



GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT



EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN KARNATAKA

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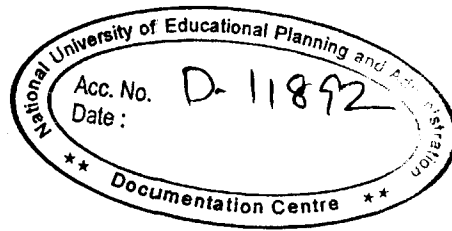
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Preface

This Study looks at the young child, 0-6 years, in the specific context of programmes in Karnataka, for the development of the pre-school child; set in the wider perspective of the Indian cultural scene and as related to the global conceptualization of the "Universal" child.

The stated objectives * of this study are "

1. To assess the success of efforts of the GOK to provide pre-school education, in particular, in ensuring coverage, **meeting the expectations for early childhood education** and ensuring convergence of various services targetted at pre-school children.
2. To define the policy programming issues that need to be resolved to improve coverage and effectiveness of early childhood education services for children during the 2 to 3 years before they enter primary school.

This entails looking critically at :

Policy, in relation to services for pre-school children, including those provided by private (NGO) bodies.

The **types of services** available and putting together a **statistical picture** of coverage, location, etc., of services provided; as also at **the number and the socio-economic status of the children** catered to -- with a view to assessing the **adequacy** or otherwise of the services provided, in terms of both **quality and quantity**.

The level of **Collaboration and co-operation between the Department of Education and the Department of Women and Child Development**, in the specific context of the pre-school and its linkages to primary education.

The **service conditions** of pre-school teachers, supervisors and other related personnel.

The adequacy, relevance and quality of **training** given to different levels of staff, by the existing resource and **training institutions** which support early childhood programmes.

The study, as stipulated, has combined the **analysis of secondary data** with extensive field visits. The latter were for the purposes of collecting qualitative data.

The ICDS of the Department of Women and Child Development, is the largest programme re. early childhood development. 40,000 anganwadi centres (AWCs) are run in Karnataka - which cater to some 60 % of pre-school children in this State.

The Education Department enhances AWCs in some 450 sites of 5 to 6 blocks.

- See Annexure D Terms of Reference.

NGOs, while providing quality pre-school education, cater to only a small percentage of pre-school children. Together, they also provide a rich laboratory of experiences, which, if selectively adapted, could be a source of continuous enrichment to the larger State-sponsored programme. A profitable partnership with NGOs, is in the area of training.

In this study, we have largely concentrated on documenting and analyzing the ICDS experience. We have also looked to NGOs, for insights and for comparisons. Actual and potential collaboration and co-operation between the Department of Education (DOE) and the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), both in terms of what is on the ground and what is perceived, has been noted and commented upon.

We have made a number of recommendations, in terms of both enhanced financial and qualitative requirements. Recommendations, if implemented piece-meal or in part, will not yield proportionately effective results. The synergy, or value added, of implementing the recommendations in toto or almost so, will be lost.

We are preparing a shorter version of this Study Report, in Kannada, so as to be able to share the findings with all the people we interacted with in the field.

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and
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I. THE RATIONALE

= Zubeida, all of 3 years, was bent over, absorbed in putting chalk to slate - in faithful imitation of her older brother.

“What are you doing?” asked her mother.

“I am drawing God”. Said Zubeida

“But no one knows what God looks like” said mother.

Without missing a beat or looking up from her drawing, Zubeida replied,

“They will in a minute”.

This innate, supreme self-confidence can ease many of life’s challenges and shape more ups than downs in Zubeida’s life. Can we help preserve it?

= “The child is father of the man”, or “As you sow, so shall you reap”.

Subjects for school essays? Written without pausing to think that the meaning would come home to roost.

= Remember childhood stories? That one about the child Krishna . Opening his mouth and revealing to his mother, the whole world in there?

II. PREAMBLE

“The very definition of who constitutes a child is problematic. There is no universal experience of childhood. Definitions of children along with the diverse childhoods that children across the world experience, are social constructs which are the result of a complex interplay of historical, social and cultural factors” (Vasanti Raman: “Politics of Childhood” Economic and Political Weekly, Nov. 11, 2000).

The idea of childhood as a separate phase of life is barely 3 to 4 centuries old in the West. In non-western societies, childhood, adolescence and adulthood is seen as a continuum. Witness the girl child who takes on sibling care and household chores well before puberty, which itself is but another step on her path to donning the full responsibility of womanhood and motherhood.

The West looks upon childhood as a time for protection from the ‘real’ world – a time to learn and grow. With increasing focus on the sanctity of the individual, the need to draw out the potential of each person becomes central to attending to the growth of the child.

In India, corresponding ideas of stages of growth were applicable only to the Brahmins and other higher castes. “Education” was not a drawing out, but a readying of the person for his role in society. Disciplining, in the West, has given way to a more liberal attitude towards helping the child to grow. In India, discipline was and continues to be the backbone of bringing up a child. The child is expected to mirror the values and wishes of its parents and forebears.

Even those not belonging to the upper echelons of the caste system follow this edict in shaping their roles whether it be in the realm of the professional, the familial or the societal.

But the world is shrinking and one cannot shut oneself off from the winds of change; nor is it possible to let the winds flow by without being affected, often positively, many a time negatively, by the passion of ideas, the imperatives of economics and the excitement of the varied possibilities of the human existence.

Like the world over, we too are a fractured society – varying only in degree. While the twice-born and the rich, consciously and purposefully, if not always with discernment, partake of a common world culture, the vast majority of the poor and the dispossessed are not in a position to exercise choice in this matter.

From an era of looking on slaves, the working classes, women and in India, the lower castes, as not quite human, we are now in a time, when it is all but a non-negotiable world value, to hold all human beings as equal – at least ideationally, if not in the dark recesses of our guts.

It is against this backdrop, that various programmes for uplifting the poor and the disadvantaged have been started in India, as elsewhere in the Third World.

The Integrated Child Development Programme (ICDS), one such, was started in 1975. But as far back as the 19th century, in India, interest was being evinced in early

childhood education. Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the form of Kindergarten classes, were first started in India by missionaries, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Madame Montessori inspired social workers to start a school in Baroda in 1915. In 1920, the wonderfully creative, unconventional Gijubhai Badekar, adapted Montessori methods to Indian conditions, adding his own soupcon of story-telling, while starting a Bal Mandir in Bhavnagar, Gujarat.

Madame Montessori, invited to India, started her first training course, in Madras in 1939, under the auspices of the Theosophical Society. It was left to Mahatma Gandhi to ask Madame Montessori to Indianize her methods, so that an inexpensive system of pre-school education could be made available to the vast majority of Indian children who had no access to education of any sort. This was in 1946. It was seen as pre-basic education, a runner-up to Gandhiji's programme for basic education.

At the time of independence, pre-school education was in the hands of a few voluntary agencies. It was Durgabai Deshmukh who took the first step towards reaching out to rural areas and to poor and needy children. She was instrumental in setting up the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) in 1953. In 1960, the CSWB set up a committee to study the problems of children under the age of 6. A comprehensive plan for their care and training was the result. The responsibility for running pre-schools was left to voluntary agencies, with support from government. The recommendation that a cadre of child-care workers be trained, gave birth to the Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW), 1961.

The CSWB also initiated the starting of mahila mandals and balwadis, during the First Five year Plan period. The Second Plan saw the co-ordination of programmes for women and children in the Community Development Blocks. The CSWB was also instrumental in setting up the supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) - in 1970, and a scheme for creches for ailing and working mothers in 1974.

During the Third Plan period, there was a greater focus on recognizing the child as a separate entity, with specific development needs. Till the Fifth plan, the programme for early childhood development had a "Welfare" approach - Comprehensive welfare services were provided in all aspects of child development.

The formulation of the National Policy for Children, 1974, saw a shift in emphasis in the Planning documents, from 'welfare' to 'development'. Already, in 1968, the Committee for the Preparation of Programmes for Children recommended that Government should invest heavily in education, including pre-school education – this fundamental and important sector of development should not be left to private agencies. A study group set up to look into a comprehensive programme for the development of the pre-school child, recommended an integrated approach including health, nutrition and education. The Indian Association for Pre-School Education (IAPE) raised a point about the psycho-social development of the child. After much debate, when the ICDS was launched in 1975, it included a strong component of non-formal pre-school education.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1986 explicitly spoke of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), emphasizing the need to invest in the development of the young child. ECCE was conceived of as a feeder programme to strengthen primary education as also as a human resource development programme.

Though various sub-committees were set up to chalk out a Programme of Action (POA), the reach of the programme, in terms of the percentage of children covered, was disappointing. This was the conclusion reached by the Acharya Ramamurti Committee of 1990. One of the reasons cited by this Committee, for slow progress, was that the programme, which had been conceptualized and developed by the Dept. of Education, had been transferred to the Dept. of Women and Child Development. The DWCD was not able to fulfill its role as nodal agency for co-ordinating with other departments, to achieve holistic development of the child, i.e. nutritional, health, social, physical, mental, moral and emotional development, as conceived of in the NPE.

The Ramamurti Committee also emphasized that the Constitutional directive (Article 45) of providing free and compulsory education for all children up to 14 years of age, should include ECCE. The Committee also recommended programmatic and physical linkages with the primary education system.

From the very start of the ICDS, more emphasis was laid on expansion, than on implementing lessons of the early 'experimental' blocks – probably due to political expediency. 1992 saw a marked expansion of the ICDS, under the Eighth Five Year Plan, with a view to universalizing the programme. This was also the year when the Indian Government ratified the Rights of the Child.

The Ninth Five Year Plan reiterated the need to universalize the ICDS, specially stressing the need to focus on the girl child, in keeping with current thinking. An important point that the plan makes is that the early period of play and learning in the young child's life should be strengthened, so that it can make possible an harmonious transition from family environment to formal learning.

The concept of what a child is and what it's developmental needs, has changed in the West, as a result of and in answer to changing social conditions; in keeping with evolving ideas and values of what a human being is and what his rights.

As India gets drawn into the global net, ideas, values and ideologies concomitant with the changing societal and economic conditions of developed countries, willy-nilly get grafted on to the different cultural, societal and economic conditions prevailing in this country. And a global imperative of outlook and conscience impinges on and motivates the decisions and actions of those in power and those with 'voice'. So much so that, programmes devised for the benefit of the vast majority in India, often do not mesh with their world view, but mirror the world view of the planners and beyond them, of the global community.

An example:

Children are sitting on brightly-coloured plastic chairs placed around plastic tables. These small groups of 4 and 5 children dot the room in such a way that there is barely any space to move around. There are still a few children left who sit here and there on the floor. The tables have new-looking plastic and wooden toys which engage the children. The anganwadi has won a prize for being one of the best – the prize being the plastic chairs, tables and toys.

We are a mixed team of foreign funders and the ever-ubiquitous local consultants, 'experts' who are evaluating the ICDS project in Chingelput, Tamil Nadu. The CDPO, the

supervisors, the AWW, the helper and assorted government officials mandated to accompany the team, all beam with pride at the splash of plastic colour around us. We of the team are a bit aghast at how all this plastic diverts from the 'real' purpose of turning out self-confident, articulate, creative, curious-about-this-and-that children. Whose perceptions take precedence? Whose perceptions to apply when evaluating?

And another example:

Parents, the community, the ICDS workers, all plumb for an obedient, hard – working, truth-telling child as the ideal – somewhat at variance with our view (academic, expert, individualistic) of a chattering, fearless, active and imaginative child.

"The child doesn't listen to us. She answers back like a boy" say parents.

"She disturbs everyone in class" says the AWW.

"She is discovering the world, realizing her potential" say we.

Different world-views. Different 'expected' outcomes.

It is inevitable, in this shrinking world, that there has to be co-ordination and reconciliation between the global and the local – which makes implementation that much more complex and complicated, never mind other obstacles on the way.

III SNAPSHOTS FROM THE FIELD.

Where is the Anganwadi? We usually entered the village with this question.

'Near the school' "Behind that temple" or

'Which AWC do you want to visit? One is in the main village, another is in the SC "Colony"'

One thing is for sure, By the 25th year of the ICDS programme, it has achieved a wide reach. The AWC has become a natural entity of the village. It has a role in village dynamics also. By providing some of the basic facilities to the people it has developed a strong identity of its own.

No AWCs here !

When we were visiting Harohalli Panchayat, Mysore Taluk – we found that in Kallahalli Chuncharayanahundi, Maddurhundi- there were no AWCs. The importance of AWCs can be felt once you go to a place where there isn't one. People in general, mothers, primary school teachers, all of them expressed a sense of loss.

"Our little children are on the streets" – is the feeling of the community. They are very much aware of the AW programme and they feel their children are deprived of nutritional food and education.

For the primary school teachers, it is a big headache to manage the children who come to the first class without going through any pre-primary course. It takes 6 months for them to make the children adjust to the school atmosphere.

Another problem for the primary school is that parents bring children who are not yet old enough to join 1st class and put pressure on the teachers to admit the children. Many a time even if they are not admitted they just leave their children in the 1st class with other children and go off. Teachers find it very difficult to cope with this.

Previously in these villages they had a pre-primary course attached to the primary schools. But since the last one/one and a half years, this course has been stopped. The teachers have been absorbed in lower primary schools.

In fact one other thing we found is that "space" for younger children is becoming a necessity for mothers and the community. Children below 5 do not work and are not independent. Mothers feel more relaxed leaving them in a safe place. So this again points to the need for pre-primary education. (We also heard that once the child starts doing a little work – it is out of school and into work. So, for the community, pre-school becomes more of a necessity than primary! Though it is not encouraging, it seems to be a fact).

Though there is an expressed need, there are many villages which still do not have an AWC facility. In Maddurhundi they took matters into their own hands. They took the help of an 'Irani Saheb' as they call him, (an industrialist who has a farm near this village. He has donated lots of materials to the nearby schools).He helped in starting a pre-school centre. Ms. Anasuya comes as a teacher from a nearby village and stays

there for the full day. Food is not provided in the school. More than 50 children attend the school. The teacher is paid Rs.1000/- and the helper is paid is Rs.300/-, salaries being routed through the village heads.

The community knows that this cannot be a permanent arrangement. So they even asked us whether we can get an AWC to their village. Everywhere we went, we realized that communities indeed wanted an AWC in their village.

