



Early Childhood Education in Anganwadi Centres



State Planning Commission

19th June 2013

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STATE PLANNING COMMISSION

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Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission

The State Planning Commission was constituted in Tamil Nadu as an Advisory body on 25th May 1971 under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble Chief Minister to make recommendations to the Government on various matters pertaining to the development of the State. The Chairman of the Commission is assisted by Vice Chairman, Full Time Member & Part Time Members who are experts in various fields. The Principal Secretary to Government, Planning, Development and Special Initiatives and the Principal Secretary to Government, Finance Department are the ex-officio members. The Member Secretary is responsible for administration in the Commission.

The Commission has the following technical divisions:

1. Agricultural Policy and Planning
2. Industries, Power and Transport
3. Land Use
4. Education and Employment
5. Health and Social Welfare
6. District Planning and Rural Development
7. Plan Co-ordination.

Main activities of SPC:

1. Preparation of Five Year and Annual Plans based on the policies and priorities of the Government.
2. Undertake Mid Term review of the Five Year Plan, other special reviews on the Economy and advise the Government on appropriate modification and restructuring of the schemes.
3. Monitor development indicators that influence the Human Development Index, Gender Development Index, etc., at a disaggregated level and suggest correctional measures.
4. Undertake special studies as required for formulation and implementation of plan projects and programmes.
5. Tamil Nadu State Land Use Research Board (TNSLURB) is functioning under the chairmanship of Vice Chairman, State Planning Commission as a permanent body in the State Planning Commission. This Board is intended to promote interaction and study in the vital areas of land use. The State Planning Commission organizes seminars/workshops and undertake studies.
6. Human Development Reports (HDRs) were prepared for Dindigul, Sivagangai, Tiruvannamalai, Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, the Nilgiris, Kanyakumari and Dharmapuri districts. The concept of Human Development has been disseminated to all districts through workshops organized in the concerned districts. Proposal for preparation of District Human Development Reports (DHDR) for the remaining districts is under process.
7. State Balanced Growth Fund (SBGF) is operated to bridge the regional imbalances among the districts.

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Education in early childhood assumes much importance in that 90% of the children's brain and its cognitive skills develop in the early childhood, below 3 years. With emphasis, this critical period requires tender caring, balanced nutrition and intellectual nourishment in the form of education. Education facilitates mental pabulum. Considering this critical period of childhood, the Government both at the centre and in the State are implementing a host of schemes and programmes. This type of Government intervention aims at catching the young at an early stage and provides a package of services such as education, health care, nutrition etc. There should be proper linkage between Anganwadi Centres and Schools.

The Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) is an important scheme which offers a package of services under a single umbrella. They are Nutrition, Childhood education and Pre-School care, Health, Supportive services and Convergence. Of late, the scheme has become universalised having been in implementation in all the development blocks. This scheme has impacted childhood education, health improvement and health status of lactating mothers. In addition to the ICDS scheme, the SSA, a flagship programme of Government of India has been making rapid strides in the educational sphere. It helps to reduce the dropout rate and increase the enrolment rate and retention rate. This scheme also encourages childhood education by nurturing good values in children.



Article 5 of the Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All, 1990 states that, "LEARNING begins at BIRTH . . . and DEVELOPMENT has begun EARLIER" It is well established that the most important years of learning are begun at birth. During these early years, a human being is capable of absorbing more information at a time than they will ever be able to again. The environment of the young child influences the development of cognitive skills and emotional skills due to the rapid brain growth that occurs in the early years. Studies have shown that high quality or any high rated preschools have a long term effect in improving the outcomes of a child.

Holistic Development of a Child

Young children are not only growing physically during early childhood, they are also growing mentally. Children of this age continue to advance their skills through observing and interacting with the world around them. They try to learn how to process, store, elaborate and use information.

The holistic development of a child includes

- Physical & Motor Development
- Cognitive or Intellectual Development
- Language Development
- Social Development
- Emotional Development
- Development of Creative Expression & Aesthetic Appreciation.

