone of preschool program by a number of researchers it would be useful to quote them to highlight the value attached to it.

Sociodramatic play helps children construct their own understandings of how the world works; act out social situations requiring negotiation with players with different needs and views (Donoghue, 1990 cited in Isenberg & Jalongo, 1993:146); express their inner feelings (Mayesky, 1990 in Isenberg & Jalongo, 1993:146): communicate in meaningful ways and develop social skills by negotiating roles, locating props, and agreeing on a common theme(Tompkins & Hoskisson, 1991:210); and develop the confidence to explore freely and imaginatively the more structured forms of drama (Shaftei & Shaftei, 1983:123).

Moreover, drama expert McCaslin(1990) claims that all children gain important values from creative drama activity, regardless of age, circumstance, or previous experience. Nevertheless, few teachers utilize its potential.

In the same vein, it would be logical to assume, based on the findings which show the poor conditions of props in the kindergartens, that the potential of sociodramatic play could not be realized in our cases too.

Table 8

Musical Toys and Equipment

Towns	Mean scores of Kindergartens			Ave. Mean
	1*	2*	3*	
Awassa	.21	.29	.50	.33
Nazareth	.29	.36	.50	.38
Dire-Dawa	.29	.29	.57	.38
Jimma	.36	.29	.50	.38
Dessie	.14	.36	.43	.31

As can be seen from the table the situation as regards the availability of musical toys and equipment is deplorable. Out of the fifteen kindergartens studied, in the ten(two kindergartens in each town) musical toys and equipment have been found to be too little-below standard with the mean scores stretched from .14 to .36. In the rest five kindergartens (one from each town), however, there are sufficient musical toys and equipments, the mean scores being between .43 and .57.

The situation of children in those kindergartens which lack musical toys and equipment would undoubtedly be unpleasant. The prime benefit of music is enjoyment. However, children in these kindergartens are unfortunate to have access to various musical toys and equipment.

Besides, many educators assert that music contributes to the child's total development: psychomotor, perceptual, affective, cognitive, social, cultural, and aesthetic(Gardner, 1973; Greenberg, 1979 cited in Isenberg & Jalongo, 1993: 105; Leeper, Dales, Skipper, & Witherspoon, 1974:29; Zimmerman, 1984:87).

Thus, in order a music program achieve its objectives children need to learn to listen appreciatively, sing tunefully, move expressively and

rhythmically play classroom instruments, and value music as part of everyday life. These could be achieved mainly through the adequacy and provision of necessary musical instruments and experiences.

To ameliorate the situation in which the kindergartens are found in the light of the availability of musical toys and equipment as well as to foster the various aspects of children's development effort has to be made to equip the kindergartens with the most important musical toys and equipment. It has to be noted here that, even if resources are limited, it is possible to prepare various kinds of cultural musical instruments from locally and easily available materials such as "kirar", "masinko", drum, wood blocks, flute, tamburine, rhythm sticks, bell, maracas, etc..

Table 9

Hard Surface Play Area Equipment

Towns	Mean scores of Kindergartens			Ave. Mean
	1*	2*	3*	
Awassa	.14	.29	.43	.29
Nazareth	.36	.21	.29	.29
Dire-Dawa	.21	.36	.57	.38
Jimma	.21	.21	.29	.24
Dessie	.14	.36	.21	.24

Quite shocking results have been recorded with regard to the availability as well as adequacy of hard surface play area equipment. It is only two of the fifteen kindergartens involved in the study that have adequate hard surface play area equipment - one from Awassa with the mean score of .43, and the other one from Dire-Dawa with the mean score of .57. The remaining thirteen kindergartens fall short of the equipment under discussion- the mean scores ranged from .14 to .36 which are low.

The major reason for the scarcity of hard surface play area equipment (wheel toys-riding, pushing, and carrying) is the financial problem of the kindergartens. Most of the kindergartens do not have financial resources that could buy equipment of such kind. However, it has to be worth noting that these kindergartens would have been equipped with cheap hard surface play area equipment such as building blocks, boards, manipulatable boxes, sandbox, outdoor table(s), shelves, and easels.

Table 10

Soft Surface Play Area Equipment

Towns	Mean scores of Kindergartens			Ave. Mean
	1*	2*	3*	
Awassa	.21	.29	.43	.31
Nazareth	.36	.36	.43	.38
Dire-Dawa	.21	.36	.57	.38
Jimma	.43	.29	.57	.43
Dessie	.14	.36	.36	.29

It is apparent from the table that soft surface play area equipment are also scant in most of the kindergartens under consideration. Ten kindergartens (all the three from Dessie, two from Awassa, two from Nazareth, two from Dire-Dawa, and one from Jimma) have been found to be below par concerning the availability and adequacy of soft surface play area equipment. Whereas, the remaining five kindergartens are up to the mark, their results being in between .43 and .57.

Here it has to be noted that soft surface play area equipment such as swings, slides, ladders, merry-go round are commonly available in almost all the kindergartens included in the study. However, since they have only one from each kind of equipment the number of children that could be served at a time is very few.

Dereje (1994:119) also reported the same cases where children are found in a very deplorable conditions that they are unfortunate to meet their physical needs because of these outdoor equipment inadequacy in Addis Ababa.

His findings revealed that almost all kindergartens studied have the outdoor equipments such as swings, climbing frames or ladders, slides, see-saws, merry-go-rounds and tyres. Nevertheless, their number cannot match with the children who have to be served in each kindergarten.

The foremost consideration in equipping an outdoor playground is providing for a variety of movement possibilities in order to foster creative play. But, due to lack of such outdoor equipment in the case of the kindergartens explored it would be unlikely to achieve the desired goal.

In this regard Tirussew(1979) as cited in Dereje(1994:120) has commented that inadequacy of these outdoor equipment causes a grave problem to the extent that a child is forced to stop before completing the activity he has already began. And this problem is assumed to be the major source of strong displeasure in most kindergartens. Besides, because of the lack of these equipment management problem appears to be true; i.e., who has to play first and how long.

Consequently, this lack of outdoor equipment in the observed centers would negatively influence the motor development of the children. Because, children's physical and motor development could be promoted through the opportunities for practice and exercises that are provided. Yet the inadequacy of the equipment has confined the provision.

An investigation made by Johnson on the effect of the amount of play materials on children's behavior has confirmed that in a situation where the total amount of equipment is meager, the frequency of stress behaviours such as thumb sucking would be higher(Johnson, 1935 cited in Phyfe-

Perkins, 1980:109). Similarly, Smith & Connolly have ascertained that lack of equipment led to aggression, a result which was similar to Johnson's (1935) findings(Smith & Connolly, 1976 cited in Phyfe-Perkins, 1980:109).

At the same time, it has been asserted that in the more extensively equipped condition children played more with materials, had more bodily exercise, and less undesirable behavior such as teasing, crying, quarreling, hitting, etc.

Table 11

Arrangement of Materials and Equipment

Towns	Mean scores of Kindergartens			Ave. Mean
	1*	2*	3*	
Awassa	.29	.46	.75	.50
Nazareth	.46	.54	.64	.55
Dire-Dawa	.36	.46	.79	.54
Jimma	.57	.50	.71	.59
Dessie	.43	.54	.75	.57

A rather interesting findings have been documented as regards the arrangement of materials and equipment. As can be seen from the above table all the observed kindergartens but two have been in a satisfactory conditions arrangement wise-the mean scores ranging from .43 to .75.

The two kindergartens which have been found to be poor in arrangement of materials and equipment are from Awassa and Dire-Dawa their mean scores being .29 and .36 respectively.

It is apparent from the data that the materials and equipment in the kindergartens have proper arrangement since the average mean scores of all the cases studied fall between .50 and .59.

Generally, inspite of all the problems of adequacy of equipment and materials observed so far, almost all the kindergartens have been found to be adequate concerning arrangement. In these centers the available toys and equipment are arranged in such a way that they foster various forms of play and concept development; i.e., they are arranged by types of activity and concepts.

Secondly, it is also observed that these materials are arranged sequentially; i.e., size, color, number, etc. are considered. Moreover, in almost all the kindergarten these materials and equipment are placed on low shelves and happened to be visually and physically accessible to children.

On the other hand, however, findings pointed out that in most of the instances arrangement of materials hardly varies. This is the weak point to be commented concerning arrangement. As far as possible arrangement of materials need to be varied for several reasons: for purposes of novelty, to sustain interest and foster cognitive variability.

Though there is little research available to substantiate the effect of arrangement of equipment and materials, the way in which materials are displayed has been considered an important factor in the behavior of preschool children (Brophy, Good, & Nedler, 1975; Dodge, 1978; Kritchevsky & Prescott, 1969; Montes & Risley, 1975 cited in Phyfe-Perkins, 1980:109-110). For instance, Dodge emphasizes that messy and crowded displays of materials do not encourage constructive use or care of materials. She recommends simplicity, labeling of shelves, sparseness of display, and the organization of materials to teach concepts such as number, sequence, classification or color.

