

State of Early Childhood Education

Fact-Sheet of ICDS Project of Banspal, Odisha

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Undertaking a micro-study at Banspal Block of Keonjhar district in the State of Odisha has been an intense learning and experience. This report is published with the aim to sensitize Stakeholders and Civil Society Organizations on the significance of ECE, and to initiate dialogue with government as well as to explore the scope of collaboration with the local administration to address problems and challenges in the ICDS system so that access of all children to ECE is realized. Preparation of this report was preceded with substantial amount of exercise such as intensive field study, data analysis, etc which could not have been possible without support of different persons. I take this opportunity to express my gratefulness and sincere thanks to the following persons / institutions who inspired, supported, and guided me in completing the report.

- Anganwadi Workers
- Bernard van Leer Foundation, The Netherlands
- Child Development Project Officer
- Children
- ICDS Supervisors
- Parents and Communities
- President, CLAP
- Tribal Law Centre
- NCER Network Members for Keonjhar District

As this study was attempted for the first time, there could be few technical lapses in the report. There might be factual errors and analytical deficiency in the report. We would appreciate to receive comments and feedbacks from the readers to improve our technical skills in conducting research on the issues of young children.

Pramoda Acharya

Executive Director

Committee for Legal Aid to Poor

CONTENTS

Chapter-1	Background of the Study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction ● Significance of ECE ● Overview of ICDS
Chapter-2	Study Design & Methodology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objectives ● Source and Methods of Data Collection ● Limitations
Chapter-3	Area Description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Socio-Economic features of Keonjhar ● About Banspal
Chapter- 4	Analysis and Findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access related indicators ● Facility related indicators ● Quality related indicators ● Curriculum and pedagogy related indicators ● Management related indicators ● Knowledge related indicators
Chapter - 5	Way Forward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Suggestions ● Opportunities

CHAPTER -1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1: Introduction

Ever since the adoption of 86th amendment to the Constitution of India on 14 November 2002 introducing the right to education within the fold of fundamental rights, debates have been raised over the omission of right to Early Childhood Education (ECE) for the children of below six years age. Whereas ECE (commonly referred as pre-school education in India) is a feeder and support programme¹ as well as an enabling factor for realization of right to education, absence of a policy framework for early childhood education in India has been a major concern. With the enforcement of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act-2009, it is publicly believed that the children are provided with the legal opportunities to realize their right to education until the completion of fourteen years of age. In order to translate the constitutional mandate enshrined in Article-21(A)² to actual realization, it is really desirable for education policy to equally address two most important and interconnected factors i.e. Ready School and School Readiness. Undoubtedly, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act has addressed the ready school factor with the provisioning for accessibility of the child to neighborhood primary school, quality education, improved education environment, trained teachers, method driven teaching.

¹ National Policy on Education, 1986

² Article- 21(A) inserted in the Part-III of the Constitution of India by way of 86th Amendment to the Constitution in 2002, speaks that "State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine."

World Declaration on Education for All signed by global leaders in the year 2000 sets the first goal for improving and expanding comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Education to all Children focussing on children of marginalised and vulnerable communities

School readiness includes development of 5 distinct but interconnected areas such as :

- (i) child health and physical development;*
- (ii) social and emotional development;*
- (iii) approaches to learning (i.e. enthusiasm, curiosity, and persistence,*
- (iv) communication skills; and*
- (v) cognitive development and problem solving skills.*

**UNESCO;
EFA Global Monitoring Report:
Strong Foundation**

But what is significantly missing in this law is that school readiness provision which may ensure successful transition of the child from pre-school to primary education. Even though hints of reference for pre-school education is found in Section-11 of the RTE Act³, Act, the words used in the law that '*government may make necessary arrangements for providing pre-school education*' has made provision only literal one without having binding force on the government. While in the present context ECE is being delivered through Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme in the form of non-formal pre-school education, it is essentially important, particularly after the enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act-2009, to emphasize that pre-school education should be taken with priority for actual realization of right to education of children.

In this backdrop, the Committee for Legal Aid to Poor (CLAP) under the National Campaign for ECCE Right (NCER) has engineered this study with the objectives of first, to make critical revelation of state of pre-school education in ICDS Programme; secondly to make baseline assessment of institutional facilities, and capacity of Anganwadi Workers of ICDS Project, Banspal of Keonjhar district to render pre-school education service. This study was conducted under In Defence of the Child Project of CLAP which has been supported by Bernard van Leer Foundation, The Netherlands

1.2 : Significance of Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood is a period of systematic and progressive changes in the physical, emotional, social

³ *With a view to prepare above the age of three years for elementary education and to provide early childhood care and education of all children until they complete the age of six years, the appropriate government may make necessary arrangement for providing free pre-school education for such children*

While in the present context ECE is being delivered by the ICDS Scheme in the form of non-formal pre-school education, it is essentially important to give priority to pre-school education with distinct objectives, curriculum, and methodology and learning materials for the actual realisation of right to education to children.

