



Pedagogical Practices in Early Childhood Development: Roles of Facilitators in Community School ECD Centres

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Keywords

Child-centered approach, community schools, facilitators, pedagogical practices, and play-based learning.

Abstract

This study examines the pedagogical approaches and instructional techniques used by Early Childhood Development (ECD) facilitators in Nepalese community school centers. This study's main goals were to better understand how facilitators teach young children and to pinpoint the precise tactics used in regular classroom settings. Through thorough classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and a review of pertinent EDC documentation, the study collected qualitative data using a descriptive research approach. In order to identify common teaching techniques and the factors affecting classroom quality, the study concentrated on participants from particular community schools. According to the results, most facilitators use a hybrid pedagogical approach that combines basic teaching techniques with play-based learning, oral storytelling, musical activities, and group dynamics. However, the study concludes that systemic aspects are necessary for these practices to be effective; in particular, facilitator training, the availability of sufficient learning resources, and a supportive school infrastructure are essential for maximising ECD classroom activities.

Introduction

A crucial stage supporting children's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development is called early childhood development (ECD) (Center on the Developing Child, 2016). In Nepal, community schools are essential for delivering ECD services, particularly

in isolated and underprivileged areas with few formal early learning options (Acharya, 2019). According to Shrestha and Manandhar (2020), the role of facilitators in these centers is to provide exciting, caring environments that encourage learning via play and social

engagement. According to Siraj-Blatchford et al. (2011), the pedagogical requirements of early childhood education are very different from those of traditional schooling, requiring methods that promote curiosity, creativity, communication, and basic literacy and numeracy. However, there are obstacles to ECD pedagogy in Nepalese community schools, such as inadequate resources, a lack of training for facilitators, and infrastructure limitations that affect the quality of instruction (Dhital & Adhikari 2020).

Early Childhood Development (ECD) constitutes a pivotal developmental phase, serving as the foundation for a child's physical, emotional, social and cognitive maturation (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; UNICEF, 2019). Within the context of Nepal, community schools have assumed a critical mandate in delivering ECD services, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged regions where access to early learning opportunities is otherwise restricted [MoEST], 2020). In these settings, ECD facilitators are charged with the complex task of constructing safe, supportive, and engaging environments that foster learning through play and meaningful interaction (Rao & Sun, 2015).

The pedagogy required for instructing young children diverges significantly from the methods used for older students. Effective early childhood education necessitates strategies that stimulate curiosity, foster creativity, enhance communication, and build foundational literacy and numeracy skills (Bredekamp, 2014). However, the implementation of these pedagogical ideals is often constrained by the realities of the field; practices in ECD classrooms are heavily influenced by the facilitator's level of training, their individual skill sets, the resources available to them, and the broader school

environmental (UNESCO, 2017). In many Nepalese community schools, facilitators contend with significant systemic hurdles, including a scarcity of teaching materials, overcrowded classrooms, and a dearth of continuous professional development opportunities (CERID, 2018; Dahal & Adhikari, 2021).

This Study aims to rigorously examine the pedagogical behaviours of ECD facilitators within these community centers. By exploring the specific strategies facilitators employ and the challenges they navigate, this research seeks to contribute actionable insights toward improving the quality of early childhood education in the public sector (MoEST, 2020; UNICEF, 2021). The global acknowledgement of ECD had intensified the focus on the education, health and nutrition of young children. Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that early interactions shape cognitive architecture, social behaviors, and lifelong learning potential. Consequently, the provision of high-quality ECD services is not merely educational but developmental, supporting the integrated growth of physical, emotional, mental, and psychological dimensions (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). This period is critical for the acquisition of foundational skills and the introduction of effective developmental interventions (Hyson, 2003).

The environment in which a child develops exerts a profound influence on their trajectory well into adulthood. The first five years of life are particularly sensitive, marking the formation of major social and cognitive competencies (Sharif, 2015). From a young age, children begin to construct basic understandings and thinking abilities that allow them to adapt to novel situations (Isaacs, 2018). In this ecosystem, ECD

facilitators play a central role. By employing engaging and supportive teaching practices, they encourage holistic development. These methods are tailored to the unique needs of young learners. Given that care and affection are prerequisites for learning at this stage, ECD centers structure their environments to provide additional attention, grouping children by age to better foster language and social skills. Furthermore, strong parental involvement-facilitated through workshops and communication-reinforces this learning. Collectively, these diverse approaches establish a balanced foundation for lifelong growth.