4.2. Bio-Data of the Respondents and Data Obtained Through Questionnaires

In an attempt to know the sex of kindergarten teachers involved in the study, an item was devoted to it in which fifty two (93-percent) of the kindergarten teachers have been found to be females, while four (7 percent) is male. This finding would not be surprising since similar results have been reported at an international level. For instance, a survey made by UNESCO revealed that in 999 cases out of a thousand, pre-school teachers were female(UNESCO, 1976: 47). Besides, the information obtained from the Kindergarten Teachers' Training Institute in Addis Ababa confirmed the fact that only few male have joined early childhood education in Ethiopia-among the 2792 regular trainees who have been trained since 1979 till the end of 1996, 2735 (98 percent) were female. Whereas, it was only 57 (2 percent) who were male.

It has to be noted here that the trend of making-preschool education the province of female alone has been changed currently. According to Decker and Decker men are recruited for preschool staff positions to meliorate some impacts of the absence of the father in the home for both boys and girls and to prevent children from perceiving the kindergarten as a feminine environment (Decker and Decker, 1988:205-206). It has been reported that large body of empirical evidence supported the trends appeared these days which encourage men to take positions in preschool education for the balance they would provide (Leeper, et al, 1984; Bredekamp, 1986 cited in Decker and Decker, 1988: 205-206).

So, it has to be underscored that viewing preschool education as the realm of female alone is undesirable, and an attempt has to be made to change the attitude in the case of Ethiopia and follow this bent-encourage men to enter this field. Because, it appears very important that kindergartens are to be more or less home like, and this will be resulted in the presence of men, thus, in the preschool institutions.

Table 12

Age of Teacher Respondents

Age	Frequency	%
17-21	3	5
22-26	15	27
27-31	19	34
32-36	14	25
37 & above	5	9
Total	56	100

As regards the age of kindergarten teachers involved in the study, it has been found that the majority of the teachers (34 percent) were in the range of twenty-seven to thirty-one. Very few teachers have been found in the youth age range; i.e., seventeen to twenty-one, which contained only 5 percent. Similarly, small portions of the teachers (9 percent) have been found to be thirty-seven years old and above. In general, as can be seen from table 2, all the teacher respondents are above 17 years old, and almost all the teachers are in an active working age which is beneficial to preschool children.

It appears evident that children are highly interested in active adults who could identify themselves with their physical needs in order to adjust and interact with the kindergarten environment easily. Besides, it is also evident that children would be quite free to express their emotions-needs, fears, problems, feelings, etc. when they are with active adults who could understand them, who could give them frequent spontaneous expressions of warmth, and enthusiasm.

Table 13

Teacher Respondents' Educational Status

Educational Status	Respondents	
	Frequency	%
12+3 months training	37	66
12+1 year training	8	14
12+2	7	13
12+4	4	7

Regarding the educational status of teacher respondents, it has been found that most teachers (66 percent) are at 12 grade level with three months of kindergarten teachers training program; 14 percent of them being 12+1; 13 percent are diploma holders; and 7 percent are degree awarded. Findings indicated that a significantly larger number of teachers have been found in the 12+3 months level.

This finding is really alarming that it would be unlikely for the teachers; i.e., the prospective teachers of children, to gain the necessary knowledge and skill with in such short period of time.

It appears evident that lengthy period of training is essential so as to develop proper level of knowledge and skill. This being the case, the situation of kindergarten teachers training in Ethiopia, which is three months, is very minimal.

Similar results have been reported concerning the training periods of kindergarten teachers by Tirussew (1979), Bizunesh (1983), Abebe (1985), and Dereje (1994). Besides, they argued that the three-months training period in operation could not be adequate to provide teachers with fundamental knowledge and skill.

Indeed, it would be reasonable to argue that the duration of the training is insufficient visavis the roles and responsibilities of the kindergarten teachers in meeting the basic needs of children. In a kindergarten, the teacher arranges the conditions by which the basic needs of children are met. It is the teacher who is responsible to help children meet their physical, intellectual, social, and emotional needs. Thus, to perform his tasks effectively, the kindergarten teacher has to know the possibilities and the limitations of various materials and equipment, as well as the best way of ordering and caring for them. Moreover, the teacher has to know the methods that have proved most effective in teaching young children. Above all, the teacher needs to recognize the fact that variety in method is very important, and has to apply in a practical situation.

The aforementioned facts show that becoming a teacher of children is not a simple task; instead, it is hard. The complexities of the position calls for the need of providing prospective teachers with an in-depth program in early childhood education.

Table 14

Teacher Respondents' Professional Experience

Professional Experience	**Respondents**	
	Frequency	%
Below 5 years	6	11
5-10 years	34	61
11-16 years	11	19
17 & above	5	9

As regards the professional experience of the teacher respondents, most teachers (61 percent) have served from 5 to 10 years in kindergartens. On the other hand, only few teachers (11 percent) have been found to serve below 5 years. The rest lies between 11-16 years service (19 percent) and on

17 years service and above (9 percent) respectively. Hence, significantly high proportion of the respondents are of the group who served 5 to 10 years.

The result concerning the professional experience seems promising in that through time teachers would acquire essential knowledge and develop skill which would make them in a position to be effective and competent in helping children attain the desired objectives.

There is evidence that years of prior teaching experience is related with the cognitive gains of children. For example, Seefeldt's research on teacher effectiveness pointed out that cognitive gains of children were significantly and positively associated with years of prior teaching experience and education(Seefeldt, 1973:308-11).

Concerning the teacher respondents training in the light of kindergarten education it is found that. Out of the 56 teachers involved in the study, only eleven (20 percent) are not trained in kindergarten education, while forty five (80 percent) are trained.

It is of interest to note here that one of the most important tasks in teacher education in general, and in kindergarten education in particular, is the training of teachers to arm them with the necessary knowledge and skill so as to be able to manage the varied tasks the profession require. In this regard, the finding appears to be interesting since the majority of the teachers have passed through training in kindergarten education.

Trained teachers are indispensable to a sound program. Especially, in order to develop a kindergarten teacher who is able to guide each child toward his optimum development, training is quite relevant.

Nevertheless, it has to be curiously considered that the remaining 20 percent who have not followed kindergarten teacher-training courses should

not be overlooked. Because, unless teachers are trained they could not understand the developmental sequences and expectancies. And if they could not understand these sequences and expectancies they would not be able to adapt the curriculum to children. Besides, if the teachers themselves do not have well-developed knowledge in the fields of studies, they would be unable to help children develop properly.

Many authorities supported the role that training plays and strongly argued that teachers have to be smart and very well informed to guide young children. Teachers who lack basic knowledge and skill about child development could not provide the child with the desirable physical, intellectual, social, and emotional needs(Piaget, 1971; Hymes, 1974 cited in Seefeldt, 1980: 19; Foster and Headley, 1959: 43; Pitcher, 1966; Hildebrand, 1971: 3-5; UNESCO, 1982:9; Decker and Decker, 1988:206-208).

An item has also been devoted to obtain the teachers opinion as regards the adequacy of the training period. Results indicated that thirty eight (84 percent) of the respondents pronounce that the duration of the training is inadequate. Whereas, seven respondents (16 percent) maintain that the training period is sufficient. The findings confirmed that a significantly greater proportion of respondents are of the opinion that the training period is below par-.

The respondents who claimed that the duration of the training is short gave logical reasons which could be summarized in the following words: it would be difficult to cover the portions of the subjects offered properly; would be impossible to acquire knowledge in-depth and develop necessary skill to organize appropriate learning environment and to generate important learning aids, etc.

There is local evidence that support the teacher respondents reasoning which contends that lack of training weakens seriously the prospective teachers' knowledge and understanding of the various needs of

children, and thereby they would be inefficient to provide children with necessary love, care, and guidance (Abebech and Alemtsehay, 1972).

Table 15

Courses Taken by Respondents

Courses	Respondents	
	Frequency	%
Psychology & Child Development	45	100
Teaching Method	45	100
Theory of Education	13	29
Basic Mathematical Concepts	36	80
Environmental Science	22	49
Health & Hygiene	45	100
Music & Movement	23	51
Art & handicraft	25	56
Curriculum Development	4	9
Childrens Language Development	45	100
Children's Play	45	100
Parent Education	10	22

The respondents were also requested to indicate, by a tick in the space provided, the subjects which they took during their pre-service training. They were given a choice of twelve subjects suggested to be included in the preparation of kindergarten teacher.

Of the 56 respondents, 11 did not answer the question, that is they ticked no space since they were not trained in kindergarten education. The remaining forty-five respondents gave replies. As could be seen from the above table, subjects such as children's play, childrens language development, health and hygiene, teaching method, and psychology and child development have been observed to be taken by all the respondents

(100 percent). In the second place comes the subject-basic mathematical concepts which was taken by thirty-six (80 percent) respondents. Subjects (1) art and handicraft; (2) music and movement; and (3) environmental science have been taken by twenty-five(56 percent), twenty-three (51 percent), and twenty-two (49 percent) of the respondents respectively. Quite incontrast, very few respondents (9 percent) have learned the subject curriculum development. Besides, only thirteen(29 percent) and ten(22 percent) of the respondents took theory of education and parent education respectively.

