



NEP 2020: Changing Elementary Education with Integrating Toy Based Pedagogy in Curriculum

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<p>Received: 03/05/2024</p> <p>Accepted: 20/06/2024</p> <p>Published: 09/07/2024</p>	<p>Abstract: India has been witnessing a transformation with the introduction of NEP 2020 that significantly focused on changing the framework in elementary Education. This article focused on the importance of toys in childhood and how they can be used in the learning experiences of the children in Elementary education period. The toy is the source of happiness for most of the children and it can bring changes the notion of Education in elementary level throughout the country. Educational Psychology has shown that children learn more concretely and vividly when they engage themselves in experiential and concrete experiences and it is more applicable when they play with toys. The New Education Policy focused on using toy based pedagogy to be used in foundational and Elementary stage and how it can be applied in the classroom by teachers. This article has also mentioned some of the toys existed in Indian Context and how it can be a useful learning tool in attaining different skills among children. This paper also focused on the values and the skill competencies among children that can be acquired with playing the toys.</p> <p>Keywords: Toy-based Pedagogy, Foundational stage, Play based Experiential learning, Elementary level Education.</p>
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Introduction

India is recently witnessing a breath-taking change in the realm of Education after it embraced the New Education Policy in 2020. It has significantly changed the course of action in Elementary to Higher Level of Education. The National education Policy is a revolutionary step to prepare India to meet the challenging futuristic need of 21st Century's knowledge based society. Being a key component of NEP 2020, its objective is to cater high quality of Education for all the children in country that is perseverant with the values and ethos that is inherent in the Indian Constitution. National Educational Policy 2020 has altered the existing 10+2+3 curriculum to 5+3+3+4 level curriculum that revised the notion of Elementary Education in our Country. Earlier the pre-school stage was not given any importance rather it totally focused on the school level Education starting from age six. As a result the children lack the education at the period of their brain development. Many scientific researchers have already proved that children's brain generally develops rapidly at the age of Three to Five years. This is the first stage of cognitive development when they start to think in complex ways about their self and surroundings. All studies related to early period of child stated that at this period proper care and education can redirect the child to multi-skilled individuals throughout the life-span. National Education policy has changed the primary level into the Foundational and preparatory stages of eight year duration where Elementary education has been kept in primary focus. A

National Curriculum Framework which has been divided in two sub-frameworks for 0-3 years and for 3-8 years children mainly included in the Foundational stage which has been published in the year of 2022 where the quality education, methods, pedagogy and training of teachers at elementary level has been broadly discussed. The agenda of National Curriculum Framework lies in universal access of quality early childhood development and care to ensure foundational literacy and Numeracy by the year 2025 which is a task of sustainable developmental goal. To ensure the success of this goal more students need to take enrolment as well as engage themselves in an active regular elementary school period. It will be possible only if the school time is full of fun, engaging, activity and play based that can attract as well as motivate student to go and participate more in the school activities. Children naturally are more prone to play based activity in early years. Those children who are more exposed to age-appropriate, physical, Educational and social activities through play based method learn better and grow better. Play based pedagogy thus takes a central position as the criteria of teaching children of pre-school stage. This paper mainly intends to show the importance of play based pedagogy and how it can change the scenario of Elementary Education of our country in near future.

Reviews of Related Literature

Researcher here found very few studies discussing about the significance of the toy based pedagogy for child's comprehensive development. Some studies have been discussed below:

Jani and Sethi (2024) in their article "*Toy Based Pedagogy promotes 21st century skills in schools and Beyond: A new path to Education Reform*" addressed to acquire essential toy based pedagogical knowledge in order to enhance the skills like reasoning, communication, critical thinking, creative thinking and cognitive flexibility. The main aim of this pedagogical practice lies in providing fast hand learning experiences towards students and creating a beautiful learning retention for them. Therefore, the researchers stressed on the use of toy based pedagogy very strategically in all levels of school education.

Lone and Kaur (2024) in their article "*Significance of Toy-Based Pedagogy for Elementary Students*" have showed that how elementary school students can be changed with the help of toy based pedagogy. The use of toy based pedagogy in elementary level can be a game changer in the context of Indian Education. The researchers have stressed the chance of exploration for children with the help of toy and play based pedagogy.

