

Research Paper

## Evaluating Practices and Proposing Reforms for ECCE in Private Stand-Alone Preschools: A Study in Champhai District, Mizoram

Dr. Laltlanzauvi Kawlni<sup>1\*</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) forms the foundation for lifelong learning and development, with the early years recognized as a critical period for cognitive, emotional, and social growth. Despite significant policy efforts, gaps in quality and standardization continue to exist, especially in rural and underserved regions. This study investigates the practices and services of private stand-alone preschools in Champhai District, Mizoram, a region where limited research has been conducted in the context of early childhood education. Using qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews and direct observations, data were collected from five private preschools. The findings reveal strengths in areas such as the use of bilingual instruction, provision of mid-day meals, and incorporation of cultural and creative activities. However, notable gaps were identified in outdoor play, health services, teacher training, and parental engagement. The findings underline the need for policy attention, standardized early childhood education practices and policy-level interventions to ensure comprehensive ECCE implementation in remote and under-researched regions like Champhai.

**Keywords:** *Bilingual Instruction, Champhai, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), NEP 2020, Private Stand-Alone Preschool, Teacher Training*

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is widely recognized as a foundational stage for a child's cognitive, emotional, and social development. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the importance of providing universal, play-based, and inclusive ECCE for children aged 3 to 6 years. Despite policy efforts, the quality and accessibility of preschool education remain uneven, particularly in rural and remote areas.

Private stand-alone preschools, which are growing in number across districts like Champhai in Mizoram, play an important role in early education. However, questions remain about their alignment with national standards, teacher qualifications and overall learning environment. This study examines the practices and services of private stand-alone preschools in Champhai, highlighting existing strengths and gaps in relation to the goals of NEP 2020.

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Govt. Champhai College

\*Corresponding Author

Received: July 11, 2025; Revision Received: November 25, 2025; Accepted: November 30, 2025

## Evaluating Practices and Proposing Reforms for ECCE in Private Stand-Alone Preschools: A Study in Champhai District, Mizoram

### *Rationale of the Study*

The early years of a child's life, particularly from birth to eight years, are recognized as a vital period for brain development and lifelong learning. Neuro scientific research highlights that during this stage, children undergo rapid cognitive, emotional, and physical development, acquiring foundational skills in language, motor coordination, and social interaction. These early competencies significantly influence their educational achievement and overall well-being in later years. Furthermore, this phase is critical for shaping personal habits, values, and interpersonal relationships.

In India, several key policies and frameworks—including the National Policy on Education (1986), National Curriculum Framework (2005), and the ECCE Policy and Curriculum Frameworks (2013)—have underlined the importance of early childhood education. Despite these efforts, challenges such as unequal access, lack of standardized curriculum, and inconsistent implementation continue to affect the quality of ECCE, especially in rural and privately managed settings. The RTE Act (2009) mandates formal school entry at age six, yet many children enter with limited school readiness, contributing to poor learning outcomes and increased dropout rates.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 offers a renewed focus on ECCE, defining it as the care and education of children from birth to eight years, and emphasizing a holistic, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate approach. The policy proposes the creation of a National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for ECCE (NCPFECCE), promotes play-based and inquiry-driven learning, and calls for professional training of educators and improved preschool infrastructure. It also aims to universalize access to ECCE by 2030.

In this context, evaluating the quality of preschool services, particularly in underserved areas like Champhai district of Mizoram, becomes essential. Private stand-alone preschools have emerged as key providers of early education, yet their practices often remain outside formal regulation. This study examines the pedagogical practices, services, and facilities of these preschools to assess their alignment with ECCE standards and identify areas for quality enhancement.

### *Objectives*

1. To examine the existing practices in private stand-alone preschools in Champhai District.
2. To formulate evidence-based suggestions for improving the quality and effectiveness of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Champhai District.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Research Design*

This study employed a descriptive and exploratory research design to investigate the current practices in private stand-alone preschools and to develop context-specific suggestions for improving the quality of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Champhai District.

### *Population*

The population includes all the private stand-alone preschools functioning in Champhai District, Mizoram.

## Evaluating Practices and Proposing Reforms for ECCE in Private Stand-Alone Preschools: A Study in Champhai District, Mizoram

### *Sample*

The sample for this study consisted of all private stand-alone preschools operating in Champhai District at the time of data collection. Since the total number of such institutions was limited to five, the study adopted a complete enumeration method, wherein the entire population was included as the sample. This approach ensured comprehensive coverage and enhanced the reliability of the findings, as every relevant unit was studied without sampling error.

### *Sources of Data*

The study utilized both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with preschool teachers and staff, along with direct observations of classroom practices and school infrastructure. Additionally, field visits to each of the selected preschools were carried out to obtain firsthand information about their functioning.

Secondary data were gathered from various published sources, including official ECCE policy documents such as those issued by NCERT and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Further insights were drawn from previous research studies and relevant academic literature related to early childhood education and preschool standards.

