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## UNIT 10 EDUCATIONAL TENETS OF SOME PIONEERS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION — PART-II

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### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

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In this Unit, you will read about the views of some more educationists who have made a significant contribution to the development of early childhood education and developed approaches and models for early learning and education.

#### Objectives

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- describe the views of Steiner, Mitchell, Badheka, Gandhi, Modak, Wagh, Malaguzzi and Weikart concerning learning and education in the early years; and
- explain how each educationist has contributed to the development of ECCE.

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## 10.2 RUDOLF STEINER (1861-1925)/ WALDORF EDUCATION METHOD

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Steiner was a scholar and a philosopher born in a village, Donji Kraljevek, which was earlier a part of Austria-Hungary, but today is in Croatia. He made many notable contributions to various fields including philosophy, education, medicine, agriculture and art. His work focused on the spiritual world. He gave lectures, and wrote books and essays on education, some of them being '*A Modern Art of Education*', '*Education in the Light of Spiritual Science*' and '*The Education of the Child*'.

**Rudolf Steiner was the force behind the Waldorf Education Method:** The first Waldorf school was set up when Emil Molt, the owner of Waldorf-Astoria Cigarette Company. Impressed by Steiner's work, Molt asked him to establish a school for the children of the employees of his company. Steiner agreed to do this on the condition that the school would be open to all children and have classes from pre-primary to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Thus, the first Waldorf School opened in Stuttgart, Germany in the year 1919 taking its educational philosophy from Steiner and its name from the Waldorf-Astoria Company.

Today, there are numerous Waldorf schools and preschools all over the world, including in India. Courses and certificate programmes that train in the Waldorf Education method are also offered by many teacher-training organizations in the world.

### 10.2.1 Steiner's View of the Child

Steiner viewed childhood in three developmental stages. These stages are seven-year-long periods. In each stage, children have particular developmental characteristics which affect how they learn. The first stage is from **birth to seven years**. These years correspond to the early childhood years. In this stage, the child uses all her senses to interact with the environment. According to him, learning should be sensory-based, through children's hands-on participation in activities, and experiences. He believed that children learn through play activity and imitation.

The second stage is from **seven to fourteen years**, corresponding to the middle childhood years, The third stage, according to Steiner, is from **fourteen to twenty-one years**.

### 10.2.2 Features of Learning and Education in the Early Years

Steiner believed that all children have potential, which education helps them reach. For him, the aim of education was to educate the 'Whole Child'. By this, Steiner meant that **through education not only would the children's minds grow but also their bodies as well as their souls**. He was unhappy with the overly academic emphasis of schools and felt that the aesthetic aspect of education was being overlooked. He used the term 'head, heart and

hands' to convey the idea that education must focus on the whole being so that thinking, feeling and doing are integrated. The stated goals of Waldorf education are to develop individuals who have the mind to think for themselves, have the heart to serve others, and have the courage to take action for others. Therefore, activities done in the Waldorf classroom involve:

- Children's hands — as their bodies, muscles and senses develop by engaging in activities where children work with their hands;
- Children's head — activities that require children to think and use their cognitive functions, thus developing their minds; and
- Children's heart — activities through which children understand emotions, and social responsibility help to develop their souls.

Can you see how Steiner's concept of education is related to the concept of 'Holistic Development' of children? Like many other educational pioneers, Steiner also believed in holistic development, which is why **he gave importance to all areas of development (physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional)** in his school. He also gave importance to the development of the children's moral and ethical character. This is also why Steiner emphasizes including art in the curriculum. Through various forms of visual and performing arts like music, painting, drama and sculpting, children use their whole selves. Steiner believed that by integrating art into the academic curriculum, children will better understand academic subjects like maths and science as their learning would happen through something beautiful. So, children learn about shapes through a dance activity and learn about history through a poem. The arts not only help children express their creativity but also help them appreciate aesthetic beauty.



Fig. 10.1: Eurhythmy at a glance

Steiner created a new art form called ‘Eurhythmy’ which is an important part of the Waldorf curriculum. Eurhythmy is a dance-like movement art form usually performed with music, or spoken words. It also has elements of role-play in it. Eurhythmy emphasizes the integration of the various art forms as well as various aspects of the child’s personality.

#### a) Curriculum

Waldorf School creates the classroom environment and the curriculum keeping the children’s stage of development in mind. Now let us look at how Waldorf Schools function during the early years.

In the Waldorf preschool, the teacher strives to create an environment that is loving, joyful and safe for the child. This environment is designed to be home-like, using natural materials. Since preschool years correspond to Steiner’s first developmental stage in which the child’s senses are crucial for her learning, the Waldorf teacher ensures that the **children have many sensory experiences**. She also encourages the children to participate in **art activities**, which as you read earlier, is a key component of the Waldorf curriculum. Since children learn a lot by seeing the activities of other people in their environment, children in Waldorf preschools are involved in ‘**practical play activities**’. These are activities designed by adapting and simplifying daily-life activities like cooking, cleaning, washing and gardening so that they are appropriate for the age and ability of preschool children (See Figure 10.2). Through activities like washing utensils, kneading dough, watering plants, not only do children learn some basic life skills but also get a chance to imitate what they have seen in their environment and learn from it. These activities also give children the opportunity of learning through hands-on work. In addition, imagination and creativity are emphasized in all aspects of their work.



Fig. 10.2: Children engaged in a practical play activity wherein they are wiping utensils

Waldorf pre-schoolers are also given many **opportunities for guided free play and imaginative play** in their daily routine. The materials provided to children for play are made of natural materials like wood, cloth, and seashells and they are generally homemade or made by the teacher. The toys in Waldorf preschools are generally simple and inexpensive rather than complex or expensive. This is because simple toys without many fancy gadgets allow children to use their imagination and creativity during play. The Waldorf doll is a good example of this. Even though these dolls are not very detailed or anatomically perfect (exactly like a human body), they give children a lot of freedom in fantasy play (See Figure 10.3).



Fig. 10.3: Let me put you to sleep!

**Development of oral language communication skills** is also emphasized in the Waldorf preschool curriculum by having **daily story time**. Teachers are encouraged to tell the story from memory rather than read the story from a book, as it leads to a better storytelling experience. Fairy tales and fables are told to slightly older children, while younger children listen to simple stories about animals. Oral language skills are also developed through the use of puppetry, games, singing and eurhythmy.

The Waldorf preschool curriculum aims to have rhythm in the child's life. This is done by creating a balance between different types of indoor and outdoor activities, imaginative play, sensory play, quiet or vigorous physical play. The daily rhythm is ensured by seeing that some activities are done every day at one particular time. Annual rhythm is ensured by having seasonal and religious celebrations at a particular time during the academic year. Thus, a routine is set in the Waldorf preschool.