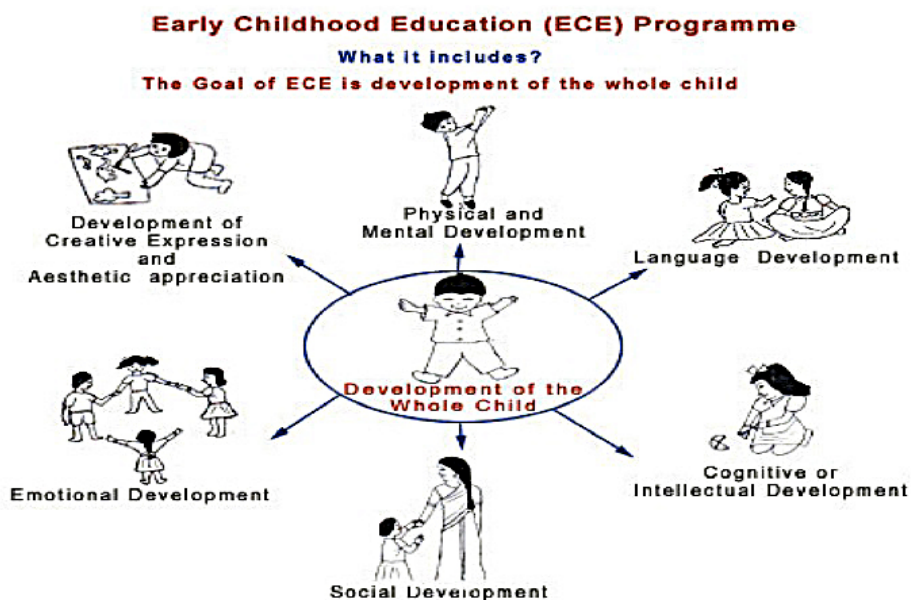
Cognition in its real meaning refers to the higher processes involved in understanding and dealing with the world around us. Cognitive development is intimately linked to the development of emotions, language and physical development. Cognition is also referred to as a covert mental process, encompassing processes such as thinking, remembering, perceiving, planning, choosing, fantasizing and even dreaming. Simply it can be defined as an activity of knowing; mental process through which knowledge is acquired and problems are solved. Several eminent theorists have documented their perspectives on cognitive development of young children.



Early Childhood Education refers to the formal teaching of young children by people outside the family or in settings outside the home. "Early childhood" is usually defined as before the age of normal schooling – five years. Pre-school is an early childhood programme in which children combine learning with play in a programme run by professionally trained adults. Children are most commonly enrolled in pre-school between the ages of three and five, though those as young as two can attend some schools.

Early childhood education focuses on children's learning through play in a fun-filled environment. Children learn more efficiently and gain more knowledge through play-based activities such as dramatic play, art and social games. Allowing preschool aged children to discover and explore freely within each of these areas of development is the foundation for developmental learning.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is now being universally recognised as a crucial input for the overall development of the child, particularly from the disadvantaged sections of the society. ECE is in principle, a process and development oriented system and therefore ECE programmes are transacted through the medium of play and activity according to the age of the pre-schoolers. The ECE Programme is development oriented and child-centred in approach and places a great deal of emphasis on children's interaction and active experience of the environment. It derives its theoretical base from a synthesis of the principles and ideologies of some of the prominent forerunners of early childhood education as well as some leading developmental Psychologists.



ECCE is defined as the care & education of the children from 0 to 6 years in the Indian context. The latest policy documents such as National Policy on Education (NPE 1986) and the subsequent Ramamurti Committee Report (1990) have considered ECCE as the care which includes health & nutrition along with education of children from birth to six years. It includes:

- Early stimulation Programmes through Creches / Home stimulation for 0-3 years.
- Pre - school / Early Childhood Care & Education Programmes for 3-5 years.
- Early Primary Education Programmes as part of primary schooling for 6-8 years.

The preparation of ECE Programme owes its origin to a workshop conducted by UNICEF in Agra in 1984 in which several noted

experts and practitioners of ECE in the country participated and presented papers on Pre-school curriculum. ECE has received its due emphasis in the National Policy on Education (1986) as a critical input both for the holistic development of an individual and for its impact on the enrolment and retention of children in the Primary grades. ECE Programme focuses exclusively on a programme for 3 to 6 years children who are in Pre-school, along the lines suggested in the national policy. While the age for entry to Class I is 5-6 years generally, a considerable number of children continue to attend ECE centres even upto the age of 6 years, particularly in the rural, tribal and urban slum areas. This ECE Programme specifically has these children in mind while suggesting objectives activities for this older age group ie. 5-6 years.



Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme represents one of the world's largest and most unique programmes for early childhood development. ICDS is the foremost symbol of India's commitment to her children – India's response to the challenge of providing pre-school education on one hand and breaking the vicious cycle of malnutrition, morbidity, reduced learning capacity and mortality on the other. It reaches more than 34 million children aged 0-6 years and 7 million pregnant and lactating mothers.