The Universal Declarations of Human Rights, General Comment-7 interprets Right to Education during early childhood as beginning at birth and closely linked to young children right to maximum development.

Committee on the Rights of Child-2006

and cognitive development of the child which play a critical role in shaping learning acquisition skills of the child. Improving the standards of early childhood education service and ensuring quality ECE to all children through the institutional set up is a major task of the government. The amount of knowledge the children acquire from the early childhood learning process have definite impact on school readiness and, learning outcomes of the child which ultimately leads to higher enrolment in primary education, increased retention in school education. ECE helps children both to enter in school and to remain in the schooling system for continuity in education. The crux of the fact is that many empirical researches have provided substantial evidence to acknowledge ECE is most important step in the education ladder.

Early Childhood Education, referred as pre-school education in India, is a very important stage in education with distinct philosophy, value, objectives, curriculum, methodology, and materials. What is required to ensure quality ECE service is child-friendly centre with availability of basic facilities, trained facilitator with required knowledge, and skills, and strong monitoring system. In order to ensure that each child acquires basic learning acquisition skills before entering into the primary education, it is desirable to give importance not only to '**what child learns**' but '**how child learns**' also. Hence, teaching- learning process is as important as what is envisaged from the child to learn, be it song, rhymes, drawing, number, concept, communication skills, etc. Thus, Pre-School Education requires a framework that contains learning environment, teaching methodologies, learning process, teaching-learning materials, facilitator skills, monitoring standard.

The benefits of ECCE of on children's physical, motor, language, cognitive and social-emotional development lasts into primary grades and beyond.

UNESCO, 2010

The National Curriculum Framework-2005 designed by NCERT recognises early childhood years as critical period and states that "all pedagogic efforts during the primary classes greatly depend on the professional planning and the significant expansion of ECCE."

The significance of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) as a critical phase of in human development has been globally acknowledged through several declarations and ratifications. ECCE has increasingly become an integral part of the national development plans of the country. There have been constitutional provision, legislative measures, policies, and action plan for children below six years of age which have evolved over period of time is exhibited below.

In National policy for Children (1974), Government of India declared children as 'Supremely important assets'.

National Policy on Education (1986) considers ECCE to be critical input for human development necessary for school readiness and first step towards education in later years.

National Nutrition Policy (1993) has also recommended interventions for child care and nutrition during early childhood. **The National Health Policy (2002)** and **National Plan of Action for Children (2005)** have also been supported policy initiatives for early childhood.

86th Constitutional Amendment Act 2002 included ECCE under Article 45 of the Constitution that states that "The State shall endeavour to provide ECCE for all children until they complete the age of 6 years".

National Charter for Children(2003) emphasized Government of India's commitment to children's right to survival, health, nutrition, standard of living, early childhood care & education, name & nationality, freedom of expression, right to a family and right to be protected from economic exploitation.

National Curriculum Framework (2005) recognizes early childhood years as critical period and states that "all pedagogic efforts during the primary classes greatly depend on the professional planning and the significant expansion of ECCE".

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2009) under Section-11 states that "with a view to prepare children above the age of 3-years for elementary education and to provide ECCE, appropriate government may take necessary arrangements for providing free pre-school education for such children".

The 12th Five Year Plan envisions development need of the child is not only integrated but also interdependent. Thus it emphasizes on strengthening ECCE as a core service of Anganwadi Centre with a need to restructuring and strengthening ICDS centre thereby promoting ECCD in 'life cycle continuum' through delivering quality ECCE to all.

1.3: Overview of ICDS

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), a countrywide programme of the Government of India, offers a comprehensive package of services to address the nutrition and health problems and to promote early childhood education. The objectives of the ICDS are to: (i) improve the nutritional and health status of children in the age group of 0-6 years; (ii) lay the foundation for proper psychological, physical, and social development of the child; (iii) reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition, and school dropout; (iv) enhance the capability of mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child through nutrition and health education. ICDS has been the largest initiative on ECCE in India which was launched in the year 1975 following the adoption of National Policy for Children (1974) and it offers following six types of services interrelated to the holistic development of young children

- Supplementary nutrition
- Non -formal pre-school education
- Immunization
- Health Check-up
- Referral services
- Nutrition and Health Education

ICDS is mandated to provide centre based pre-school education facility. Children of 3-6 years are offered with the benefit of non-formal pre-school education through the institution of anganwadis. As per the ICDS guidelines, pre-school education has to be provided in a natural, joyful, and stimulating environment with emphasis on necessary inputs for optimal growth and development of the child.



ICDS has failed in providing pre-school education of necessary level. Pre-School Education has been least important activity of the anganwadis due to operational and managerial problems such as lack of learning environment in the centre, lack of knowledge of the facilitators about pre-school pedagogy, lack of age appropriate learning materials.