Rana and Yadav (2023) in their article titled "*Toy Integrated Pedagogy Helps to Develop Positive Mathematical Beliefs at Elementary Level*" mainly focused on the concept on how toy based pedagogy can influence positive mathematical attitude among students of Elementary level. They wanted to nullify all the mathematical fear and misconception among the students.

Pradhan and Srivastava (2023) in their paper titled "*Toy-Based Pedagogy-Promoting Holistic Development*" mainly highlighted how far the toy based pedagogy ensures the holistic development among children of class 1 and 2. It also enlisted the inevitable roadblocks and suggested required measures for effective implementation of Toy based pedagogy recommended by National Education Policy 2020.

Schoroškienė (2023) in the research paper titled "*Combination of Picture Books and Toys for Development of Children's Literacy: Advantages and Limitations in the Context of Play-Based Pedagogy*" significantly showed how picture textbook can be used with the context of toy based pedagogy. The research article concluded that learning with toys on regular basis can enhance the integrity as well as sometime hinder interaction between teacher and student.

Wadhawan (2022) in his article titled "*NCERT's Toy-Based Pedagogy for an Element of fun in Conceptual Understanding*" specifically points out the importance of toy based pedagogy

in evolving conceptual understanding of students at elementary level. It can qualitatively enhance the cognitive flexibility among learners thus ensure the lifelong learning opportunity for them.

Arora (2020) in her article titled “*Learning with Toys: More Fun and Creativity*” stressed that toys can be promoted to experience experiential learning in various subjects like mathematics, Language learning etc. It can be used as vocational Educational materials to make child competent enough to deal with Elementary level education. The exceptional potential of toy based pedagogy in nurturing child’s imagination, social and emotional maturity along with depth in knowledge allures most of the educationists to use this in elementary level.

Önder (2018) in his article “*Contribution of Plays and Toys to Children’s Value Education*” researcher has shown the role of toys and play to imbibe values in children mind. Social, Emotional and cultural values are the major areas which can be nurtured with the help of toys and plays. Various traditions across the world have their own tradition for toys and plays which have their own importance in the respective cultures to introduce the children with the culture.

Objectives:

This paper intends to focus on the following topics that are mentioned below:

1. To understand the concept of toy based pedagogy.
2. To know the importance of including toy based pedagogy in elementary education.
3. To know about the specific toys can be used in the pedagogical process.
4. To know the learning outcome of students with this toy based pedagogy.

Critical Analysis:

Play is the core activity that children do at their childhood period. Many studies show that play is interactive reciprocal system which supports learning by pushing children to remain active, engaged and socially participative that paves the path for social constructivism, the renowned theory of Lev Vygotsky. Toy based pedagogy has come to a long way to arrive this position. Archaeology has showed the proof how Harappa Civilization used to make clay toys. So, it has been significant how toys were mediums of joy at that period. It has been observed that when children are playing, there are three main aspects:

- A freedom of choice to decide which kind of play they want to complete that makes them active and consistent with their own choices
- A world of wonder opens up for them. For example child get curious even about small things like how the kite flies or why things get disappeared in any magic that make them think and process their thinking.
- There are lots of amusements when they do play and they don’t feel any external pressure from it, thus it can be an extensive tool for them to continue learning.
- A little creativity combined with basic materials combined with basic materials can stimulate learners and facilitate a young child’s development across all the developmental goals. To understand the children’s world of fantasy and imagination we need to get their word of play and what toys actually mean to them. This article will further analyse each objectives mentioned in the study.

Discussions:

1. The concept of Toy Based Pedagogy:

Toy Based pedagogy is basically constructed on the principle that besides being an integral part and source entertainment or recreation during childhood it has immense potential in

children learning process. It can be an authentic source for mental, physical, social and emotional development and can ignite the mind of children (NCERT, 2022).