Commenced by the Government of India in 1975 in 33 community development blocks, the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) has been instrumental in improving the health and well-being of mothers and children under six by providing

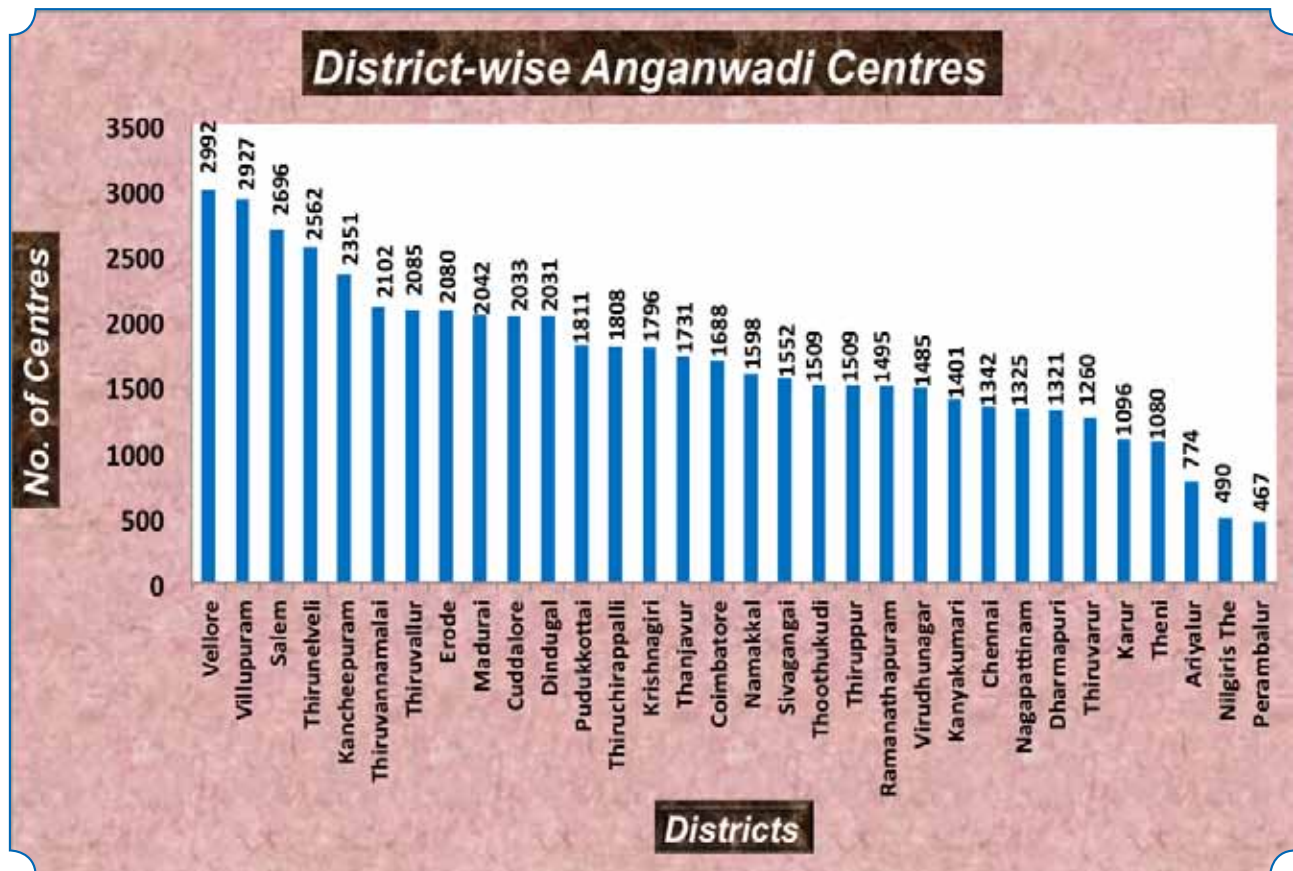
health and nutrition education, health services, supplementary food and pre-school education. Within this also, the focus now is on under three children which is the period of growth and also a period when the child is susceptible to many infections.

The programme is specifically designed to reach disadvantaged and low income groups for effective disparity reduction. ICDS provides the convergent interface / platform between communities and other systems such as primary healthcare, education, water and sanitation among others. The programme has the potential to break an intergenerational cycle of under-nutrition as well as address the multiple disadvantages faced by girls and women but with adequate investment and enabling environment.



