

## **EDITORIAL**

### **LEARNING AT PRE-BIRTH STAGE**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Mahabharata, the great epic, narrates the story of Abhimanyu, who, while in his mother's womb had learnt about technique of penetrating wheel like formation of soldiers in a face to face battle of those days (Mohanty 2012). There are many such instances for which Indian culture gives much respect to the pregnant ladies and expects them to be pious and carry out noble and spiritual activities. In 2008, Early Years Framework document of the Government of Scotland of UK defined early years as pre-birth to 8 years old and recognized the "importance of pregnancy in influencing outcomes and that the transition into primary school is a critical period in children's lives." (Scottish Government 2008, p.3). Learning and Teaching Scotland (2010, p.15) stated that "Babies start to learn in the womb, particularly in the last trimester. They are born able to recognise familiar sounds and they have already developed some taste preferences."

Mahatma Gandhi had said that

"The education of the child begins with conception. The physical and mental states of the parents at the moment of conception are reproduced in the baby. Then during the period of pregnancy it continues to be affected by the mother's moods, desires and temperament, as also by her ways of life. After birth the child imitates the parents, and for a considerable number of years entirely depends on them for its growth." (Gandhi 1927, p. 232).

Nearly seventy years ago, in 1951, The Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Puducherry stated that

“For it is certain that the nature of the child to be born depends very much upon the mother who forms it, upon her aspiration and will as well as upon the material surroundings in which she lives. To see that her thoughts are always beautiful and pure, her feelings always noble and fine, her material surroundings as harmonious as possible and full of a great simplicity—this is the part of education which should apply to the mother herself. And if she has in addition a conscious and definite will to form the child according to the highest ideal, she can conceive, then the very best conditions will be realised so that the child can come into the world with his utmost potentialities. How many difficult efforts and useless complications would be avoided in this way!” (The Mother 1951, p. 11).

It is high time that the nation gives stress on this aspect of learning, which is not only useful for intellectual , but also socio-emotional development of children.

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