The fact-sheet highlights some of the key issues pertaining to performance of ICDS programme in delivering the pre-school education service as well as offers suggestions for bringing improvement in service delivery performance and management systems of ICDS.

CHAPTER -2

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The subject, dimension, as well as area decided to be taken up for this study was made deliberately and purposefully. It is true that expansion of ICDS has been good and noticeable to make wider outreach to the community, but it does not necessarily mean that the Service Delivery Unit of ICDS, i.e. the Anganwadis are equipped with adequate structure and capable human resources to effectively and efficiently discharge pre-school education service. This study was commissioned first, to make critical revelation of state of pre-school education in ICDS Programme; secondly to make baseline assessment of institutional facilities and capacity of Anganwadi Workers of ICDS Project, Bansapal of Keonjhar district to render pre-school education service.

2.1: Objectives

1. To assess facilities and availability of materials such as

- Physical structure
- Basic facilities such as drinking water, toilet, outer space
- teaching-learning materials

2. To assess knowledge and motivation level of ICDS functionaries with respect to

- their understanding of the holistic development of the child;
- their perception to ECE practice;
- their assigned responsibility and actual discharge of service
- training given to them and future requirement for better practice
- challenges faced and encountered

The entire territory of Bansapal Block is covered under Scheduled Areas as per the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution of India. ICDS Project of Bansapal is classified as Tribal Project with 231 centers including 148 AWCs and 83 Mini-AWCs

This report focusses on strengthening ICDS system through developing strategies and initiatives that address the barriers faced by the Anganwadi Workers in rendering pre-school services effectively and efficiently.

3. To ascertain system of monitoring, level of community participation for pre-school education.

2.2: Source and Methods for Data Collection

Analysis made, and major findings summarized in this report is based on the information collected through facility survey of 231 anganwadis, observatory report of the survey team, as well as on the views and opinions offered by the AWWs in Practice Documentation Workshops. The survey was commissioned during January-February 2012 by the CLAP Tribal Law Centre of Banspal. The survey was made to ascertain enrollment status for pre-school education, institutional facilities available in the anganwadis, educational standards of the PSE facilitator, training provided to the facilitators, availability of teaching-learning materials in the centers. A set of structured questionnaire schedule was used to collect that information from the record, and register of the anganwadis and in discussion with the AWWs. Narrative opinions of the AWWs about the Teaching-Learning Practice, Facilitator Training on PSE Curriculum, Problems and Challenges in PSE service delivery were captured through Practice Documentation Workshops. Seven numbers of such workshops were organized to obtain their views and opinions through group discussion, practice presentation, question-answer deliberation. All the data collected through centre survey were cross checked and validated. Then it was submitted to research division for tabulation, analysis, and reporting.

Few numbers of literatures and reports were reviewed which entailed collection of background information relating global views on ECE, national policy and programmes, and with respect to ICDS also.

Centre Survey and Practice Documentation Workshop was the source for data collection. The AWWs were asked to offer their opinions to the following questions in practice documentation workshop.

- *What types of practices followed and difficulties faced/challenges encountered by the facilitator to bring the child from home to centre, to manage the classroom ?*
- *Does the Mothers Committee, Parents, Community, PRI Members supervise and monitor pre-school education ?*
- *Is there any curriculum/ activity guidelines being followed for pre-school education ?*
- *Are the centers provided with the play-based teaching-learning materials ?*
- *Are the facilitators trained about the pre-school education methods, preparation of context and culture specific learning materials by using locally available materials ?*

Following documents were reviewed as a part of desk review process.

- World Education for All Report
- Fourth Country Report on CRC, Government of India.
- Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009
- Orissa Human Development Report-2004
- Annual Activity Report, Department of Women & Child Development, GoO.
- District Level Household Survey Report, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, GoI.

2.3: Limitations

Data presented in the report are based on information obtained from the AWCs. Accuracy and Truthfulness of data rest with record management by the AWWs. Analysis made and Graph illustrated in the report is based on the data collected from the centre and on the responses of the AWWs.



Data Collection Period :
January - February 2012

Centre Covered : 231

AWWs Interacted : 231

**Number of Children
Recorded : 13610**

CHAPTER -3

AREA DESCRIPTION

Area selected for the purpose of field investigation for primary information is Banspal ICDS Project Block of Keonjhar district in the State of Odisha. Brief profile of the study area is given below.

3.1: Socio-Economic Features of Keonjhar District

The district Keonjhar geographically located at the northern region of Odisha State is one of the most backward districts in the State and its backwards is mostly attributed to the factors of high concentration of poverty; poor livelihood patterns; inadequate institutional development, political apathy, inadequate social capital, increasing vulnerability of tribal, poor participation of people in the decision making process at the local governance intuitions. The peculiar and distinct features of the district are provided below.