Educators in early childhood settings are tasked with sparking wonder and analytical capability through discovery-driven methods. They cultivate an atmosphere of inquiry and hands-on exploration, empowering children to uncover insights and construct their own understanding of reality. Effective teachers create opportunities for children to pose questions, predict outcomes, test hypotheses, and reflect on their learning journeys. As Montessori emphasized, granting children autonomy is essential for nurturing their overall growth (Department of Education [DOE], 2063). Instructors must acknowledge the unique ways in which each child absorbs information, employing customized techniques and bespoke plans to unlock every child's potential.

Play serves as the cornerstone of preschool education. It engages children in pursuits that are simultaneously enjoyable and instructive-such as pretend scenarios, brain teasers, and outdoor adventures-to advance mental, physical, and interpersonal progress. A learner-focused model prioritizes the child's interests, building self-reliance and confidence by aligning educational

experiences with personal preferences. Curricula in these settings are often blended, linking various fields such as biology, numeracy, and creativity to help children form comprehensive cognitive associations. Frequent story telling sessions enhance vocabulary and cultural insight, while practical pursuits like drawing or construction refine dexterity and collaboration skills. Rhythm and motion exercises are employed to aid coordination and emotional release, while socioemotional programs instill compassion and self-control through group interaction.

Recognizing that young children exhibit greater enthusiasm for games than for other pursuits, preschool educators must instruct via playful techniques to ensure complete advancement (Samuelson & Carlsson, 2008). Pioneers like Froebel and Montessori advocated for freedom in recreation to foster balanced maturity (Kronh & Morehouse, 2014). The learning environment must encourage problem-solving and permit free engagement in safe spaces (DOE, 2063). Because the brain evolves rapidly in infancy without a full moral compass of "good versus bad," the nurturing setting is crucial in molding lifelong paths (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2011).

The primary objective of the study was to gain understanding to how facilitators impart knowledge to young children and to identify the specific strategies utilized in daily classroom environments.

Literature Review

ECD research unequivocally demonstrates that child development includes psychological, emotional, social, and cognitive maturation in addition to physical growth (Gautam & Korirala, 2073; UNICEF, 2017). Children undergo quick developmental changes throughout these formative years, which are

greatly influenced by their surroundings, emotional connections, and chances for discovery (Jackman, 2001). According to neuroscientific research, early experiences shape brain development and set the stage for long-term wellbeing (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). According to research, early development includes all of the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional aspects that are essential for long-term results (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007). According to Shonkoff et al. (2012), early exposure to enriched settings and positive adult interactions maximise brain growth and learning preparedness. ECD programs that emphasize holistic growth-including language, motor skills, and emotional regulation-promote competencies like creativity, problem-solving, and self-control, which enhance academic and social success (Melhuish, 2011). Play-based learning is recognized internationally as a critical pedagogical approach supporting these outcomes (Pyle & Danniels, 2017). Within Nepal, government efforts such as the National ECD program focus on expanding access, standardizing quality, and involving communities to support disadvantaged groups (Bhatta et al., 2017).

ECD programs emphasize holistic growth, supporting language abilities, motor skills, and emotional adjustment. These early competencies-communication, numeracy, creativity, and self-regulation-are directly linked to improved academic and life outcomes. Creativity, for instance, peaks between the ages of two and six; without nurturing, it may diminish (Jackman, 2001). Meaningful ECD opportunities also protect children's rights and introduce positive social behaviors such as empathy and cooperation (Karki et al., 2018). Facilitators are essential in observing developmental patterns and guiding children through age-appropriate activities

to build social-emotional competence. These interactions allow children to develop conflict-resolution skills and supportive peer relationships.

ECD is a vital investment. It encourages exploration and strengthens readiness for formal schooling (Karki et al., 2018). The ultimate goal is to create opportunities that foster creativity, social values, and hygiene habits (MOE, 2007). children receiving early support show significant improvements in attention span and problem-solving, and such experiences increase equity by reducing learning gap rooted in socioeconomic disparities. Nepal operates ECD centers through three primary modalities: government-run programs, NGO/INGO-supported initiatives, and collaborative partnerships. The Department of Education has established national guidelines to ensure uniformity and quality across districts (Khanal et al., 2017). Significantly, the 2075 Compulsory and Free Education Act recognizes one year of pre-primary education as a component of basic education, guaranteeing it free of charge (World Bank, 2020).