When we entered Kumpanamajalu (Bantwai Taluk – D.K. dist) AWCs were identified by the AWW's name. "Is it Ravikala's Anganwadi or Mamatha's Anganwadi...?"

It was Ravikala whom we wanted to meet. Of course, working there for 10 years from the inception it has naturally become Ravikala's Anganwadi. We were there when children were arriving at the centre.. Ravikala gave us a warm and confident welcome. She was wearing a salwar and khameez. (This is mentioned because – usually the AWW is not supposed to wear a salwar and khameez. She is supposed to wear only sarees). Because she was planning to take that day off, she wore a salwar and khameez. Ravikala was totally at ease. We mention this specially because – it says something very important.

In most of the AWCs, the first part of our visit was like a little drama. Our appearance (a surprise?) would bring about an alarming agitation in the Centre. The AWW and the helper would run around to arrange chairs for us to sit on, or, if they were a little late reaching the AWC -, become very apologetic in front of us, take out the registers as quick as possible, make the children sit quiet, folding their hands All this within a few seconds.

But often before they got their act together we would squat on the floor giving them a big shock! (Yes! The shock was visible on their faces). Somehow they would bring a mat at least and push it under us. Then we introduce ourselves and tell them in brief about the objective of our study.

Conversation would begin slowly. Gradually we would get into discussion – following our questionnaire guidelines. By then they also would realize that we are not big "bhoothas" (devils) nor government officials and start interacting comfortably.

It is a very small sample to draw any conclusions from, but we distinctly get the feeling wherever we go. "Why do people working at the grass-roots have to be so fearful, suspicious about visitors? What makes them behave like this. Why are visits of people like us seen as threatening, instead of being seen as friendly, supportive and enriching? What message do the little children watching them get? Isn't it necessary to understand this and analyse what effect this has on the functioning and the outcomes of the programme?" "How important is self-esteem? Can acquiring confidence and self-esteem be built into training programmes?."

Here is Ravikala, an exception. There were a few more who received us on equal terms and in such a dignified manner. Sumithrabai of Bidar was one other face we remember. Ravikala is a graduate. Most of the AWWs we met have finished their SSLC. The AWHs are mostly illiterate or with a primary level qualification, We met one person with SSLC, working as an AWH. (Hosahalli-Koodlige).

We met AWWs who had just started their work with enthusiasm and AWWs who had slogged for more than 20 – 23 years. So for us, it was like travelling with them over all these years.

Physical Set Up :

The AWC we visited in Kumpanamajalu had a building of its own. For getting the building Ravikala had to put in lots of effort. In the beginning for 2 to 3 years there was no building. The AWC was situated in a small area which was part of a Beedi Shop. Then for some time, it was in somebody's house. Though they co-operated, it was a burden on them.

And then the building was sanctioned. In no time this sanction was withdrawn and shifted to another area because of some political influence! Then again it was in somebody's house. In that house for some time it was in the hall and afterwards it was shifted to one of the rooms. This was the last. A building was sanctioned again.

A local family donated the land. The BDO's office sanctioned Rs. 45,000. The building was finally ready by 1993. Ravikala says that even to find the AWC a proper building, the responsibility falls on the AWW.

They inaugurated the building and felicitated the person who had donated the land, and presented mementos to the people who helped. UNICEF provided Rs.1000/- for a toilet. With that amount half the work was done 3 years back. That is the present status. Ravikala has not been able to get help from the panchayat. Here again she has to run up and down many times leaving the centre to the helper.

The physical set up of the AWCs is discouraging. Some do not have a building, others had buildings but with some problem or the other. In Mannalli – Bidar – 3 AWCs are in one room. It looks over-crowded, suffocating. They cannot leave children outside either, because the space around is used as an open toilet.

In Chikkahokkurane – K, Bidar and Mamadapura Quarad – Bidar – the AWC is in a cage-like space – dark little hut. In addition to that in Chikkahokkarane – K, the AWW, Nirmala, said that she has to pay rent for the building ie Rs.50/- per month. This amount is paid out of her pocket. She has to do this because she needs to keep her job. The community feels that the AWW gets that amount from the government – why can't she pay the rent!

In Ayyanahalli (Koodlige) the AWC has a building, but it has a crack in it. Because it does not look safe, the AWC is conducted in the primary school. In Haralu (Koodlige/Bellary) the AWC has a building, but there is no roof to the kitchen. The AWW is trying to get help from the Panchayat.

Even the buildings meant for AWCs are not built with enough sensitivity. The kitchen is built just like another store-room – no ventilation, no outlets for smoke or water. Another problem in some places is the dirty surroundings. Either an open drain or toilet space. How do children play outdoor games?

AWCs which do not have proper buildings face one more problem. The ration is kept in the AWWs residence. "When I keep the ration at home, people think I am selling

it or eating it up. It is very humiliating". In some places AWCs are situated in temples where SC children are not allowed. In such situations buildings are all the more needed.

In Babaleshwara (Bijapur) we found an AWC with a compound wall. This gives enough space and safety for the children. An unintended heap of sand is there in the compound. It is a good provision. Children love it.

Pre-School Education:

Ms. Alamma was drawing figures of wild animals on the floor and all the children were around her watching her and answering her questions when we entered the Ayyanahalli AWC. (Koodlige Bellary). We went and sat quietly, asking her to continue. She drew the picture of an elephant and asked the children all about it. Reminded them of a story which has the elephant as a character. Children were responding to her in a loud voice.

This is part of the content prescribed for PSE. There are 52 themes for the year, eg. Wild animals, domestic animals, seasons, colours, wind, size etc. A manual has also been prepared which gives detailed planning for the day, week and year. Everyone knows about this thematic content. Some have this book; others had a xeroxed copy and some had the list of 52 themes in a cyclostyled sheet. When we were going around in Koodlige, everywhere we heard of wild animals!

Though the information is there, AWWs find it difficult to deal with the subject using different methods. For a week they are supposed to deal with one theme. So it gets monotonous. They feel the need to develop skills as well as materials. There is a visible dearth of both.

The classroom routine is almost the same everywhere. Once the children enter (this happens at different times in different places. It may be 10.30, 11, 11.30 a.m) they begin with a prayer. The children are then checked for neatness and cleanliness. Sometimes children are sent back if they come without combing their hair or wearing unclean clothes.

After that some outdoor games, indoor games, action songs (rhymes), storytelling. Meanwhile some time for the content of that week.

Though AWCs are not meant to teach alphabets – this happens as a natural phenomenon. Some of the AWWs even teach English alphabets. There is strong community pressure regarding this. They compare the AWC with English medium schools and feel that their children are deprived of that kind of education.

For the AWW this is the easiest way to spend time. Otherwise she has to think of many more creative/non-traditional teaching and learning methods, as also convince parents regarding these (unorthodox) teaching methods.

Moreover, the nearby primary school teachers expect the AWW to teach basic reading and writing skills which is helpful for them when the children come to the 1st class. If this is the situation, is it not better to include this in the syllabus and teach alphabets and numbers in a "joyful" manner? There are many play-way methods of teaching which can be introduced.

One of the CDPO's mentioned that the AW syllabus need not have to be uniform over the whole State. The principles should be known that's all. In one of the AWCs the AWW (Mannalli – Bidar – Ms.Suman) said that the children there have not seen many types of fruit. So how can she teach about fruit to them. She would rather concentrate on something else that they are familiar with.

Many of them try their best to gather materials which will help them in their work. Ms. Nirmala (AWW – Chikkahakkarane – Bidar) got to see the guide book - which she bought from Guledagudda training centre through somebody, spending Rs.50/- on it. Another eg. When we were in Guledagudda Training Centre the trainees (AWWs with years of experience were also there) asked us to sing a song. When we sang a few, they were after us to write them down for use in their AWCs. There is a thirst for new content, new materials and new methods.

PSE is one of the major components of the ICDS programme. All functionaries we met from all the different levels stressed the importance of this component. When we asked about what the AWC should be doing the first preference would fall on either SNP or PSE. Both seemed to have equal importance.

Toys and Teaching aids.

Every centre we visited, AWWs expressed the need for toys and teaching materials. This demand is expressed at all levels. One-time toys or providing just a few toys, makes the situation worse. Because it is difficult to share them out between so many children; also there is the fear that toys will break and then there is no more supply. So, in some AWC's the toys are tied to the beams – which are away from children's reach. Small children inside a room without having anything to occupy and stimulate them is not a very healthy situation.

AWWs say "Toys are very helpful for keeping children occupied. They enjoy themselves and get absorbed in them too". There are hardly any materials on the walls which would appeal to children. Some of the charts put up (e.g. objectives of ICDS project, services provided by ICDS project, some statistics etc, appear to be targetted at visitors rather than meant for the children.) To manage to have something on the wall for children, the AWWs have to spend out of their pocket. Ravikala paid Rs.65/- for the charts she has prepared and put on the walls. (chart paper, sketch pens and plastic sheets to cover).

Wherever we found a few colourful charts it was said that AWW's had spent on them.(eg.Babaleshwar – Gangamma). This is the usual thing. One way or the other they have to shell out money if they want to enrich their work.

In Bantwal Taluk the CDPO found that there are not enough materials in the AWCs. So he bought posters in lots from Tamil Nadu. Each poster costs Rs.10.00 . AWWs are made to buy a set of 10, 15 or 25 from the contingency amount of the AWC. In fact while buying the posters the AWW has to pay the full amount and gradually adjust it with the monthly contingency amount. (This amount is Rs.15/- per month which is meant for fuel, washing powder etc, etc).

In a village called Haralu (Koodlige Taluk,) the AWC had only one small rolling black board and that too was torn. (suddenly the promise of providing computers to the

schools came to mind). But the interesting thing was even on that torn board - the content for that week (wild animals) was written with the date on it.

Of course, in the AWC's which do not have proper buildings – the question of toys, charts, material, does not arise at all. Because AWW's do not feel safe putting them up even if they have a few. Many a time whatever they had put up was either stolen or torn off.

Whatever the posters/charts used in the AWWs they are not meant for that age group. For eg, A chart of wild animals has small, small figures and it is hung high up on the wall. Children really can hardly see, never mind touch these pictures. When the teacher questions them, they have to point out the animal with the help of a stick.

Amongst all these, there is one AWC which turned out to be a big and pleasant shock to us. This is an AWC in Thoranagal, Sandur Taluk (Bellary Dist.) When we reached there the AWW, Ms. Peeramma was about to leave the centre for some work. She gave us a nasty look. But the next minute she welcomed us and sat down for discussion with us. The AWC did not have a proper building. But it was full of materials. The walls were covered with charts, hand-made posters, etc. Different kinds of toys and hand-made materials were hanging from the roof. One after another the materials were drawing our attention. We couldn't help noticing them enquiring about them and appreciating them.

Once Peeramma realized that we were interested in the materials she started exhibiting some more which were backed up in a corner. Peeramma's son, Khader, was removing the materials to show us. In fact when we entered the Centre from the side which was Peeramma's residence – Khader was busy manufacturing some materials. He was totally engrossed in it.

Once they finished showing materials in the AWC they took us to their residence and showed us many more materials made of rot, cardboard etc. . Minute details were worked out. The whole room was covered by the materials. It was amazing. Her residence showed her economic poverty. Her home was rich with materials for the AWC. Mothers who came there at that point, said that Peeramma was always like this. Her house is full of toys for children.

Supplementary Nutrition Programme.

After 12'o clock it is lunch time for children (In some places it is said that more children gather at this time). Twice a week energy food is given in all the places. The other four days some rice preparation (Chithranna, Payasam) is given.

The energy food and ration is reached to the AWC's by the CDPO's office (previously it was the AWWs responsibility to get food materials to her centre). Except in a few places energy food is well accepted. The only complaint about energy food is that it sometimes leads to a stomach upset. But some of the AWWs say that if it is given hygenically nothing happens. Also it is better to start with a small quantity and slowly increase the amount. For small children it is helpful if it is provided in a semi-liquid form – the consistency of payasam.

Ravikala (AWW) says that the energy food is really nutritious and good for children. Once it so happened that for 3 months their AWC did not get any other ration. So they had to give energy food continuously for 3 months.

She noticed a significant increase in children's weight.

Except for 2 to 3 AWWs all were in favour of SNP. Somehow even with problems, this programme has been a continuous feature in the field. In fact the AWC many a time is identified as a food giving centre.

This energy food is usually supplied by a private firm called 'TOTO foods'. There is a government agency by name "Agro Foods" which also supplies this food in some areas. It is not always regular. There is one experiment which is being tried out in Hosagodu (Hosa Koppa) near Shringeri. A DWCRRA unit of women has taken this up as an income – generation scheme. This experiment could be studied and emulated.

The CDPO of Bagalkot district and a few AWWs also said that it would be better if ready-made food was provided rather than having to cook in the AWCs. They were suggesting that some kind of biscuits or may be fruit or kharasev would make a good alternative.

Some CDPO's are very enthusiastic and put in effort to provide extra nutrition to malnourished children in their areas, with the help of social service agencies like Rotary Club, Lions Club etc. Mr. Bekal from Udipi has done systematic work on this.

Sometimes the rations or food does not reach the AWCs in time. When we were in Babaleshwar area (Bijapur Dist.) we found that they did not get food materials for nearly 2 months. When there is no food the AWW has to face many problems. Either sudden dropout of children from the AWC or blame from the community. In Babaleshwar the AWWs somehow mobilized some eatables (things like Kadlepuri) for children. Sometimes they themselves spend money on this. When we enquired about this in the CDPO's office we got to know that payment was pending for transport. That is why the food had not been supplied.

The problem with SNP is not just the food part of it, but the fuel part too. Everywhere, every centre we visited mentioned this problem. In some places the amount for fuel is given through the panchayat. Some places, the amount is given once a month, in others it is not given for more than a year. We also heard of panchayats using this opportunity to control the AWW. Making her run up and down, and also get some of their own work done too.

In some other places they have asked the Zilla Parishad to pay the amount to the CDPOs office and this is provided along with the monthly honorarium. The responsibility of arranging fuel mostly falls on the AWH. While collecting fuel for her house she picks up some (wood) for the AWC also. Sometimes they mobilize from the community but with great effort. This problem is present everywhere in one form or another.

