

# The educational system in mauritius education essay



Education, whether as knowledge in basic skills, academics, technical, discipline or citizenship is nowadays the most fundamental issue discussed in all societies throughout the world. Education is not only the accumulation of facts but also the development of logic and reasonable thinking skills which will enable people to use their knowledge in a variety of application problems. Education prepares an individual to become a fully-fledged citizen, aware of his rights and conscious of the right behaviour. The formation of an individual into a complete and respectable citizen is a life-long process which takes its root at home and from personal experiences within the educational system and at work. Education also enables social interaction among people of different ages, ethnic groups and races. Therefore education provides the basis for a mutual understanding and acceptance among different people. This will later help the individual to adapt himself perfectly to people in society, whether it is work or his neighbourhood. Education also imparts knowledge of the social ills, such as drugs, alcohol and prostitutions. In Mauritius, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources aims at sensitising our children at a very young age so that they can become a good citizen.

The educational system in Mauritius is largely based on the British School system. After the independence of our island Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam promoted free education and thus allowed everyone to have equal right to education and now schooling is compulsory up to the age of 16. This year the government has allocated Rs 4, 208 million to education. This represents 11% of the National budget.

Our educational system is divided into pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education. We must note that education at all the levels are governed by the Education Act 1996, amended in 2001. It states that all children should attend primary school and failing to do so the responsible party will be liable to pay a fine or may even face imprisonment [4].

The Ministry of Education and Human Resources (formally Ministry of Education and Scientific research) manages and controls all actions related to the provision of education in Mauritius. Its main responsibilities are to provide free pre-primary and primary education, to provide admission to all children in the Republic of Mauritius to secondary education and to promote the tertiary sector. The Mauritius Examination Syndicate (MES) is responsible to conduct all national examinations.

The schools in Mauritius are distributed in four zones; the first zone is Port Louis/North, secondly we have Upper Plaine Wilhems/East, thirdly we have lower Plaine Wilhems/South and the fourth zone is Quatre Bornes/West. Pre-primary education in Mauritius starts at the age of 3. Pre-primary education is provided by both government run schools and private aided schools. However, more than 75% of the pre-primary schools in Mauritius are privately run [4]. Primary education starts at the age of six. In order to successfully complete the primary education one needs to pass a national examination, Certificate of Primary Education (CPE). One can start secondary and prevocational education in Mauritius after passing the CPE examination [1]. Below is a table showing the trends of results for the past years for the CPE examination in the Republic of Mauritius (Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega).

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**Year**

**% Passed**

**Male**

**Female**

**Total**

2006

62.0

74.3

67.9

2007

60.1

72.1

66.2

2008

62.1

73.2

67.4

2009

62. 29

74. 46

68. 13 Table 1. 1 Certificate of Primary Education Examination (CPE) results by sex (School candidates only), Republic of Mauritius Year 2006-2010 [2].

After completing their primary education, students are automatically admitted to the secondary level of education, which continues further for the next seven years. However, at the end of five year, students need to take the School Certificate examination. In 2009, 77. 64% of 17498 candidates passed the Cambridge School Certificate. The Higher School Certificate continues for another two years and this mark the end of secondary education. In 2009, the number of students who took part in the Higher School Certificate examination is 9490 students and the pass rate is 78. 77%. Scholarships are awarded to the best students in four fields: Science, Economics, Art and Technical.

Post-secondary education in Mauritius is promoted by the Tertiary Education institutes. In Mauritius there are two universities in the public sector, namely the University of Mauritius (UoM) and the University of Technology Mauritius (UTM). Both run undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. PhD is also provided in a range of disciplines. Besides there are other two other organisations that provide diploma, degree and courses, they are the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) and Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI). The MIE offered training to school teachers in program ranging from certificate, diploma and the PGCE. There are three Polytechnics, managed by the Technical School Management Trust Fund. They run programmes at the <https://assignbuster.com/the-educational-system-in-mauritius-education-essay/>

certificate and diploma levels within the public sector. These are the Sir Guy Forget Lycée Polytechnique, the Swami Dayanand Institute of Management, and the “ Institut Supérieur de Technologie”.

## **Figure 1. 1 Structure of the education system [4].**

### **Pre-Primary Education**

The focus of this project is pre-primary education. Pre-primary education (or Early Childhood Education) refers to the stage of education before primary school for children. It lays an important base for life-long learning and whole person development. It articulates with primary, secondary and tertiary education to complete the education system in almost all countries of the world.

The pre-primary stage of education is considered as one of the most important and most vital of all stages in the proper development of a child whether is in the emotional, behavioural or cognitive domain. Pugh and Rohl state that the years between three and ten are crucial as it is of the utmost importance in the child’s physical, emotional and intellectual development.