- District is situated in distinct and difficult geographic zone:** Keonjhar is located in difficult geo-climatic zone of northern plateaus of Odisha. The district is covered with dense forest and hilly terrain. Around 30% of the total geographical area of 1103.78 sq.kms is covered with dense forest. Keonjhar is the bordering district to the state of Jharkhand as a result that there has been large scale migration from/to the district.
- District is covered under Schedule Areas as per Fifth Schedule of the Constitution of India:** Demographically, district is highly concentrated with Schedule Tribe Population. As per estimation of Census-2001, around 45% of



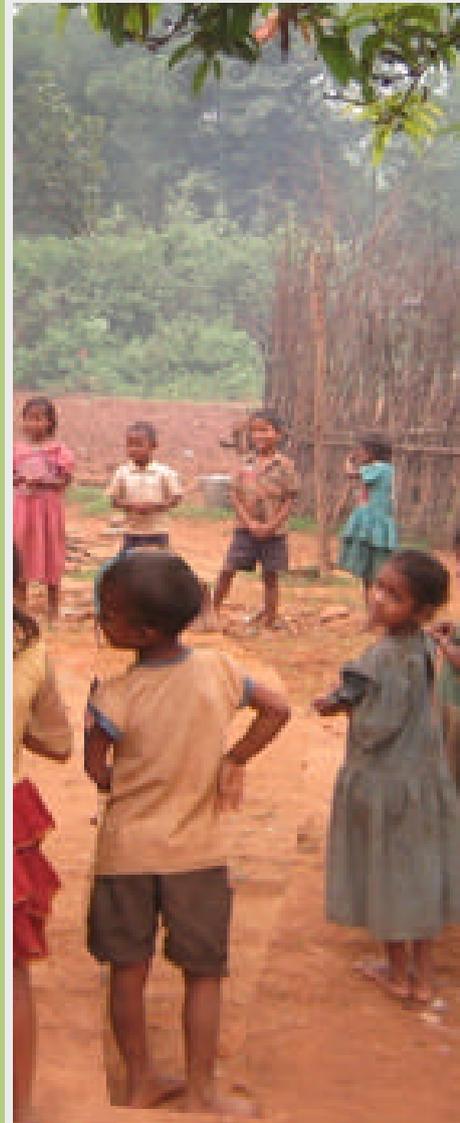
the population is schedule tribes. Keonjhar is homeland for 16 numbers of tribes including Primitive Tribal community Juanga. It is observed that a reasonable size of Juanga tribe are mostly concentrated in 42 nos. of villages within the geographical boundary of Bansapal Block.

- **Low ranked in Human Development Index:**

In certain human development indicators, Keonjhar is one of the poorest district in the state of Odisha. In terms of HDI, Keonjhar has lagged behind the All-Odisha average. Keonjhar is the poorly performed district in terms of development as it is evident from its ranking of 24th in HDI, 20th in Gender Development Index, 24th Infrastructure Development Index, and 18th Education Development Index. The situation of health status of children is alarming. The IMR of 58, NNMR of 41 and under-5 child mortality rate of 85 is comparatively higher as against the All-Odisha average. Institutional birth rate is 34.3% as compared to All-Odisha average of 44.1 (Refer: DLHS-3 2007-08, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, GOI).

- **High concentration of poverty:** Poverty rates are significantly higher among the tribal population. Many of the indicators of basic civic facility such as electricity connection to 23.6% households, toilet facility to 12.4% households and only 8.9% of families having pucca house speaks the magnitude of poverty among the tribal people.

- **Cultural invasion:** The district Keonjhar is enriched with natural resources of iron, bauxite, and manganese and chromites ores. Many intruders such as industrialist, mining agency,



mafia have been migrated to Keonjhar as a result their influence the tribal are losing their identity, culture and language.

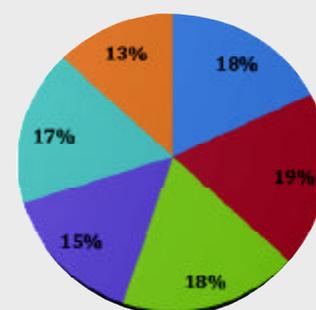
3.2: About Bansapal

Bansapal is one among the 14 Blocks of Keonjhar district. There are 21-nos of Gram Panchayats and 169 Revenue villages in Bansapal Block. The population¹ of Bansapal Block, as per Census-2001, was stood at 69,454 which consisted with 78.7% schedule tribe population. As per survey estimation, children below 6 years aged are numbered 13,547. In disaggregated age group, there are 7,437 numbers of children between the age 0-3 years, and 6173 numbers children of 3-6 years aged. The sex ratio is calculated to be 921 among 0-3 years aged children, and 857 among 3-6 years aged children. Approximately 70% of the total under-6 year aged children are consisted of scheduled tribes Tribal residing in this area are predominantly from BHUYAN, JUANGA, & MUNDA communities. Juanga, a primitive tribe are found 8 GPs namely Talachampe, Gonasika, Bargarh, Kodipasa, Kuanar, Bayakumutia, Tana and Suakathi. Juanga has its own dialect that is distinctively differed from Odia language which is the dominant regional language in the State of Odisha