Food is the area where much corruption is heard of. Politicians/bureaucrats have a deal with the contractors and fourth-grade groceries are supplied. Sometimes the number of children shown is more to get more money. Complaints about AWW misusing the food are also heard.

Many a time corruption taking place at different levels, is not visible. It is the AWW who is held responsible if the groceries are of very low quality, if it comes in lesser quantity or if it is late. She is blamed even for those things for which she is not really responsible directly.

Health and Nutrition Education: (HNE)

Referral Services

“Are you conducting HNE?”

Yes every week – confident and perfect answer.

“Every week! Do women come every week?”

“Some come – some do not come”.

If you go on probing further you realize that this does not take place as regularly as that. In many places it does not happen at all. Women in rural areas cannot be made to come every week for half a day just for this programme alone. It is not practical. AWWs manage this activity according to what is possible. (This is not to blame the AWWs. This is to understand the situation). If it is a Mahila Mandal or a Yuvathi Mandal attached to the AWC, then some kind of meetings do take place. However it does seem true that general knowledge about health and nutrition and immunization, has increased as claimed by most of the ICDS functionaries at different levels.

Because of this awareness and the ever-increasing publicity follow-up – the response is good for immunizations. Pregnant and lactating women are at least identified and referred to the PHCs or ANMs.

The Workload of the AWW

“Once the child is conceived in the womb our work starts... It continues when the baby is born....And it goes on until the child is 6 years old” says one of the AWWs. “Anybody born in the village – anybody dying in the village it is we who have to chase and record the information” – says another.

So here we see the AWW in her multiple roles. She is a pre-school educator. She is a health worker. A community worker. Somebody who keeps the village level statistics. She is the general dogsbody – for any and every programme in the village.

There are many stories we heard about the diverse types of work which drown her daily. Without being given the required training or remuneration commensurate with being an “ashtavadhanam” and more, never mind the stamina needed for these many tasks.

Stree Shakti :

The wave of the Stree Shakti programme was all over the place when we were in the field. Because this programme was initiated by the Chief Minister S.M. Krishna – even in the field it was identified as “S.M. Krishna’s programme”.

Before it was SHG (Self Help Group). Now it is Stree Shakti. The government is planning to spend Rs.17 crores on this project. People who come under IRDP/BPL list are considered for Stree Shakti Scheme. But, AWWs say that even in that list there are many mistakes.

An account has to be opened by a Group in a Nationalized Bank. After six months the group will get Rs.5000/-. Depending on the amount of savings, the bank will provide loans. Again, for this scheme the AWW has to maintain 3 registers.

The AWW cannot be a member of the group. She has to play a facilitator's role. For the first 6 months, she will be paid Rs.25/- for monitoring the scheme.

In the field, pressure of the Stree Shakti programme can be seen. CDPO's are expected to form a certain number of groups, as a target. So AWWs are convinced or pressurized to take up this process. Each Taluk we went to, CDPOs were talking of their achievement. This has become departmental work. The first round of training is over in all the places we visited.

In the field there are mixed responses regarding this scheme. AWWs said that they are finding it difficult. In some places AWWs are pressurized. Their honorarium will be cut if they do not form the group. Often women do not respond. In a few places younger girls are also included to achieve the target. In most areas the AWW has to go door to door to collect the amount, AWWs are yet to get the monetary incentive amount even though many months have passed and accounts have been opened.

For those who know the long and arduous process required for organizing people, this expectation of miraculously organizing women looks very strange! The important point here is that it has become one more task on which the AWW is expected to expend her (seemingly limitless) energy.

The ICDS appears to have become the chosen programme on which to ride a number of welfare schemes. AWWs like Ravikala know about these schemes to their finger tips. Which scheme; when it has come; what is the impact; which of these things she can try to provide for the people... etc. She says that the schemes are good, but many a time they do not reach the people. Sometimes the schemes get changed even before anyone has properly got to know about them. Some AWWs say that many a time they put up applications on somebody's behalf and if it does not materialize, the AWWs are blamed and made to feel responsible for the failure.

IV. FACTS, STATISTICS AND OBSERVATIONS

Introduction :

The Government of Karnataka took an early, thought subsequently abortive, initiative in programming pre-school education in the state. Some 2000 pre-schools were started during the 60's, well before the start of the ICDS. Though these schools ran the whole day and had nursery school graduate teachers, they never really caught on - no mid-day meals were provided and may be it was yet early days for initiating pre-school education - a time when there was no palpable public or bureaucratic interest in even the familiar formal education system.

The programme limped along till 1986, by which time the all-India ICDS had been started and the GOK took a decision not to expand the pre-school programme further.

In 1990, there was a major expansion of the ICDS and in 1999 it was decided to close down the earlier pre-school programme in all areas where the ICDS was functioning. However, what happened was that the total programme closed down, period.

No formal evaluation was carried out, but various reasons are cited for closing down the programme :

1. The nursery school graduate teachers were all women. Their continuing stay at any one place was a function of marriage for single women and of husband's transfers for themselves, because there are a sufficient number of primary schools scattered over the State, to make transfers possible. But with only 2000 pre-schools, there was no flexibility of choice. And the dissatisfied pre-schools, there was no flexibility of choice. And the dissatisfied pre-school teachers started agitating.
2. At the same time there was (and is) a shortage of qualified teachers in primary schools. The pre-school teachers were admirably suited for early primary education. Headmasters of Primary schools, chief representatives of education, specially in rural areas, started commandeering the pre-school teachers to teach in primary schools. And in any case, the pre-schools were running indifferently.
3. It served more than one purpose to close down the pre-schools- the primary schools got that many more teachers; the pre-school teachers were only too happy to seize this opportunity, not only to stay with their jobs and with their families but to increase their status as well.
4. The ICDS provided a meal and the pre-school programme did not.
5. The NPE gave a good deal of importance to pre-school education, but at the last political minute, responsibility for pre-school education stayed with the ICDS.
6. In the face of an on-going situation of scarce resources; increasing public-opinion and financial focus on primary education and an all-round indifference

to pre-school education, GOK concentrated attention on primary education, relegating pre-school education to the ICDS and its mixed pot of food, health and education. The ICDS is with the Department of Women and Child Development, with it's, till recently, image of "Welfare", thus taking a step backward, in making the pre-school a matter of welfare and not part of mainstream education.

And to date, GOK's involvement in pre-school education is through the ICDS.

IV.1 The ICDS Programme

This programme is unique in that it postulates and addresses holistic development of the child on such a large scale. The program is designed to respond to the needs of India's majority population of the poor and the undernourished. Pre-school programmes in the developed world do not need to incorporate nutrition and health concerns in addressing the issue of early childhood development. In India, there is a need to synergize the effects of good nutrition, good health and psycho-social stimulation, to bring about an observable change in ground realities. The ICDS was launched in 1975 in 33 blocks, on an experimental basis. Karnataka was one of the States where the experiment was started.

Objectives:

The aims and objectives of the ICDS were and continue to be:

1. To improve the nutritional and health status of children in the age group of 0-6 years.
2. To lay the foundations for psychological, physical and social development of the child.
3. To reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school drop-out rate.
4. To achieve co-ordination and implementation of policy amongst the various departments to promote child development.
5. To enhance the capability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child through proper nutrition and health care education.

These objectives are to be realized through a package of services, consisting of:

1. Supplementary nutrition.
2. Immunization.
3. Health check-ups.
4. Referral services.
5. Nutrition and health care education.
6. Non-formal education.

"The most significant feature of ICDS (to quote the National Evaluation of ICDS, 1992) is to improve the capabilities of the parents to take care of the child and thus involve the community by encouraging self-help in improving the quality of life and well-being of the child and family. ICDS has been envisaged and conceptualized as a

community-based programme. It calls for **community participation** in its process of implementation by utilizing local resources. **It's objectives are not limited to mere delivery of services, but emphasize initiation of a process aimed at bringing about social change in the life of the community.**

This is likely to be reflected in heightened awareness, change in attitudes, beliefs and practices. The choice of having the AWW at the grass roots level as a voluntary worker and not a paid functionary, makes it a scheme of the people. The assumption is that the AWW, being a local woman, would be much more effective in delivery of services due to her familiarity with the community. This would facilitate acceptance of the programme and the community's participation in it"

Observations on all the above follow in each specific section.

IV.2 The ICDS ¹

in Karnataka :

The total population of Karnataka as projected for the year 2000, is 5,20,92,000. The population is spread over 27 districts which comprise 185 blocks. Today ICDS is universalized in Karnataka, with 40,000 AWCs spread over the 175 rural and 10 urban blocks. There are as many AWWs and helpers. CDPOs are in place in all the 185 blocks. However there are only 500 supervisors for the 1800 posts allotted.

There are some balwadis run by the Karnataka State Council for Child Welfare (KSCCW) and some pre-schools run by NGOs,. But the bulk of children 0 – 6 years, about 60% are covered by the ICDS.

33% of the population is under the poverty line (93-94) 21% of the population are SC/ST.

Observation:

The criteria for situating AWCs is that there be 1 AWC per 1000 population and in tribal areas 1 AWC for 700 population.

"Though at the macro-level there is universalization, at the ground level there are a large number of smaller villages and many more habitations, which are not catered to by AWCs, because they do not meet the criterion of population size. Young children cannot negotiate the distance to AWCs outside their villages. So, these children, almost certainly from the poorer and the SC/ST sections of the population, have little or no access to the early childhood education and socialization process provided by the AWC prior to primary schooling."

¹ Statistics are from 3 Source Books.

i. National Evaluation of ICDS, NIPCCS 1992

ii. Human Development in Karnataka – 1999

iii. Evaluation of Karnataka ICDS – NCAER –2000

“It is universally acknowledged through systematic research that exposure to early childhood education constitutes the first critical step in the total learning process and contributes very significantly to the successful completion of elementary education.”²

Even in India, where pre-school centres do not measure up to the standards set in China and in the West, many studies, individual correspondence and interviews testify to the fact that a child with pre-school experience adjusts and performs better on entering primary school. Also, sending children to a pre-school makes parents more accustomed to seeing their children in the school stream, before they are of an age to be drawn into the stream of child labour. This is an impression gathered from different sources. We know of no research studies in this context.

The thumb rule of an AW per 1000 population should be relaxed, wherever necessary, so that children from smaller villages and habitations can have easy recourse to pre-school education.

This is all the more necessary as the SC/ST population (whose area of habitation is usually demarcated from the main village) is only about 21 % and therefore not likely, in any one habitation, to add up to 1000 population.

iv.3 Components of the ICDS

IV.3.1 The Anganwadi:

The picture of the Anganwadi in Karnataka is quite hopeful, though of course there is plenty of room for improvement.

- = 60% urban and 50% rural AWCs are centrally located.
- = 2 in 3 AWCs have enough space; the rural AWCs are better off.
- = 40% of AWCs have pucca buildings. There are very few AWCs in open spaces or in unhygienic surroundings.
- = 32% urban and 55% rural AWCs have their own buildings.
- = 70% of urban AWCs have recourse to piped water.

Observation:

This appears a fairly good infrastructure from which to build upon. Specially since there seem to be very few AWCs which are kept closed for a long period of time. If the AWW is not there, the helper at least keeps the AWC open. Most AWCs are open at least a part of the time – 4 hours being what is prescribed.

Statistics also show that 90% of the AWCs have no toilets and 50% of rural AWCs have no nearby source of water. Providing water is an absolute must, even before toilets, as, without water, toilets are more of a liability than an asset.

² From “Education for All: Integrating Gender and Equity Concerns into Mainstream Educational Programme, by Anita Kaul (unpublished paper) 2000.

Water supply and toilets can be provided in a phased manner perhaps, starting with where AWCs have their own buildings. Calculation of costs is given in Annexure – A.

Where the AWC is situated in a temple or in the upper caste area, it militates against the lower caste children attending the AWC. When new AWCs are started or older rented ones converted into owned buildings, then, the locational factor must be kept in mind.

IV.3.2 The Services:

Nutrition and Health:

Against the backdrop of a generally, if not dramatic improving health and nutrition picture in India, Karnataka stands among the better-off States. It has been claimed that the percentage of families below the poverty line has also decreased. Knowledge about the practice of getting children immunized (polio and triple anti-gen) has spread. It is probably the synergistic effect of better nutrition and of greater immunity (which enables the maintenance of nutritional levels), that has led to a definite reduction of third and fourth degree malnutrition. But the same cannot be said of first and second degree malnutrition – i.e., undernourishment, or in politically correct terms, Protein Energy Malnutrition (PEM).

A NIPCCD evaluation of 1992 states “There is ample evidence of the positive impact of the nutrition component. The ICDS programme has certainly brought about a reduction in the prevalence of malnutrition”. And cites several studies in support of this statement .

This statement is also supported by the eminent nutritionist Dr.Tara Gopaldas. In a longitudinal study³ carried out in Maharashtra and in Gujarat over a period of 7 years from 1984 – 1990, a marked difference in severe malnutrition has been recorded for 2 groups of children.

Reduction in severe malnutrition (1984 – 1990)

	Gujarat	Maharashtra
0 – 3 years	25%	53%
3 – 6 years	36%	68%

It might be noted that the programme in the study area was evaluated to be particularly efficiently run. Dr. Gopaldas emphasizes the importance of management in bringing about effective impact. If delivery is not optimal then where is the question of expected outcomes materializing?

³ Summary Report of USAID assisted ICDS Impact Evaluation Report, Panchmahals, Gujarat and Chandrapur, Maharashtra by Tara Gopaldas and Sunder Gujral.

There is another view⁴, which is quite widely subscribed to – that there is no difference in the nutritional levels of children 0 – 6 between ICDS and non-ICDS blocks. Perhaps only in the Tamil Nadu Nutrition Programme in the ICDS areas, where there was a concentrated focus on nutrition, were there any significant positive changes in nutrition levels. But this might have been because TNNP functioned in conjunction with an efficient health outreach system in Tamil Nadu.

Karnataka:

The Supplementary Nutrition Programme in Karnataka has impressive figures of delivery – Food is delivered 288 of 300 days prescribed. 90-95% of enrolled children receive the one meal a day. But 60% of eligible children are enrolled and of these 50 – 60% attend the AWC.