The government collaborates with development partners to oversee these programs. The Eighth Amendment to the Education Act (2016) reinforced the state's responsibility to provide free ECD services (UNICEF, 2019). Support mechanisms include free meals for low-income families and the distribution of teaching materials (Upreti, 2013). However, challenges persist. The School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) recommended standardizing quality by enhancing facilitator training and promoting mother-tongue instruction. While rural areas have shown improvements, many urban families still undervalue ECD, and resource shortages remain a critical barrier.

Historically, Nepal's involvement in ECD began in 1948 with the first Montessori school. The Ministry of Education introduced *Shishu Kaksha* in 1992, and international support for UNICEF and UNESCO increased in the 1990s. Nepal became a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. Since the 1990s, ECD has been incorporated into various national plans, including the Education for All Plan and the School Sector Reform Plan. By 2015, the number of centers had grown to nearly 31,959 (Karki et al., 2018), and recent data indicates over 36,000 centers and now operational. Several theorists have shaped the practices observed in this study. Friedrich Froebel emphasized that early learning should occur through hands-on activity and interaction with nature, arguing that such experiences nurture self-expression (Roszar, 2018). His concept of "gift" encourages children to construct meaning independently (Reinhold et al., 2017).

Maria Montessori argued that children learn best in structured environments that allow for freedom of choice and self-directed exploration (Isaacs, 2018). In her approach, facilitators act as guides who observe needs and prepare the environment accordingly. Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky stressed active learning. Piaget viewed cognitive development as a process of constructing knowledge through environmental interaction, while Vygotsky focused on the cultural context, asserting that children learn through guidance from more knowledgeable adults. John Dewey added that schools should mirror real-life situations, enabling learning through experience and cooperation (Williams, 2017). Collectively, these theories highlight the necessity for play-based, culturally sensitive ECD programs.

Methodology

In order to enable a thorough analysis of the educational environment, this study used a qualitative case study design. In educational research, case studies are frequently employed to examine social units comprehensively (Best & Kahn, 2006; Creswell, 2013). By pinpointing particular areas for development, this method enables educational institutions to improve their teaching methods. The study was carried out in Nepal's Koshi Province's Morang district. Four facilitators and three community ECD centers were chosen for the study. To ensure confidentiality, all participants were given pseudonyms. Semi-structured interviews and in-person classroom observations were used to collect data. Finding the different kinds of indoor and outdoor play activities available and comprehending the facilitator's viewpoints on their pedagogical decisions continued to be the key priorities.

The data were analyzed and interpreted by using qualitative research designed as stated. First, I grouped the data, and organized in a way so that they could be used to draw the essential themes to be analyzed and discussed. Second, after grouping and organizing the data, I looked for the common patterns, narrations, and stories, and participants' direct quotes to explore and build up themes for the analysis and interpretation. Third, I, then, drew themes from the data, and organized the data under the themes drawn for the analysis and interpretation. Finally, I used and analyzed them using data and references based on the literature cited, and conclude them in a way that could answer the research questions relying on methodology.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the major findings of the study and provides an analysis of the

pedagogical practices observed in the selected ECD centers.

Pedagogical Approaches in ECD Centers

Teaching strategies are central to creating meaningful learning experiences and supporting children's holistic development in early childhood settings. Previous studies have emphasized that instructional practices should be developmentally appropriate and responsive to young children's needs. In line with this understanding, the present study explored the existing pedagogical practices in ECD centers and identified both strengths and areas that require further improvement.

Drawing on the researcher's Montessori background, it is argued that the effectiveness of teaching practices in early childhood education is closely linked to the quality and relevance of teachers' ongoing professional development. When teachers actively engage in meaningful training and professional learning opportunities, they are better equipped to provide high-quality educational experiences, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of preschool education.

Facilitators' Role in Play Activities in ECD Centers

Information for this study was collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with early childhood educators. Particular attention was given to the indoor and outdoor play activities provided in ECD centers. Data were gathered from three centers located in rural areas of Koshi Province, Nepal. The findings show that teachers use a variety of play-based activities to support children's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. The following account, shared by one of the four participating teachers, illustrates the nature of play practices in these rural settings.

One teacher, who had twelve years of experience in early childhood education, described play as the foundation of children's holistic development. She explained that she intentionally combines indoor and outdoor activities to provide diverse learning experiences for children. Inside the classroom, children engage in puzzles, block play, and storytelling sessions. Referring to Vygotsky's ideas, she emphasized that cultural tools play an important role in developing children's thinking skills and therefore introduces these tools through guided and playful activities (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978).