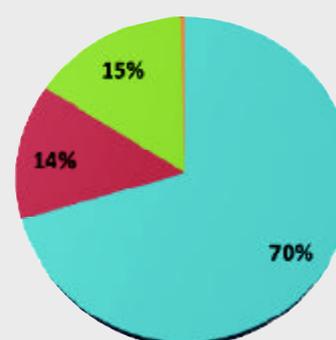
◆◆◆

¹ <File://H:/Banspal Block.htm>

Percentage of Children in Disaggregated Age group



Social Category among 0-6 Years aged Children



CHAPTER -4

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

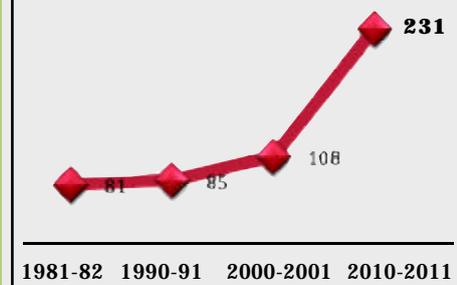
The state of pre-school education in ICDS Project of Banspal is examined in the context of key indicators: Access related indicators; Facility related indicators, Quality related indicators; Curriculum & Pedagogy related indicators; Knowledge related indicators and Management related indicators. Attempt is made here to make a consolidated and comprehensive analysis of infrastructure of ICDS centre including basic facilities such as availability of safe drinking water, toilet, separate kitchen space; enrolment status; educational qualification and teaching skill of the facilitator; availability of teaching-learning materials, curriculum & pedagogy.

4.1: Access related indicators

- ICDS Project of Banspal was started in the year 1981-82 with the operation of 81-Anganwadi Centers. Since then number of AWCs continued to grow to cover all the villages of Banspal block. From 85 anganwadis in 1990-91, the number was increased to 108 in 2000-01, and further to 231 anganwadis in 2010-11. Of the total 231 centers, AWCs are numbered to 148 and remaining 83 centers are mini-anganwadis. Despite progressive growth in the number of AWCs, still there are 18- hamlet villages¹ of Banspal Block that are not yet provided with anganwadis in their habitations.
- With quantitative expansion of ICDS Centers over the years, it was probably expected that

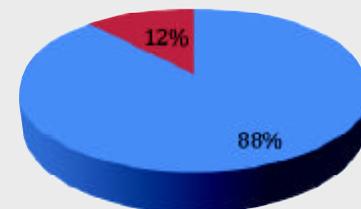
¹Baitarini, Danguaposi, Rangamatia (Mudasahi), Khuntakata (Gouda Sahi), Vegidhi, Medinipur, Sana Radhna, Gopinathpur, Uppersamatha, Sagapada, Daki Nuagaon, Birikala, Upper Raigada, Kansa, Turiba, Kantapal, Sapakanta, Upper Kansa.

Growth Trend of Anganwadis

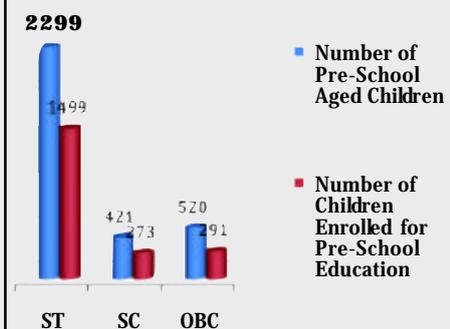


Location of Anganwadis

■ Within 1 km ■ Above 1 km



Enrollment Proportion of Boys for Pre-school Education in Anganwadis

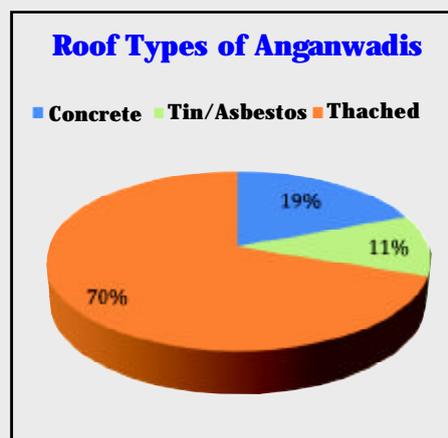
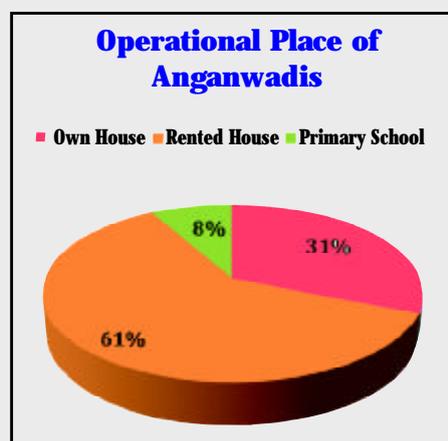
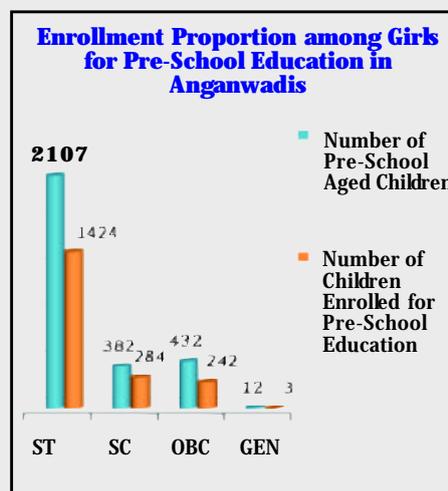