The immunization drive over several years has been very intensive and certainly seems to have paid off in terms of percentages of children immunized. For all immunizations, Karnataka is well above the all India average (see Annexure B.)

Again delivery-wise, 70 – 80% of AWCs have weighing scales. But maintenance of growth charts is poor.

Observation:

Most studies point to the fact that it is the 3-6 year old child who eats in the AWC. Food for the 0 – 3 and for pregnant and lactating mothers is almost invariably taken home to be shared by the whole family. Often, siblings, both younger and older, join the AWC children at the meal time.

- = No mother, even if pregnant or lactating will eat her share of ICDS food while the rest of the family is in its usual, forever- hungry state.
- = No AWW can or will chase away siblings of the AWC children at meal times. She would be chased out of the village.
- = A child who has eaten at the AWC will get less or no corresponding meal in the home. The ICDS food is largely a substitute, sometimes part-supplement for home food.
- = Food at the ICDS is certainly not distributed according to degrees of malnutrition at the AWC. With a group of children, most of them perpetually hungry, how can the AWW serve less and more?

It is an undisputed fact that the AWC is best recognized in its 'avatar' as a food distribution centre. It is a major factor in drawing children to the AWC.

Nothing of what has been said so far re: health and nutrition is new. Since the '80s, studies have said the same thing , again and again. It is time reality be considered and the programme modified accordingly.

⁴ Personal communication from Dr. Shanti Ghosh.

Dr. Tara Gopaldas suggests the following:

- De-worming, vitamin A and iron tablets/liquid, are the most important. De-worming because it enables the child ingest whatever nutrition it is getting, more efficiently.
- Since food draws children to the AWC, some ready-made nutrition in the form of biscuits or the thicker 'sev' could be given.
- With our coffers overflowing with daily-rotting-away grain, some distribution system to families via the AWC or a ration shop (run by the Mahila Sangha) could be organized.

This would help to do away with the whole unwieldy, time –consuming business of locating fuel, cooking etc. And the AWW would have more time to get on with other jobs.

Pre-School Education

Each AWC covers a 1000 population area. Of this about 16% are children 0 – 6 years old (7% 0 – 3 and 9% 3 – 6). This makes for about 160 eligible children (in a population of 1000) in the age group 0 – 6 of whom 90 are 3 – 6 year olds.

60% of all children eligible for PSE are enrolled in the AWC i.e. 54 children. The NCAER study states that over 50% of enrolled children attend the AWC . During our field visits (Feb and March 2001) 20 was the maximum we found in any one AWC – more usually less than that. And of those in the AWC, often there are 4 or 5, 1 to 3 year olds whc have come along with their older siblings.

Observation:

At meal time (12.30 – 1 p.m.) the numbers increase – mothers along with younger children and even some 3 – 6 year olds come to collect food and take it home.

It is recommended by nutritionists that the meal be given first thing in the morning (9 a.m.). Children with something in their stomachs have energy to function in a focussed manner. But if the AWW does this, she says she would have a hard time keeping the children in class.

There are many NGOs who run pre-school centres from 9 or 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. without providing any food at all. Children either bring their own food or run home, eat and return. Not only is the pre-school content more child-friendly, materials more plentiful and more often replaced, but also class-room methodology and the attitude of the child-care workers is such that the child voluntarily and willingly attends the centre.

The AWW has a few books, toys, a few stories, songs and games with which to engage the children. She has acquired this pre-school "material" in the course of her training. She has also learnt to make some teaching aids – which she cannot let the children get their hands on, as there are no funds for realistic replacement of such materials. Again and again we come across AWWs spending their own money on toys, posters etc. Her training teaches her 'X' number of activities which, in addition to being limited, are expected to be taught according to a set schedule previously prescribed for all the weeks of the year. But more on this in the section on training. Sufficient here to say that she is in no way enabled or encouraged to recognize and draw upon her own creativity.

In spite of this there are exceptions – women who enthusiastically spend their own money on materials for the children eg. Ravikala and Peeramma, mentioned in section III re:field visits.

The whole picture is confounded by the system of monitoring and evaluation.

- = The AWW is monitored largely through the registers she keeps and the food that she distributes.
- = As far as PSE is concerned, a couple of children recite poems, another dances and a couple more sing when the supervisor, the CDPO and /or other visitors descend on the AWC.
- = She is evaluated for what she has taught rather than for what the children learn.

The PSE resources she has are “dead” – she has not been equipped with skills enough to bring them to life.

The NCAER study states that “the ability of the children to describe the activities of the PSE is limited to just 40%”. And the ability to read simple words and count numbers is marginally higher than for other activities. Apart from the question of why children should be expected to “describe” activities it is not at all surprising that words and numbers figure in ‘abilities’. For ,this is what is easiest for the AWW, in terms of what she is confident about and what is ‘demonstrable’ to an audience; and importantly, in terms of what the community expects and even more so, that primary school teacher who needs to inherit these children, to meet her own requirements of enrollment and in these more demanding days, of attendance as well. Children coming from AWCs are known not only to have higher retention rates in primary classes, but also to do better in terms of academic performance. Various studies, interviews with AWWs, primary school teachers, CDPOs, academic experts, all are in agreement about this conclusion.

Here is an area which needs looking into in re-conceptualizing, revitalizing and making more realistic, the pre-school curriculum. The expectations of the community and the imperatives of the system demand that the child learn the 3Rs even at this early age. All but the poorest children are busy reciting poems in English, rattling off the alphabet and counting 100 backwards, so that they stand a chance of admission to one of those short –of-supply ‘good’ schools.

The Indian child’s childhood is short; she/he is adept at all sorts of adult-related tasks. Alphabets and numbers seem the least arduous of skills. Why is only the poor child subjected to the principles of (western) child psychology? And even that is not a ‘scientific’ (in the sense of universally and eternally true) fact any more. From time to time there are studies which revise downward the expected age when children (can) learn x, y or z without damage to the psyche. The latest is a research study from Charles Sturt University in Australia which studied babies aged 6 – 8 months. Among other things the study states that the babies “demonstrated sophisticated abilities to socialize within a group (of same-age babies) much earlier than previously thought. Traditionally , at that age, the mother is said to be the only centre of the child’s universe. Many of us know to the contrary, in our world peopled with siblings, aunts and grandmothers. Characteristics (other than the purely physical), of the species are to a large extent shaped and tempered by cultural and social environments.

This apart, alphabet and number teaching can be taught through fun and child-friendly methods, as has been demonstrated by many an NGO and by innovative government initiatives (Rajasthan, Karnataka).

Though it is universally admitted that the health and nutrition inputs of the AWC are absolutely essential for the proper development of the child, opinion is sharply divided as to how efficacious activities towards this end have been, in the ICDS programme.

On the other hand, there is general agreement among academics, researchers, practitioners in the field, ICDS functionaries, the community and parents, that even in its present much-to-be desired state, the ICDS programme turns out children who are more sociable and show more "school-readiness" than those children who go directly to the primary without attending any pre-school centre.

Family Education

for Women:

The NCAER study states that AWWs have covered 70% of mothers regarding correct diet. However only about 25% of mothers attend the Mothers Meetings. Breast-feeding is usually continued till the child is 15 months, semi-solids being given at the earliest after 5 months.

Observation:

In many ways this is one of the weakest components of the ICDS programme. Every week, month in and month out, the AWW is expected to bring mothers together for health and nutrition education. Her knowledge in these matters is limited (18 days in a 3-month training period). Many AWWs are sent directly to the field, often for 6 months, before they get any training; her credibility quotient in the village is low (see section on 'The AWW'); there are no incentives of useful (according to the mothers), knowledge or of the more concrete monetary variety, to draw mothers to these meetings. The meetings are seldom held.

The AWW also visits homes. In the best scenario and if she is of the right caste, she enters the home and gets that hopeful cup of tea while she talks to the woman of the house. If she is a SC woman, then in upper caste homes, she stands outside and talks to the householder, provided that the latter steps out to talk to the AWW - which the woman more often than not does, in a gesture to help the AWW in her work.

Having said all this, it must also be said that most mothers are aware of health and nutrition 'best practices' It is another matter that many are not convinced of or are economically not able to follow many of these practices.

For example:

= A Pregnant or lactating woman will not eat the energy food meant for her, when she has hungry children at home.

- = Hardly any one can afford the fuel to boil water for drinking. (It needs 10 – 20 minutes of boiling after it comes to a boil).
- = To feed a child with solids before it is 8 months to a year, is culturally not acceptable in many parts of this country, including Karnataka. When a child sits/crawls, then is the time for solids.

Immunization for children is the one practice that has gained widespread credence, especially the pulse polio drive. Apart from the general faith in “injections”, this whole activity has the stamp of credibility of doctors and nurses.

IV.3.3 Community Participation:

“Community Participation” is a much abused term. It is understood and interpreted in myriad ways. It is a term which no self-respecting person working in “development” can do without. The planner, the implementor, the practitioner, the NGO, the evaluator, continue to dialogue about community participation, while all the time each one has his/her own understanding of the term.

However, whatever the meaning assigned to community participation this is one area that all studies, reports, evaluations etc are in agreement about – that community participation has not worked in the ICDS programme.

The original ICDS document talks of “improving the capabilities of parents to take care of the child and thus to involve the community...” And again, the ICDS “calls for community participation in its process of implementation, by utilizing local resources”

Observation:

At the field level this is interpreted as – members of the community contributing to the running of the programme. Eg. by way of fuel, vegetables, oil, condiments, etc. AWWs maintain that communities are too poor to contribute. And rather than go round soliciting for “participation”, AWWs prefer to have the helper collect the fuel or pay for it themselves. Refinements to cooking by way of condiments etc. are left alone. Nowhere is the idea of the community “owning” the programme promoted. Neither in the training situation nor during monitoring nor even in evaluations.

The evolving idea of what community participation means in the sense of ownership and of decision-making responsibility, is seen, to some extent, in NGO-run programmes, but largely, community participation remains in the realm of discourse.

The community perceives the ICDS as a government programme and sees no reason why the government, thereby meaning the AWW, should’nt be responsible for the proper running of the programme. Where Village Education Committees (VECs) or Mahila Mandals have been associated with the running of the AWC the responsibility has been assumed to be that of a policing rather than of a supportive role.

In the meanwhile, in keeping with the growing value being attached to “private ownership”, opinion-makers translate this into the developmentally acceptable terminology of “community ownership”. Thereby promoting the idea of transferring the responsibility of running AWCs to panchayats, naming this as the process of

decentralization. The formal elected panchayats, incidentally, are seen as government institutions, by village communities.

There is another stream of opinion that sees that it is the State which should take responsibility for working towards providing a level playing field for the economically and socially disadvantaged, in a country like India, which is short on livelihood resources. Even in advanced countries like the USA and some of the EU. members whose byword is privatization and which look on the State as a facilitator rather than as an active enabler, even there, the distance between the poor and the rich is increasing. What better pointer for the State in countries like India, to actively support the disadvantaged to substantiate our claim to democracy not only in discourse, but on the ground as well.

IV.3.4 Anganwadi Worker and The Helper

“The choice of having an AWW at the grass roots level as voluntary worker and not a paid functionary makes it a scheme of the people. The assumption is that the AWW, being a local woman, would be much more effective in delivery of services due to her familiarity with the community. This would facilitate acceptance of the programme and community participation in it” says the ICDS document. This statement and the assumptions thereof, have little connection to complexities of ground-level realities.

The AWW has been conceived of as the fulcrum of the programme. She is the main, if not the sole, vehicle for communicating with and involving the community. On her shoulders rests the success of the ICDS and on her head falls the accountability for failure. The attempts to equip her for this task end with acquainting her with the content of what she has to do without addressing the question of how to mesh the three-dimensional socio-economic reality that is the AWW with the conceptual image of what is required for the programme.

Observation:

Over 90% of AWWs work because they need the money – less than the legal daily wage. They are volunteers in the eyes of the State, but are perceived of as government servants by the community. The AWWs are paid an “honorarium” - literally, “gaurav-dhana”. They laugh when they say “we get neither gaurav (respect) nor dhana (money).

Most AWWs are between the ages of 30 – 40 years the urban AWWs being somewhat older than the rural AWWs. Again, most AWWs are married women. Helpers are an older group and some 20% of them are single women (widowed, abandoned).

The minimum qualification for AWWs is matriculation. About 30% of them have studied beyond matriculation, but many are 8th, 9th pass because of a paucity of candidates with the required qualifications. Helpers are more often than not illiterate. 60% helpers live in the village of the AWC and 40% of the AWWs too. Those who stay outside the AWC village live within easy commuting distance.

There are very few upper caste AWWs. Some are SCs and the majority are OBCs.

Most AWWs (90%) have received pre-service training and very few have received in-service training as well. However, many that we met in the field and at training centres, had received /were receiving, pre-service training after having spent time in the field. Training Centre staff and AWWs said about 6 months are spent in the field before any sort of training is given. The CDPO gives them some initial orientation, mostly re: the registers before they are sent directly to the field without training.

Caste plays a very important part in the AWW's working life. Her selection and posting is determined by village influentials. There are cases where the community states beforehand their preferences, i.e. the caste of the AWW.

If the AWW is of a lower caste and the AWC has upper caste children then at cooking time, often an upper caste woman from the village will come and do the cooking. Or, upper caste children will bring their own food or not eat in the AWC. An SC or lower caste AWW will not be allowed into the homes of upper caste homes – she will stand outside and talk to the woman of the house. This is not so overtly obvious as in some other States, but nevertheless exists.

The helper who plays quite a large part in the life of the AWC is hardly mentioned in studies, reports, evaluations. It is the helper who collects the children and the fuel. She helps the AWW in looking after the children. And in the absence of the AWW on one of her various government-assigned, non-AWC tasks, the helper looks after the AWC. She knows all the songs, stories, games and, if so inclined can keep children occupied

The AWW is a part-time worker. In addition to the assigned tasks of the ICDS, over the years, she has accumulated various responsibilities; She already maintains (or often pays someone to maintain) some 8 - 10 registers. To this have been added birth and death registers and recently, 2 more registers for the Stree Shakti programme.