Reflecting social constructivist principles, she also encourages children to participate in traditional games that are closely connected to their local culture. Activities such as running races, hide-and-seek, local ball games, and puppet shows are commonly organized and enjoyed by the children.

Because the center has limited indoor space, she gives greater priority to outdoor play. According to her, outdoor activities not only help children develop gross motor skills but also promote cooperation and interaction among peers. One of the main challenges she faces is the lack of ready-made learning materials. To overcome this limitation, she creatively makes use of locally available resources, including stones, bamboo sticks, and clay, to design engaging and meaningful play experiences. As she explained, these indigenous materials not only address the shortage of resources but also connect children's learning to their everyday lives and local environment.

"With twelve years of experience . . . I've noticed that children are far more eager to play outside than inside. Unfortunately, we don't have proper play equipment . . . nor

do we have a dedicated playground area . . . which makes it challenging to keep them actively involved . . . however, when the weather is dry, we organize traditional local games that the children absolutely love, such as Chungi and Rumal lukai"."

These play-based activities actively develop children's strength, coordination, and interpersonal skills in addition to providing them with entertainment. In spite of this, the instructor faces a lack of resources and minimal exposure to training in modern teaching methods or tools. Plans for outdoor sessions are frequently derailed by unpredictable weather, and sporadic attendance—which is impacted by domestic situations—adds another level of complexity. Nevertheless, play has a profound effect on children's relationships, emotions, and ways of thinking. Playing with classmates teaches them to collaborate, share ideas, settle minor disputes, and express their emotions. Hopping, sprinting, and climbing are examples of energetic exercises that build their bodies and improve their general physical control.

Play-Based Learning Through Creativity and Social interaction

Another educator interviewed, a teacher with five years of experience, described how play forms a core element of the daily schedule at her center, supporting children's physical growth as well as other areas of development. Working with very limited supplies, she creatively transforms everyday waste into playthings—for instance, turning worn-out fabric into soft dolls and bundling old cloth scraps into balls.

Drawing on the ideas of social constructivism, she designs group games and shared play spaces that encourage children to learn from one another. As Vygotsky and Cole (1978) suggested, surrounding young learners with

meaningful cultural objects and interactions helps them understand the world around them. In her classroom, team-based activities build cooperation and help children practice speaking and listening to their peers. Even without fancy equipment, basic skills such as recognizing numbers and identifying colors emerge naturally during these games.

A Second educator, with five years of experience, described play as the core element of her daily schedule. Working with limited supplies, she transforms everyday waste into educational tools turning worn-out fabric into dolls and cloth scraps into balls. This aligns with social constructivist ideas, where she designs group games that encourage peer learning. She emphasized the contrast between academic tasks and play:

I have been teaching at his level for the past five years. Whenever we ask the children to focus on reading or writing tasks, they quickly lose interest and become restless with their copies and pencils. However, the moment we introduce activities related to play, their energy and enthusiasm immediately increase. Most of the children here are especially fond of traditional games such as Putaliko Khel, Gatta and, Kitti which resembles cricket in many ways. They are equally eager to participate in storytelling, singing, and other interactive sessions. Because these activities are rooted in their culture and daily experiences, the children find them more enjoyable and engaging, helping them learn in a natural and meaningful way.

She makes an effort to blend simple reading, writing, and number skills into the play-based activities. For example, when the children engage in the game "Gatta," she guides them to count the questions about the characters and events to strengthen their understanding of

the story. The local community remains quite cooperative; they frequently volunteer during school programs and contribute materials whenever possible. In contrast, government assistance is minimal and usually limited to occasional training sessions. More reliable financial support and adequate resources would significantly enhance her ability to provide quality learning experiences.

Inclusive Play-Based Learning Rooted in Social Constructivism

One of the ECD facilitators has been teaching young children for twelve years. She puts great effort into designing activities that every child can join, no matter their physical or learning abilities. For children face physical challenges, she modifies games so they require less running, jumping, or strength. When a child struggles with learning, she offers patient one-on-one help, breaks tasks into smaller steps, and gives clear, simple instructions. She constantly watches the children during playtime and makes sure the environment is safe by removing anything that could cause accidents. At the same time, she teaches them basic safety rules: walk instead of run indoors, use toys gently, take turns, and friends kindly.