Since spirituality is a key component in Waldorf's philosophy, certain **religious traditions** are a part of the Waldorf curriculum. Decisions

regarding which religious traditions would be followed are made by the faculty of the school, based on the needs of the children. The goal is to ensure that no particular religion is the focus.

The Waldorf philosophy discourages children in preschool (also children younger than fourth grade) from being exposed to media like TV, computers or recorded music, as it is believed that these media interfere with the child's imagination.

#### **b) Role of the Educator**

The teacher is a very important figure in the Waldorf method of education. According to Steiner, since children learn a lot through imitation during the early years, the teacher needs to be aware of her position as a role model for children. The teacher is given a lot of creative freedom in terms of selection of the topics, deciding the curriculum, and other pedagogical decisions. The teacher's aim in the Waldorf classroom is to build a relationship with the children which would promote learning. Because of this, the teacher stays with the children all through the elementary school and teaches at least the principal academic subjects for the eight grades so that children have a sense of continuity in their education. This also enables the teacher to understand each child in-depth and help the children to learn at their own pace.

Since the Waldorf Schools have specialized subject teachers only after class 8, it means that the elementary Waldorf teacher needs to be trained and proficient in teaching all the subjects. The teacher needs to be constantly developing herself in the light of the needs and demands of children as their learning requirements change as they grow. In fact, Steiner believed that helping children learn naturally results in the teacher's own learning and self-development.

- i) **Teacher as an Authority:** Steiner believed that the teachers in the classroom should be respected and unquestioned figures of authority as "children longed for a show of authority". The teacher, thus, does not function as a facilitator but as the authority who leads the children in a variety of teacher-directed activities. Yet, the teacher does not force her knowledge on the children, and neither does she claim to know everything; she does not fill the students with information but rather she lovingly guides them in finding answers to questions on their own.
- ii) **Teacher's Role in Evaluation:** In Waldorf schools, children are not evaluated using grades or marks. Instead, to understand the children and their development, the teachers are trained to carefully observe them and also have regular meetings with their parents. Based on these observations and meetings, the teachers write detailed assessments at the end of the year for each child, describing the child's nature, her behaviour, strengths and weaknesses along with what she has learned in the various subjects.
- iii) **Teacher's Role in Waldorf School Administration:** The teacher is involved in all aspects of the school including academic as well as

administrative functions. Steiner believed that for the school and teachers to have creative autonomy, the school should be independent and self-governing. Thus, all administrative activities in the school should be done by the teaching faculty of the school rather than by a separate administrator (usually the principal or the head teacher). A committee of teachers from amongst the teaching faculty (called the ‘college of teachers’) is created to make decisions regarding the running of the school as well as the pedagogy. They may also elect a head of the school who would take a leadership role in the school management. Teachers work with parents of children and encourage them to take an active part in the non-curricular aspects of the running of the school.

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### 10.3 LUCY SPRAGUE MITCHELL (1878- 1967)

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Lucy Sprague Mitchell, who is most well-known for founding the **Bank Street Approach** was born in the United States of America. She was influenced by the work of Freud, Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky and Erikson and believed that education has the power to improve society.

Mitchell along with Caroline Pratt and Harriet Johnson established a play school which is now considered to be one of the first of what is now known as ‘developmentally appropriate practice’ in the United States of America. You will read more about developmentally appropriate practice in the next Unit. In 1916, Mitchell founded the Bureau of Educational Experiments (BEE) in New York City in collaboration with her husband Wesley Mitchell (an economist) and Harriet Johnson. The idea behind BEE was that education provided to children should be based on an understanding of their development, arrived at through study and research. This organization was unique in combining research about children with its application in an experimental school. A nursery school was opened by the BEE in 1919, which joined with Pratt’s preschool. Later, this school was moved to Bank Street in New York and was known as the ‘Bank Street School’ and the approach followed here was called the ‘Bank Street Approach’. The Bank Street programme is designed for children from preschool through primary grades. It is one of the most well-known programmes operating today using a play-based approach. In 1930, Mitchell also opened a teacher preparation institute called the ‘Cooperative School for Student Teachers’.

Mitchell authored many children’s story books including ‘*Here and Now Story Book (1921)*’ which was one of the first books for 2-7-year-olds that centred around children’s everyday life rather than on fantasy-based fables and fairy tales. She also wrote a book for teachers called ‘*Young Geographers: How They Explore the World and How They Map the World (1934)*’.

#### 10.3.1 View of the Child in the Bank Street Approach

**Children are viewed as active learners**, who like to experiment and explore. Children are also seen as artists. Children’s prior knowledge is

respected. Children are seen as individuals, each developing uniquely, learning at their own pace, with different children learning in different ways.

Development is seen to take place as a result of the child's interactions with the social and the physical world. **The child's development is seen as integrated** which means that it is recognized that experiences in one developmental domain influence learning and development in all other domains. So, for example, the growth of cognitive processes (thinking, reasoning, problem-solving) cannot be separated from the development of social and emotional competence. The development of self-esteem, self-confidence, sense of identity, autonomy, initiative, and relationships with people, based on a sense of caring, fairness, responsibility and cooperation, supports the development of cognitive processes.

### 10.3.2 Features of Learning and Education in the Early Years

#### a) Curriculum

The Bank Street programme is concerned with all aspects of children's development which led Mitchell to coin the term the '**whole child**'.

Since children's development is seen as integrated, **the model upholds that the curriculum and functioning of the classroom should also be integrated.** Since children experience situations, events, and phenomena in their entirety and holistically, the curriculum is devised in terms of 'themes' or 'units'. Concepts from various disciplines are then explored within this theme. Also, the theme is used as the vehicle for fostering development in the different developmental domains. So children's oral expression is strengthened as they engage in discussions, storytelling, and rhymes based on the theme; other activities based on the theme are used to develop children's cognitive activities of matching, classification, prediction, inference, and so on. In this way, children experience a sense of integration in the learning process. The idea is that learning should not be broken down as subjects but should be integrated. So, for example, if a festival is approaching which is celebrated by families of most children, the teacher will take it up as the theme. She will explore various aspects of the festival and provide a variety of learning experiences based on it. To give another example, in the rainy season, the teacher may take up 'rain' as the theme. You will read about the thematic approach to curriculum planning in detail in Unit 26 of Block 6.

Social studies subjects (history, geography, cultural anthropology, economics and political science) form the backbone of this 'integrated' curriculum. According to this approach, children make meaning through their interactions in the human world. So, the themes selected are usually 'Social Studies' themes. Within these social topics, the subjects of science are interwoven.

#### i) *Play and concrete first-hand experiences at the heart of the curriculum*

Play is seen as the means for constructing and reconstructing knowledge and is seen as the means for enhancing cognitive development rather than as an end itself.