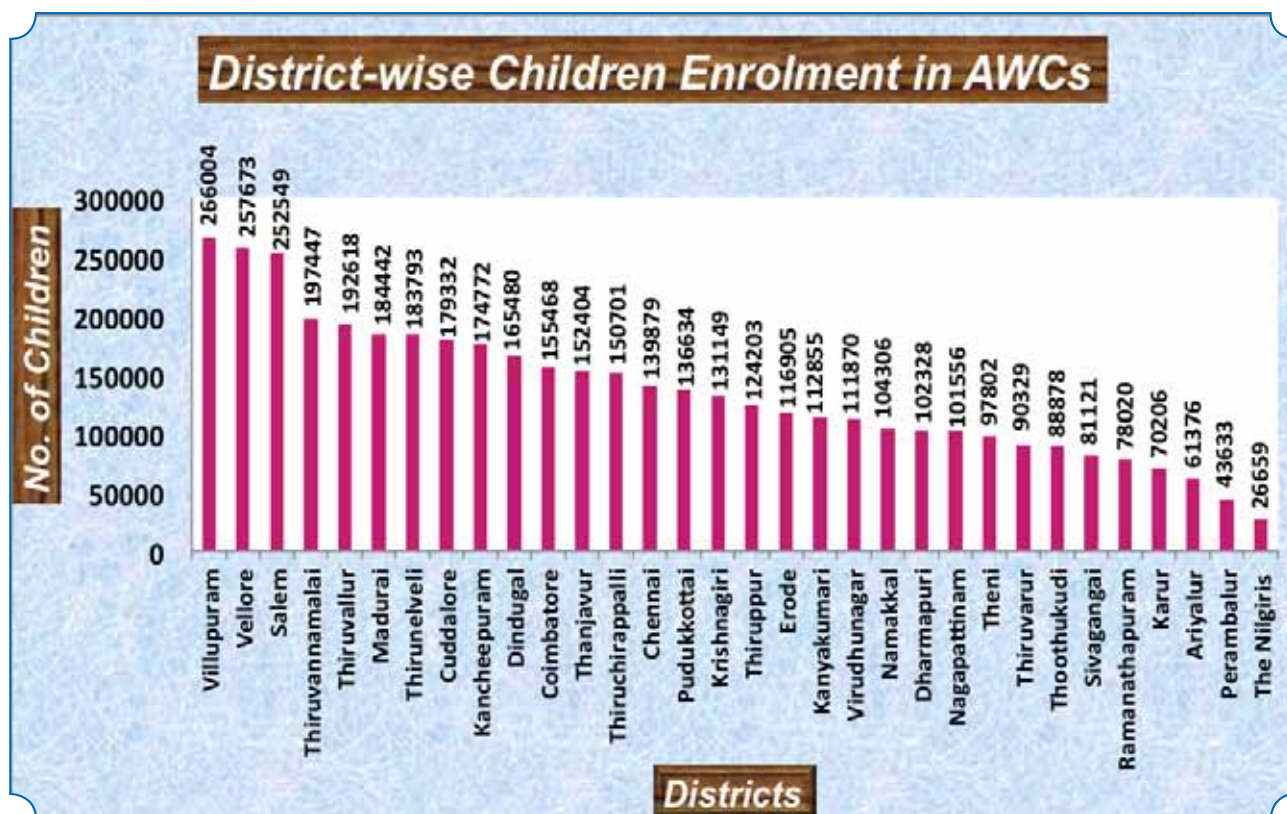
In Tamil Nadu, Integrated Child Development Services scheme is implemented through 54,439 Anganwadi centres (AWCs) comprising of 49,499 Anganwadi centres and 4,940 Mini Anganwadi centres in 434 Child Development Blocks covering all the 32

districts. In terms of number of centres, the Vellore district is the highest with 2992 centres and the Perambalur district is the lowest with 467 centres. The graph shown below depicts the district-wise number of Centres (AWCs).



As per the latest reports (Feb' 2014), the total number of children enrolled in the AWCs is 43,32,392. In terms of number of children enrolled in AWCs, the Villupuram district is the

highest with 2,66,004 children and the lowest is the Nilgiris district with 26,659 children. The graph given below depicts the district-wise number of children enrolled in the AWCs.