In her class there was a very shy little boy who usually stayed by himself and rarely spoke to others. Drawing on Vygotsky's social constructivism approach, she used "scaffolding" techniques-giving just the right amount of support so the child could slowly move forward. According to Vygotsky's Zone of proximal Development (ZPD), children can achieve more when a "more knowledgeable other" (MKO)- whether an adult or a capable peer-guides them gently. By pairing the shy child with kind and patient classmates during small-group games and giving him simple roles at first, she helped him join in at a pace that felt comfortable and safe.

Every day she organized circle games, dramatic play corners, and cooperative art activities. Over several weeks, the boy began smiling more, answering when spoken to, and eventually even suggesting ideas during play. His parents were delighted-they told her he had started talking about his friends at home, sharing toys with his siblings, and seeming much happier overall. Through consistent, supportive group experiences, the once-withdrawn child gradually blossomed into a confident and sociable member of the class. She explains her experiences as follows:

To Make the first days at school feel warm and familiar, I bring in the very games and songs the children already know from their villages and homes. Hearing a tune their grandmother sings or playing a game they enjoy with cousins instantly puts them at ease. For example, we often play "Langadi Tangi," where everyone hops on one leg-it's wonderful for building balance, strength, and concentration. Another favourite is "Dandibiyo," our local stick-and-ball game that looks a bit like cricket. While the children chase, swing, and cheer, they're actually practising hand-eye coordination, learning to take turns, encouraging teammates, and solving little disagreements together. They don't even realize how much they're growing, because to them it's just fun with friends.

She weaves storytelling into the daily routine, but never just by reading aloud. the children become the characters: They growl like tigers, tiptoe like clever rabbits, or wave their arms as stormy rain, as they act out the tales together, their imaginations soar and new words roll effortlessly off their tongues. Guided by Vygotsky's ideas of social constructivism, she carefully builds little bridges of support-asking a more confident child to help another, or offering just enough guidance so that each

child can reach a little further than they could alone. In this way, the gap between what a child can do today and what they might achieve tomorrow steadily narrows. Yet, no matter how creative she is, the lack of proper swings, slides, balls, or even simple wooden blocks limits what she can offer.

Play as a Pathway to Social-Emotional learning and Collaborative Problem-Solving

Another facilitator, with more than a decade of experience in early childhood classrooms, also believes that true growth happens through active play. She welcomes every squabble over a toy or disagreement about rules as a golden teaching moment. Instead of quickly setting the argument herself, she kneels down and gently prompts the children: "How did that make you feel?" and "What could we do so both of you feel happy?" Listening to each other, suggesting fair solutions, and sometimes even inventing new rules together—these small negotiations build empathy, patience, and the ability to solve problems peacefully. Like her colleagues, she dreams of a playground filled with safe, colorful equipment and shelves stocked with art materials, puzzles, and musical instruments. She is convinced that with stronger support from local authorities and active participation from families, they could transform the center into a vibrant space where every child—regardless of background—discovers the joy of learning through play, laughter, and friendship. She noted her experience:

Ten years ago, when I began teaching in early childhood education, I trained at Seto Gurash and Ratnauli Yuwa Club. The trainers always stressed one key idea: children learn best through play—indoors or outdoors. I've seen this proven every day. Even though I sometimes worry when they run around wildly, I know those active moments help them grow

stronger and healthier. So I turn learning into joyful play. Inside, we build with blocks and draw colorful pictures; outside, we race, hop, and trace big chalk letters on the ground. Through every laugh and discovery, the children develop physically, mentally, and emotionally—without every feeling like they are studying. For them it's fun; for me it's the most meaningful way to teach.

Through these lively games and hands-on tasks, children sharpen their thinking abilities, learn to share ideas, solve little problems together, and build lasting friendships. The facilitators deliberately weave in traditional pastimes passed down through generations—ring games, folk riddles, and seasonal songs that carry the heartbeat of the community—so the children feel proud of who they are while they play. Still, every day brings the same quiet struggle: the playgrounds are tiny patches of uneven ground, often right next to busy paths or thorny hedges, with no proper fencing, mats, or shade. Yet, no matter how cramped or basic the setting, the teachers refuse to let joy be limited—turning every corner into a space for wonder and discovery.

These conversations with the facilitators bring one truth into sharp focus: in the early years, play is not a luxury—it is the very foundation of growth. Even with empty packets and bare rooms, the ECD teachers of rural Koshi Province are quietly changing lives. By designing games that feel familiar and meaningful, they put Vygotsky's social constructivism into daily practice: children learn best when they talk, negotiate, laugh, and create side by side with friends and caring adults. Group chores, paired storytelling, and team races become natural classrooms for language, empathy, and confidence.