The Bank Street approach is also known as the ‘**developmental-interactionist approach**’. The term ‘developmental’ here means that curriculum planning is influenced by child development principles. The term ‘interactionist’ refers to two aspects. It refers to the importance this model places on the interactions the child has in her environment, particularly social interactions. The approach believes that learning takes place best in collaborative groups. ‘Interaction’ here also refers to the interconnectedness between the cognitive development and socio-emotional development of the child as explained above.

The day’s schedule includes individual, small group, and large-group play and play-based learning activities. **Children’s own activity, problem-solving and experimentation is emphasized and teacher-directed activity is de-emphasized.**

## ii) *Arrangement of Learning Space*

The space in the room is organized into ‘**interest centers**’ such as art, music, reading, sand play, clay work, water play, blocks, puzzles, swings, riding toys, dramatic play, math area and science areas. Appropriate materials are laid out in each interest centre that is specific to its purpose.

All play centres have a lot of print. For example, materials are labeled; teachers paste messages related to the interest centre. Children are free to move around the interest centres. They choose what they want to play with and are encouraged to learn in their own way. They have easy access to materials that are mostly open-ended, like blocks, wood, water, clay, etc. Many hand-made materials are also used.

Children can choose to work individually or in groups in these interest centres. These interest centres are regularly modified to meet children’s needs. So, for example, if children become interested in animals, an animal centre may be added. An interest centre that is not being used much may be adapted into something else which interests children. Some common group activities which are part of the curriculum are — cooking, outdoor trips, listening to music and group discussions.

The philosophy of the ‘interest centres’ stems from the belief that when children are provided with an environment with developmentally appropriate activities and materials, they are capable of selecting the activities and learning from them.

## b) **Role of the Educator**

In this approach, the teachers need to know the principles of child development, understand each child individually, respect individual differences, and know how best to provide such experiences and play materials that would be beneficial for each child’s development. **As children’s abilities develop, teachers have to change the experiences they provide accordingly. The focus is on providing ‘child-centered-education’.**

**The teacher is an observer and facilitator** who promotes independence and initiative in children. Creating trust between children and adults is a key element of this approach. Teachers help children to develop a strong sense of self, to make choices, to experience mastery, to have the confidence to take risks, develop abilities of problem-solving and independent experimentation, and a sense of joy in learning. The school is seen as an active community connected to the social world. The teachers, therefore, also emphasize the development of social relatedness and a sense of caring, fairness, responsibility and cooperation. Children's prior learning is taken into account when planning experiences. Discipline is based on positive motivation and not on punishment.

Teachers use four teaching strategies to interact with children as given as follows:

- i) Observing children to know the level of their thinking;
- ii) Verbally responding to children's comments, actions and activities. This involves rephrasing children's comments, elaborating upon children's responses, and asking them questions;
- iii) Fostering higher levels of thinking; and
- iv) Posing challenging problems for children to solve.

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## **10.4 MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI (1869-1948)**

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Gandhiji will always be remembered not only as a great example of non-violence and truth but also as an important philosopher of education. He aimed at evolving an educational system based on Indian culture. In 1937, he outlined the ideological basis for his scheme of new education called *Nai-Talim* or **Basic Education**. However, at that time, he did not think of preschool education. In 1944, he realized the importance of early childhood education. In his words, "*The real education begins from conception, as the mother begins to take up the responsibility of the child. It is very clear that if this new education is to be effective, its foundation must go deeper, it must begin not with the children but the parents and the community.*"

**Gandhi's publications on education include:**

- Basic Education
- True Education
- Tasks before Indian Students
- Towards New Education
- Medium of Instruction

### **10.4.1 Gandhi's View of the Child**

Gandhiji wrote in his biography: "*We labour under a sort of superstition that the child has nothing to learn during the first five years of his life. On the*

*contrary, the fact is that the child never learns afterward what it does in its first five years. The education of the child begins with conception. The physical and mental states of parents at the moment of conception are produced in the baby. Then, during pregnancy, it continues to be affected by the mother's moods, desires and temperament, as also by her way of life. After birth, the child imitates the parents, and for a considerable number of years, entirely depends on them for its growth."* **He believed that the child is active, creative, and playful.** She learns through the medium of play. The home is the first centre of education and learning for the child.

#### 10.4.2 Features of Learning and Education in Early Years

**Gandhi coined the term 'Pre-Basic Education' for the education of children under seven years of age.** He stated that pre-basic education must aim at "the development of all their faculties, conducted by the school teachers in cooperation with the parents and the community in schools, in the home and the village."

Gandhi was also concerned with the defects of elementary education, particularly its emphasis on memorization, the divorce of the contents from the environment and the impracticability of the curriculum. He recommended a new approach during the elementary years called 'Basic Education'. Both **Pre-basic and Basic Education are based on the principle idea of imparting education to the mind and the body. Preschool education, he stated, must be inexpensive** so that it can reach the millions in the villages.

Good education, according to him, was "*that which draws out and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical capacities of the children.*" In Gandhi's philosophy of education, **children are at the centre of the process.** Their needs and interests are the deciding factors in the teaching strategy. The teacher must understand the child's likes and dislikes. **The child's own activity is at the core of the Gandhian philosophy of education.** Instead of loading the child with bookish knowledge, he stated, that the child must learn by doing, through experience and purposeful activities. The curriculum of Pre-basic Education is accordingly to be built and the teaching is to be done through concrete life situations.

**He laid great emphasis on crafts,** not merely for productive work, but also for developing the intellectual capacities of the children. He said that all teaching is possible through the processes of the handicraft.

Though the child in the preschool period cannot be self-sufficient or self-supporting, an attempt should be made to develop this quality. According to him, no one must be a parasite in the family or society.

Based on his above ideas, the first experiment in Pre-Basic education was started in 1945 at Sevagram, Maharashtra, under the guidance of Smt. Shanta Narulkar. The Pre-basic school is geared to the needs of the following four groups of children:

**Stage 1:** Conception to birth

**Stage 2:** Birth to 2 ½ years

**Stage 3:** 2 ½ years to 4 years

**Stage 4:** 4 years to 7 years

The first two stages involve both the mother and the child. Mothers are helped to learn about new trends and scientific methods of child rearing, health and hygiene. The physical and health needs of the children are also looked after, during this period.

Children from 2½ to 4 years of age are provided stimulating play activities. They are free to act, move about, and choose their own activities. The teacher ensures that the child handles the play materials effectively and correctly.

After four years of age, the child participates in activities like cleaning the classroom, washing small vessels, watering the plants, measuring and weighing things, ginning cloth with a small iron rod and wooden plank, bringing water, and other similar activities. Can you see the similarity between this idea and Montessori's idea of practical life activities?