The emphasis given to psychology and child development (6 periods a week), teaching method, environmental science, language, math (5 periods a week for each course) is quite encouraging and pertinent. Because research studies recommended that in order to deal with the broadening roles of the teacher the training has to include a strong emphasis on child development studies as well as liberal arts(Williams and Fromberg, 1992: 415).

Because young children want and need to know about everything, their teachers have to have a broad knowledge of all of the liberal arts, including art, music, social science, biological and physical sciences, math, and language so as to be able to make this knowledge accessible to young children. Besides, it has to be noted that in-depth understanding of both child growth and development, and learning and content are required in order for the teacher to be capable of using the natural activity and play of children to teach content as an integrated, unified whole. Especially knowledge of child growth and development is hoped to shape the teachers understanding, feelings, and behavior toward children as well as the ways they organize instruction.

Nevertheless, it has to be commented that parent education has not got deserved attention. Since parents have a profound influence on children's growth and development through their continuos interactions

with their children, the subject parent education needs to be given proper attention so that such interactions would be certainly valuable for children to have meaningful experience that could be obtained from an education setting. The logic to be pointed out is that when parent education gets recognition and is emphasized, it would be likely that the prospective teachers gain the necessary knowledge and skill on the subject under consideration which in turn would enable them help children's family be prepared for their role.

Respondents were also requested to respond as to whether or not they have got chance to practice teaching during their training. Results obtained indicated that thirty-two respondents (71 percent) have practiced teaching, while thirteen respondents (29 percent) have not.

Here, it has to be noted that though the result indicates that the majority of the respondents have been given time to practice teaching, it is still discouraging. Because, in such kind of teachers training institutes it appears desirable to provide every trainees with opportunities to practice in practical situations. However, this would not be a reality in the case of preschool teachers training program under investigation.

It is believed that the trainees teaching practice is the most vital part of his professional training for a number of reasons. It is on this occasion that they have their first opportunity to put into application some of the methods and principles as well as psychology they have learned theoretically; it is through this practice that the trainees gain and develop valuable skill for their profession.

With regard to the significance of, and the need for practice teaching Yates has the following to say: "it is generally recognized that an important part of any program of teacher education is the provision of opportunities for the student to undergo practical experience of teaching" (Yates, 1970: 61-62).

Moreover, it has also been confirmed that the time allotted for teaching practice is minimal. Finding shows thirty-six respondents(80 percent) have said that the time allowed for teaching practice is not adequate, while, nine respondents (20 percent) have stated to be adequate.

Besides the provision of opportunities being incomplete, the time allowed for teaching practice has been found to be insufficient. Based on the findings it would be reasonable to assume that in such circumstances the trainees in the kindergarten institutes could not be sufficiently armed with professional skills which they confidently put into practice when they graduate. If prospective teachers cannot be well-armed with the necessary professional skill, the complexities of their career may create lack of confidence and feelings of inadequacy in their minds.

As noted by several educators and researchers in the field theory without ultimate practical application would not be helpful. That is why it has been emphasized teaching practice to be a bridge between academic theory and educational practice. Practice teaching helps the trainees to be more ready to meet the demands of an actual situation if adequately and properly employed.

An item was also devoted to secure information as to whether or not the teacher respondents have been exposed to supplementary trainings through inservice or refresher courses. Results show that, thirty-eight respondents(68 percent) have not obtained inservice training or refresher courses; whereas, eighteen respondents (32 percent) have attended a refresher course or inservice training.

From this finding it would be reasonable to assume that opportunities for inservice staff development are minimal and limited. This situation, therefore, would have a negative impact on the performance of the teachers in the kindergarten and this inturn affects children on the whole.

There are evidences which indicate the importance of further training for the programs to have positive effects on children. As it has been stated, in this rapidly changing world if teachers are to continue to serve the rapidly changing societies effectively, they constantly need further training. This is mainly because "our knowledge of the child's psychology, his biological development, and his environment has advanced so much and educational techniques have developed so quickly." It is further emphasised that " the future of preschool education will be endangered if teachers do not change whilst their environment and the children who live in that environment are perpetually changing." (UNESCO, 1976: 48; Girma cited in Fafunwa and Aisiku, 1982:77)

Therefore, kindergarten teachers generally are required to participate regularly in in-service professional development activities in order to be equipped with up-dated knowledge, new attitudes and novel techniques, and with the skills needed for adopting new roles. In this regard, further investigation was made to see the frequency the teachers attend in-service or refresher courses.

Thus, for the question "...how many times have you participate in such workshops or seminars?" seven(39 percent) of the respondents reported that they have attended only once; five(28 percent) twice; and six (33 percent) have attended three times.

4.3. Information Obtained Through the Interviews

Interviews were also conducted to collect additional information on the pre-service and in-service training of kindergarten teachers, establishment of kindergartens, facilities of kindergartens, and kindergarten teachers' training institute, and problem areas as well as suggestions to alleviate the problems from concerned officials - heads of Kindergarten, Special, and Primary Education in the Ministry of Education

and in the sample towns and head of the Preschool Teachers' Training Institute.

This section of the study is therefore concerned with the outcomes of the interviews and presented as follows:

4.3.1. Concerning the training of teachers

As regards the term of the training, it has been observed that all the interviewees held similar view that the three-months preparation is too short to arm trainees with the necessary knowledge and skill. At the same time they felt that this lack of training would inhibit the teachers to perform their tasks effectively. Consequently, the interviewees generally recommended to prolong the training term to a minimum of 1 year. This finding is in harmony with the data obtained through questionnaire from the kindergarten teacher respondents. A significantly greater proportion(84 percent) of the teacher respondents have contended that the duration of the training is inadequate and need to be elongated to a 1 year course as far as possible.

As far as the in-service training is concerned the interviewees reported that there is attempt to offer teachers an on-job training as well as refresher courses through workshop, seminar, and the like. However, they admitted that the scale is limited; i.e., the frequency being once a year and the in-take capacity of the institute being very low(60-67 trainees). Due to this it would have been very difficult to provide all kindergarten teachers with refresher courses and in-service training.

Based on this information it would be possible to say that the attention given for upgrading or improving the teaching ability and academic qualification of kindergarten teacher is very minimal. Because, with this range it is quite unlikely to provide opportunities for teachers to up-date their knowledge. Therefore, it has to be commented that since

learning aids in almost all subjects and rooms for different purposes of the program.

In general, the interviewees suggested that special attention needs to be paid by the Government to change the whole picture of kindergarten teachers training in Ethiopia-pre-service as well as in-service. Attempt has to be made to lengthen the training term and to organize and conduct workshops, seminars, etc. regularly to expose all kindergarten teachers to the new situations, approaches, and the inevitable changes of every aspects of the field under consideration.

4.3.2 Concerning the Establishment of Kindergartens & their Facilities

In an attempt to know whether there was and still is careful planning while selecting sites and building kindergartens the officials were requested to share the experience. Accordingly, the interviewees on the whole have pointed out that despite the economic problem an attempt has been always made to consider proper rules and regulation while constructing kindergartens. All the weaknesses and other related problems, according to them, of the kindergartens must be ascribed to lack of finance.

Regarding the planning of selecting sites the interviewees have reported that the sites for kindergartens are located on the master plans of the towns before hand. And it is and was based on these master plans that the kindergartens have been situated.

The researcher has also witnessed that the quality of buildings in some of the kindergartens(for example 'kebele' 03 kindergarten in Arba Minch; 'Kebele' 05 and 'Kebele' 06 kindergartens in Jimma; Aliance kindergarten in Dire-Dawa; and "kefitegna" 3 "kebele" 04 kindergarten in

Dessie) is much better than is expected in such financial constraints, and well up to the standard.

All the interviewees have also admitted that toys, equipment, and other necessary facilities are generally unsatisfactory in the kindergartens. This is also attributed to the financial problem that kindergartens sponsored by the public haven't had regular budget allocated by the government or they haven't also had the benefits of aid money.

The interviews sought to establish whether there is any plan or effort which intended to alleviate the lack of facilities in the kindergartens. Sadly enough the interviewees could not mention anything; i.e., nothing has been tried to solve the scarcity of toys and equipment and to improve the provision of other essential facilities. This seem to indicate that the attention given to the kindergartens program is insignificant. Because, there would have been various meanness and ways to be searched and attempted to minimize the problem. For example, it would have been possible to encourage the teachers themselves to produce some of the toys required for the program from cheap and locally available materials. It would have been also possible to ask for help pedagogical centers.

environment is not suitable for proper implementation of the curriculum; basic facilities and equipment are considerably lacking; and the training as well as competencies of the teachers are inadequate. Along with these, the area has not been researched adequately. As a result, obtaining a good deal of scholarly researched materials on preschool educational programs of Ethiopia seems to be unlikely.