According to Henniger, play is the primary means for learning in the early childhood classroom. Play stimulates imagination, creativity and the willingness to participate. Henniger also emphasised that teachers and parents should work together in order to promote quality education. Learning at this young age takes place primarily through sensory experiences with real world materials [3].

Many countries like in USA, China, England, and France among others have elaborated special frameworks to work with young children. A curriculum framework is made for teachers to allow them to follow the same steps to keep all children in pace.

## **Pre-Primary Education in Mauritius**

Pre-primary education in Mauritius plays a very important role in the proper development of the Mauritian child. It is basically for children from 3 to 5 years old. Early childhood care and education is gaining tremendous importance in the country and most of the government run primary schools are opening up sections for pre-primary education although most of the pre-primary schools are private ones. Children in the age group 4 to 5 years old attending a private pre-school receive a monthly capital grant of Rs 200 from the Government and as from January 2011 children of 3 years old will also receive the grant of Rs 200. Out of the Rs 4, 208 million (11%) allocated to education sector, Rs 94. 1 million (2%) were for the pre-primary education [4].

The Early Childhood Care and Education (ex Pre-School Trust Fund) was set up in 1984. Its main aim is to give the children (3 to 5 years) all means required for a sustainable education and to provide equal access for all children to quality pre-schooling, including those at risk of delayed development and disabilities, through a child-centered and play-based approach, with the involvement of the parents.

## **Schools**

The number of pre-schools has considerably increased in our country. In March 2009, there were 1, 057 schools providing pre-primary education: 1, 024 in the island of Mauritius and 33 in Rodrigues. Of these schools, 803 (76%) were privately run institutions; 182 (17%), operating on government primary school premises, were administered by the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority (Ex Pre-School Trust Fund) and the remaining 72 (7%) were administered by either Roman Catholic (RC), Hindu Education authorities and/or Municipal/Village Councils [5]. Both governmental schools and private schools follow the National Curriculum Framework Pre-Primary (3-5 years) which was produced by the MIE so that all the children are in same level when they enter primary school.

While investigating about pre-primary education in Mauritius, we have noticed some problems which make the teachers unsatisfied. Out of 10 Government pre-primary schools, half of them are complaining that the toilet is quite far from the pre-primary unit and thus the young children have to walk a lot to go there. They also said that they need more space for the children to practice their daily activities. We must note that in government pre-primary schools we have 2 pre-primary classes, each comprising of 25 young learners. Moreover they want to be equipped with a kitchen so as to heat the food of the children because when they bring food in Tupperware the food is already cold at the time they are going to eat it.

As far as ICT is concerned, there is an acute lack of resources. In some schools whether private or governmental, most of the computers are out of use. These computers were helping the teacher to prepare work for the <https://assignbuster.com/the-educational-system-in-mauritius-education-essay/>



children. Sometimes they were used to teach children how to use the various programs, specially Paint for them to learn and develop some of computer skills. They also want to a special teacher to teach computer skills to the children.

## **ICT in Mauritius**

The Government of Mauritius has actively promoted ICT since 1989. It has set up four institutions: the National Computer Board (NCB), the Central Information Bureau, the State Informatics Limited and the State Training Centre Limited. The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology deals with the formulation and implementation of government policies in the ICT Sector [6].

According to National Information and Communication Technology Strategic (NICTSP) 2007-2011 plan, Mauritius is on the verge of becoming a cyber island [7]. Recent statistics shows that our country has 29. 6% internet penetration ratio with 380, 000 internet users. Following the Global Information Technology Report 2008-2009, Mauritius rank 51st position in the use of ICT for development [8].

Since ICT over the recent years is becoming an increasingly obligatory tool in several sectors, research is being done how to introduce Computed Aided learning environments in pre-primary, primary, secondary and vocational education in Mauritian context as we cannot blindly copy the way it is done elsewhere [9].

## **National Computer Board**

The NCB is administered by a board of directors under the aegis of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology. Its vision is to be the key enabler in transforming Mauritius into a Cyber island and the regional ICT hub and its mission is to e-power people, businesses and the public sector by developing and promoting ICT and ICT- related services [10]. It provides for Universal ICT Education Programme for imparting computer proficiency skills to the population and the Cyber Caravan which is equipped with 10 PCs and Internet Connection to facilitate ICT in the most isolated areas in the island. Besides, each year the NCB organises InfoTech to create awareness on emerging technologies and provide business opportunities in the ICT sector [11].