Though Gandhiji's scheme of education was started with great enthusiasm in the country, by the end of the Second Five Year Plan, only 24 percent of the elementary schools were of the basic pattern. **The influence of his approach on preschool education does not appear to be marked. However, play-based activities did become an active component of the existing preschools, *Balwadis* and baby clinics of that time.**

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## 10.5 TARABAI MODAK (1892-1973)

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Padma Bhooshan Tarabai Modak was a pioneer in the field of preschool education in our country. She was also sometimes referred to as the 'Montessori Mother'. Modak was influenced by the works of Montessori, Gijubhai Bhadeka and Gandhi.

She was the principal of Barten Female College of Education at Rajkot in Saurashtra when she came in contact with Gijubhai Badheka, another Indian educationist in the field of preschool education. Badheka had opened a preschool education at Bhavnagar, Gujarat, where he was experimenting with Indianising the Montessori Method. Greatly influenced by what she saw at Gijubhai's Bal Mandir, she resigned from her post as the Principal in 1923 and went to work with Gijubhai.

This was the period when the national movement in education was at its peak and efforts were on to Indianize the system of education. Gijubhai and Tarabai were convinced of the importance of preschool education and they started the movement for preschool education in India. Preparing the necessary literature for student-teachers, they started a training college for pre-primary teachers in 1925 — the first of its kind in the country. Later in 1926, they founded a society for the propagation of preschool education called the '*Nutan Bal Shiskan Sangh*' (NBSS). NBSS brought out a journal called *Shikshan Patrika* and published instructional material for teachers and parents.

In Gujarat where Gijubhai and Tarabai worked, the preschool movement was criticized on the ground that preschool education was only for the rich and India could not afford it. Tarabai Modak took this up as a challenge and in 1931 extended the preschool movement to Maharashtra, where she set up a *Balwadi* in the scheduled-caste community of *Harijanwada* at Amravati.

In 1936, Tarabai started a centre for preschool children called *Shishu Vihar Kendra* in Bombay. This centre had been established in a well-to-do locality and also had a teacher training component.

Modak's experience in Amravati, the rising cost of Montessori materials, and the increasing popularity of Gandhi Ji's education philosophy led to Modak concluding that ECCE was especially necessary for children belonging to deprived sections of the society. Subsequently, in 1945 Tarabai founded the *Gram Bal Shiksha Kendra* at Bordi, where she worked for 12 years. Anutai Wagh, another Indian pioneer of ECCE also started working alongside Modak in Bordi.

Later in 1957, Modak shifted to the tribal area of Kosbad, where she worked with tribal children. The *Gram Bal Shiksha Kendra* at Kosbad, which under Tarabai's leadership began the programme of preschool education for the tribal children of Kosbad Hills, now runs a complex of educational institutions ranging from a *Balwadi* to a high school, training institutions for teachers at different levels and a workshop for preparing educational materials. The education component of this project aimed at making the children economically independent and self-respecting, while at the same time preserving the tribal cultural heritage. The trainees of teacher training institutions at Kosbad, after receiving training, are sent to villages to set up *Anganwadis*, devise play materials from locally available materials, and mobilize community support.

During her long career, Modak wrote many publications for children and parents in Gujarati and Marathi, including stories and nursery rhymes. She also wrote books on education in the English language. In 1962, she was honoured by the Indian government with the 'Padma Bhushan' for her work.

### 10.5.1 Features of Learning and Education in Early Years

**Tarabai pioneered the concept of *Balwadi* — a centre for preschool children. She started two types of *Balwadis* at Bordi - Central *Balwadis* and *Angan Balwadis*.** The Central *Balwadis* were run during regular school hours for five hours. They were fully equipped with educational play material. The children were brought from their homes to the central *Balwadi*.

The *Angan Balwadis* were conducted near the children's huts under the eyes of the parents and elders, in the courtyard, or under the trees. These were run at the convenience of children, for an hour and a half. The *Angan Balwadi* was almost without any materials, except a mirror, combs, buckets, scissors, napkins, etc. Activities in the *Angan Balwadis* included personal and general cleanliness, rhythmic movements, games, oral language activities, hand work and crafts.

**Tarabai also initiated the concept of the Meadow School** where teachers went to the meadows to teach the children who could not leave their cattle. She stressed that preschool should not interfere with the tribal child’s routine of roaming in the woods and interacting with nature.

**Tarabai stressed that the teachers should make their own play material from locally available materials.** The things that could not be made by teachers were made by local artisans.

Tarabai believed that the work children did in preschools should be familiar to them and relevant to their context. Like Gandhi, she emphasized giving children real-life work education. For instance, the preschoolers at Bordi would see adults cutting out weeds near their school and later would be asked if they wanted to join in the work.

**Tarabai's idea of the *Angan Balwadi* is a unique contribution that greatly helped in making education in the early years truly indigenous in content and form.** Her ideas of *Anganwadi* and meadow school were an eye opener to the people working with preschool children. Her educational materials and methods made a tremendous contribution to the preschool movement in India. The concept of *Anganwadi* in India’s largest programme for children, the ICDS scheme has been drawn from her work.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 1**

Answer the following questions briefly in the space below:

1) Match column I to column II

**Column I**

- a) Montessori
- b) Tagore
- c) Gandhi
- d) Tarabai
- e) Badeka

**Column II**

- i) pre-basic education
- ii) pioneered the concept of Balwadi
- iii) set up the first training college for primary teachers
- iv) peripatetic method
- v) rebelled against collective methods of teaching

2) What are the main features of the Montessori system of education?

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3) What has been Tagore’s contribution to preschool education?

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4) What role has Tarabai Modak played in promoting the preschool movement in India?

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### 10.6 ANUTAI WAGH (1910- 1993)

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Anutai Wagh worked closely with Tarabai Modak. While Tarabai initiated the concept of the meadow school, it was Anutai Wagh who developed and carried this concept further. She made a major contribution by Indianizing Montessori materials, using stones, leaves, pebbles, etc. available in the environment.

Anutai Wagh held executive positions in several organizations and committees and initiated many programmes for the welfare of women and children in her lifetime. She was the Director of the *Gram Bal Shikshan Kendra* at Kosbad. She was the President of the Thane District *Stree Shakti Jagriti Samiti* and under its auspices initiated many programmes for women and children.

She wrote many books in the Marathi language on child education and was also the editor of the monthly magazine of the *Nutan Bal Shikshan Sangh* – ‘*Shikshan Patrika*’ — and of a journal for women – ‘*Savitri*’.

In 1972, the Maharashtra Government awarded her the ‘*Ideal Teacher Award*’. In 1974, the State Government conferred on her the title of ‘*Dalit Mitra*’. The FIE Foundation of Ichal Karanji in 1978 awarded her for her outstanding contribution to education. In the International Year of the Child (1979), she received the National Award from the Government of India for being the best worker in the field of education. She has been felicitated and awarded by many other organizations in Maharashtra and elsewhere. She was a great source of strength and inspiration to the Indian Association for Preschool Education, taking an active leadership role in its functioning to refresh and re-educate teachers of the very young, country-wide.