The main objective of this study was, therefore, to find out the current state of the learning environment in the Ethiopian kindergartens to obtain a clear picture of the situation of preschool education at the national level. To this end, five major urban centers (Dessie, Awassa, Dire-Dawa, Jimma, and Nazareth) were selected as sample towns of which a total of fifteen kindergartens (three form each town) have been taken for the study. Besides, the teachers (fifty-six in number) teaching in the sampled kindergarten, head of the Kindergarten teachers training institute, and heads of Kindergarten education department in Ministry of Education as well as schools' offices of the five towns have been used as subjects of the study.

A multiple system of data collection was employed: observation, questionnaire, and interview. In light of the nature of the instruments the analysis of data was made separately. Accordingly, percentage has been used for the data obtained through questionnaire; mean scores for the data obtained through observation scales; and finally summary of the words of the interviewees followed by discussion for the data obtained through interview.

In brief, the following findings have been documented:

5.1.1 The Learning Environments in the Kindergartens

5.1.1.1 The Training of Teachers

Significantly higher proportion of the teachers (80 percent) have been trained in kindergarten education. It has been, however, claimed that the duration of the training(three months) is too short to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills properly and in-depth. In other words, lack of training time weakens seriously the teachers' knowledge and understanding of various needs of children, their skill to organize appropriate learning environment, and their ability to generate important learning aids. This in turn makes the teachers inefficient to provide children with proper love, care, and guidance.

Moreover, the majority of the teachers(68 percent) have not obtained in service training or refresher courses. This finding implies that opportunities for in-service staff development are minimal and limited which directly affect the teachers performance in the kindergarten.

As regards the courses of study, it has been confirmed that subjects, such as psychology and child development, teaching method, health and hygiene, children play, and children's' language development, which are considered to be very important and suggested to be included in the kindergarten teachers' training program by distinguished scholars in the field, have been offered. However, theory of education, parent education, and curriculum development, though absorbed in other subjects, have not been offered as independent subjects.

5.1.1.2 Physical Environment

The distribution of child areas as regards indoor space has been found to be below the standard in most of the kindergartens. This lack of space appears to influence negatively children's actions, language, relationships with others, etc. Besides, almost all kindergartens have not

undertakings in many aspects the attempt to professionalise teachers, to equip preschool educational institutions with the necessary facilities, to increase the coverage rates, etc.

On the contrary, the situation of preschool education as regards the aforementioned aspects has been found to be deplorable. Besides, local research in the field is quite few and limited that makes obtaining scholarly written literature questionable. Owing to these facts, the researcher feels that it would be helpful to examine the current state of the learning environment in the Ethiopian kindergartens to have a clear picture of the situation hoping that it (a) provides the concerned party as well as those who are interested-with the necessary information that can be used in the planning and further development of kindergarten education both at the regional and at the national levels; (b), helps to know how kindergartens in Ethiopia rate functionally; and (c), suggests realistic ways in which the major problems of the kindergartens could be solved.

Accordingly, findings revealed that, though the majority of teachers in the Ethiopian kindergartens have been trained in kindergarten education the duration of the training has been considered to be too short to arm them with the necessary skills and knowledge and opportunity for in-service or refresher courses is rather minimal. Besides, the learning environments in the kindergartens, with the exception of staff facilities and distribution of child areas in outdoor space, have been found to be unsuitable.

Hence, despite the limitations of the study it would be possible to say the following in conclusion: the current state of the learning environment in the investigated kindergartens appears to be poor. This may be attributable to a lack or absence of budget allocated for the enhancement of preschool educational undertakings and lack of regular follow-up of these institutions. what so ever, the children's most important developmental needs would undoubtedly be hampered by the discouraging conditions

under which kindergartens in Ethiopia function. In such depressing learning environment wholesome growth could not be expected. As long as this situation continuous, the future of kindergartens is in jeopardy of the children's life.

To sum up, it has to be noted that the findings of this study are not perfect and final for the already mentioned limitations would have some impact and leave us with uncertainty. To arrive at a satisfactory conclusion, thus, further investigation has to be made. If similar findings would appear, it will be of great assistance to the concerned bodies to search for ways and means of improving the situation.

5.3. Recommendations

The findings of the study, in general, indicate that the conditions under which kindergartens in Ethiopia are functioning at present are highly deplorable - the learning environments are not fovourable. These facts imply that a tremendous effort has to be made by the government as well as the concerned party to ameliorate the situation.

Therefore, on the basis of the findings the following recommendations are forwarded:

1. It is believed that although so many factors are involved, the success of pre-school education depends upon the standard of its teachers. Hence, teacher training has to be considered as the keystone of the whole endeavour thereby adequate time(at least one year) has to be given to produce better teachers who have broad academic backgrounds, desirable personal qualities, and professional competencies.

   Because, it is true that a high level of knowledge and skill could be developed over a lengthy period of preparation. Besides, it would be advisable that prospective teachers have to obtain adequate practice

teaching as well as field based observation in their preparatory program since it is during such experience that trainees confront problems to solve, have opportunities to test pedagogical approaches, learn more about young children, and become further socialized into the profession.

2. To be a teacher, in the real sense, requires constant personal and professional growth so as to serve the rapidly changing societies effectively. Therefore, an attempt has to be made to keep teachers in the kindergartens abreast of advances in the field through different mechanisms such as seminars, workshops, and summer courses. The further training of kindergarten teachers could be organized by the Ministry of Education as well as regional educational offices.

3. Since kindergarten is a place where children have to be able to play and expend their energies, engaging in many different activities of a physical, rhythmic, musical or manual nature, it would be pertinent to provide children with a large spacious room. In order to solve the problem of indoor space the likely solution has to be for the kindergartens to operate a two-shift school day with half of the children attending in the forenoon and the other half of them attending in the afternoon. This appears a fairly reasonable solution that could improve the distribution of child areas regarding indoor space.

4. Another important feature of facilities that needs due consideration is the toilet room. Because it is natural that children tend to get dirty very quickly they need to have ready access to washbasins and lavatories adapted to their height. Therefore, whenever kindergartens are established it would be helpful to consult the norms set by the children, youth, and family welfare organization in 1985 and attempt to do so accordingly. That is, a kindergarten need to have series of lavatories divided into individual cubicles, one

cubicle being provided for every fifteen children consisting of washbasins at a height of about 50cm. above the floor, one tap being provided for every ten children or so.

5. In order to make its rightful contribution to the children's overall development a kindergarten needs to have ample toys, equipment, and materials. Thus, equipping a kindergarten with at least the various toys and equipment which could easily be prepared by the teachers, school pedagogical centers, and the like has to be a major endeavour. Along with this, efforts have to be made to obtain basic equipment, toys, and materials devising several ways and means such as presenting a request proposal to donor agencies, forming fund raising committee from the community, etc.

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APPENDIX A

Background Information Regarding Sample Kindergartens and Sample Population.

I. Sample Kindergartens

A. Awassa
   1. Sidama Zone Workers & Social Affairs
   2. Higher 2 Kebele 02
   3. Komboni

B. Nazareth
   1. Workers & Social Affairs Kindergarten
   2. Higher 1 Keble 02 Kindergarten
   3. Betel kindergarten

C. Dire-Dawa
   1. "Misle-Hitsanat" Kindergarten
   2. "Ende-Enat" Kindergarten
   3. Aliance Kindergarten

D. Jimma
   1. Higher 1 Kebele 05 Kindergarten
   2. Higher 2 Kebele 06
   3. SOS Kindergarten

E. Dessie
   1. Higher 3 Kebele 04 Kindergarten
   2. Workers & Social Affairs Kindergarten
   3. "Tesfa" Kindergarten

II. Profiles of the Teacher Respondents

{PRIVATE }Items	Number	%
1. Age		
1.1. 17-21	3	5.4
1.2. 22-26	15	26.8
1.3. 27-31	19	33.9
1.4. 32-36	14	25.0
1.5. 37 & above	5	8.9
Total	56	100
2. Years of Experience		
2.1.Below 5 Years	6	10.7
2.2. 5-10 Years	34	60.7
2.3. 11-16 Years	11	19.6
2.4. 17 & above	5	8.9
Total	56	100
3. Educational level		
3.1. 12+3 months of training	41	73.2
3.2. 12+1	4	7.2
3.3. 12+2	7	12.5
3.4. 12+4	4	7.1
Total	56	100