- = The AWW has to organize Stree Shakti groups, go to the bank with them, help them maintain their individual and group records. If she is not able to get women together in a group and oversee the proper functioning of the group, she is under threat of having her salary cut.
- = At election time (local, district and State) the AWW is an "extra" as she calls herself. Runs errands, serves tea etc. to all the petty officials who mill around at these times.
- = Wherever there is a VEC, she has to attend meetings as a member – whom nobody claims or listens to – neither the Department of Education nor her parent Department of Women and Child Development.
- = Her contacts with panchayats have increased, since they have got activated and inter alia, she sometimes runs errands for them as well.
- = The CDPO has his own share of additional tasks which he devolves on the AWW.

There is little chance of routinely spending quality time with children at the AWC.

With all this, it is only short of miraculous, that there are many AWWs who laugh and play with the children, tell stories, make toys with local waste material and generally cope, even if only just.

It is a huge mis-utilization of this vast human resource.

The AWW is seen as at the very bottom of the government pile. Not only every functionary in her own departmental hierarchy, but other department functionaries with whom she comes in contact with, in carrying out the multifarious tasks she has accumulated - all of them interact with her to personally experience and make visible to others, their own higher hierarchical status. The AWW only has the helper below her and the helper doesn't count.

How can a woman of little learning, negligible emoluments, low socio-economic status and a fragile self-image, be expected to bring about social change? The AWW requires concerted training inputs, addressed to pragmatically equipping her with self-esteem, social and communication skills and the analytical ability which will enable her, to more effectively meet the challenges of her seminal job of human resource development, for that is what early childhood development is all about. She will need the massive support of colleagues in all the hierarchies she interacts with, if she is to succeed in her work. All this is certainly possible, as has been amply demonstrated in that other government programme. Mahila Samkhyā, Poor women from the agricultural labour class, almost all of them illiterate, make their voices heard at the local, the district and the State levels. So why not the AWW?

But more on this in the section on 'Training'

IV.3.5 The Child

What is the sort of child that we want? What sort of adult do we want her/him to grow up into?

The pre-school and primary school curricula carry with them assumptions, albeit unstated, about the values and behaviour patterns that the planners want to support and/or promote. Should the assumptions be stated as is being done now in the recent (2000) "National Curriculum Framework for School Education", put together by the NCERT? Or should Curricula concentrate on content and leave it to families, to care-givers and teachers, to shape values and behaviour through the inter-action methodologies of their own socio-cultural milieu?

It is, of course not as simple as that. The family, apart from being the earliest learning institution for the child, is also the place where the child spends the maximum time of day. The AWW has her own value system, beliefs, biases – all of which come through in her inter-actions with the children. We talk of social change, whether it is the ICDS, the school system or developmental projects. The ICDS was planned for and does, in fact, work with poor children and their families – to provide them with the abilities which will enable them to access opportunities for personal and socio-economic growth, on an equal footing with those who have a head-start in life in terms of their given socio-economic and cultural environments.

The AWW says "Look at your hair – did your mother not have time to comb it, this morning?"

Or

"Look at Rashmi – how clean she looks? Why can't you be like that?"
What does the child feel in being put down like this?

And this is often confounded with "Why can't you recite that poem? Look how Savitri recites so beautifully"

And later in school –"Can't you even do these simple sums? You will land up pulling out weeds in the fields. Don't you want to work in an office, become a doctor or something. Look at Arun's sums – how neat!"

Now, this is wonderful for the children praised, but for every Rashmi, Savitri and Arun, there are ten times that number of children who are put down by remarks as the above, no doubt made to help the child improve herself by seeing the good example in front of her.

What is needed to help the child pull herself up from where she has reached as a result of daily put-down remarks?

Or better still – how to prevent this from happening?

Is it important?

Again, as stated earlier – do we want an obedient, disciplined child or do we want this tempered with a large dose of liveliness, creativity and curiosity? Do we want children to learn by rote and reproduce it undigested? Or do we want children to understand, analyse and digest information, so that it becomes knowledge.

We need to think about whether the present education system from pre-school upwards is promoting status quo – leaving change to the vagaries of films, political parties and the T.V.

If the stated objective of the ICDS re: change-not just physical but social too, is to be achieved, the AWW and other ICDS functionaries need to experience, in training and thereafter, what we would like them to enable the AWC children to experience.

IV.3.6 Training

There is quite a good infrastructure for training in Karnataka:

- = A regional branch of NIPCCD is situated in Karnataka. CDPOs and AWTC (Anganwadi Training Centre) Staff receive training here.
- = There is a MLTC (Middle level Training Centre) at Ujire for the training of supervisors.

- = There are 25 AWTCs spread all over the State, of which 11 are run by the Karnataka State Council for Child Welfare, (KSCCW) which also oversees the other AWTCs, which are run by various NGO.
- = In Karnataka, a major experiment in training AWWs was carried out all over the State. It is called COPC and was conducted by Dr. Indira Swaminathan. There have been other attempts to introduce variety in AWW training methods (notably by Ms. Anita Kaul) but none of them have been long lasting.
- = In addition to this there are various NGOs which organize their own trainings for the pre-school centres they run. Also, organizations like Promise Foundation, Equip, CRY etc. cater to the training needs of NGOs.

There is a good deal of difference between the mainstream ICDS-related training and the NGO training. The latter is much more personalized; it is not a one-shot deal. There are follow up, in-service and on-the-job trainings too.

Over the 25 years that the ICDS has been running, there has been only one major change that has taken place in training content and methodology.

- = In the beginning, training included much more theoretical content than there is now. It was felt that AWWs were not able to translate the theory into action in the field.
- = Training was drastically changed, the theoretical content being cut down and "activities" taking its place. Activities according to "themes" was a part of this activity oriented way of running the pre-school. In Karnataka. There is a good manual on the thematic methodology.

There has been some introduction of songs, games, stories etc. which has helped the AWWs in keeping children occupied.

CDPOs and supervisors are trained separately from the AWWs and only a part of the AWWs syllabus is covered by the syllabus for the CDPO and the supervisor.

However, all training is content/behaviour-oriented. Process, or the WHY and the HOW of training is not paid attention to.

Udisha (1998) (re: training) strikes a sensitive note where it speaks of improving the communication skills of the functionaries, developing their personalities to increase their self-esteem and self-confidence and of introducing them to issues of empowering women. Udisha also stresses the need for reducing the workload of the AWW, by relocating some of the tasks she has been given, back to those govt. functionaries who are primarily responsible for those tasks. e.g. relocating the birth and death registers with the ANM.

Another point Udisha makes is that the CDPO and the supervisor should learn everything that the AWW learns and also take on some of the duties the AWW performs now, e.g. the registers which do not have to be filled in daily, should be filled by the supervisors.

While the above and other aims are laudable, especially the recognition that, enhancing the AWWs skills as a communicator and developing her personality, self-esteem and self-confidence, will enable her to deal confidently with the community, Udisha does not go far enough in bringing about a radical change in the training curriculum. It is still heavily loaded on content. There is little said on the "HOW" of training, which from the documented experience of many a successful training programme is the most important part of training, if attitudinal and personality change is to be brought about.

Observation :

As with much of the development-oriented programmes in India, stated intentions and conceptualization thereof cannot be faulted; their translation into implementation is either non-existent or follows a path which is a far cry from the original discourse.

Wherever we went in the field the only connotation Udisha had was enhancement in salaries and expenditures at the AWTCs. The main agitation in the minds of everybody was : where will the funds come from once Udisha dries up?

The present situation:

Whether it is the CDPO, the supervisor or the AWW, the training situation is one of "teaching-learning". By and large there is a one-way flow of information from trainer to trainee.

This can be seen in:

1. The syllabi and job descriptions of, especially, the CDPO and the Supervisor. They are given information on various subjects and are expected to "guide", "check" and "demonstrate".
2. The teacher-learner relationship in the field: In the words of the AWW, the CDPO and the supervisor are looked upon as "guide", "inspector", "instructor" and "monitor"; and naturally this same attitude is present in the relationship of the AWW to the children she looks after and especially the women she talks to about nutrition, health etc. The AWW makes the children play – she does not play with them; she talks to the mothers and not with them.

Communication all through the system is one-way and not two-way. It must be noted that there are exceptions at every level, but this is because of individual capabilities and personalities and not due to training.

Training in communication skills should be provided to all levels of functionaries in the ICDS programme – from the AWWs to officials at the State level. Pilot Projects can be initiated, starting with trainers at about 4 or 5 Anganwadi Training Centres. There are several institutions/organizations which impart such training and selected Training Centres can be associated each with a different institution/organization. CDPOs and Supervisors of the Pilot Project can also be trained by the same institutions/organizations. It would be useful if some part of the training for the trainers of Anganwadi Training Centres and for the CDPOs and Supervisors overlaps. This would

give the CDPOs and the Supervisors some practical experience in the type of training the AWWs will be getting. Officers at the District and State levels should also attend orientation courses for acquiring communication skills.

Training of the CDPOs and the Supervisors is totally separated from the training of the AWWs. This tends to emphasize the status difference between the three categories of workers. In the field (with some exceptions) the status difference is very clear. CDPOs give instructions and orders to the Supervisors; the Supervisors do the same with the AWWs and the AWWs copy this attitude in dealing with the children and the mothers. Team-work is not horizontal, but at best, vertical with each lower level in the ladder being a bit afraid of those higher up in the ladder. It is very seldom that a worker lower down the ladder gets a pat on the back for some thing well done. This does not help to create team-spirit nor a feeling of trust, both of which are essential for getting the best results from the programme.

In addition to training in communication skills, ICDS functionaries should also receive training in self-awareness and human development skills. The aim is to make them relate to each other as equal human beings working together for a common cause. Motivation goes along with these types of training.

At monthly and/or sectoral meetings, resource persons/ agencies can be invited to conduct a few joint training sessions for the CDPO, the Supervisors and the AWWs together for promoting healthy inter-action. At such training sessions, it would be useful to invite a few anganwadi training centre staff to participate, so that they are enabled to keep in touch with the current situation in the field and use the experience in future training programmes.

Apart from a few days in the field with each batch of trainees, the anganwadi training centre staff do not get any direct feedback on how the training they have imparted is working out in the field. With such feed-back, training could be more dynamic.

In addition to being invited to join in on some monthly and sectoral meetings, staff of the anganwadi training centres should be requested to make regular field trips and they should be given a travelling allowance to make this possible. It cannot be too strongly stressed that unless they continually incorporate feedback from the field in their training courses, the training will remain static and unresponsive to a changing social situation. To each anganwadi training centre an anganwadi could be attached to provide on-the-spot experience to the trainers. In keeping with the same line of thinking there should be refresher courses at regular intervals. (preferably interlevel), to provide fresh impetus through an exchange of experiences and ideas. It might be worth experimenting with putting out a newsletter which will be contributed to and also distributed to all functionaries in the ICDS programme. It would be another way of keeping communication lines open between them: and of helping them to feel that they are not working in isolation but share problems and experiences with others like themselves.

Songs, games, story-telling have become a part of training programmes. Another important element of training is the use of role-play. If properly used, role-play is a powerful tool of "experiential learning" i.e. of learning through personally experiencing some of the motivating factors and assumptions which underlie daily behaviour (as relevant to the functioning of the ICDS). Parallels of experiences (in one's personal life

and in one's working life re: the ICDS), bring various relevant situations to life, making possible analysis and understanding e.g. the part power relationships play in the way we behave and interact with others.

An example of role-play improvization in this context:

Scene 1. The CDPO reprimands the supervisor for coming late

Scene 2. The supervisor goes on to the AWTC and shouts at the AWW for having too few children at her AWC

Scene 3. The AWW slaps a child for not listening to her.

Scene 4. Child is crying. Whom can the child shout at?

This is the power structure existing at all levels, at work, in the home, in the village. All of us operate from different steps of the power-ladder. Understanding our place, status and relative position of power or powerlessness is one of the central themes of experiential learning in the context of developmental programmes aimed at social change. Role-plays greatly help in elucidating the nuances of the inherent power-powerlessness relationship of those in any given situation. These role-plays depict real life situations of the participants. When discussion follows it becomes personal and the general concept is better understood from being rooted in specific situations and through the process of experiencing it in the "here and now"

Role-plays provide an emotional insight into the understanding of socio-political realities as also one's own and others attitudes.

Areas which can be covered/discussed by this method are:

- a) Understanding of social structure.
- b) Power hierarchy and the resulting exploitation.
- c) Understanding of one's personal beliefs and values.
- d) Family relationships.
- e) Understanding the world of the child.

Examples of the discussion sessions during training:

Does punishment help maintain discipline? Is fear of the stick essential to a child's acquiescence?

Who is a good child, a bad child, an ideal child?

What is more important to teach children – competition or co-operation ? Are they mutually exclusive?

Themes of immediate relevance which have a bearing on the teacher-child relationship, teacher's attitudes and class-room teaching are taken up for discussion. Sitting in smaller groups for better participation is encouraged. The presentations are

made in the form of role-plays and the main points from each group-discussion are put up as posters on the wall.

Many-a-time these discussion lead to self-exploration. Questions like “When I was hurt because I was punished by my teacher and I bunked school for fear of being beaten-up then why am I repeating the cycle?”

“If my self-esteem is built on my self-confidence and my ability to do well then why not let the child’s self- esteem be built on a similar edifice?”

Experiential training does not need any great educational qualifications among trainees. It has to be combined with enabling the AWW to recognize and realize her creative abilities, so that she does not get stuck on “X’ number of activities, but can invent new ways of keeping children engaged and in turn enable children to discover their own potential and grow.

IV.3.7 Monitoring and Evaluation:

A 1987 NIPCCD Report “Monitoring Social Components of ICDS – A Pilot Project” by Adarsh Sharma states: The present system of monitoring addresses itself more to the operation and process of delivery of services and does not report on the quality of the services. The beneficiaries who could be the best judge of the programme and its efficacy are not included in the monitoring system” A plea for community monitoring as long back as 1987.

The results of the pilot study say:

“It was found that children were not staying in the centre for preschool activities for the full duration. A majority of them were coming only to collect food. The AWCs were inadequately equipped with teaching aids and play material. Formal teaching was emphasized more than play and other activities. Children attending the programme looked disinterested in the on-going activities. Their movements were restricted and strict discipline was imposed. A significant association was established between the quality of the preschool programme and the period for which children stayed at the AWC. This was in turn dependent on the variety in the programme, availability of play material and the workers’ ability to conduct the programme”.