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## 10.7 LORIS MALAGUZZI (1920-1994)

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Loris Malaguzzi was an educational psychologist and a practicing teacher and was the founder of Reggio Emilia's approach. His educational theory draws from his own experiences and is influenced by Dewey's progressive education movement, Piaget's constructivist theory, Vygotsky's postulation of social interaction as a method of learning, and Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence. The Reggio Emilia Approach to education originated in the city of Reggio Emilia, situated in northern Italy. While the Reggio Emilia Approach took its name from the city where it originated, its educational philosophy was developed by Loris Malaguzzi.

During the Second World War, the city like many other parts of Italy saw the destruction. So after the war, the people of the city got together to rebuild the city. Community members and parents collaborated to build schools for children below 6 years of age. They were guided in this process by Malaguzzi. Malaguzzi worked with Reggio Emilia's city administration to successfully open the network of "Asili del Popolo" or the People's Schools in 1967. Infant-toddler centres were added to these schools in 1971. These schools were managed and run by the local municipality of Reggio Emilia, and this is where the Reggio Emilia Approach was developed. Malaguzzi himself directed this network of schools for many years.

Later on, Malaguzzi was the editor of the journals — *Zerosei* and *Bambini*. In 1980, Malaguzzi founded an early childhood association for teachers, researchers, and administrators working in the field of ECCE called the *Nidi Infanzia* or 'National Group'. He served as the president of this organization from 1980 till his death in 1994.

### 10.7.1 Malaguzzi's Views of Child

Malaguzzi saw the child as a thinker and as one who is naturally curious about the world around her. He believed that all children are strong, inventive, full of ideas and potential, and competent to construct their own learning. They learn about the world by interacting with people and things around them. Malaguzzi believed in the child's ability to learn through investigation. He believed children could collaborate to plan learning projects, reflect upon their experiences critically and learn from what they do. In this way, the child is actively involved in her learning process. He saw children as individuals with rights rather than needs. So he held that learning was a right for the child and not a privilege provided by adults. They are the central characters in the educational process, supported by teachers and parents.

### 10.7.2 Features of Learning and Education in the Early Years

#### a) Curriculum and Educational Materials

**Reggio Emilia propounded and developed the concept of the Emergent Curriculum.** You will read in detail about this approach to curriculum



development in Unit 27 of Block 6 of this Course. In this section, let us read about how the emergent curriculum approach is applied in Reggio Emilia preschools. In this way, many aspects of the emergent curriculum will become clear to you.

There is no pre-planned fixed curriculum or set of topics to be covered in the Reggio Emilia approach. There is no division of learning into subjects. Broad goals are set by the teachers for children's development with there being a lot of flexibility about how they are to be met. **The chief strategy for learning in Reggio Emilia approach is the use of the Project Method.** A group of children and their teacher together decide what topic or concept they will explore in-depth. This becomes their Project. The topic for the Project can emerge from the questions children ask, the observations and experiences they share, or from teachers' observations of children's activities. The teacher pays close attention to what the children are saying to find out their thoughts and interests. She reflects upon all that she has observed as these reflections form the basis of learning activities in the classroom. Any interest, the idea of the child, or any discovery the child has made can be explored in-depth in this emerging curriculum. For example, a child shared with the teacher her experience of seeing a bird's nest in a tree near her house. This led to a classroom discussion with all the children regarding bird homes. Subsequently, the children were involved in a project on birds' nests.

**To explore and understand the topic that children have taken up as a Project, children use a variety of investigative methods** – observations of the phenomenon under study, interviews with people, looking up books. They decide what the course of their learning will be and what methods they will use. So children do not learn from any one textbook but learn in different ways from different sources. When children work on a project they do so in small groups of usually 5-7 children. All children are not expected to do the same thing and their originality is valued. The idea is that working in small groups allows children to understand styles of communication. As children collaborate and plan their Project, they debate, discuss, resolve opposing ideas, negotiate, reconstruct ideas and hypothesize – all of which leads to cognitive growth. There is continuous communication and sharing of ideas among peers as well as the teacher and the children.

**Learning and knowledge construction in this approach is a very social and a very dynamic process.** The Projects are carried out for a short time or a long time, depending upon the interest of the children.

As children explore their topic and continue their investigations, they represent and depict their learning and experiences in many different ways through different media. Children document what they create or learn in the Project in the atelier/mini atelier (workshop space or art studio). They use oral expression, dance, drawing, painting, clay work, building, dramatic play, finger play (shadow play), music, photography, puppetry, sculpting, and other ways to communicate what they know and what they want to continue to explore further. In this way, **children are seen to have a 'hundred languages' which refers to their many different ways of representing their thinking.** This emphasis on symbolizing one's thinking is a unique

feature of Reggio Emilia approach. **The use of the Project Approach and the encouragement provided to children to use multiple ways of representing their thinking arises from Malaguzzi's belief that the child is a natural researcher and a communicator.**

Though Project work is central to the RE approach, it takes up only a part of the day, each day. During the rest of the day, there are other preschool activities – such as dramatic play in realistic home settings, block play, vigorous play, reading and examining books, writing, and interacting with friends. Arts are emphasized and children express themselves through the arts not only when they are engaged in a project, but at other times as well.

The child — her thoughts, ideas, interests, creations and expressions — are all given a lot of respect in the Reggio Emilia Approach. She is the centre of all learning activities as it is her interests that guide the curriculum. The child is the central character in the educational process, supported by parents and teachers.

#### **b) Arrangement of the Learning Space**

Malaguzzi believed that the child is naturally motivated to form a connection with the world around her; she wants to understand her environment. So the environment becomes a crucial part of the Reggio Emilia learning approach. **The learning environment is in fact seen as the 'third teacher'** for children, after the parents and the preschool teacher. The child actively learns by interacting with the space around her. So the space needs to be stimulating to all the senses and provide multiple learning opportunities.

Thus, in Reggio Emilia schools, every space and component of the learning environment contributes to the child's education. According to Malaguzzi, the environment can: a) communicate information about children's interest, their culture and identity; b) attract attention; and c) communicate messages of welcome.

**In the Reggio Emilia Schools, beauty and aesthetics are emphasized.** The rooms are arranged to have a lot of natural light and greenery. Aspects like colour, light, reflections and the arrangement of the smallest of materials are carefully thought out by the educator, even in areas like bathrooms, kitchen and hallways, which are often neglected. Educators introduce unexpected and interesting elements which would attract the child. For instance, storing colourful objects in transparent boxes and having aromatic smells in the classroom not only draw in the child, but also encourage classroom conversation.

Materials can be used in multiple ways. Children and parents are involved in collecting and organizing these materials. Many natural materials like pine cones, shells, or pebbles are used by children and displayed in the classroom based on size, shape, or colour. Children's work, their interests as well their pictures are generously displayed all over the place.