### *Tools of Data Collection*

Interview schedule for teachers and staffs and Observation checklist developed by the investigator based on ECCE indicators was used for data collection.

### *Techniques of Data Collection*

The researcher personally visited each school and obtained permission from the head of the institution to collect the necessary data, assuring them of the confidentiality and ethical handling of all information gathered.

### **Data Analysis**

The collected data were organized into tables and analyzed descriptively. Findings were interpreted in alignment with the objectives of the study and compared with established ECCE standards. Based on the analysis, contextually relevant suggestions were formulated to enhance the quality of preschool education in the district.

## **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

1. To examine the existing practices in private stand-alone preschools in Champhai District.

*Table 1: Existing Practices in Private Stand-alone Preschools in Champhai District.*

Sl. No	Items	Yes		No	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Organization of activities according to themes	2	40	3	60
2	Maintenance of separate files/records for each child	2	40	3	60
3	Organization of outdoor games/activities	1	20	4	80
4	Immunization & vaccination	2	40	3	60
5	Health Check up/Health care services	0		5	100

**Evaluating Practices and Proposing Reforms for ECCE in Private Stand-Alone Preschools: A Study in Champhai District, Mizoram**

6	Growth Monitoring	3	60	2	40
7	Celebration of important festivals (international/national/ cultural /local)	5	100	0	
8	Organization of story-telling, rhymes/songs, drawing/painting	5	100	0	
9	Provision of lunch	5	100	0	
10	Pick & drop service	5	100	0	
11	Programme planning	5	100	0	
12	Home work	1	20	0	
13	Organization of Parent Teacher Meet	0		5	100
14	Medium of Instruction				
	a. Mizo	0		5	100
	b. English	0		5	100
	c. Mixed of Mizo & English	5	100	0	

It is clearly shown in the table that theme-based activities are organized by only 40% of preschools, while the remaining 60% do not follow thematic approaches. This suggests a lack of structured, child-centered curriculum in most institutions. Only 40% of schools maintain individual records/files for each child, pointing toward limited documentation and tracking of children's development. Outdoor activities/games are organized by merely 20%, reflecting inadequate emphasis on physical development and play-based learning, which are crucial aspects of ECCE. Immunization and vaccination services are available in 40% of preschools, while health check-ups are completely absent in all five preschools (100% “No”), indicating a major gap in basic health services. Growth monitoring, a key ECCE recommendation, is being practiced in 60% of the schools.

Encouragingly, 100% of the preschools provide lunch, showing attention to child nutrition. All preschools (100%) celebrate important festivals and regularly organize story-telling, rhymes, songs, and art activities. These are positive practices that enrich children's cultural exposure and creative development. Regarding transportation and daily services, all preschools (100%) provide pick and drop facilities and engage in programme planning. Only one preschool (20%) assigns homework, which may reflect either limited academic pressure or an informal approach to learning at home. With respect to parent involvement, no preschool organizes Parent-Teacher Meetings (0%), indicating a serious lack of parent-school collaboration and feedback mechanisms.

With respect to medium of instruction, none of the preschools use Mizo or English exclusively. All preschools (100%) use a mixed medium of Mizo and English, which reflects a bilingual approach suited to the local context, possibly enhancing comprehension and inclusivity.

2. To formulate evidence-based suggestions for improving the quality and effectiveness of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Champhai District.

**Suggestions**

1. **Enhance Teacher Training in ECCE:** There is a critical need to provide formal training in Early Childhood Care and Education. Government agencies, NGOs, or private institutions should organize ECCE-specific diploma or certificate programs

## Evaluating Practices and Proposing Reforms for ECCE in Private Stand-Alone Preschools: A Study in Champhai District, Mizoram

for preschool teachers to improve their pedagogical skills and align them with national standards.

- 2. Conduct Regular Professional Development Programs:** Regular workshops, in-service training, and exposure visits should be introduced to help the teachers build practical knowledge and classroom management strategies.
- 3. Ensure Compliance with ECCE Curriculum Guidelines:** Stand-alone preschools should adopt structured, theme-based planning and maintain individual child records to monitor developmental progress. ECCE curriculum implementation must be standardized across institutions.
- 4. Incorporate Health and Nutrition Services:** Basic health services such as regular health check-ups, immunizations and growth monitoring should be introduced in collaboration with local health departments to ensure children's well-being.
- 5. Establish Parent-Teacher Interaction Mechanisms:** Parent-teacher meetings should be conducted regularly to strengthen communication between educators and families, enabling a shared approach to child development and learning.
- 6. Regulate and Monitor Stand-Alone Preschools:** Local education authorities should develop guidelines to monitor infrastructure, staff qualifications and curriculum practices in private preschools to ensure accountability and quality assurance.
- 7. Encourage Documentation and Record-Keeping:** Preschools should be encouraged to maintain proper documentation related to curriculum planning, child assessment and developmental milestones to support effective learning interventions.
- 8. Promote Awareness on ECCE among Parents:** Awareness campaigns should be conducted to educate parents about the importance of ECCE, teacher qualifications and curriculum quality so they can make informed choices for their children.