The document states that “There is a need for having a monitoring system for the special components of ICDS, to further strengthen the scheme and enhance its potential of becoming a silent revolution, a profound instrument of a community-based human resource development programme of our country”.

The situation has not changed much since then. The main basis for monitoring and evaluation are the registers. There are something like between 16-20 registers including the Stree Shakti Programme. Not one of these registers records what is being done re: the pre-school aspect of the ICDS. One of the objectives of the ICDS is to “lay the foundation for the proper psychological, physical and social development of the child”. There are many registers re: the physical development of the child especially for the delivery of food, the daily distribution of food, immunization given, etc. There is an attendance register for the 3 – 6 year olds, as separate from the record of food given to

the 0-3 year olds. Only the attendance of the 3-6 year old is recorded for the purposes of pre-school education.

There is a manual (often in the form of cyclostyled sheets) which prescribes what 'theme' should be taught during which week. Most AWWs follow this sequence but there is no record to substantiate this.

All this speaks volumes for the importance accorded to pre-school education.

NGOs, on the other hand, most of whom do not provide food or immunization services, concentrate on mapping the social, emotional and cognitive growth and development of the child. Many NGOs keep individual files for each child.

All registers at the AWC are for physical verification of stock and services (immunizations, mother's meetings) delivered and children present. It is an indication of the lack of trust in the AWW. This creates a feeling of fear which often leads to the fudging of records. When the supervisor visits the AWC, she may listen to a couple of songs, see a dance, watch a game, but this is the extent of her monitoring for pre-school activities. Quality time she devotes to the registers and visiting a few houses.

Activities provide the security of verifying the visible. How do you gauge a child's self-confidence, her psychological and social development? These are not amenable to easy verification. They need the working out of indicators, observation, records of observation and interpretation of these observations. Not easy, but not specialized either. When you talk to AWWs, parents, others, indicators are easily elicited. "She talks as much as her brother". "She is always asking questions". "She asks the visitor her name". And so on. But monitoring does not include such questioning and seeking of psycho-social developmental indicators. This area is not addressed in training nor is it a familiar way of thinking and analysing in the upbringing of the AWW the supervisor, the CDPO nor of the other officials connected with the programme.

Monitoring is geared to finding fault. There is never any appreciation or praise, only reprisals. There are AWWs who find new ways of interpreting themes or who add on songs and stories that they know, to the prescribed repertoire. These could be picked up and circulated to other AWWs.

In Karnataka there are not enough supervisors to go round – 500 of a sanctioned 1800 are in a position. It is not clear from the field whether the AWWs enjoy the freedom of not being supervised or would prefer even "negative strokes" to no strokes at all. The AWWs are in a sense a lonely, isolated lot. In some ways they are crowded in by many bosses. But in fact there is no meaningful inter-action between different levels of the programme. Once a month, a hurried meeting with the CDPO and one other meeting at the PHC, is not enough to sustain the interest and involvement of the AWW in her work.

Since new supervisors are being/have been recruited in Karnataka, it would be worthwhile, training them as supporters, facilitators and trainers rather than as "inspectors" The supervisor's job can then become a constructive one which can provide her with more energy, motivation and satisfaction in carrying out her work.

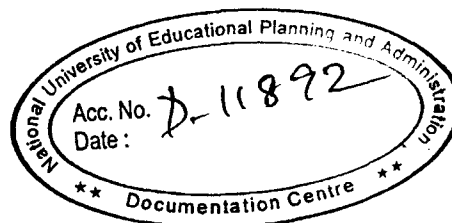
There was an item in the Times of India, March 31, 2001 which states that the Government of Karnataka is going to put an end to the “inspectorial regime” which creates fear in the primary education sector. Instead, the GOK has appointed education co-ordinators, who will be responsible for improving the quality of primary education. Though the move appears to be primarily targeted at improving school enrolment, it is still a radical step towards a change of attitude. The Commissioner for Public Education said “We want to make school administration parent- and student-friendly.”

It is only logical that this process be started at the pre-school level.

IV.3.8 Management and Convergence of Services:

There has been a marked improvement from early days to now in some areas.

- = The delivery of food is most of the time regular – without too many gaps in-between.
- = The energy food is acceptable to most children. It is quite palatable and children eat it all up.
- = Bringing children together for pulse polio and other immunizations has become routinized.
- = The AWWs no longer have to make their own arrangements for collecting the food from some central point – it is delivered at the AWC.
- = The AWW's salary is by cheque and therefore less open to corruption. There was a time when AWWs had to give a percentage to the desk clerk (the babu). However there are enormous delays in receiving the money for fuel etc. and also the additional honorarium for facilitating the implementation of Stree Shakti programme.
- = The AWW now gets maternity leave for 3 months with pay. But she only gets a raise in salary after 5 years and then again after 10 years and that is it.
- = The original number of registers have been reduced but others (births, deaths, Stree Shakti) have been added. The AWW however appears to be spending less time on them than before – there were not as many complaints about the registers as before.



Convergence of Services by and large exists only in the AWW. She attends a monthly meeting at the PHC, she attends VEC meetings. She goes around forming

groups for Stree Shakti. The advent of this latter programme, though increasing her work-load gives a broader meaning to her work and puts her in touch with others in the village, reducing the isolation in which she worked. Where the Mahila Samakya programme is there, their help is availed of in forming new groups and in turn, the M.S. groups are drawn into the Stree Shakti programme of getting Rs.5000/- per group after 6 months of functioning. This convergence has been initiated by the two departments at the State level.

Another example with great potential is the convergence between the DPEP primary school and the AWC in some areas. The few places we visited (Devanhalli, Bangalore Dist. Koodlige Bellary Dist and Humanabad, Bidar Dist) it appeared to be working well, with the AWC keeping the same hours as the primary school so that the older siblings (especially the girls) are able to attend school. Also the association with the school has had a salutary effect on the AWC. The AWC is, more and more, beginning to be seen as an educational stepping-stone to school. And interaction with the DPEP teachers has brought more liveliness into the AWC. The main snag in this picture, at present, is that the AWCs are not yet getting the additional Rs.300 p.m. regularly. This may just be a preliminary hiccup, but the Education Department does not appear enthusiastic about continuing the arrangement. If the nitty gritty of this convergence could be worked out between the 2 Departments – of Education and Women and Child Development, then it would go a long way to enhancing, and making visible the pre-school component of AWCs. It would place the pre-school child in his/her rightful place, at the beginning of the educational continuum.

V. IN CONCLUSION.

For many years now, experts have held the opinion that pre-school education is the first step towards the proper growth and development of the child. The Indian State has subscribed to this concept, by initiating the ICDS programme, in 1975. In subsequent years, the State has substantiated its faith in pre-schools, by seeking to universalize the ICDS, all over the country.

Till about some 10 years ago, parents and communities, for whom the ICDS had been designed, were not particularly enthusiastic in their response to the programme. Along with the wide and concerted drive for literacy, being carried on by the State, there has been a perceptible change in attitude from "Education is not for us ---why do we need it?" to "Education is also for us---we want it for our children.." Schools, as the most visible repositories of education are very much in demand. The AWC has largely been and still is seen as a feeding centre, but the image is slowly becoming less uni-dimensional, with parents seeing it as a stepping stone to school. Schools, even rural government schools, are beginning to show their preference for children coming from pre-schools---of course private and NGO pre -school centres are the first preference, but the potential of AWCs, literally as "pre-school" centres is also being realized. The private and NGO pre-school centres, among other things, also teach alphabets and numerals more effectively than the AWCs(who, in any case, are not expected to teach alphabets and numbers). However, this is not all. Primary School teachers say that children from pre-schools, including AWCs "adjust" much better to the school, than children who come there directly from home --- the latter take 6 months to settle down.

Karnataka has a reasonably stable ICDS infrastructure which ranges over the whole State. The programme functions relatively better than in any other state. However, as seen from the main body of the report, there are lacunae, some more serious than others, which need to be attended to for optimizing the ICDS programme.

Karnataka is one of the more literate States, which has also been successful in increasing grass-root level awareness of and demand for literacy. In this environment of aroused expectations, if any large-scale effect is to be felt, it is only the State which can undertake the task. Private and NGO efforts are essential, not only to affirm this manifestation of civil society's involvement. But also, to provide that variety of experience that will enhance the growth of a vital education system.

The importance of education as basic to long-term and sustained development is engaging the urgent attention of the Government of Karnataka. It is in the process of revamping the entire education system. In this process, attaching pre-schools to primary schools was also tried out but was abandoned, ostensibly for lack of finance.

While the Government seems aware of the importance of pre-school education and indeed had started pre-schools as early as the 60s - even before the ICDS, the impetus was not sustained and the programme was finally closed in 1999 (see "Introduction" to Section IV : Facts, Statistics and Observations). At present no discernable policy for pre-school education has been formulated, may be because of the "Lakshman rekha" between any two departments of Government; in this case, the departments of Women and Child Development and Education. The Department of Women and Child Development runs the ICDS, the only large-scale attempt at pre-school education. However, as the ICDS caters to the 0 to 6 year old child, the pre-

school component, as we seen, has become overshadowed by the distribution of the nutrition supplement.

However, with growing community interest in primary education, the pre-school has become visible, if only as a stepping-stone to primary education. This community-parent-primary school teacher awareness and need, is combined with concerted demands from civil Society, backed by the now well-researched and recognized fact of the importance of pre-school education in the child's development, not only for school-readiness but also life-readiness.

This across-the-board realization of the place of the pre-school as an essential first step on the education ladder, calls for serious acknowledgement, in practical term, by policy-makers, planners and implementors.

The compartmentalized administration and financial rules and procedures of Departments, cannot be allowed to become an insurmountable barrier to consolidating a comprehensive and continuous system of education for the Indian Child's growth and development.

All this becomes even more urgent in the face of the imminent 83rd Constitutional Amendment Bill (re : Right to Education), which contravenes not only the Constitution, but also, all arguments in favour of a comprehensive system of education, which should, beginning at the age of 3 or 4, continue though primary and Secondary stage of school education.

Civil Society has been vociferous about this contravention. Now, other voices, from other dimensions of society and for a variety of reasons have all joined in the chorus of demand for an effective, change and growth-oriented system of education. It would be crass power and political play, to pay no heed to what can be interpreted as a growing democratic consciousness. It can only be ignored with impurity.

We have listed recommendations emanating from the review – too many perhaps. It is with the earnest desire that the recommendations will help in making the ICDS programme more responsive, not only to the country's needs but also to people's needs as experienced and expressed by them.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS.

Some of the recommendations are about a "Vision" - from which would emanate a policy about pre-school education and the subsequent plotting of sequential steps, in terms of time and finances required. This calls for a serious debate and discussions at state level and as between the State and the people, at different levels.

The Long-Term Vision

1. Combining pre-school and the early primary years - i.e., age 4 to age 6 or 7 (lower primary?). The teaching methodologies for these years are very much the same, only proceeding from the simpler to the more complex. Enhancing self-confidence and self-esteem; preserving a sense of wonder; promoting the development of creativity; understanding how things work, rather than learning by rote; critical thinking, etc., all need to begin to take root in these early years. Nalli Kalli and the DPEP in Karnataka stand witness to such specialized methodology of the teaching-learning transaction.
2. For creating the man-power to manage these early years of crucial education, an university degree course (2 years ? 3 years ?) could be established for training teachers in the special methodologies required for these years of learning. A precedence set by the Delhi University, offers useful lessons.
3. The anganwadis could then concentrate on the very young child- 0 to 3 years, by running all-day creches, so that the children, their older siblings and their parents, all benefit.
4. The training for the AWWs, the pre-school / early primary teachers needs to be gradually updated, so that the physical and specially the socio-psychological development of Children can be understood such that it can be put into practice. In this context, it might be worthwhile initiating studies to establish, with more cultural exactitude, the different stages of growth of the Indian child-indeed, even of the girl and boy child separately, as, their conditioning and path of expected behaviour and growth, vary as between the sexes, never mind comparisons with the development world.
5. If planned for over the period of the Tenth Plan period, the whole system should be in place by the end of the Tenth Plan:
 - = Re-grouping the early years of education into the pre-school (balwadi?) the lower primary and the upper primary.
 - = Focussing anganwadis on creche facilities for the 0 1 to 4 year old and for the mother.

- = Putting into place a degree course which would cover the pre-school and the lower primary classes.

In the interim / parallelly, additional AWWs can be trained in the joy of learning methodology - see recommendation re:AWWs.

And, in any case, supervisor can be trained to be supportive trainers in lieu of the checking role they assume now.

Recommendations for the Medium and the Short-term

The following recommendations are not in order of importance nor are they sequential. They generally follow the section headings, as set out in the report (See annexure for financial implications of upgrading pre school education)

The Anganwadi

- = About 50% AWCs function in rented buildings. Permanent buildings need to be built for various reasons. Rented buildings are not child or AWW friendly. The main hall should be big enough to hold all the children. The bottom half of the walls should be painted black (as in DPEP schools), so that children can draw and scribble. The store is essential for locking up the food and other materials. The kitchen (even in owned buildings) needs light, an outlet for smoke and for water used for cooking, etc.)
- = Water facility (hand-pump, etc.) and toilets are essential in that order.
- = A compound wall would not only provide security for the children, but also demarcate the AWC area.
- = Finally, having a separate building for the AWC, strengthens perceptions of the AWC as an integral institution of the village, just as the school building and the Sangha Mane(house) affirm those institutions, as part of the daily on-going life of the village.
- = The AWC should run the full day – the same hours as the primary school. There is a vast difference in the perception and the relevance of an AWC which runs half a day and that which runs the whole day. The “feeding-centre” image expands to encompass pre-school education.

- = To meet increase in population (over 5 crores in 2001), at least some 20,000 additional AWCs are required.