## **Discussion**

As said earlier, 2% is allocated to pre-primary education but if we analysed it well, it is not enough for such an important phase in the life of a child. The government should increase the amount allocated to pre-primary education but of course not at the expense of primary, secondary and tertiary sector.

Nowadays more and more children are acquainted with technologies (television, mobile phones, radio, digital camera, computer laptop among others) as soon as they are born. Therefore it would be unrealistic to think that children between the age of 3 and 5 will not be able to make proper use of IT.

The rest of the project is organised as follows. Section 2 background studies will describe about learning areas for pre-primary education in the Mauritian

context and ICT in education in Mauritius. Section 3 namely the literature review provides details how education is done in different countries and impact of ICT in education.

## **BACKGROUND STUDY**

This chapter contains the various skills that a young learner should know in order to start primary school. A major part of the resources in this section come from the National Curriculum Framework for pre-primary education.

The aim of Early Childhood Care and Education (0-8years) is to focus on the holistic development of the child and to lay a solid foundation for lifelong learning. It is to be noted that the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, through its Strategic Plan (2008-2010), has proclaimed that all children aged 3 to 5 years will have to attend pre-primary school, followed by a 6-year compulsory primary schooling.

There are 6 areas of learning that pre-primary children should master before going to primary school.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Communication Language and Literacy

Expressive, Creative and Aesthetic Development

Health and Physical Development

Body and Environmental Awareness

Mathematical and Logical Thinking

Children learn these areas by playing, doing activities, talking, listening, doing movements with their hands and by learning from other children. For a child to learn well, the environment should be very attractive and child-centered, for example posters can be put all around the classroom to make it more lively and appealing to them.

## **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)**

### **Figure 2. 1 Personal, Social and Emotional Developments**

This area of learning is about knowing oneself, developing a positive self-concept and building self-confidence. Children learn how to interact with friends, adults and respect others by accepting their differences. They also learn about cultural events and religious festivals which will help them to know more about different religion in the country [12].

When children have mastered this skill, they should be able to respond when referring to their first and last name. They should also dress and undress by themselves and eat skilfully. Different strategies can be used in this area of learning like demonstrations, stories/songs, mimes, group work and dramatization

The children are assessed by being observed by their teachers. Through observation the teachers assess the behaviours of the children inside the classroom. These observations are reported in the form of anecdotal report and these records help the teacher for future planning and plan follow-up activities [12].

## **Communications, Language and Literacy (CLL)**

### **Figure 2. 2 Communications, Language and Literacy Areas**

During childhood, development proficiency in the mother tongue is of the utmost importance as language is the key to knowledge acquisition. Our mother-tongue is Creole. It is used in pre-primary education but English and French are used more. The Ministry of Education and Human Resources is planning to introduce Creole as an optional language in education. Children who cannot cope with the difficulties of mastering reading, writing and counting will use the mother tongue to master basics, and they can transfer the basic skills to other classes they follow at school [14]. Therefore the pre-school educators can use Creole to help the children understand mastering basic skills.

Children learn to use language in order to communicate their experiences and feelings in different situation. They develop their oral (listening/speaking) and written skills (reading/written) by being involved in different activities such as participating in interactive games, listening to stories and singing. In this area, assessment of the child is made by observing him or her. The performance indicators can be used to help out the teacher to profile the children's language ability that is whether the child is being able to communicate and share his/her feelings [12].

Computer can be used to provide some interactive educational games to the children like allowing them to differentiating shapes and giving them a score at the end. Besides, with the help of computer, teachers can make the children listen to stories by providing them with images and videos.

## **Expressive, Creative and Aesthetic Development (ECAD)**

### **Figure 2. 3 ECAD Different Skills**

In this area the children are encouraged to use their creativity by exploring different art media in their environment. Through art, children can express their emotion and feelings and appreciate different things by using media, music, storytelling and movement. Human values play a basic part in the all-round development of a child. It has been included in pre-primary education as it is important that the child know about moral values and ethics in line with the tremendous progress of science and technology [12].

Assessment in this area will be growth oriented. The concept of assessment should be based on a broad comprehensive concept concerned with a variety of tools and techniques and all aspects of the child's growth. The educator's observation will be the main tool for assessment and will serve both formative and diagnostic achievement purposes [12].

Computer can help a lot in this area of learning. Children can use paint to be able to draw and colour different shapes. Besides, music and rhythms can be played using the computer at the same providing a visual aspect to them.

## **Health and Physical Development (HPD)**

### **Figure 2. 4 Different Skills in HPD**

Young children are active learners so they need to develop a healthy standard of living by cultivating good habits. By understanding basic health and safety issues, they can protect themselves against many dangers.