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 provides a comprehensive framework to ensure holistic, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). However, the implementation of these goals remains a challenge, particularly in remote regions like Champhai district of Mizoram. This study reveals that the foundational activities are well implemented, and there is a mixed adherence to ECCE curriculum norms, reflecting varied pedagogical approaches. These institutions often follow play-based and activity-oriented approaches to early education, focusing on language development, motor skills and social behavior.

The overall analysis shows that while private stand-alone preschools in Champhai District are making strides in providing basic early education services, lack of focus on health, documentation, child monitoring practices and parental involvement which are vital for monitoring child development and fostering home-school collaboration, these points to areas needing improvement in aligning with national ECCE guidelines. Furthermore, only 40% of the schools follow thematic activity planning and maintain individual child records, which are essential for structured learning and progress tracking. The practice of assigning homework is found in only one preschool, reflecting inconsistencies in pedagogical approaches.

The key strengths of private stand-alone preschools in Champhai District comprises of universal provision of lunch, storytelling and co-curricular activities, festival celebration, and pick & drop services. Bilingual instruction (Mizo with English) makes education culturally relevant. The key gaps identified in this study are poor health and hygiene services

## Evaluating Practices and Proposing Reforms for ECCE in Private Stand-Alone Preschools: A Study in Champhai District, Mizoram

(no health check-ups, low immunization coverage), lack of outdoor/play-based activities, absence of parent engagement (no PTMs) and limited documentation and structured curriculum planning.

The results highlight the importance of aligning private preschools with national ECCE policies to ensure equitable and quality early learning experiences for all children. Thus, the study concludes that although these private stand-alone preschools in Champhai contribute to expanding access to early education childhood education, there is a pressing need for capacity building, training and standardization.

### REFERENCES

- Chawngthu, L., & Fanai, L. (2020). A study of the prevailing conditions of pre-school education in Mizoram with particular reference to physical structure of pre-schools in Aizawl City. *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews (IJRAR)*, 7(1), 72–74. <https://ijrar.org/papers/IJAR2001573.pdf>
- Chuaungo, L. (2001). *An analytical study of pre-school education in Mizoram* (Doctoral dissertation, North-Eastern Hill University, Mizoram Campus). <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/60543>
- Chuaungo, L. (2006). Physical structure and facilities of pre-schools in relation to minimum specifications for pre-schools. *Mizoram Educational Journal*, 1(1), 37–43.
- Gupta, M. S. (2009). *Early childhood care and education*. New Delhi: PHI Learning Private Limited.
- Jindal, M. (2022). *A study of standalone preschools in Pune city from the perspective of management for the implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy of India* (Doctoral dissertation). <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/426493>
- Laldampuii, Fanai, L. (2023). A study of private pre-schools within Aizawl City. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research (IJMER)*, 12(1), 138–144. [https://s3-ap-southeast-1.amazonaws.com/ijmer/pdf/volume12/volume12-issue1\(1\)/21.pdf](https://s3-ap-southeast-1.amazonaws.com/ijmer/pdf/volume12/volume12-issue1(1)/21.pdf)
- Mohanty, J., Mohanty, B. (2002). *Early childhood care and education (ECCE)*. New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd.
- National Council of Educational Research and Training. (2019). *The pre-school curriculum*. [http://ncert.nic.in/dee/pdf/Combined\\_Pre\\_school\\_curriculumEng.pdf](http://ncert.nic.in/dee/pdf/Combined_Pre_school_curriculumEng.pdf)
- National Council of Educational Research and Training. (2020). *Guidelines for preschool education*. <https://ncert.nic.in/dee/pdf/guidelines-for-preschool.pdf>
- National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development. (n.d.). *Guidebook for planning and organization of preschool education activities in Anganwadi centers*. <https://www.nipccd.nic.in/file/cmu/ECCE/pse.pdf>
- Singh, T. B. (2020). A study of pre-school education in Siaha District, Mizoram, India. *International Journal of Social Sciences Arts & Humanities*, 7(4), 119–122. <http://www.crdeepjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Vol-7-4-9-IJSSAH.pdf>
- Shukla, R. P. (2004). *Early childhood care and education*. Delhi: Sarup and Sons.

### Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

**Evaluating Practices and Proposing Reforms for ECCE in Private Stand-Alone Preschools: A Study in Champhai District, Mizoram**

***How to cite this article:*** Kawlni, L. (2025). Evaluating Practices and Proposing Reforms for ECCE in Private Stand-Alone Preschools: A Study in Champhai District, Mizoram. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 13(4), 1548-1554. DIP:18.01.143.20251304, DOI:10.25215/1304.143