APPENDIX B

በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርስቲ የድህረ ምረቃ ትምህርት ቤት

በትምህርት ፋከልቲ

ካሪክለምና እስትራክሽን ትምህርት ክፍል

በአፀደ ሕፃናት መምህራን የሚሞላ መጠይቅ

የመጠይቁ ዓላማ፡

የዚህ መጠይቅ ዋና ዓላማ በአሁኑ ጊዜ በኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ ባሉት አፀደ ሕፃናት ውስጥ የሚገኙትን መምህራን ሥልጠና እና አፀደ ሕፃናቱቹ ለፕሮግራሙ ክንውን ያላቸውን ገፅታ ምን እንደሚመስል ትክክለኛና የተሟላ ግንዛቤ በማግኘት የአፀደ ሕፃናት ትምህርት የሚሻሻልበትንና እድገቱ ሊፋጠን የሚችልበትን መንገድ ለመጠቆም ነው። ሥለዚህ የእርስዎ መጠይቆቹን በሐቅ መሙላት ለጥናቱ መሳካት በጣም አስፈላጊ ሲሆን ትብብርዎ ላቅ ያለ ግምት ተሰጥቶታል።

በጣም አመሰግናለሁ

የድሕረ ምረቃ ተማሪ

ማሳሰቢያ፡-

1. በመጠይቁ ላይ ስምዎን መፃፍ አያስፈልግም
2. መጠፅቆቹን ካነበቡ በኋላ በትክክለኛው መልስ ትይዩ ባለው ክፍት ሥፍራ ላይ የ"✓"ምልክት ያድርጉ
3. አማራጭ ምላሽ ለሌላቸው መጠይቆች በተሰጡት መስመሮች ላይ መልስዎን አጭር እና ግልፅ አድርገው ያስፍሩ

PART - I

1. የአፀደ ሕፃናቱ ስም _____

2. ከተማ _____ ቀበሌ _____ ከፍተኛ _____

3. የመምህሩ/የመምህሯ/ ጾታ _____

   እድሜ _____

4. የትምህርት ደረጃ

5. ሙያዊ ልምድ/በአፀደ ሕፃናት ውስጥ በመምህርነት የሠሩት ጠቅላላ አገልግሎት/

   ከ 5 ዓመት በታች _____

   ከ 5–10 ዓመት _____

   11 ዓመት እና ከዚያ በላይ _____

PART - II - <u>የመምህራን ሥልጠና፣ እና የሥልጠናው ይዘቶች</u>

1. ለአፀደ ሕፃናት ትምህርት መምህርነት ሠልጥነዋል?

   አዎን ሠልጥኛለሁ _____ አልሰለጠንኩም _____

2. ምላሽዎ 'ሠልጥኛለሁ' ከሆነ ለምን ያህል ጊዜ ነው የሠለጠኑት?

   ለ3 ወር _____ ሌላ ከሆነ ይግለፁ _____

   ለ1 ዓመት _____

3. ከሚከተሉት ውስጥ በሥልጠናዎ ወቅት የተማሯቸውን የትምህርት ዓይነቶች ብቻ በመለየት ከፊት ለፊታቸው ባለው ክፍት ቦታ ላይ የ "✓" ምልክት ያድርጉ።

   ሀ. ሳይኮሎጂና የህፃናት እድገት _____ ሌላ ካለ ይግለፁ

   ለ. የማስተማር ዘዴ _____ _____

   ሐ. የትምህርት ንድፈ ሃሳብ _____ _____

   መ. መሠረታዊ የሂሳብ ፅንሰ ሃሳብ _____

   ሠ. የአካባቢ ሳይንስ _____

   ረ. ጤናና ንፅህና አጠባበቅ _____

   ሰ. ሙዚቃ እና እንቅስቃሴ _____

   ሸ. ሥዕል እና እጅሥራ _____

   ቀ. የሥርዓተ ትምህርት አነዳደፍ _____

   በ. የልጆች የቋንቋ እድገት _____

   ተ. የልጆች ጨዋታ _____

   ቸ. የወላጆች ትምህርት _____

4. የሥልጠናው ጊዜ ለአፀደ ሕፃናት መምህርነት ተግባር ብቁ ለማድረግ በቂ ነ ያምናሉ? አዎ _____ አይበቃም _____

5. ምላሽዎ "አይበቃም" ከሆነ ምክንያቱን ቢገልፁ

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. በሥልጠናው ወቅት <u>የማስተማር ልምምድ</u> ለማድረግ እድል አግኝተዋል?

አዎ _____ አላገኘሁም _____

7. ምላሽዎ "አዎ" ከሆነ ለማስተማር ልምምድ የተሰጠው ጊዜ በቂ ነው ብለው የምናሉ?

አዎ _____ በቂ አይደለም _____

8. "በቂ አይደለም" ካሉ ምን አስተያየት ይሰጣሉ?

_____

_____

_____

9. በሥራ ላይ ሥልጠናም ሆነ በሴሚናር ወይም በወርክሾፕ ተጨማሪ ሥልጠና አግኝተዋል?

አዎ _____ አላገኘሁም _____

10. ምላሽም "አዎ" ከሆነ ስንት ጊዜ የመካፈል እድል አግኝተዋል?

1 ጊዜ ብቻ _____ 3 ጊዜ _____

2 ጊዜ _____ ከ3 ጊዜ በላይ _____

11. የአፀደ ሕፃናት መምህራንን ሥልጠና ለማሻሻል ምን ማድረግ አለበት ይላሉ?

ሀ. የሚሠጡትን ኮርሶች በተመለከተ

_____

_____

_____

_____

ለ. የሥልጠናውን ጊዜ ርዝማኔ በተመለከተ

_____

_____

_____

_____

ሐ. የማስተማር ልምምዱን በሚመለከት

_____

_____

_____

_____

መ. ሌላ ማንኛውንም አስተያየት፣ ትችት፣ ሃሳብ ካለዎት

_____

_____

_____

_____

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Questionnaires to be Filled by Teachers in a Kindergarten

Purpose of the questionnaire:

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain as accurate and full picture of as possible of the current state of the training of teachers and the learning environment of Ethiopian kindergartens. And thereby draw up, on the basis of the current condition, recommendations with a view to facilitate and hasten the improvement of kindergarten education. Hence, your honest response is earnestly needed and your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Thank you very much!
Student, school of Graduate studies.

N.B.

1. Do not write your name
2. After reading the questionnaires, put a tick " ✓" in the space provided for the correct response.
3. For the questions having no alternative response, you are requested to give a short and precise response in the lines provided in short.

PART - I Preliminary Information

1. Name of the Kindergarten _____
2. Town _____ 'Kebele' _____ 'Kefitegna' _____
3. Teacher's 3.1. Sex _____
   3.2. Age _____
4. Educational status _____
5. Professional experience (total years of services as teacher in Kindergarten)
   5.1. Below 5 years _____
   5.2. 5-10 years _____
   5.3. 11 and above _____

PART - II Teachers' Training and courses offered

1. Have you been trained in Kindergarten Education? Yes ___ No____

2. If your answer for No. 1 is 'Yes' for how long have you been trained?
   2.1. For three months _____
   2.2. For a year _____
   2.3. Other: specify _____

3. Which subjects have you learned during your training?
   3.1. Psychology and Child Development _____
   3.2. Teaching methods _____
   3.3. Theory of Education _____
   3.4. Basic Mathematical concepts _____
   3.5. Environmental Science _____
   3.6. Health and Hygiene _____
   3.7. Music and Movement _____
   3.8. Art and Handicraft _____
   3.9. Curriculum Development _____
   3.10. Children Language Development _____

3.11. Children's play _____

3.12. Parent education _____

3.13. Other: Specify _____

4. Do you think that the duration of the training is adequate enough to be effective in Kindergarten carreer? Yes _____ Not adequate _____

5. If you have ticked "Not adequate" the reason is:

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Have you got chance to Practice teaching during the training?

Yes _____ No _____

7. If you have ticked "Yes" do you think that the time given for teaching practice is adequate? Yes _____ Not adequate _____

8. If you have ticked "not adequate" what do you suggest?

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. Have you got supplementary training in-service or refresher courses?