Appropriate training and synchronization of the body and sensory functions plays a vital role in children's learning as it can effectively develop their

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concentration and observation abilities and thus help to increase their self-confidence. So the children should be able to practice breathing exercises, engage in active play such as running, jumping, chasing, and moving to music. They should be able to complete 6 pieces puzzle, manage toileting, carry objects, and safely negotiate stairs, curbs and uneven surfaces.

The educators will observed the children's participation, responses and manipulation during learning activities. The teachers keep records of the children performance which will help them to evaluate the children later.

## **Body and Environmental Awareness (BEA)**

### **Figure 2. 5 BEA different skills**

Children are very curious by nature. They want to know more about their body and the environment. They also develop awareness about the five senses that is sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. They also learn about plants, animals, living things and simple events occurring in the environment. The main aim here is to help the children to develop important science process skills like observing, classifying, pattern seeking, hypothesizing, inferring and predicting [12].

Moreover, since their early years children are surrounded by technology whether television, radio, mobile phones and computers, so they need to know the importance of all these technology at a young age.

Assessment of the children's learning in this area would be through observation the children participation, responses and manipulation during learning activities like drawing and role play.

## **Mathematical and Logical Thinking (MLT)**

### **Figure 2. 6 MLT different learning skills**

Mathematics helps children to make sense of their world and to develop logical and rational thinking. Mathematics at pre-primary level comprises activities and play. At the young learner should be able to master the names of some common colours (red, blue, yellow, green...), the names of basic shapes (circle, triangle, rectangle and square). They should also be able to make comparison between small and big objects, count 1 to 5 or 6 or 7 or the other numbers and estimate the volume required (e. g. in terms of cups). Besides they should be able to use the concept of time like day, night, morning, afternoon among others [12].

The assessment of children's learning has to be conducted in a genuine learning environment. The analysis of children's performance is carried out by observation by seeing if the children are being able to do simple mathematics calculations and differentiation of shapes.

A website can be of great help in this skill as simple mathematical calculation and learning of different shapes can be integrated in it and thus children can access it at home or at school. Teachers can get ideas how to teach the children by having a look at the materials given in the website.

## **ICT in Education in Mauritius**

All Mauritian primary and secondary schools have computers. Primary schools are now offering ICT as a new subject and they are equipped with computer laboratory and special teachers are available to teach ICT to the primary children. For now, ICT is not a compulsory subject but in the near

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future, the government may decide to put it as a core subject as Mauritius aims is to become a cyber island.

Almost all the secondary schools, whether private or governmental schools have computer laboratories. When a student starts his secondary education, it is compulsory for him/her to do a subject named Computer Studies till he/she reaches form 3. Then the student can opt to do it for the SC and HSC examination. Computer Studies may become a compulsory subject at form IV later as nowadays computer are becoming more and more important.

Universities in Mauritius are all equipped with one or more computer laboratories. They have LANs (Local Area Network) and high speed internet which is free to the students. The universities have websites where prospective students can fill out admission applications and existing students can obtain scholarship details, examination results and other information [14].

Till now, no one has put forward the idea of integrating ICT in pre-primary education although a lot is being done at the primary level. It should be introduced at the pre-primary level for children to get a better insight of it at an early age.

## **Talking Book**

Talking book is described as the conversion of text content into sounds.

Research has shown that it was frequently used by the blinds. The importance of technology offers various benefits to the educational community which generates interaction and collaboration among learners.

Talking book offers several benefits related to the development of young  
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children. One among the benefits of talking book is that it enhances the communication skills of young children [3].

Talking book offers several benefits related to the development young children and educational objectives as it:

Æ' Develops affective and cognitive domains

Æ' Caters for young pupils with different learning styles

Æ' Brings innovation in curriculum

Æ' Develop literacy skills

Æ' Improves communication skills [3].

The key motivation of talking book was basically the interest shown by young children in playing computer games and their level of maturity and understanding displayed by them while playing. Thus, IT could be used as a useful educational tool for exploring as well as learning. This tool can help in enhancing the cognitive development in young children [3].

Prior to the creation of the talking books, pre-primary schools with IT facilities were identified from the four different zones. The investigation was conducted in 22 pre-primary private schools [3].

The research was divided in two parts,

the creation and testing of the talking books in the pre-primary

primary schools and

the social networking among the main actors involved in the teaching and learning process using Moodle e-learning platform [3]

## **Educational websites for pre-primary education**

Internet is becoming an increasing vital tool in our modern society. The use of internet as tool for learning is well known as many people opt for distance learning and there are some e-learning tools provided to help students to know their lessons better by giving them online exercises to do and instantaneously getting the answer.