**Fig. 10.4: Classroom in a Reggio Emilia School**

**Source:** <http://www.compasselc.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Classroom-Diana-School-Reggio-Emilia.png>

**The Reggio Emilia schools have certain distinctive architectural features.**

One such feature is the atelier. The **atelier** is the main art studio/workshop of the school which contains a wide variety of art supplies, natural and recycled materials as well as other resources, which the children use to express themselves and document their work. Other than the main atelier, each classroom in the school also has a mini-atelier.

Another feature of the school is the **piazza area** which is a central area that leads to various classrooms. This area is used by children of different classes as well as parents to meet each other, form friendships and extend the classroom activities outside.



**Fig. 10.5: Piazza: The Chit-Chat Corner of the Reggio Emilia School**

**Source:** <http://www.compasselc.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/The-Diana-School-Reggio-Emilia-la-piazza.png>

The central piazza shows us the importance that Malaguzzi gave to human interactions and relationships and the role of the environment in encouraging them. Child-child and child-adult interactions are also kept in mind while designing the classrooms. The children have space to work either among themselves or with the teacher in large groups, small groups or individually.

### c) Role of the Educator

In the Reggio Emilia centres, during the early years, children are divided into two groups – birth to three years and three to six years. The Reggio Emilia Preschool classroom consists of 25 children with 2 co-teachers, while the infant-toddler group is slightly smaller in size with 3 co-teachers. The Reggio Emilia approach believes that a team of at least two teachers is essential to understanding the children. Having co-teachers gives the children a model of how to work with peers. The teachers stay with the same group of children for a period of three years but the group moves to a different classroom/space every year as the needs and interests of children change with age.

Other than the classroom teachers, two other staff members help in the learning processes of the school. These are the *Atelierista* and *Pedagogista*. An *atelierista* is a person trained in arts, who supports children's work in the atelier, teaching them techniques and skills. The *pedagogista* is kind of an advisor, who helps teachers with various educational issues, helps in building relationships with families, and is responsible for staff development. One *pedagogista* works with several preschools. There is no head teacher or director of the school.

**Educators play a significant role in the Reggio Emilia approach.** The teacher is someone who recognizes that her work of understanding children and creating learning experiences is a continuous and collaborative process. The teacher has to take on multiple roles.

- i) The teacher is a **guide** who helps children understand the world around them. She guides the children in the process of their discovery. She asks them questions to find out about their ideas and then provides them with opportunities to make discoveries. She is not a traditional teacher who just “teaches” the lesson, nor does she sit back and only observe the children. This teacher is an active facilitator who provides children with tools to learn. Her role is to listen to children, observe them, ask them questions and reflect on their answers to understand them and take their learning forward.
- ii) The teacher also plays the role of a **learner or a collaborator** who is learning alongside the children. She does not dominate the class, she is not an authority on knowledge, rather she listens to the children and learns with them. She respects the children's prior knowledge and their ideas.
- iii) One of the unique roles of the teacher is to document all aspects of the child's experiences and activities (Project as well as others) to represent the thinking of the child. The documentation by the teacher emphasizes the **teacher's role as a listener and observer**. Documentation is done

by taking photographs of work done by children, their activities, and the stages of growth of their projects; by making audio and video recordings of children's discussions, conversations, play; by writing detailed notes of incidents; and by collecting children's work samples such as paintings, clay work. This documentation is then displayed throughout the school in different forms – as a panel hung up on the wall, or as a book,

This detailed documentation serves many purposes:

- It is a record of how children's thinking and perspectives are changing and developing over time. This serves as a tool of reflection for the teacher. The teacher uses this documentation as the basis for their weekly discussions with other teachers, the *atelierista* and the *pedagogista*. They review the documentation, discuss what it seems to communicate about children and arrive at a shared interpretation. These discussions help the teachers find ideas about how to formulate future learning experiences for the children. Sometimes, ideas for a project may emerge from such discussions.
  - The documentation shows to the children that their work is valued and gives them a sense of accomplishment. It also helps the children in remembering what they had learned earlier.
  - The documentation enables the parents to know what their children are doing in the preschool, what they are learning, and how.
- iii) The educator in the Reggio Emilia class is also a **researcher**. The continuous discussions and interpretations of their own work and that of the children help the teachers to deepen their theoretical understanding of children's development, their process of learning, and how they as teachers can help children to expand their learning strategies.

#### d) **Role of the Parents**

Since its very beginning, parents of the children have a major role in the Reggio Emilia Preschools. They are involved in many aspects of decision making participate in class activities and share their ideas and skills. There is open communication between the preschool and the families of the children. This enables close links between the home and the school. Consequently, the curriculum represents the diversity of children's families and their experiences.

Today, the Reggio Emilia Approach has spread all over the world as its success in Italy has inspired many early childhood programmes.

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## **10.8 DAVID WEIKART (1931- 2003)**

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David Weikart was an American psychologist and an educationist, under whose leadership the High Scope Approach was founded.

In 1962, when he was the director of special services for the Public schools in Ypsilanti, Michigan, USA, Weikart along with his colleagues started the now famous **High Scope Perry Preschool Project**. This Project was developed to

demonstrate that early education could improve school performance of poor children of Ypsilanti, Michigan. Here the term 'High Scope' refers to the 'high purpose and far-reaching mission' of the approach. This massive intervention project and research study which continued for over 40 years, proved that a good preschool education benefited individuals (especially those belonging to low socio-economic families) not only during their school life but also in their adult life. This study found that children who attended good quality preschools had better educational achievements, higher paying jobs, and lesser chances of getting arrested for committing a crime; as compared to children who did not attend any preschool programme.

Later in 1970, Weikart also founded the High Scope Educational Research Foundation.

The High Scope Approach is followed by many preschools in the world today including in India. It is also used in many preschools which belong to America's famous preschool programme — the Head Start Programme, about which you read in Unit 5 of Block 1 of this Course. The approach caters to both preschool programmes (for children aged 2 ½ years to 6 years) as well as to infant — toddler programmes (for children aged 6 weeks to around 3 years). This approach is primarily influenced by the work of Piaget and has also been influenced by the theories of Dewey and Vygotsky.

**This approach is also known by the name 'Cognitively Oriented Curriculum'.**

### **10.8.1 View of the Child in the High Scope Approach**

The High Scope Approach is built on the idea that children are active learners who construct their knowledge by actively engaging in meaningful experiences through play. Children learn best when the environment is appropriate for their context, when they have actively involved in self-selected learning activities, i.e. activities that they plan, carry out and reflect upon.

### **10.8.2 Features of Learning and Education in the Early Years**

#### **a) Curriculum**

High Scope programmes follow a **daily routine** where specific periods are allotted to specific activities. The routine includes time segments for arrival and departure, feeding and meal times, nap times, bodily care routines, choice time, outside time and group time. This daily routine provides a common framework and the consistency of this routine helps children to know what to expect during the day and develop an understanding of time. This daily routine is often represented on the walls in form of pictures. However, the routine is flexible – it can be changed to accommodate children's needs and interests.