Yes _____ No _____

10. If you have ticked "Yes" how many times have you participated in such workshops or seminar?

10.1. Only one times _____ 10.3. Three times _____

10.2. Two times _____ 10.4. More than three times _____

11. What do you recommend for the improvement of Kindergartens teachers training program?

11.1 Regarding subjects offfered

11.2. Regarding duration of the training

11.3. Regarding the practice teaching

11.4. Any other comments, suggestions, or criticisms?

APPENDIX - C

በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የድህረ ምረቃ ፕሮግራም

በትምህርት ፋክልቲ

ካሪክለምና ኢንስትራክሽ ትምህት ክፍል

በትምህርት ሚኒስቴር እና በትምህርት ቢሮዎች ውስጥ ላሉ የአፀደ ሕፃናት ትምህርት መምሪያ ሃላፊዎች የቀረበ ቃለ መጠይቅ

1. የአፀደ ሕፃናት መምህራን ሥልጠናን በተመለከተ የ3ወሩ ሥልጠና ለሥራው ውጤታማነት በቂ ነው ብለው ይገምታሉ?
2. የአፀደ ሕፃናትን መምህራን ሞያ ለማሻሻል የሚደረግ ጥረት አለ? እንደ የሥራ ላይ ሥልጠና፣ ወርክሾፕ እና የመሳሰሉትን
3. የአፀደ ሕፃናትን የሥራ ሂደት የመገምገም ልምድ አለ?
5. የአፀደ ሕፃናቶች ህንፃ ሲሰራ ተገቢ ነው የሚባለውን ደንብና መምሪያ ከግምት ውስጥ ማስገባቱ ይታያል?
6. አፀደ ሕያናቶች ለፕሮግራሙ ዓላማ ግብ መምታት የሚያስፈልጋቸው ቁሳቁስ ምን ይህል የተሟላ ነው? ህንን በተመለከተስ ምን ዕቅድና ጥረት አለ?
7. የአፀደ ህፃናት መምህራን ሥልጠና እንዲሻሻል የሚጠቁሙት መፍትሄ ሃሳብ ካለ

   7.1. የሥልጠና ጊዜ ርዝማኔን በተመለከተ

   7.2. ሌላ ካለ
8. አፀደ ህፃናቶች በአጠቃላይ ይዘታቸው ለሕፃናቱ ተስማሚ እንዲሆኑና ተፈላጊውን ግብ ለመምታት ያስችሉ ዘንድ ምን መደረግ አለበት ይላሉ?
9. ሌላ ማንኛውም አፀደ ሕፃናትን በተመለከተ ሊሰነዝሩት የሚፈልጉት አስተያየት ካለ?

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Interview schedule presented for officials of Kindergarten education department in Ministry of education and regional education offices.

1. Concerning the training of kindergarten teachers, do you think the three months training is adequate to be effective in the kindergarten career.
2. Is there any effort made or attempted to improve the profession of kindergarten teachers through on job training, workshop, and the like?
3. Is there a practice of assessing the performances of kindergartens?
4. When kindergartens are established is there careful planning of selecting sites?
5. When building kindergartens, has it been checked whether proper rules and regulations are considered?
6. How far do kindergartens equip with the necessary materials and facilities for the attainment of the objectives of the program? Is there any plan and effort regarding this point?
7. If you have suggestions that help to improve the training of kindergarten teachers:
   7.1. In light of the duration of the training.
   7.2. Any other
8. So as to make the kindergartens conducive for children and be able to attain the desired objectives what do you recommend?
9. If you have any other comment or suggestions regarding kindergartens?

APPENDIX - D

በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የድህረ ምረቃ ፕሮግራም

በትምህርት ፋከልቲ

ካሪክለምና ኢንስትራክሽ ትምህት ክፍል

ለአፀደ ሕፃናት መምህራን ማሠልጠኛ ተቋም ርዕሰ መመህር የቀረበ መጠይቅ

1. የአፀደ ሕፃናት መምህራንን ለማሠልጠን አሠልጣኞቹ በአብዛኛው የሚጠቀሙበት የማስተማር ዘዴ ምንድነው? ውይይት፣ ሌክቸር፣ ማስተማር ልምምድ፣ ምልከታና ጉብኝት ወይም ሌላ?
2. ይህ የ3 ወር የማሠልጠኛ ጊዜ ለሠልጣኞቹ ተገቢ እውቀት እና ክህሎት ልማስጨበጥ በቂ ነው ብለው ይገምታሉ? ካልሆነ ምን ይመክራሉ?
3. ለማስተማር ልምምዱ የተሰጠው ጊዜ ሠልጣኞቹ የቀሰሙትን እውቀት ምን ያህል ተግባራዊ ማድረግ ይችላሉ የሚለውን ለመመልከት ያስችላል ይላሉ?
4. ማሠልጠኛው ለሥልጠናው ሥራ ምን ያህል ብቃት አለው ይላሉ?
5. የአፀደ ሕፃናት መምህራን ሥልጠናን ለማሻሻል የበኩልዎ አተያየት ምንድን ነው?
6. የተቋሙ ጉልህ ችግሮች ምን ምን ናቸው?
7. ሌላ ሊሰጡት የሚፈልጉት አስተያየት ወይም ትችት ካለ?

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Interview schedule presented for the director of Kindergarten Teachers Training Institute.

1. What methods are mostly used by the trainers during the training of kindergarten teachers? Discussion? Lecture? Practice teaching? Observation and Visit? Or other?
2. Do you think that the three months training is adequate to arm the trainees with proper knowledge and skill? If not, what do you suggest?
3. Do you think that the time given for teaching practice is adequate enough to assess whether or not the trainees are able to apply knowledge and skill acquired during the training?
4. Do you think that the institute is efficient for its purpose?
   - 4.1. Regarding the number of the trainers and their efficiency.
   - 4.2. Regarding the equipment and facilities
5. What do you recommend to improve the training of kindergarten teachers?
6. What are the major problems of the institute?
7. If you have any other comments or suggestions?

APPENDIX - E

Form 1: **Observation Scale for Assessing Physical Environment**

Name of the Kindergarten: .....

Address: .....

Date(s) of Observation .....

			1	low 2	3	Adequate 4	5	Excelent 6	7
	Total quantity		≤35	40	45	50	55	60	≥70
IN-Door Space	Distribution: child Areas (sq. ft. per) child	General play	≤25	30	35	40	45	50	≥55
		Gross motor play	none	30	35	40	45	50	≥55
		Eating areas	none	10	11	12	13	14	≥15
		Extra purpose rooms (No.)	none	1	2	3	4	5	≥6
		Sleeping rooms	none	20	21	22	23	24	≥25
		Other Space	none	1	2	3	4	5	≥6
	Bathroom facilities	Toilets(Child size) unit - child ratio	≤1:9	1:8	1:7	1:6	1:5	1:4	≥1:3
		Washbasins(child-size) "	≤1:9	1:8	1:7	1:6	1:5	1:4	≥1:3
	Staff facilities	Lounge - coffee room (sq. Ft. per adult)	≤25	28	31	34	37	40	≥43
		Office space (desk-adult ratio)	≤1:5	1:4	1:3	1:2	2:3	3:4	≥1:1
Out-Door space	Total quantity		≤30	40	50	60	70	80	≥90
	Distribution: child areas (sq.ft./child)	Soft surface	≤15	20	25	30	35	40	≥45
		Hard surface	≤15	20	25	30	35	40	≥45
		Nature garden	0	5	10	15	20	25	≥30
REMARK									

FORM 1: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Descriptions of the scale

INDOOR SPACE

TOTAL QUANTITY ALL ACTIVITIES

Square feet per child (excluding cabinets, toy shelves, adult furniture, etc., but including child-sized furniture)

Range: $\leq$35-$\geq$70 square feet per child

DISTRIBUTION: CHILD AREAS

General play (excluding gross motor play) square feet per child as above,(excluding cabinets, etc.)

Range: $\leq$25-$\geq$55 square feet per child.

Gross motor play square feet per child (exclusive of all furniture except gross motor apparatus itself, i.e.) climbing apparatus, walking boards, vehicles, tumbling mats, etc.)

Range: none - $\geq$ 55 square feet per child.

Eating areas: Square feet per child (exclusive of everything except children's tables and chairs).

Range: none - $\geq$ 15 square feet per child

Extra purpose rooms: Number of rooms at least 5^1 x 7^1 each suitable for small group free or guided play, for special activities, segregated play, or use as quiet area for contagious children, parent or visitor discussions, testing etc.

Range: none - $\geq$ 6 rooms

Sleeping rooms (separated) square feet per child (exclusive of everything except cribs, cots, etc.)

Range: none - $\geq$ 25 square feet per child

Other space space, such as hallways, vestibules, etc., not designed for a particular child use, but which can provide extra child areas.

Range : none - $\leq$ 6 square feet per child

BATHROOM FACILITIES

1. Number of appropriate size toilets

   Range: ≤ 1:9 - ≥ 1:3 units per child

2. Number of child - sized washbasins

   Range: ≤1:9 - ≥1:3 units per child

STAFF FACILITIES

1. Lounge-coffee room - square feet per adult including furniture.

   Range : ≤ 25 - ≥ 43

2. Office space - Desk: adult ratio

   Range: ≤ 1:5 - ≥ 1:1 units per adult

OUTDOOR SPACE

TOTAL QUANTITY - ALL PLAY ACTIVITIES

Square feet per child including equipment but exclusive of storage and nature areas.

Range: ≤ 30 - ≥ 90 square feet per child

DISTRIBUTION: CHILD AREAS

Soft surface - square feet per child of lawn, soft grounds etc. for movement play, climbing apparatus, swings, horses,...

Range: ≤ 15-≥ 45

Hard surface - square feet per child of asphalt, concrete, hard ground, etc. for rideable wheel toys, etc.

Range: ≤15 - ≥ 45 square feet per child

Nature garden area - square feet per child of trees, flowers, and digging areas, etc.

Range: none - ≥ 30 square feet per child

APPENDIX - F

Form 2: **Observation Scale for Assessing Toys and equipment**

Name of the Kindergarten: .....

Address: .....