enrolment rate in pre-school education could have gone up. But in reality this did not happen. Record maintained in the AWCs shows that enrolment rate for pre-school education among all categories of children is apparently 65.0%.

- There could be multiple reasons for which accessibility is restricted, ICDS service is not utilized properly, enrollment is limited, and attendance rate is remained poor. Lack of parental sensitivity towards benefit of pre-school education; common perception about anganwadi as feeding centers; communication disruption in off-seasons; cultural superstitious, casual approach of AWWs towards their responsibilities are some of the reasons for unsatisfactory outreach of pre-school education service of ICDS scheme.
- There are few villages where anganwadis are distantly located which caused problems for children to come regularly to the centre. In the hilly areas of Gonasika, Kanjipani, and Suakathi Sector, accessibility to anganwadis is disrupted in rainy seasons due to communication problems. Around 20% of the AWWs have stayed away from the villages where centres are located and they usually come to the centre for 10-12 days in month against the mandated period of 25 days.

4.2: Facility related indicators

- Infrastructure as well as good physical environment is very much essential for any kind of institutional set up to discharge the services without any structural and operational hazardous. Improved infrastructure would be a factor of attraction to catch up more and more beneficiaries to the anganwadis. Surprisingly,

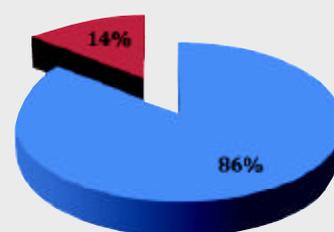


necessary attention has not been given at the policy level for infrastructure development of anganwadis. Poor infrastructure and Non-availability of minimum basic facilities have become the real constraint for the proper functioning of the anganwadis.

- Of the total 231 anganwadis, only 72 centers have their own house. As many as 140 centers are operating in rented house/ community place and 19-centres are placed in primary schools. Classification of anganwadis by type of building shows that 19.0% of centers have concrete roof, 11.0% have asbestos roof, and 70.0% of the centers have thatched roof.
- Availability of safe drinking water in the Anganwadi center needs to be ensured for the safety of the children from the water born diseases like diarrhea; cholera etc. 198-centres have sourced their drinking water from tube well. Source of drinking water for remaining 33-centres is well. However, only 35-centers have drinking water facility within the own premises.
- None of the anganwadis has toilet facilities of its own. Even though 19-centres have toilet facility, but these centers are placed in primary schools which are provided with toilet facilities as per mandate of SSA Programme.
- Providing cooked food to children is a mandate for the AWC as far supplementary nutrition programme of ICDS is concerned. Thus, availability of separate space kitchen purpose is very much essential for AWC. However, only 35-centres have kitchen space separately. In other centers, foods are cooked either in open place or in the house of AWW/AWH.

Drinking Water Source in Anganwadis

■ Tube Well ■ Well



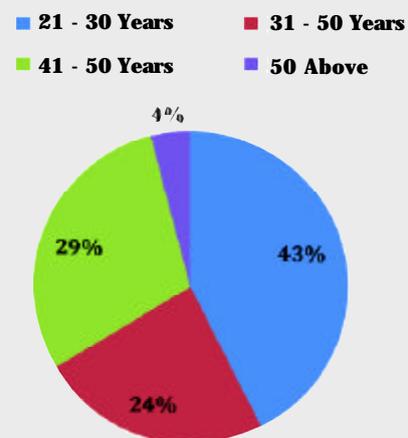
While there is significant increase in the number of anganwadis over a period from 2001-10, the progress for enhancing competence of the facilitators, prescribing standard uniform PSE curriculum, providing age appropriate TLM, securing community participation is lacking.

4.3: Quality related indicators

Quantitative expansion of ICDS centers does not ensure that quality of pre-school education service is improved. Mere increase in number of centers without quality assurance can be seen as a lop-sided improvement. Setting of quality standards for pre-school education may include competence of the facilitator; developmentally appropriate curriculum; appropriate teaching-learning materials; parental and community involvement; learning outcomes assessment of children; and convergence with primary schools. Information concerning to the competency level of the AWWs, availability of PSE Curriculum, teaching-learning methods practiced by the facilitator, parental perceptions etc was captured under this study. Some of the key findings regarding present quality standards of pre-school education are given below.