As we all know that our government is trying to prepare an effective elementary Education system that can be combined with the 21st Century's skills such as critical thinking, Reasoning, Problem solving, communication and adaptability. According to the recent Handbook published by NCERT 'play based pedagogy is inherent part of play based and experiential learning whereas toys, fields or board games are the instrument on which play based learning operates'. Toy Based Pedagogy is the most vital subset of play based learning goal. Whether it is simple kitchen set based games or interlocking based puzzle game or any soft indigenous toys each toy has immense impact on the learning process of children at the age of three to eight years. There are many scientific evidences that prove children don't need extensive or rich toys even a paper ball can create joy and stress free environment for the children. Thus the method of teaching through toy or game is thus a new guiding light for the elementary level education.

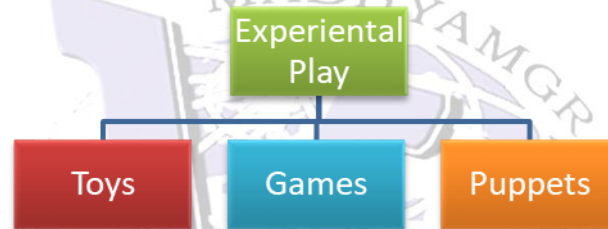


Fig 1: Inter-relationship between Plays and Toys

2. The Importance of Toy Based Pedagogy in Elementary Education:



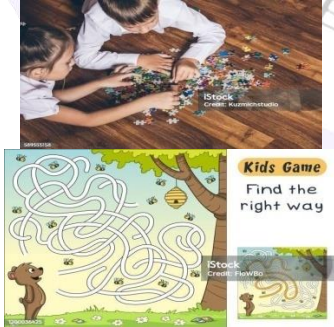
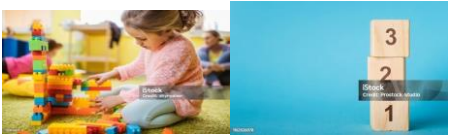
The learning is inherent in the play or toy based experiential activity among the children. The classroom environment should motivate the enthusiasm of using toy and other concrete objects which can be alternative to any toy or game for the child. The consequence of implementing Toy based Pedagogy has lasting impact on the developmental goals of children that are set by psychological construct. Some significant importance are listed below:





- The improvement of psycho-motor and hand-eye co-ordination while holding toys or any objects.
- It can improve the spatial understanding among the children while they engage spatial based building block games.
- Toy has immense potential in developing cognitive flexibility among learners like puzzle, matching blocks which improve their problem solving and engineering skills.
- Through the language based games like Alphabet Matching or color board child can gain effective knowledge of language.
- A child immensely enjoys when he or she dismantle a toy and rebuilds it. This improves sense of creativity and diversity of thought among the child.
- Play is possibly the most important tool for building social competence among children. It improves the social connectivity and interpersonal relationship among child. It leads them to become cooperative and collaborative. India being a diverse country with numerous culture and language can postulate the sense of 'Unity in diversity' among children.
- Play helps the child to release their stress and got emotionally connected with their peers and surrounding.
- Moreover, children can be independent when they take decision of their own while playing toys and games. This eventually emerges sense of freedom among them.

3. Specific Toys to be Used in Pedagogical Process and the Expected Learning Outcome:

Toys are basically any concrete thing with which a student play. There are no distinct definitions of Toys present in any document. Any object that leads child to a joyful experience can be a toy. National Curriculum framework for Foundational stage (2022) has mentioned usage of extensive indigenous toys for children to get them accustomed to the rich cultural heritage of Indian context.

There are many local toys that are accessible and affordable in our country with the support of basic materials like Clay, wood, bamboo, Grass, Cloth, shell, paper or wrapping paper, metals and glass across different states like Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Odisha etc. Indigenous toys and games such as spinning top (lattoo), kites, pinwheel, phirni are such examples (Kapoor, 2022). There are also many Indian board games that are significant for cognitive development of children at higher level. The Recent framework also promoted the use of traditional and popular toys that are being used across the world like ring block, DIY toys. In this point some specific toys both traditional and indigenous toys are mentioned in a list which the associated learning outcomes to the particular toys have been mentioned with Illustrative examples:

Toys Image & Name	Learning Area	Learning Outcome
<p>Large Coloured and Serial Rings</p> 	<p>Cognitive & Motor Development skill</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Development of the concept of size and colour ii. Fine motor skill coordination
<p>Teething & Squeezing Toys</p> 	<p>Sensory and Psychomotor Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Development sense of touch ii. Develop Eye-hand Co-ordination iii. Develop grasping skills
<p>Jigsaw Puzzles, Wooden Maze</p> 	<p>Cognitive Problem-solving skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develop Problem solving skills ii. Development of critical thinking skills iii. Develop thinking ability
<p>Block Building and Construction Set</p> 	<p>Fine Motor skills and Muscle Co-ordination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Extend Imagination ii. Develop dexterity and problem solving skills iii. Writing Readiness iv. Spatial awareness v. How things connected with each other

<p>Abacus and Number-Word blocks</p> 	<p>Foundational Numeracy and Literacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develop number sense ii. Recognize verbal letters iii. Pre- Number and Post- Number counts iv. Develop number and word reading and writing readiness
<p>Paper and Art Craft Toys</p> 	<p>Creative and Aesthetic Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develops Creative sense ii. Enhances the sense of aesthetic expression. iii. Develops imagination power among children
<p>Doll House, Puppets & Masks, Traditional Indigenous Toys</p> 	<p>Aesthetic and Cultural Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develops sense of cultural context ii. Develops socio-emotional skills iii. Develop language and communication skills iv. Develops vocabulary sense among the children v. Develops an understanding the world around them vi. Emerges social awareness vii. Sense of Emotional development viii. To gain knowledge related to life skills.
<p>Tri-Cycle, Slides, See-Saw, Balls</p> 	<p>Gross Motor Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develops gross muscle of child ii. Develops the skill of balancing iii. Muscle strengthening iv. Overall Physical development

4. Learning Outcome of Students with Toy Based Pedagogy:

Toy-Based Pedagogy has immense ability to promote design thinking skills which is strictly important for brainstorming among teachers and students. Toys can be merged with the mapping of concepts that leads to meaningful learning experiences. Thus, going through the details of the learning outcome attached with each type of toys we should introduce the children to use more toys as their learning tools. Toy based pedagogy paves the way of experiential learning that is goal of National Education policy 2020.

The most significant stakeholders of this pedagogical transformation are the elementary level pre-service and in-service teachers. Teachers hold sheer responsibility of transacting curriculum through toy based pedagogy. The primary focus should be the training of teachers about the theoretical concept and probable practical applicability in bringing innovative practice with the help of indigenous and designed based toys in the teaching-learning procedure of Classroom scenario. There are certain aims that lie within the responsibilities of the elementary teachers which are listed below-classroom:

- i. First of all, the teachers must have deeper knowledge about the experiential learning experience that toys can provide for children.
- ii. They should be trained with hand-on experience on making and using basic materials available and affordable to prepare toys in regular classroom
- iii. They must know the ground reality of minimum capacity of Indian primary schools situated in remote place and should take measures according to the situation.
- iv. They should aware the parents and the other peer teachers and should collaborate with the administration and the Government in promoting Toy based pedagogy in the elementary level
- v. The last and probably the most important step is to clear the misconception and the negative attitude associated with toys and games among teachers and parents and also look after the deleterious addiction of tech-based toys among today's children.

Though our Educational policy aims to inculcate Toys in teaching-Learning Process the ground reality itself gives insight that the majority of pre-school and schools lack suitable toy materials. The readiness level among teachers and parents towards using toys as pedagogical equipment still don't get much practical recognition. This is perhaps the major challenge that is inclined to implement this practice in reality. Sometimes the students got fascinated towards tech-toys and lose track in teaching learning which is also a major drawback now-a-days. More awareness and advocacy program among teachers and parents must be conducted to build consciousness and practical relevance among them which is the most vital step toward coming future.

Conclusion:

A detailed study on the Toy-Based pedagogy shows its profound impact on child's holistic development on a vast aspect. The enormous scope of toys in learning context starts with a step ahead and positive mind-set showcasing our belief and perseverance in Indian rich cultural heritage and influence for future generation. Toys can be a medium through which the children of nation get connected with the diversity and at the same time it tends towards the inculcation of scientific and critical thinking with problem solving skills among the toddlers and children to gain the 21st century knowledge. The toy based pedagogy is one of the ground-breaking steps in the history of elementary level education in India. This will enhance the sense of design based innovation and creativity among children which will surely paves the way of preparing futuristic generation.

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