Date(s) of Observation .....

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Indoor	Problem solving & Creative Construction materials	Construction toys: number of types	<2	3	5	6	7	9	>10
		Free-form materials: number of types	<2	3	5	6	7	9	>10
		Structured-problem solving materials: no. Of types	<2	3	5	6	7	9	>10
		Structured materials: no of units per child	≤.3	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	>3
		Quality of all sensory-motor toys and materials	poor				ex-	cel	lent
	Information & literary materials	Total books, magazines and pictures: no.per child	≤1	2	3	4	5	6	>7
		Fiction books per child	≤.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	>3.5
		Non fiction books per child	≤.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	>3.5
		Quality of information materials	poor				ex	cel	lent
	Props for sociodrama	Number of types	≤2	3	4	5	6	7	>8
		Quality of props.	few					good	many
		Number of units per child	≤1:4	1:3	1:2	2.3	3:4	4:5	≥1:1
	Musical toys & equipment	Number of types	≤2	4	6	8	10	12	≥14
		Number of units per child	≤.3	0:5	1	1.5	2	2.5	≥3
	Toys	Number of units and sets per child	≤.3	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	≥3
Outdoor	Hard surface play area equ.	Number of types	≤2	3	5	6	7	9	≥ 10
		Number of units & sets per child	≤.2	0:3	0:5	1	1.5	2	≥ 2.5
	Soft surface play area equ.	Number of types	≤2	3	5	6	7	9	≥10
		Number of units per child	≤.2	0.3	0.5	0.75	1	1.5	≥2.0
		No. Of units or sets per child	≤.3	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	≥3
Arrangement of materials & equipment		By types of activity							
		Sequential arrangement							
		Variability of arrangement							
		Ease of accesss							

FORM 2: TOYS AND EQUIPMENT

Descriptions of the Scale

INDOOR

PROBLEM SOLVING AND CREATIVE-CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

Construction toys (Modular unit sets each having at least three pieces per child: miniature and unit blocks, building bricks, flannel boards, etc. - Commercial and homemade).

Range : $\leq$ 2 to $\geq$ 10 number of types of sets

Free form materials (Moldable or free forming combinations, commercial or homemade, each having one set or unit of workable material for every three children: Three-Dimensional-clay, play dough, paper mache, etc.; Two dimensional - crayon and chalk drawing, finger and easel painting, collage, etc.)

Range: $\leq$ 2 to $\geq$ 10 number of types

Structured (fixed and semi-fixed pattern) problem-solving materials (Jigsaw puzzles - Content configured, form boards, shape sorting boxes, size graded materials, color and number matching materials, etc. - commercial or homemade)

Range : $\leq$ 2 to $\geq$ 10 number of types

... Number of units per child

Range : $\leq$. 3 to $\geq$ 3 per child

Quality of all sensory motor toys and materials

Low: many unclear in design, poorly constructed, garish, or blurred in color; too many toys with hazardous features (sharp points or edges and fragile). Too many complicated toys (e.g., mechanical toys) offering few possibilities of constructive play.

ADEQUATE: Usually of good design, well colored, durable, and not dangerous. Toys usually meet children's needs for active manipulation and constructive play.

EXCELLENT: Most are of clear-cut design, many are imaginative. Simple well-balanced colors are used. Durable, safe and well designed to encourage active manipulation or constructive play.

INFORMATION AND LITRARY MATERIALS

Total books, picture magazines and pictures number per child (10 pictures = 1 book)

Range: $\leq$ 1 to $\geq$ 7 per child

Fiction (picture story, poetry, etc.)

Range: $\leq$ .5 to $\geq$ 3.5 per child

Non-fiction (crafts, knowledge of animals, agriculture, etc.)

Range: $\leq$ .5 to $\geq$ 3.5 per child

Quality of information materials (books, pictures, etc.)

LOW: Many unclear in design when realism intended. Highly oversimplified, poorly executed or overly complex designs. Poor in design or color;

ADEQUATE: Generally adequate design, color, clarity, and execution of all pictures, book illustrations, etc.

EXCELLENT: Uniformly high quality of all materials in design, execution, and of literary materials in themes. Nearly all are excellent in either realism or imaginativeness.

PROPS AND MATERIALS FOR SOCIODRAMATIC PLAY

Number of social and Occupational role types

Range : $\leq$ 2 to $\geq$ 8

Quality of Props

LOW: Very few props and materials for stimulating sociodramatic play. A few items suggesting only domestic role play (tables, chairs, dishes, stove).

ADEQUATE: Several varieties of props and materials, for stimulating sociodramatic and occupational role play.

EXCELLENT: An extensive variety of props and materials, either commercial or homemade, for sociodramatic and occupational role play, such as office furniture, kitchen appliances including stoves and sinks; adult clothes representing occupational roles; simulated tools of trades, etc.

Number of units per child

Range : $\leq$ 1:4 to $\geq$ 1.1

MUSICAL TOYS AND EQUIPMENT

Number of types (tone, pattern, and pitch discrimination sets, commercial and homemade; bottles, bells, tuning forks, piano, guitar, Krar, Masinko, flute, or other instruments.

Range : $\leq$ 2 to $\geq$ 14

Number of units per child

Range : $\leq$ .3 to $\geq$ 3 per child

OUTDOOR

HARD SURFACE PLAY AREA EQUIPMENT

(For use on asphalt, concrete surface areas) : Wheel toys-riding, pushing and carrying (trikes, bikes, wagons, kiddy cars, etc.); hollow building blocks, boards, and manipulatable boxes; sandbox with water available, water play area, protected swimming pool; etc.

Number of types-

Range : $\leq$ 2 to $\geq$ 10

Number of units and sets per child (where applicable, counting ten hollow blocks and other pieces of modular materials as a set)

Range : $\leq$ .2 to $\geq$ 2.5 per child

SOFT SURFACE AREA EQUIPMENT

(For use on soft surfaces - lawn, sand, sawdust, dirt,...): Climbing apparatus, slides, climbing rops and nets, swings, etc. - Commercial and homemade.

Number of types-

Range: ≤ 2 to ≥ 10

Number of units and sets per child

Range: $\leq .2$ to ≥ 2.5 per child

ARRANGEMENT OF MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT

By types of activity and concepts

Arranging toys and equipment into categories to foster breadth and depth in concept development and types of play. Categories leading to possible areas of toy grouping are: free form creative materials, modular construction materials, structured means-ends (problem solving) materials, science and other information materials, musical instruments, sociodramatic and other role play props, building materials, riding and wheel toys, climbing apparatus, etc.

LOW: Chaotic clutter or random piling of materials, without regard for harmony between types of play or stimulation.

ADEQUATE: Attention to division of materials and encouragement of diverse forms of play.

EXCELLENT: Careful, imaginative arrangement of all materials and equipment to foster diverse types of experimentation, construction, creativity, and sociodramatic role play.

SEQUENTIAL ARRANGEMENT OF MATERIALS

LOW: No sequential sets of materials available or maintained for specific concept learning tasks (such as size, color, number, time)

ADEQUATE: A moderate variety of sets of learning and play materials sequentially graded in difficulty. Sets are maintained in moderate order and used regularly, sometimes with guidance.

EXCELLENT: A large variety of well-conceptualized and designed sequential sets; order is constantly maintained (except during use), and children are daily guided in their use in a variety of specific concept-learning tasks.

VARIABILITY OF ARRANGEMENT AND PERIODIC
ROTATION OF TOYS AND EQUIPMENT

Recognition of principles of varying availability and arrangement of materials for purposes of novelty, to sustain interest and foster cognitive variability.

LOW: Arrangement of materials seldom varies: the same set of materials available each day

ADEQUATE: Moderate attention to both a basic repertoire and regularity o rotation of some materials.

EXCELLENT: Good repertoire of basic materials for all important categories of play and learning; regular rotation of supplementary materials (toys, books, records) and equipment; varying selected information materials (pictures, books, sociodramatic tool props) often coordinated in a common theme embracing several areas of activity over a week or more.

EASE OF VISUAL AND PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY OF MATERIAL TO CHILDREN

Adequacy of type and arrangement of display shelves or other accommodation for materials and equipment intended for use during a given period, from small toys, books, to wheel toys, climbing apparatus, etc.

LOW: Shelf spaces inadequate in number, size, and arrangement. Materials poorly displayed and difficult to reach (piled in boxes, stored in cupboards) or in a clutter on the floor, or shelves.

ADEQUATE: Fairly adequate shelf space and arrangement; moderate attention to visual display and ease of accessibility.

EXCELLENT: Careful arrangement of shelves in terms of number, size, height, and depth, with all unstored materials regularly and thoughtfully arranged to be visually inviting, uncrowded, easily scanned, identified, compared, and selected by children for play.