- 43.0% of AWWs are between the age of 21-30 years, 24.0% between 31-40 years, 29.0% between 41-50 years and 4.0% of AWWs are above the age 50 years. Average age among the AWWs is 32 years which suggests that there is scope to improve their skills through training and orientation.
- As far educational qualification is concerned, 78.0% of the AWWs have qualification between VIII –X standards, 10.0% have educational standard from V-VII and only 6.0% of these have education of matriculation or above. Educational qualification of 6.0% of the AWWs is up-to primary standard (i.e. below to standard-V).
- In the context of the ICDS programme, the role of the AWW is most crucial as they are the frontline functionaries who identifies the beneficiaries as well as delivers the services. Hence, they are

Age Profile of AWWs



Educational Standard among AWWs



needed to be trained about the context, content, pedagogy, and methods of pre-school learning. As far as training component within the ICDS programme is concerned, it is mandatory for all AWWs to go through job course training after joining. Available information shows that all workers of 148 AWCs have gone through job course training whereas 55-Mini-Anganwadi Workers (i.e. 66.0 % of total Mini-AWCs) have not yet received training on job course. 48.0% of the AWWs had received 4 months training of job course and refresher course, while 22.0% received 3 months training, and 30.0% of the AWWs were provided with less than 2 months training of both job course and refresher course. While almost all the AWWs perceived that the trainings were useful in enhancing their skills for household survey, immunization, health and nutrition education, record management, but approximately 75.0% of the AWWs did not recognize usefulness of those trainings in improving their skills for pre-school education. Pre-school training imparted to the AWWs is inadequate as a result they are not adequately capacitated to plan, organize, and conduct developmentally appropriate and innovative ECE programme.

- As per central government revised ICDS norms-2008, each AWC is provided with a grant of Rs.1000/- per annum to procure ECE kits. Although majority of anganwadi workers viewed that they had been provided with ECE kits and TLM such as chart, flash card, picture books etc, but those were not sufficient as per requirements. Around two-third of the AWWs informed they had received TLM kits more than 3 years ago. Most of the centers do not have own house or

While it is mandatory to provide job course training to anganwadi worker immediately after joining, around two-thirds of the mini-anganwadi workers are remained untrained. Training that had been offered to the anganwadi workers did not helpful to improve their skills for pre-school teaching in such extent as useful in enhancing their skills for household surveys, immunization, health & nutrition, education and record management.

What is required to ensure quality ECE service is child-friendly centre with availability of basic facilities, trained facilitator with required knowledge, and skills, and strong monitoring system.

are not provided with store-well to keep the learning materials in safety. The offshoot of the fact is that even if the centers have been provided with the TLM, the use of those materials is very limited.

4.4: Curriculum & pedagogy related indicators

- In the early childhood education stage, teaching-learning process and learning outcomes is equally important because what *child learns* has same significance with *how child learns*. ECE is ought to be play-based, child centered, and school based programme. Conversely, ECE ought not to be syllabus-bound, teacher-centric and formal teaching programme. Pre-school education programme is integrated in ICDS with the objective to develop readiness of children for primary schooling. The ICDS guidelines of PSE has recognized that age group of 3-6 years is a school preparatory stage where emphasis should be on development of cognitive processes along with motor and muscular development. The focus of pre-school education should be; (i) to develop pre-number concepts; (ii) concept formation and language development though the activities like pre-conversation, storytelling, and vocabulary building. What is prescribed in pre-school curriculum called Arunima is not practiced uniformly due to lack of orientation of the facilitators coupled with non-availability of appropriate materials and adequate space to conduct play based activities. Due to lack of conceptual clarity about what is ECE and what is not ECE, Anganwadi Workers are giving more stress to conventional method of teaching and formal learning such as reading, and writing.

Due to lack of conceptual clarity about what is ECE and what is not ECE, Anganwadi Workers are giving more stress to conventional method of teaching and formal learning such as reading, and writing.

Monitoring and Supportive Supervision of pre-school education is undoubtedly the weakest areas of ICDS Programme. ICDS Supervisors hardly visit to 30 percent centers of their respective cluster once in a month. Lack of transportation facilities and low conveyance allowance has hindered their movement to inaccessible pockets.

- Although a standard guideline called Arunima is prescribed with time tables for each of the activities, the time for ECE is varied and this is not followed through in practice. There was no active demonstration of organized ECE as a programme, sporadic activities were conducted. The language of communication is in Odia language which cause problem for tribal children to understand and follow the activity.