There are many websites that can be used by young learners so as to help them develop well and understand some aspects of their learning skills but most of the websites were developed by outside developers for their respective countries. These are:

### **Kinderweb educational children's Games (<http://kinderwebgames.com>)**

This website is a free website and a very interesting one. It provides many different exercises or educational games that young learners can do with the help of an adult. The exercises include letters game, color game, addition game, subtraction game, comparison game among others. Besides, teachers or parents can print the section on coloring and then give the children to color it.

The Kinderweb websites is not that attractive, they could have use color for the background to attract more young learners. Besides the user needs to scroll a lot, they could have classified the games in horizontal.

**IXL (<http://www.ixl.com/math/grade/pre-k/>)**

The IXL website provides a number of exercises for different types of learners and divides the web page in section accordingly. The website is not a free one, we must register in order to access all its resources but it does let us get an overview of it by providing a free trial. The pre-K skills are meant for pre-primary education and it provides them with a lot of activities that are classified in various learning areas. The IXL track the score when answering the question and also the questions increase in difficulty as the young learner improves.

The main problem with this website is that it is not free and children will not be able to use it for long as the trial finished. The website could have been free for children and paid for teachers or parents who want to download and access some other data.

**Internet4Classrooms (<http://www.internet4classrooms.com/month2month.htm>)**

The internet4Classrooms website is a free web portal designed to assist anyone who wants to find high-quality, free internet resources for classrooms. The website site is used by teachers, parents and students. It is divided in different sections such as Kindergarten skills, 1st grade skills among others. In the Kindergarten section actives on mathematics, languages and art are available.

The problem with this website is that too many information is compact in one whole page which can be very confusing for all types of users. Besides, before accessing any exercises, we have to click on a link which will bring us

to another page and then click on another link to finally access the exercise. There are too many steps to be done before actually accessed the exercises.

To be able to make the website more interactive, first we should remove all the unnecessary information. Moreover, when clicking on an exercise instead of giving a series of links, we could access the exercise directly and then as doing the exercise the level increases as well as the difficulty.

### **Starfall. com (<http://www.starfall.com/>)**

This website is very interesting and attractive one. It is a free website which will enable anyone whether teachers, parents and young learners to use it without much difficulty. It provides guidelines and curriculums for the teachers. Besides, the website consists of animated pictures and the font size is not that small which will help the user to use it very well. It provides for activities for learning ABC and reading. This web page is very good but it could have put some mathematical skills for young learners and some shape differentiation (whether circle, square, rectangle or triangle).

### **Julia's Rainbow Corner (<http://www.juliasrainbowcorner.com/>)**

This website is a free and available to children, parents, teachers and grandparents. It is very attractive with different colour variations. As a front page, it has a rainbow which instantly can capture a child attention. The website has a section “ fun and games” which provides different games in different learning area like number, language among others. The games are provided with sounds and guidance for small children to use it. It also has a section namely “ Goodies 4 Kids” which provide for a list of items for kids

such as clothes, calendars, toys among others. People can buy these items online. In all, this website is good and interactive which can help children a lot.

### **e-Learning for kids (www. e-learningforkids. org)**

This website is a private non-profit institution based in US and Netherlands. It provides free interactive tools for kids in different learning areas namely Maths, Languages, Arts, Science, Computer Skills, Environmental skills, Health courses, life skills and English language. Most of the courses are available in English and some in Spanish, French, Portuguese and Thai [8]. Good combinations of colors are used in the site to make it more attractive and easy for the kids to follow. Sunhaloo et al demonstrated how this website can be adapted in the Mauritian context for pre-primary education as well as primary education [13].

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section is about pre-primary education in other countries like Nigeria, Hong Kong, United Kingdom, Australia and USA and also how technology have help in early childhood education and what are the prospects of ICT in pre-primary education We have taken country from each of the five continents that we can have a general view of pre-primary education around the world.

Modern Societies show serious concern for education of their young children for many important reasons but it should be noted that not all are agreed on the need and effectiveness of such early childhood programmes. Some early writers on this issue hold the view that young children are not mature

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enough to learn complex skills fostering of children's emotional security are more vital than any form of educational programme [15]. Furthermore, some leading scholars in early childhood education have doubted the wisdom in exposing young children very early to formal education [16].

## **Early Childhood Education**

### **Nigeria**

In the current National Policy on Education in Nigeria, early childhood education is labelled as pre-primary education. It is given to children aged from three to five plus prior to the entering in the primary school. The Policy aims at providing a smooth transition from the home to the school; preparing the child for primary school; inculcating in the child the spirit of cre