APPENDIX G

Number of Section, Size of Classroom, and Child-space Ratio(Indoor)

Kindergarten		No of Section	Size of each room in sq. feet	Number of children in the kindergarten	Average child-space ratio in sq. feet
Awassa	1. Workers & Social Affairs	2	1700	85	40
	2. Higher 2 Kebele 02	3	2766.5	166	50
	3. Kamboni	4	4230	282	60
Nazareth	4. Workers & Social of	3	1545	103	45
	5. Higher 1 Kebele 02	3	1966.5	118	50
	6. Betel	3	1723.3	94	55
Dire-Dawa	7. "Misle-Hitsanat	4	1237.5	99	50
	8. "Ende enat"	2	1625	65	50
	9. Aliance	2	2400	80	60
Jimma	10. Higher 1 Kebele 05	3	2616.5	157	50
	11. Higher 2 Kebele 06	2	2450	98	50
	12. SOS	3	1650	90	55
Dessie	13. Higher 3 Kebele 04	2	2640	96	55
	14.Workers& Social Affairs	1	5500	100	55
	15. Tesfa	2	3030	101	60

APPENDIX H

Size of the kindergartens and child-space ratio (Outdoor)

Kindergarten		Total Area in sq.feet	Number of Children	Ration in Sq. Feet			
				T.Q	S.S	H.S	N. G
Awassa	1.Workers& Social Affairs	4250	85	50	15	15	10
	2. Higher 2 Kebele 02	11620	166	70	30	15	10
	3. Kamboni	22560	282	80	40	25	15
Nazareth	4. Workers & Social of	7210	103	70	35	15	10
	5. Higher 1 Kebele 02	9440	118	80	40	15	15
	6. Betel	9400	94	100	40	25	20
Dire-Dawa	7. "Misle-Hitsanat	5940	99	60	20	15	5
	8. "Ende enat"	4550	65	70	35	15	10
	9. Aliance	6400	80	80	40	20	20
Jimma	10. Higher 1 Kebele 05	12560	157	80	40	15	20
	11. Higher 2 Kebele 06	6860	98	70	35	15	10
	12. SOS	7200	90	80	40	20	20
Dessie	13. Higher 3 Kebele 04	6720	96	70	30	15	15
	14. Workers & Social Affairs	8000	100	80	35	20	15
	15. Tesfa	9090	101	90	40	20	20

Key:

T.Q = Total quantity

S.S = Soft surface

H.S = Hard surface

N.G = Nature garden

APPENDIX I

Row Scores and Mean Scores of Kindergartens by Subcatgory obtained through Observation Scale Form 1- Physical environment

			Awassa			Nazareth			Dire Dawa			Jimma			Dessie		
			1*	2*	3*	1*	2*	3*	1*	2*	3*	1*	2*	3*	1*	2*	3*
INDOOR SPACE	Distribution: child areas (sq.ft./child)	Total Quantity	2	4	6	5	5	6	4	4	6	4	4	5	3	4	5
		General Play	1	1	3	5	2	3	2	3	4	3	4	4	2	3	3
		Gross Motor Play	1	1	3	1	1	3	1	1	3	1	3	1	1	2	2
		Eating Areas	1	1	4	1	4	4	1	1	4	4	4	5	1	1	4
		Extra Purpose Rooms (No.)	1	1	3	2	3	3	1	1	2	2	2	4	1	2	2
		Sleeping Areas	1	1	4	4	4	4	1	1	2	4	4	5	2	2	2
		Other Space	1	1	4	1	3	3	1	1	3	2	2	3	1	1	3
		Sum	8	10	27	19	22	26	11	12	24	20	23	27	11	15	21
		Mean	.16	20	.55	.39	.45	.53	.22	.24	.49	.41	.47	.55	.22	.31	.43
	Bathroom facilities	toilets (Child-size) Unit child Ration	1	1	3	5	2	2	1	1	3	4	2	4	1	1	2
		Wash basins (Child Size) (Unit-child Ratio)	1	1	3	1	2	2	1	1	3	3	1	4	1	1	2
		Sum	2	2	6	6	4	4	2	2	6	7	3	8	2	2	4
		Mean	.14	.14	.43	.43	.29	.29	.14	.14	.43	.50	.21	.57	.14	.14	.29
	Staff facilities	Lounge-coffee Room (Sq.ft. per adult)	1	1	6	1	6	7	1	1	6	1	2	6	1	1	6
		Office Space (desk-adult ratio)	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
		Sum	8	8	13	8	13	14	2	8	13	8	9	13	8	8	13
		Mean	.57	.57	.93	.57	.93	1	.14	.57	.93	.57	.64	.93	.57	.57	.93
OUTDOOR SPACE	Distribution: child areas (sq.ft./child)	Total Quantity	3	5	6	5	6	7	4	5	6	6	5	6	5	6	7
		Soft Surface	1	4	6	4	5	6	2	5	6	6	5	6	5	6	6
		Hard Surface	1	1	3	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	3
		Nature Garden	3	3	4	4	4	5	2	3	5	5	3	5	3	4	5
		Sum	8	13	19	14	17	20	9	14	19	18	14	19	14	17	21
		Mean	.29	.46	.68	.50	.61	.71	.32	.50	.68	.64	.50	.68	.50	.61	.75

1*& 2* are kindergartens sponsered by the "Kebele" & Govrnment.

3* kindergartens run by NGOs.

APPENDIX J

Row Scores and Mean Scores of Kindergartens by Subcategory obtained through Observation Scale from 2.

			Awassa			Nazareth			Dire Dawa			Jimma			Dessie		
			1*	2*	3*	1*	2*	3*	1*	2*	3*	1*	2*	3*	1*	2*	3*
INDOOR	Problem solving & creative CM	Construction toys: number of types	1	2	5	3	3	4	2	3	3	3	3	4	1	3	4
		Free-form materials: number of types	1	2	4	2	2	5	2	2	3	4	2	4	1	2	4
		Structured - problem solving materials No.of types	1	2	5	3	4	3	3	2	4	3	3	5	1	3	3
		Structured materials: Number of units /Child	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	5	1	1	1
		Quality of all sensory-motor toys & materials	2	3	5	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	4	1	4	4
		Sum	6	10	21	12	14	17	11	11	16	15	12	22	5	13	16
		Mean	.17	.29	.6	.34	.4	.49	.31	.31	.46	.43	.34	.63	.14	.37	.46
	Information & Literary M.	Total books, magazins & pictures : No.of units/child	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
		Fiction books /child	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
		Non fiction books/child	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1
		Quality of information materials	1	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	4	1	4	4
		Sum	4	6	7	6	6	7	6	6	7	7	6	10	4	7	7
		Mean	.14	.21	.25	.21	.21	.25	.21	.21	.25	.25	.21	.36	.14	.25	.25
	Props for socio.	Number of types	1	2	5	2	4	5	1	2	6	3	2	4	1	2	5
		Quality of props	1	2	5	3	4	5	1	3	5	3	3	5	1	4	5
		Number of units /child	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
		Sum	3	5	11	6	9	11	3	6	13	7	6	10	3	7	11
		Mean	.14	.24	.52	.29	.43	.52	.14	.29	.62	.33	.29	.48	.14	.33	.52
OUTDOOR	Mus. Toys & equip.	Number of types	2	3	6	3	4	6	3	3	6	4	3	5	1	4	5
		Number of units/child	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1
		Sum	3	4	7	4	5	7	4	4	8	5	4	7	2	5	6
		Mean	.21	.29	.5	.29	.36	.5	.29	.29	.57	.36	.29	.5	14	.36	.43
	H.S. play area equ.	Number of types	1	3	5	4	2	3	2	4	5	2	2	3	1	4	2
		Number of units and sets/child	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1
		Sum	2	4	6	5	3	4	3	5	8	3	3	4	2	5	3
		Mean	.14	.29	.43	.36	.21	.29	.21	.36	.57	.21	.21	.29	.14	.36	.21
	S.S. play area equ.	Number of types	2	3	5	4	4	5	2	4	5	4	3	6	1	4	4
		Number of units and sets/child	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	2	1	1	1
		Sum	3	4	6	5	5	6	3	5	8	6	4	8	2	5	5
		Mean	.21	.29	.43	.36	.36	.43	.21	.36	.57	.43	.29	.57	14	.36	.36
	Arrangement of materials & equ.	By types of activity	3	4	5	4	4	5	3	4	6	4	4	5	4	4	5
		Sequential arrangement	3	3	5	3	4	4	2	3	5	4	3	5	3	4	5
		Variability of arrangement	1	2	5	2	3	4	1	2	5	3	3	3	1	3	5
		Ease of access	1	4	6	4	4	5	4	4	6	5	4	7	4	4	6
		Sum	8	13	21	13	15	18	10	13	22	16	14	20	12	15	21
		Mean	.29	.46	.75	.46	.54	.64	.36	.46	.79	.57	.5	.71	.43	.54	.75

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned declare that this thesis is my original work done under the guidance of Ato Ambaye Tsehaye. All sources of materials used for the thesis have been dully acknowledged.

Name Shewakena Cherinet

Signature 

Date June 18, 1997