4.5: Management related indicators

- ICDS is monitored at various levels. At the Central Level, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) has overall responsibility of monitoring of ICDS. As far as pre-school education component of ICDS is concerned, State Governments are required to send consolidated report received from project level to Central ICDS Monitoring Unit which is placed under **MWCD of GoI**. At the Block Level, CDPO has responsibility for overall implementation of the scheme. Supervisors are placed at the cluster level with the responsibilities of supervising the **AWC**.
- ICDS project of Banspal has seven clusters. Each supervisor has responsibility of supervising 25-30 centers on a month. The survey made an attempt to capture views from the AWWs about the frequency of visit of the concerned supervisor to the centre in preceding six months to the survey. It was observed 30.0% of the centers were visited by the Supervisors once in a month. 45.0% of the centers were visited by the Supervisors once in every 2 months and supervision to remaining 25.0% of the centers had been made once in 2-4 months. Supervision has been few and far between for those centers

Role of Mothers Committees are confined only for procurement, quality checking of food items.

Parental demand for pre-school education is perceptibly absent as this is not a priority issue for them. Parents have perceived ICDS is a feeding programme for Children.

which are located in most inaccessible pockets. The Supervisors opined that lack of transportation facilities have hindered their movement and made supervision difficult.

Community support and parental participation in pre-school education is almost lacking. Even though Mothers Committees have existence on record, the role of those committees is limited only for procurement, quality checking of food items for Supplementary Nutrition Programme.

4.6: Knowledge related indicators

- Knowledge among parents and community about ECE is at low level. Tribal people have fond of preserving their generic culture. They are guided by their own instincts and have natural disposition to their language, and culture. Tribal people are more interested to engage their children in the generic occupation of the family such as collection and selling of forest produce, seasonal farming, preparing handicrafts, preparing liquor from the locally available materials in stead of sending children to schools. Parents have seen AWCs as feeding centre only not education centre.
- Majority of the AWWs do not have appropriate conceptual clarity about what is ECE and what is not ECE? The paradox is that the AWWs are giving more stress to conventional method of teaching and formal learning such as reading, and writing.

Practice of pre-school education in anganwadi is quite contradictory to established standard which argues that pre-school is a stage for pre-reading, pre-writing, pre-arithmetic. Conventional and more formal methods of learning such as reading, writing etc is being followed by the anganwadi workers.



CHAPTER -5

WAY FORWARD

5.1: Suggestions

Suggestions are offered with regard the issues identified and the key challenges faced by the anganwadis in managing pre-school education services.

- Sensitizing parents and communities is the key to creating access to ECE provision. Once the communities are aware of the importance of ECE for their children and the right of children to receive these services, they mobilize themselves and make demand for quality ECE service. An effective public education programme is needed to sensitize parents why and how centre-based pre-school learning is necessary to prepare the child for primary education.
- Strengthening basic infrastructure and support facilities holds the key to bring improvement in the quality of the service. Each center should have own infrastructure with good physical environment.
- What is needed for effective transaction of pre-school learning is well-motivated PSE Facilitator who has required knowledge, understanding, skills, and sensitivity to adopt a more professional approach towards education and development of children. A Pre-School Education Training Module has to be developed delineating activities to be conducted, process to be followed, and materials to be used by the facilitator for conducting pre-school education. Government is required to institutionalize pre-school education training for AWWs with the creation of nodal institute which may conduct training, and research on pre-school school education.
- Enhancing competence of PSE facilitator through training and regular orientation about teaching methodology, learning pedagogy, classroom management, how to communicate with the children in multi-lingual classroom, how to measure the learning performance of children.
- Providing a uniform curriculum with daily action plan for the facilitator can mandate the facilitator to conduct pre-school learning activities appropriate

manner. Therefore, standardized PSE Curriculum should be developed with the description of activity to be conducted, duration for each activity, methods to be followed to conduct each of the activities for age-specific development of the child.

- Creating opportunities for mother-tongue based pre-school education would induce interest for tribal children
- Institutionalizing strong monitoring system is also key to develop an efficient service delivery system within the ICDS framework. A MIS system needs to be developed with the information about the enrolment, attendance, outcomes of pre-school programme of ICDS in order to promote more research, evidence-based planning and evaluation.

5.2: Opportunities

Attempt was made under this study to identify the opportunities which could be explored further to make the ICDS Project of Bansapal more effective and efficient to deliver quality pre-school education.

- Restructuring and Reform in ICDS is being contemplated by the Central Government.
- Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India has formulated National ECCE Policy which is going to be introduced shortly.
- District Administration of Keonjhar is proactively engaged for women & child development.
- Funds allocated to JDA, DIET, NREGA, Tribal Sub-plan needs to be augmented for infrastructure development of ICDS centres.
- Capable & Learner interested AWWs are available. Their motivation and skills to be developed through training.
- Strong social institutions such as NGOs available and working for young children.





COMMITTEE FOR LEGAL AID TO POOR (CLAP)
Bimaladevi Memorial Building, 367-Markatnagar,
Sector-6, Cuttack -14, Odisha, India
Phone : 0671-2363980, 2365680, Fax-0671-2363454
Email:clap_india@dataone.in Website:www.clapindia.org