The High Scope routine for the preschool programme has the following main components:

#### **i) Plan-Do-Review Cycle**

**This unique feature of the High Scope routine is at the heart of the curriculum.** It is a three-step process. First, in the morning, the teacher

helps the children individually or in small groups to think through what they would like to do during the day. Children get to identify their goals, express their intentions, and decide on actions to achieve them. The teacher records the child's plans. Second, the children carry out what they have planned and engage in their self-selected activities, supported and assisted by the teacher. A large period of the day's time is devoted to this. Finally, the children recall and review in small groups what they have done and how their plan worked out. This deliberate planning and reflection help to develop children's thinking skills.

- **Small-group time:** This is a teacher-planned activity that generally reinforces a cognitive concept.
- **Large-group time:** These are activities like music and movement, games and storytelling which involve the whole group. Art and music are part of daily activities.
- **Other aspects** of the routine are arrival time, outside time, tidy-up time, meal time and transition time.

The daily routine in the infant and toddler programme focuses on caregiving routines, arrival and leaving time, meal times, naps, choice time, outdoor activity time and group time.

The High Scope curriculum is organized in terms of certain content areas. **For the High Scope preschool, the curriculum consists of 8 areas.** These are:

- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development and Health
- Language, Literacy and Communication
- Mathematics
- Creative Arts
- Science and Technology
- Social Studies

Each of these content areas is further organized into Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs). KDIs are statements that describe learning goals for children and guide learning in the curriculum areas. They give the teachers a framework by which they plan the daily activities and also observe, support, extend and evaluate children's learning and development. In the preschool curriculum, there are 58 KDIs under these 8 areas. For example, some KDIs under the area of 'Social Studies' are:

- **Diversity:** Children understand that people have diverse interests, characteristics, and abilities.
- **Decision Making:** Children take a role in making decisions in the classroom.
- **History:** Children have an understanding of the past.

There are different KDIs for infants, toddlers and elementary-level children. For the infant and toddler programme, there are 42 KDIs under six curricular areas.

ii) **In its approach to literacy**, the High Scope curriculum places a lot of emphasis on children's ability to identify and interpret symbols before they are introduced to letters and words. For example, each child in the class would be assigned a special symbol (like 'star' for one child, 'circle' for another child) and all belongings of the child would have that symbol. The classrooms are print-rich with plenty of story books and writing tools. To develop early math concepts, children are provided opportunities to count, compare numbers, and practice one-to-one correspondence.

Influenced by Piaget, Dewey and Vygotsky, the High Scope researchers and educators developed indicators to identify whether the curriculum and activities are appropriate for the child's context and provided active learning experiences. These indicators are:

- Adequate age-appropriate materials that appeal to children's senses and can be used in different ways.
- Opportunities for children to explore, manipulate and transform the selected materials.
- Opportunities for children to choose activities and materials which they find personally meaningful and interesting.
- Opportunities to express what they are thinking through words and actions.
- Opportunities for adult scaffolding — adults first gauge what children already know and then provide opportunities for reasoning, problem-solving, and creativity that take children's thinking to the next level.

#### b) Arrangement of Learning Space

Similar to the Montessori approach and the Bank Street approach, the learning space in the High Scope Centres approach is organized into '**learning centres**' or '**interest areas**' such as building area (block play), pretend and role play area, language and literacy area (books and writing materials) music and movement area, sand play and water play area, computers, art area. Various materials reflecting children's interests and home culture are labelled and stored in these areas. Children are free to choose the materials and areas they want to engage with. These are easily accessible to the children and they are encouraged to use these materials in creative ways, combine materials from different areas and return them after they have completed their play with them. The learning space has areas dedicated to large-group activities and small-group activities.

The materials which are made available in the interest centres are also selected based on the opportunities they provide for problems to be solved. **The focus of the educators is on using a problem-solving approach. Questions such as "How can you make this...?", "What can we do to...?"** are used to encourage thinking and reflection.



### c) Role of the Educator

**The teacher in High Scope acts as a participating partner rather than as a manager or a supervisor. There is a balance between child-initiated activities and adult-planned activities.** The teacher aims to develop initiative, independence, and creativity by building positive relationships with them and supporting their play. The teachers are skilled in asking such questions that promote learning, reflection and communication. Children are helped to deal with and resolve conflicts using a problem-solving approach. So if there is a dispute regarding play materials, the teacher would likely ask the children involved how it can be best resolved.

**Observation of children is a major role of the High Scope teacher.** The teacher observes children's play and uses it as an opportunity to extend children's learning, especially in the curricular areas. She records significant behaviours children display during daily activities. These are called anecdotal records. The teachers use the Child's Observation Record (COR) to note children's development and understanding concerning the KDIS and these daily observations are used in team planning sessions to align the curriculum with children's needs.

**Teachers keep a record of children's work (called a portfolio).** Teachers also involve children's families in the learning process through home visits, family group meetings, and daily conversations.

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## 10.9 ROLE OF PIONEERS IN SHAPING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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The ideas of various educationists, pioneers and philosophers discussed in this Unit have stood the test of time as their ideas are studied by aspiring educators decades (or even centuries) after the philosophies first originated. Now that you have read about the various pioneers in the area of ECCE, it is a good idea to reflect upon their many contributions.

You will probably find many similarities and differences in many of their works. Tagore and Rousseau were both naturalists. Froebel and Montessori both designed special play/educational materials for children. While both Montessori's method and Malaguzzi's Reggio Emilia method originated from Italy, yet they had some differences. While Montessori advocated individualized teaching, Malaguzzi encouraged children to be involved in group projects and active peer interaction during learning. These similarities and differences show the constant struggle educationists made over time to find the best possible method/approach for ECCE. Nonetheless, some similarities are common to ALL the educational philosophies, such as the view of the child as an active learner, putting the child at the centre of all learning activities and using play as the medium of learning. These features today can be seen in all quality ECCE programmes and are closely linked to developmentally appropriate practices. You will read about developmentally appropriate practices in Unit 11.

You would have noticed that many of the educational philosophies of the thinkers were formed as a reaction to the system of education prevalent during their time. For instance, Dewey wanted an educational system that

moved away from the traditional authoritarian system in American education where the teacher was like a dictator. Thus, his work put the child in the centre of all learning activities. Also, Gandhiji's *Nai-Talim* was created as a reaction to the educational prevailing during the time before Independence, which was westernized and not sensitive to Indian culture.

Every teacher, who takes up the task of making a curriculum for young children, starts by asking questions like, what do I teach the children? How do I teach? What impact will my curriculum have on children's lives? The answer to these questions can be found in the writings of various great educationists who have contributed to our understanding of children and learning.