Health and Nutrition:

- = Provide 6-monthly de-worming for all children.
- = Vitamin A and iron can be given in tablet or liquid form to all children, every day at the AWC itself.
- = Provide biscuits/peanuts/khara sev. Do away with the cooking, so that the AWW can devote herself more profitably to the core job at hand.
- = Do away with growth charts – they are hardly ever properly maintained and, in any case, they do not serve the purpose of varying the food according to the nutritional status of the child. At best, the growth charts are an instrument of nutrition and health education. Alternately, maintaining the growth charts could be transferred to the ANM along with maintenance of the birth and death registers.
- = It is an arguable point whether the food makes any difference to the 0-3, 3-6 year olds or to the pregnant and lactating mothers. Basically, food draws children to the AWC. If the pre-school element is made attractive and felt to be relevant (as in the NGO and privately run pre-school centres), then the food is not important, especially if the simple measures of deworming and giving iron tablets/liquid are followed.

Pre-school Education:

- = A great deal more material needs to be provided – not as a one-time deal but periodically and regularly, over the year. At present there is the fear that once exhausted, no more material will come – leading not only to inability to keep children occupied, but also to reprimands from the supervisor/ CDPO. Old powder tins, plastic bottles (never bags), etc., are things with which children are capable of keeping themselves occupied for long stretches of time – except for the stigma that they are not 'toys'. CDPOs, supervisors and AWTC staff can contribute to collecting such materials which, by virtue of being 'undifferentiated', stimulate the child's imagination.

- = Charts, posters should be hung low enough on the walls for children to touch them and look at them more closely. Big, bold, colourful pictures attract children.
- = There should be a library for the children and a separate one for the AWWs. Apart from the fact that the AWW will have that many more stories to tell, just handling books can be a major incentive to literacy.
- = Usually, only what are considered beautiful or useful things are put up on the walls. Children's drawings, with their names, put up on the walls, would not only make children feel that the AWC is theirs, but would help boost self-esteem that their material is up for show next to the teachers and other material.
- = Children do not need to be engaged all the time. Given the right environment and plenty of material and activities to choose from, children can and need to spend time alone or among themselves, deciding and engaging in what they want to do.
- = Many of the above suggestions and the assumptions behind them need to be incorporated in the AWW's, the supervisors' and the CDPO's training.

Family Education:

- = **Mother's meetings have to be made more meaningful:**

They can be tied in with classroom activities and the progress of the children. The children's drawings, songs, games etc. could be presented to parents rather than /in addition to, showcasing them to supervisors, CDPOs and visitors.

- Mothers' meetings could be linked to Mahila Mandals/ Sanghas – made somewhat more concrete now with the advent of Stree Shakti.
- The more credible the AWW, the more likelihood of the meetings becoming meaningful. Just getting information never changed anybody. The information has to be tied in with the relevancies to and the possibilities in the lives of the recipients. This needs research on how to make articulation, between the desirable and the real, more effective.
- In addition to the mothers' meetings, AWWs and helpers could be involved in bringing the older women in the village together and collecting local songs, stories, sayings, etc. from them. This not only involves a section of the community ignored by all others, but also adds hugely to the store of songs, games, stories, etc. that the AWW can have recourse to. A bonus would lie in the fact that their own cultural knowledge is part of the pre-school curriculum – one step towards involvement in and ownership of the programme. An experiment along these lines was carried out in U.P. with positive results which persisted for quite some time. A mobile training team was formed, members being selected staff from AWTCs. Initially, tremendously successful, this team by being the sole disseminator of the methodology, not only stagnated re: their own inventiveness, but failed to create other similar resource teams which would not only have shared the task but would have brought their own brand of creativity to bear on the process. Every AWW and AWTC staff member was motivated and involved in the process for a not insubstantial amount of time, but long-term sustainability was not paid attention to. New inputs, new innovations introduced from time to time are essential to keep AWWs stimulated for giving of their best.

Community Participation:

- The above last point, re: bringing together groups of old women and collecting local songs, stories, etc. from them is also a vehicle for community participation. There are many such situations for involving the community which need to be explored in training, and later in the field – situations, the handling of which could change the image of the AWW from that of a teacher, a government servant and an outsider, into being one of a friend.
- Those who teach the subject, and those who monitor the field, themselves have no experience of community participation and this puts paid to any realistic attempts to involve the community in the working of the AWC.

The AWW.

- As suggested earlier, an experiment tried in Tamil Nadu in 2 districts is worth emulating in Karnataka. Additional AWWs were trained in 'joyful learning' by an NGO (THREAD from Orissa) and placed in all the AWCs. The training was excellent, with the trainers keeping low key and addressing various issues, even, as suggested by UDISHA, increasing the self-confidence and self-esteem of the AWW. Not only did pre-school education get more attention, but the original AWWs and the helpers picked up some of the activities and processes that the new AWWs introduced.
- There has to be a concerted effort to free the AWW from all but those tasks germane to the functioning of the AWC – so that, from being an ineffective Jack-of-all-trades, she can become an effective AWW.
- There was one instance we came across in the field, where out of expediency (no supervisor) an older and more experienced AWW was carrying out the work of a supervisor. From all accounts, she was doing very well. By plugging the qualifications required for a supervisor at a lower level, a number of the more experienced AWWs could be promoted to the supervisor's post – more AWCs need to be opened and new AWWs could be recruited instead of recruiting all new supervisors.
- There is need to re-iterate the question of the salary of the AWW – that the only totally grass-root field 'worker' be treated as a 'volunteer' in a 'temporary' programme running these 25 years, is an anomaly that can no longer be brushed aside.

Training:

- Many of the suggestions re: training have already been made in the section on training. It needs to be revamped quite drastically to address process rather than behaviour and also to relate to field realities. Feedback is essential to keep training dynamic and responsive to changing field situations. Needless to say, this is one of the most crucial inputs into making the ICDS optimally effective. The outcomes from effective training are clearly visible in that other government programme, Mahila Samakhya.

= Partnerships with NGOs, is one way of infusing new blood into training.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Here again, the concept of monitoring and evaluation has to change drastically in keeping with more recent thinking of how these aspects of programming need to be conceptualized, if they are to be instrumental in making the programme more effective. CDPOs and supervisors need to be supporters and facilitators and not instructors. Less reprimands, more co-operation and praise.
- Training supervisors as trainers, would help provide constructive support to the AWWs.
- The AWW works in isolation. It would make her and her work more enlivened if there were Resource Centres as in DPEP and in some NGOs, for inter-personal exchange of new content, methods and experiences, including maybe, even pure gossip; as this is what will keep the AWW interested in and connected to her work. It is worth experimenting using the same platform of the DPEP Cluster Resource Centre for involving the AWW as well. This would help her pick up some of the DPEP methodology and also provide a continuum from the pre-school to the primary school.
- In this context, connecting the AWC to the primary school, if possible physically, and most certainly function-wise, could bring about an understanding of and a co-operation in the 2 types of institutions, while providing a continuity of educational experience for children.

Research:

- = There are various areas of research, in which the AWWs and other members of the community could be involved: The number of children not attending the AWC – reasons why; how many of the AWC children actually go on to primary school – their economic and caste status; how many private pre-schools are there in the area – whom do they cater to, etc.

This is not a menu of recommendations. Taken together, they should, in being implemented, provide the synergy to bring required dynamism into the ICDS, so that it takes its place as one of the basic programmes which will bring about social change, towards equality and democracy, in this country.

Lakshmi Krishnamurty
Vani Periodi
and
Asha Nambisan.

April 16, 2001.

Annexure - A

Upgrading Pre-School Education – Financial Implications for 5 Years
Education Department

ITEM		DETAILS	FIRST YEAR	FIVE YEARS
1	2	3	4	
I	Pre-School Workers			
1.	Honorarium	Rs. 600 x 12 months x 40,000 PSWs	28,80,00,000	144,00,00,000
2.	Travel etc.	Rs. 50 x 12 months x 40,000 PSWs	240,00,000	12,00,00,000
	Sub-Total		31,20,00,000	156,00,00,000
II	Training			
1.	PSWs	Rs. 2,500 (5 days) x 40,000 PSWs	10,00,00,000	10,00,00,000
2.	Supervisors as Trainers	Rs. 2,500 (5 days) x 1,800 Supervisors	45,00,000	45,00,000
3.*	Partnerships with NGOs for initial and on-going training	For some 20 NGOs and individuals	1,00,00,000	5,00,00,000
	Sub-Total		11,45,00,000	15,45,00,000
III	Materials			
1.	Kit material, Posters, Charts etc.	Rs. 1,500 x 40,000 AWCs	6,00,00,000	30,00,00,000
2.**	Magazine/Newsletter for AWWs, Supervisors and CDPOs	Rs. 20x45,000 Copies x 4 quarters (16 pages, A4 size)	36,00,000	1,80,00,000
	* Continuous in-service training	** Includes editor and other staff		
	1	2	3	4
3	Library books for AWW and for AWC children	Rs. 10 x 50 books x 40,000 AWCs	2,00,00,000	10,00,00,000
	Sub-Total		8,36,00,000	41,80,00,000
Grand Total for Education Department			51,01,00,000	213,25,00,000

Upgrading Pre-School Education – Financial Implications for 5 Years

Department of Women and Child Development

ITEM		DETAILS	FIRST YEAR	FIVE YEARS
1		2	3	4
I *	Infrastructure			
1.	Buildings for existing AWCs including water facility and toilets	Rs. 1,00,000 x 4,000 AWCs/year	40,00,00,000	200,00,00,000
2.	Buildings of new AWCs including water facility and toilets	Rs. 1,00,000 x 4,000 AWCs/year	40,00,00,000	200,00,00,000
	Sub Total		80,00,00,000	400,00,00,000
II	CDPO's Office			
1.	Computers	Rs. 50,000 x 185 Talukas	92,50,000	92,50,000
2.	Maintenance	Rs. 10,000 x 185 Talukas	18,50,000	92,50,000
	Sub Total		1,11,00,000	1,85,00,000
III**	AWWs and Helpers			
1.	Honorarium for 20,000 AWWs and 20,000 helpers	Rs. 1,100 x 12 months x 40,000 workers	52,80,00,000	264,00,00,000
2.	Travel etc.	Rs. 50 x 12 months x 20,000 AWWs	1,20,00,000	6,00,00,000
	Sub-Total		54,00,00,000	270,00,00,000
Grand Total for Department of Women and Child Development			135,11,00,000	671,85,00,000

* Co-ordination between DOE and DWCD for locating AWW Close to primary school

** Administration and costs of providing 'services' have not been included

Karnataka A Glance

Indicators	Reference Year	India	Karnataka
Total Population (millions)	1991	846	44.96
Sex Ratio	1991	927	960
Per cent of Urban	1991	26	30.9
Decade Population Growth (1981-91)	1991	24	21.1
Crude Birth Rate	1996	27.5	24.1
Crude Death Rate	1996	9	7.6
Under-five Mortality Rate	1993	109.3	87.3
Neo Natal Mortality	1993	48.6	45.3
Post neonatal Mortality ¹	1993	29.9	20.2
Infant Mortality Rate	1996	72	53
Child Mortality Rate	1993	33.4	23.5
Maternal Mortality Rate*	1993	453	450
Total Fertility Rate	1995	3.5	2.7
Percentage of Mothers Receiving ANC	1993	62.3	83.4
Life Expectancy			
Male	1991	57.7	62.1
Female	1991	58.7	63.3
Percentage of Children Fully Vaccinated	1993	35.4	52.2
BCG	1993	62.2	81.7
DPT 3	1993	51.7	70.7
Polio 3	1993	53.4	71.4
Measles	1993	42.4	54.9
Institutional Delivery (%)	1993	25.5	37.5
Underweight Children (%)	1994-95	49	NA
Moderately Malnourished (%)	1994-95	29	53.35**
Severe Malnourished (%)	1994-95	12	8.3 \$

Note

¹ Computed as the difference between the infant and neonatal mortality rates.

* Maternal Deaths per Lakh Birth.

** Only Rural

\$ As per 1988-90

Source : Census of India, State Profile 1991 India, Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Government of India, Delhi.

NHFS, 1993 National Family Health Survey, IIPS, Bombay.

• UNICEF 1995. The Progress of India States. India Country Office, New Delhi.

* From Evolution of ICDS by NCAER, 2000

Annexure C**Pre-Primary Centres run by NGO, 'Sneha' Koodlige**

- Discussion with Mr. Ramanjneya, Head of the NGO – Sneha
- Visit to 4 of the Pre-primary Centres (PPC).
- Group discussion with Pre-primary teachers.

When we enter these PPCs we are received with a warm welcome. No extra effort to treat us as some big people. The teachers and children receive us with a smile and a namasthe, which gives a feeling of love and respect. The NGO head was also with us. The atmosphere was non-threatening

We sit with them, talk to children, talk to the teacher. They have a day's routine for children - but no child is compelled to do anything which he or she is not interested in. When the teacher talks to us, children are found playing on their own, or clinging to the teacher without feeling conscious about it. It was really very nice to see, when Mr. Rudramani, the PPC teacher, started speaking to us - two children came from two sides and sit close to him, leaning on him. This kind of atmosphere means a lot.

The class-rooms are full of toys and materials. Children can choose. There are plenty. In fact children can be left on their own to explore and enjoy the toys. Teachers play a facilitator's role whenever it is required. In Kuruchara, one child was bathing a baby doll, quite an elaborate activity – undisturbed. Then she started arranging their marriage – calling the teacher to attend the marriage ceremony. There were long and short garlands made out of paper, among the materials which she used.

Dolls made of clothes (stuffed), wooden blocks, heaps of coloured stones, colourful beads, tamarind seeds, big seeds of fruits, kitchen toys, building blocks..... etc. Lots and lots to choose from and play with. Children are taught to keep them back neatly after use, along with the teachers and other children.

Children are provided with colours and papers and asked to paint. Whatever they draw is accepted. Children are asked what they have drawn and whatever they say is written on that paper. Their artworks are well preserved in a file. It was very interesting to go through the file - and see the paintings – along with the captions they had given. The captions in fact were very interesting. Colour is used by hand, allowing them to feel the texture and they use it without constraint.

The walls are also filled with pictures made by children with their name on it. Children feel very proud to show it to us and also to their parents. The walls are filled with other interesting posters also. Most of them are made by the teachers themselves. Bold and visible figures, not tiny little figures. There are charts made of different varieties of cereals and pulses.

Along with this, the teachers have lots of conversation with children. Slowly they are introduced to the alphabets, also without any fuss. The teachers had a conscious understanding about the process at work.