During visits to three villages early childhood centres, a clear pattern emerged. Teachers skilfully blend guided activities (like lining up blocks to match a patter) with plenty of free, child-led-play (chasing games or inventing new rules for an old rhyme). Many of the games echoing across the yards were the same ones the facilitators themselves played as children decades ago—proof that culture stays alive through movement and laughter. Sadly, most of the modern activity ideas introduced during training gather dust, simply because the centres lack even basic supplies: no puzzles, scarce paper, hardly any crayons or balls. As a result, outdoor play takes center stage, with children sprinting, leaping, and circling in energetic group games that keep both bodies and bonds strong.

What warmed the heart most was watching how safe the children felt. They chattered freely in their mother tongue, ran to their teachers for comfort or to proudly show a new trick, and followed gentle instructions with trusting smiles. Time and again, the facilitators proved their creativity: turning dried maize cobs into counting tools, drawing hopscotch grids with charcoal, using fallen leaves for sorting games, or shaping wet mud into imaginary villages. With nothing more than local materials, local language, and boundless affection, they nurture every child's mind, body, heart, and sense of belonging—quietly proving that meaningful play needs very little except love and imagination.

Young children grow and learn most naturally through play, which is why ECD teachers in early childhood centres build almost everything around it. When children dress up as doctors or shopkeepers, stack blocks into wobbly towers, or splash colors across paper, they are quietly strengthening their thinking, movement, feelings, imagination,

and friendships all at once (Jackman, 2001; Edwards, 2017).

Hands-on exploration is where real understanding begins. That's why teachers fill the room with inviting things to touch, mix, and discover—bowls of coloured water, sand trays, old bottles for pouring experiments, leaves and seeds for sorting, or big sheets of paper and chunky crayons. Every spilled drop and smeared fingerprint is actually a lesson in cause and effect, measurement, texture, or simply the joy of creating something new (Jackman, 2001).

The best facilitators wear many hats: sometimes they step back and let children lead, sometimes they join in with a gentle question or suggestion, and sometimes they gather everyone for a short circle time with songs and stories. What ties everything together is play-free or guided—that sparks curiosity, teaches children how to share ideas, wait their turn, solve disagreements, and dream up new possibilities (Samuelsson & Carlsson, 2008). At the heart of this approach lies social constructivism, the idea that children do not learn in isolation but through talking, playing, and working alongside others. Instead of standing in front of the class giving instructions, teachers become warm guides on the side—kneeling next to a child who is stuck, celebrating a small success, or quietly pairing a shy one with a kind friend. This gentle scaffolding is especially powerful during outdoor adventures and pretend-play corners, where children negotiate roles, invent dialogue, and stretch their imaginations together (Robson & Rowe, 2012).

From a social constructivist view, every game in an ECD center is far more than fun. Circle games teach listening and rhythm, chasing games build strong legs and fair play, dramatic

play corners grow rich vocabularies and empathy, and building with scraps of wood or cardboard sparks planning and problem-solving. Language flourishes when children explain their rules or comfort a crying friend; cultural pride grows when local rhymes and stories come alive in play; emotions find safe outlets when a child pretends to be angry of scared in make-believe world.

When teachers truly understand this, they stop seeing play as "just play." They see it as the most powerful classroom there is—one built by laughter, conversation, and shared discovery—and they work every day to protect and enrich it so that every child leaves stronger, kinder, braver, and more curious than before.

Conclusion

The study concludes that ECD facilitators in community school in Nepal play a critical role in the holistic development of children, often performing their duties under challenging circumstances. Despite significant resource constraints—including a lack of proper playgrounds, educational toys, and classroom supplies—these educators employ creative, play-based pedagogies that align with advanced educational theories such as Social Constructivism and the Montessori method. The findings highlight that facilitators successfully utilize local resources and traditional games to foster physical, cognitive, and social skills. They effectively employ scaffolding techniques to support socially withdrawn children and integrate numeracy and literacy into recreational activities. However, the sustainability of these practices is threatened by the lack of systemic support. The study suggests that while human creativity can mitigate some resource deficits, it cannot replace the need for structural investment. To improve ECD classroom practices, it is imperative to focus on three

key areas: enhanced facilitators training, the provision of sufficient learning materials, and the development of supportive school environments. Strengthening these areas will enable community school to provide better early learning experiences, ensuring that every child, regardless of socioeconomic background, has the foundation necessary for lifelong growth.

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