You as teachers need to constantly evaluate and see what method/aim of education best suits your context.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 2**

1) State whether the following sentences are 'True' or 'False'. Correct the false sentences.

a) Malaguzzi believed that teaching children was the only role of the teacher.

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b) In the Waldorf school, there is separate staff for teaching and administrative duties.

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c) Many pioneers of ECCE formed their educational philosophies as a reaction to the prevalent system of education during their time.

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d) In the Waldorf approach, the classroom environment is seen as the 'third teacher' of children.

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- e) Steiner saw play and imitation as a crucial part of learning for children under seven years of age.

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2) Which of the following are a part of educational ideas proposed by Malaguzi?

- a) Piazza
- b) Emergent Curriculum
- c) Atelierista
- d) Project Method
- e) Para-Teachers
- f) Pedagogista
- g) Thematic Curriculum

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## 10.10 SUMMING UP

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In this Unit, you have read about the ideology and philosophy of some eminent educationists as related to early childhood education. The work of these educators has had a tremendous influence on the principles of early childhood education, as we know it today.

Comenius laid great emphasis on the stimulation of senses and developing the powers of observation as a means of acquiring knowledge. He believed that during infancy (the first six years in his classification) the mother’s lap should serve as the school. He believed that play was very necessary for all round development. He was against rote memorization and stated that the desire for learning has to be kindled. He wrote the first picture book for children.

Rousseau introduced the ‘naturalism’ movement in education. In contrast to the ideas of that time, he stated that the child is active and continuously attempts to understand the world. The child explores the world and learns by doing. He stressed that nature should be allowed to take its course in the development of children. He stressed the necessity of play for learning end was against harsh discipline.

Pestalozzi emphasized that education should be child-centered and that learning was more important than achievement. He emphasized the role of the mother in preschool education. He stated that the spontaneous activity of the child leads to learning. He laid great emphasis on games in development and education and made great use of objects in his teaching. He developed some exercises for pre-schoolers which he outlined in his book.

Froebel was the founder of the kindergarten system of preschool education. His work has had a tremendous impact on the nature of preschool education as we know it now. The present-day nursery schools and preschools are

heavily based on the principles and methods developed by him. Froebel believed that childhood had value in itself and the growth of the child is directed by an inner force. He believed that the chief means of education is the child's own activity and that play is an essential factor in the growth of the child. He believed that play allows the harmonious exercise of physical, emotional and intellectual qualities. However, the play also needs to be organized and guided. Froebel's KG centered around three elements — the use of his play materials, the singing of his play songs, and the playing of various educational games in the "play circle". The play materials were of two types — gifts and occupations.

Montessori, like the other progressive educationists, believed that education must help in the complete unfolding of the child's individuality and that a suitable environment should be provided so that the child may develop her potential. She was against collective methods of teaching. She held that the method of instruction must be geared to each child's level of development, interests and needs, since each child is unique and the rate of development is different for each child. She believed that it was important to help the child learn rather than acquire information through formal studies. She stressed that the senses are the gateways of knowledge and that the first six years are the crucial period of a child's life. Montessori developed her own educational material and her teaching methodology is heavily based on this aspect. Her system of education is child-centered and the child is free to choose the activity she desires. She has laid great responsibility on the directress to guide children's learning.

Dewey's Progressive education put the child in the centre of educational activities and highlighted the Experiential Education approach. He believed that education played a major role in building a democratic society.

Tagore, like Rousseau, was a naturalist. He believed that the child is essentially explorative, active and full of joy. He believed in education through play and activity. The curriculum in his preschool was activity-centered. He believed that children learn by doing. He also stressed teaching through the environment. He was a follower of the peripatetic method of teaching. He was against rigid discipline' and the student-teacher relationship was the most significant aspect of his educational philosophy.

Gandhiji evolved a system of education based on the Indian culture. He gave the term Pre-basic education for the education of children below seven years of age. He believed that the early years are crucial in learning. In his philosophy, the children are at the centre of the education process. He was against loading children with bookish knowledge. He believed that children must learn by doing and through purposeful activities. He laid great emphasis on crafts. He stressed that preschool education must be inexpensive and that the parents and the community must be involved in it.

Tarabai Modak, Gijubhai Badeka and Anutai Wagh were pioneers in the field of preschool education, and to them goes the credit for Indianizing preschool education. Tarabai and Gijubhai started a training college for pre-primary teachers in 1925 — the first of its kind in the country. Tarabai pioneered the concept of *Balwadi*. She also proved that access to preschool education need

not be limited to children from the upper strata, but that with imagination the preschool worker can adapt her teaching strategy and methodology to work with children from the poorer sections. Anutai Wagh carried Tarabai Modak's work further. She made a major contribution by Indianizing Montessori materials, using items available in the environment.

The Waldorf education approach, developed by Rudolf Steiner focused on the education of the 'Whole Child'. Steiner identified three stages of a child's development. The Waldorf curriculum focused heavily on the arts. Practical play activities, sensory experiences and free and imaginative play are key features of the Waldorf Preschools.

The Reggio Emilia Approach, created by Loris Malaguzzi saw the child as someone beautiful and full of potential. The Emergent Curriculum in the Reggio Emilia Approach ensures that learning is a very social and a very dynamic process. This approach also gives a lot of importance to the classroom environment of the child. The teacher takes on the multiple roles of a guide, learner, researcher, and someone who documents the child's experiences.

The different theoretical tenants covered in this Unit will help you in creating your philosophy of education suitable to your context and needs.

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## 10.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) a)- v)  
b)- iv)  
c)- i)  
d)- ii)  
e)- iii)
- 2) Individualized teaching is the focal point of the Montessori Method. The teacher teaches through the educational materials prepared by Montessori. The child learns by doing, through self-activity. Special attention is given to the stimulation of the senses. Learning is through the play way method. The child is free to choose the activity she desires while the directress is present to guide the child through it.
- 3) Tagore emphasized that education should be child-centered and that the curriculum in the preschool should be based on the activity of the child. The child must have freedom for creative self-expression. Play and activity should be the means of education. He emphasized learning through the environment and the use of the peripatetic method in teaching.
- 4) Modak helped to Indianize preschool education and was responsible for the spread of the preschool education movement, in the country, particularly for children belonging to the lower income group families. She pioneered the concept of *Balwadis*.

### Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) a) False. Malaguzzi believed that the teacher takes on the multiple roles of a guide, learner, researcher, and someone who documents the child's experiences.  
b) False. In the Waldorf School, the teaching and administrative duties are both carried out by teachers.  
c) True  
d) False. The classroom environment is seen as the 'third teacher' of children in the Reggio Emilia Approach.  
e) True

- 2) a) Yes
- b) Yes
- c) Yes
- d) Yes
- e) No
- f) Yes
- g) No



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