Social development, physical development (activities for bigger muscle and smaller muscle development), language development, moral development – are taken care of. For each of them they have evolved some indicators and document the progress of each child systematically. For moral development - we had some discussion with them asking how can we expect a clear indication at this age. Wouldn't it become judgemental!

The teachers are quite articulate. They get a lot support – through initial training and in-service training every month. They are exposed to different skills and concepts during the in-service training, which helps them to grow as human beings. This type of space for personality development gets reflected in their work, positively.

A full course of pre-school training they have undergone – which was conducted by Ms. Margaret who is an expert in this field. Even after the training the teachers evolve different games and activities on their own instead of sticking to one package for ever.

When we asked how do they combat monotony and boredom – some said they do not feel any such thing with the children and a few said they take leave and come back fresh. They also have yearly vacations.

Out of 12 PPTs there are two men teachers. They all feel that this job is not meant only for women. Men can also do this job. The kind of relationship developed with the children is visible. One of the teachers said that his child goes to an AWC in his home-village and according to him there is hardly any pre-school activity. It is mostly a food-giving centre. With the introduction of DPEP some materials are being provided.

The nearby primary school shows much appreciation for these PPCs. They even borrow some teaching materials from the PPCs. They say that the performance of these children is visibly better than others.

The working area of Sneha is spread over 7 panchayats. They started in 1991. They had a dialogue with people on education and health. After that they identified the need for PPCs where there are no government AWCs. In the beginning (1991) it was 4, after 2 years it was 6; then gradually 8 and at present it is 12 PPCs.

In the first year, the PPCs were mainly focussing on teaching alphabets and numerals. After that they underwent training by the Karnataka State Council for Child Welfare (1 week) in Bangalore, where they understood the concept of PPCs. With the help of 'CRY' the training process was continued by Ms. Margaret at the field level. At present 3 teachers, who received training from Ms. Margaret are still there. These teachers shared their understanding of concepts with the new teachers.

For one year 'CRY' helped to provide nutritious food also. But later as a matter of policy, they stopped it. Children in these centres go home in the afternoon, have food, and come back. Except in one village all others have understood this and co-operate.

Profile of the teachers and helpers.

In all the villages where 'Sneha' is working there are no women who studied up to 7th standard. (All these are interior villages) So the teachers are selected from the nearby towns or villages. The education qualification for teachers is SSLC/PUC/BA. In

the beginning, they were paid Rs.500/- and at present it is Rs.1150/- Women are ready to work on a 10 – 5 p.m. basis but it is difficult to manage the process effectively with such timings. So 'Sneha' has selected people who can stay in the village and work. The helper is paid Rs.400/- pm. These helpers were in fact, taken when food was being provided. After that they continued to assist the teacher in the PP activities.

Sneha" takes care to see that all the children who attend PPC, later join 1st class. They keep a record of each child and follow up their education. The first batch of children are already in the 7th std. In some places, even to go to 5th std, they have to walk 5 kms. In some places, the roads are not safe. Girl children, at the most go upto 7th std. After that only if the high school is very close by, girl children continue their education.

'Sneha' already has sent about 1000 children to the primary school. In 2 places, (other than the remaining 12 PPCs), 'Sneha' has withdrawn their PPC when these places got the govt. AWCs.

When they were asked about the performance of govt. AWCs the 'Sneha' team came up with several comments.

- = Most of the AWCs are there in name only. There is no proper supervision and monitoring.
- = Many a time the helper comes to the AWC while the teacher remains at home. Many of the AWWs have political support which is mis-used.
- = There are some good the AWWs, but they do not get proper training.
- = Even if there are many who work hard they do not get appreciation. No incentive to carry on.
- = For the kind of work the AWWs are supposed to do they get very little honorarium and also have no social status – which trivializes their work.
- = Sometimes because of the misuse of materials and sometimes just because she is seen around, the AWW becomes the victim of people's anger.
- = The whole system is corrupt. If the CDPO is not corrupt it is difficult for him or her to survive.

Sneha makes serious attempts to involve the community. Before the PPCs are started they have a dialogue; get the building space with the help of people; educate the community regarding the new concept of PPCs, and the community also grows in the process.

NGO's like Sneha bring about a change in perceptions of the concept of PPE. But the problem with them is dependency on funding agencies. So it becomes a

question of sustainability. Last year they had to take a big loan to manage the programme.

In this exercise of strategic planning Sneha found a larger dimension to its work: The PPCs of Sneha can be developed as resource centres for the AWCs around and provide them with new concepts and materials. So this year they have a plan of working with AWCs.

Pre-Primary Centres run by NGO, "Asare" Kanakapura-

"Children are not here (PPCs) to sit back folding their hands . This is the time and age for children to explore, touch and feel, talk freely, use their own bodies comfortably without becoming tight and rigid with fear. If they are made to sit back folding their hands, this is nothing but a violence on children".

Mr. Jayaprakash Banjagare stresses such aspects of preschool education. Otherwise, playing in the streets on their own, would be a more delightful experience for children than coming to school.

Asare runs 8 pre-school centres at present. It has started the process - where there are no govt. AWCs. In fact all this began with the need to find a good school for his own daughter.

We visited 6 of the centres run by Asare. J.P. himself trains the teachers. Often visits the centres. Spends time with the teachers and children continuously building an understanding with them. It so happened that when we entered Dasegowdan halli --we found a few children folding their hands and talking with hesitation. When asked, the teacher said that one of the teachers who came from the nearby school asked this teacher to keep the children disciplined. And one of the gestures of discipline is to keep hands folded. A sense of restricting the physical mobility of human beings.

Asare has started these schools in 1992. They maintain a record for each child - the family background of the child, the hand writing of the child, etc. The art and painting work done by children are on the walls with their names on it. Children point to them with pride. Each child feels attended to.

There is a lot of conversation with children. Much care is taken in selecting the teacher. Because in this teaching-learning process – interest and commitment comes first. It is not high educational qualifications that matter but high levels of empathy with children.

Training is an on-going process. Once in six months they get training. But often the resource persons spend time in the field, helping teachers deal with situations as they come up.

Any educational process has to be natural and not imposed. It shouldn't be material-centered, money centered. It relies mostly on the relationship between teacher and student. This is their philosophy.

The centre is open for the full day. No food is provided. In the afternoon many of the children were having their afternoon nap. The teacher welcomed us quietly, without disturbing the children. The atmosphere was very homely.

The older children are taught both Kannada and English alphabets. They consider this a practical necessity - tools for acquiring knowledge

Asare takes responsibility for the children getting into primary schools. Since two years they have felt the need of following up on the children admitted to primary schools. So, the teacher goes to the primary school, once a week for a day and spends time with them. Lots of creative activities are carried out with them, so that children do not miss this exposure after pre-primary . As we enter, the primary school children scream with joy saying "Asare teacher has come?" This exposure is not limited to the children who passed from Asare centre. All of them in the school get it.

Much attention is paid to the social aspects like 'discrimination' here. When we went to the primary school to see the follow-up process – whole lot of children were making fun of one boy who was sitting in one corner. The issue was slowly analyzed along with the children. He was a beggar boy and that made him self-conscious. Again he belongs to a lower caste. Here were all the signs of a future drop-out case. Though this is a tough analysis – it took place with the children in a simple way.

Discrimination often happens between the smart, talkative children and the quiet children. In Dasegowdanadoddi there was one smart girl who was dominating the scene. For every activity she is the first. J.P. got involved with a small quietly-sitting child and started some drawing activity. For quite a few minutes this process went on. The child was successful in each step and was feeling reassured to take the next step. In the end, the kind of contentment she expressed – it is just not statistically measurable. After that the smart child was attended to without being humiliated. In fact it is all these small small matters that make a big difference. The pre-school space for children makes great sense if it is provided with such an atmosphere.

Asare has plans for enlarging the process. They feel that Kanakapura Taluka has 60 – 70 villages which do not have govt. AWCs. Wherever they work with a pre-school, they have community-based activities also. So they get community support for their work.

Karnataka Education Sector Study

A STUDY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT By Lakshmi Krishnamurthy

TERMS OF REFERENCE

OBJECTIVES :

To assess the success of efforts of the GOK to provide pre-school education, in particular, in ensuring coverage, **meeting the expectations for early childhood education** and ensuring convergence of various services targeted at pre-school children.

To define the policy programming issues that need to be resolved to improve coverage and effectiveness of early childhood education services for children during the 2 to 3 years before they enter primary school.

THE TASKS : (As set out in the TOR)

1. Summarise the policy and regulatory context in Karnataka for services to pre-school children, including private services provided (using the relevant government departments' documents-legal, government orders, guidelines, etc.- governing the support of pre-school care and education for children in Karnataka and interviewing relevant officials about how this framework influences the programs that exist.
2. Identify and describe the types of early childhood education (school preparedness) that are available to children of 3-6 years of age and estimate how many children – by location, socio-economic status, and group affiliation – are enrolled in and actually attend these programmes, including those offered privately, currently, how many are unserved and to what extent targeting of marginalized sections is taking place. (Base on analysis of relevant secondary data on ICDS, pre-school education (both government sponsored and private), and any other social programmes that provide school readiness experiences for children in the age group. Important data includes the programme name and its main purposes, the services each offers, the number of children enrolled in each by district, and information on facilities and staff. The surveys of pre-school education carried out in Karnataka should be analysed.
3. Assess the content and quality of early childhood programmes/services offered, in particular the cognitive stimulation experiences in these programmes (by assembling and analyzing whatever research results are available on early childhood education in Karnataka.
4. Assess the level of collaboration and co-operation between the Department of Education programmes for pre-school children and the ICDS programme and the linkages between the primary education and pre-school education programmes (using interview guide, interview staff of Dept of Education and

ICDS at all levels – state, district, next level below, centers – to assess the level of collaboration and convergence among the two.

5. Analyse the service conditions i.e. salary structures/ qualifications, eligibility criteria, training provisions and requirements etc. for teachers, supervisors and other personnel in the respective programmes and the degree to which these are consistent across programmes.
6. Select 2-4 centres of each type (at least ICDS, Dept of Education and privately sponsored) and, using an interview and observation guide, conduct a case study of each to assess the characteristics of the infrastructure, staff and ambience; how their services provided meet expected standards and what the staff do with children (particularly on cognitive stimulation)
7. Describe the resource institutions including training institutions supporting early childhood programmes and services and the nature of the support they provide.

Sub-tasks for Tasks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7.

- 1. Collect documents, as relevant to policy, planning, implementation (including convergence of services), surveys, evaluations, etc., from inception to now (2000), from :**
 - a. The Department of Education, GOK.
 - b. The Department of Women and Children, GOK.
 - c. The Department of Health, GOK,
 - d. Training institutions, e.g., NIPCCD, KCCW.
- 2. Collate and analyse all documents so collected.**
- 3. Chart geographical and population-wise coverage** of the pre-school programme from secondary data obtained from the different GOK departments, as given above; in relation to total habitation and population requirements.
- 4. Analyse financial outlays** over time and in relation to the total outlay on education.
- 5. Interview and have discussions with relevant officials and instructors**
 - a. Matter arising out of the documents and other material collected from the Departments of Education, Women and Children and Health, GOK, and the related training institutions.
 - b. Matters relating to collaboration between the departments, as also the convergence of services.
 - c. Specifically, with regard to the following areas of concern :
 - i. What is the vision of the child that policy - makers and implementors have in mind in programming ECD.
 - ii. What are the perceptions and expectations of all those in key positions in the women and Children and Education Departments re:ECD.

- iii. What are values that policy-makers, decision-takers implementors seek to promote, through the ECD programmes.

In relation to the above (ci, cii, ciii), what are the counterpart views of parents (including AWWs and other care-givers) and the communities they live in. Experience shows that perceptions and expectations of planners and top-level decision makers differ, often quite radically, from the perceptions and expectations of those at the grass-root level. It is important to know the differences, in the interest of greater programming efficiency whether one wants to more closely adhere to grass-root level expectations or whether one wants to change attitudes and behaviour, to fit in with present views about early childhood development.

Sub-tasks for Task nos. 3, 4 and 6, which are more field oriented than the above-mentioned sub-tasks.

Field -work

1. Private and NGO efforts in pre-school education will be broadly described and analysed.
This will be from primary and secondary data.
2. NIPCCD, KSSW and a selection of AWW training centres will be visited, for discussions with the staff and to describe and analyse training content, materials and methods.
3. A small selection of GOK pre-school centres will be visited. The Selected on the basis of "good" and "bad" centres, for the purpose of analysis and understanding indicators of success, as also for pinpointing lessons from failure.

Methodology :

1. Collection of secondary data, collation and analysis.
2. Interviews and discussions with relevant officials of the Education and Women and Children Development.
3. Interviews and discussions with training institution (2) staff.
4. Interviews and group discussions with AWWs, other pre-school instructors, parents, representatives of communities and children.
5. Observation in class-rooms, to assess the teaching-learning transactions and the presence or otherwise of a child-friendly class-room atmosphere.

Children, parents, representatives of the community, AWWs, supervisors, CDPOs, training centre staff, will all be interviewed in interactive, face-to-face, individual and / or group interviews; discussion will be an integral part of the interviews.

Note : Interviews and discussions at all levels, as also all field-work visits, will not be for the purposes of yielding statistically significant results; they will aim at revealing the more elusive but equally significant, qualitative results.

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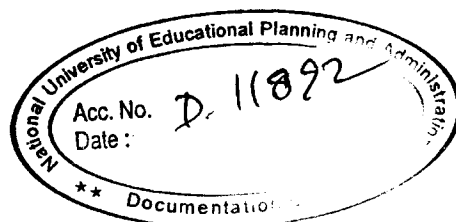
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The government of Karnataka has initiated an exercise to evolve a broad policy framework on Education. As part of this effort, a series of studies have been undertaken on various sub-sectors in a bid to have an indepth analysis of the situation and of the needs of the entire spectrum of Education in Karnataka. The various sub sectors covered relate to Education & Child development, Education & Equity, Teacher Education, & Sec & P. U Education, Collegiate Education, the Role of private sector in Education, Technical Education, Etc. The available reports are being printed hereby in an attempt to share the same with the readers at large so that they can draw as much benefit from them as possible.