Pre-school Education in AWC

Cognitive development of young children has always been a matter of concern, especially for the disadvantaged groups in India. The Government of India has initiated several programmes with a view to stimulate the cognitive development of these groups. ICDS also includes this aspect of development in its objectives.

The Non-formal Pre-school Education (PSE) component of the ICDS may well be considered the backbone of the ICDS programme. The ICDS focuses on total development of the child, in the age up to six years, mainly from the underprivileged groups. Anganwadi Centres is the focal point for providing stimulation to young children to enhance their cognitive development. These

AWCs have been set up in every village in the country. This is also the most joyful play-way daily activity. Its programme for the three-to-six years old children in the Anganwadi is directed towards providing and ensuring a natural, joyful and stimulating environment with emphasis on necessary inputs for optimal growth and development. The early learning component of the ICDS is a significant input for providing a sound foundation for cumulative lifelong learning and development. It also contributes to the universalization of primary education by providing to the child the necessary preparation for primary schooling and offering substitute care to younger siblings, thus freeing the older ones – especially girls – to attend school.



Pre-School Education aims to develop in the child:

- Good physique, muscular coordination, basic motor skills.
- Stimulating intellectual curiosity to enable child to understand his environment by exploring, investing, experimenting and learning.
- Aesthetic appreciation of self, others, things and environment.
- Emotional maturity by guiding to express, understand, accept and control feelings and emotions.
- Moral & cultural values so as to be honest, obedient, truthful and respectful to elders.
- Self confidence and inner discipline.
- Ability to express thoughts and feelings in fluent, correct and clear speech.
- Personality Development through rich learning experience.
- Social attitude, group manners and sharing things with others: live & play with others and control natural aggressiveness and destructiveness.
- Good habits and skills for personal adjustment, toilet training, dressing, eating, cleaning etc.

ECCE in AWC

A Children Centre should be a Centre for joyful learning, providing enjoyable,

enriched and stimulating environment for holistic development of children. The Delcrest Calendar for Parent Education describes the stages of the calendar as follows:

1	Birth to 2 m	Heads up stage
2	2 to 5 m	Looker stage
3	5 to 8 m	Sitter – Crawler stage
4	8 to 13 m	Cruiser stage
5	13 to 18 m	Walker stage
6	18 to 24 m	Doer stage
7	2 to 2 ½ yrs	Early Tester stage
8	2 ½ to 3 yrs	Tester stage

The five areas of stimulation are

- Understanding self
- Physical development
- Relationship
- Understanding environment
- Communication

The integrated package of services under ICDS provides Early Childhood Care and Stimulation of Children under 3 years and Pre-School Education for children in 3-6 years age group. In Tamil Nadu, there are a total number of 54439 AWCs with around 4,66,785 children enrolled in it. The ECCE programmes in AWCs include:

- Child centered programmes for 3 to 6 years old children.
- Following play way and activity approach and provide stimulating play environment for all round development of the child.
- Laying basic foundation for the development of reading, writing and number work and prepares the child for primary grades.
- Encouraging interaction with the environment and active participation in group activities and creative problem solving in the child.
- Providing first-hand experience to the child.
- Indirectly promoting self-control and inner discipline in the child.
- Stressing on prior Planning & Scheduling.
- ECCE-Preparatory Centres for regular schooling of children.
- Child friendly play kit materials to 5,100 main centres.
- Activity based learning cards and activity book related to **Odi Vilaiyadu pappa** curriculum supplied to 3,900 centres.



A new curriculum on the concept “Life of the Child is the curriculum” has been framed by the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (in Tamil & English, using a flexible bilingual approach) for the Anganwadi children. The theme “Odi Vilayadu Paapa” has been developed and various Play-way learning materials are supplied by the SSA. The child is made to mark the attendance with the help of its mother. The draft curriculum (month’s frame-work) is as follows:

Odi Vilaiyadu Pappa

- **Seidhu Arivom : Individual Choice Time**
– 14 items (Wooden and plastic blocks of different shapes; puzzles; Kidikut (balls of various sizes); Stacking cubes; Coloured beads; Geometric pin boards; Lacing boards; Shape and colour sorter; Wooden Shape Sorter 3D; English and Tamil alphabet insets; Wooden number; Shape size and colour game; Sorting and Sequencing Frame with wooden picture pieces; Maze Chase)
- **Pesi Padi Magizhvom : Circle Time** (Free conversation, Sharing schedule of the day, Weather and calendar; Promote health and hygiene (Arogya Chakram); Singing)
- **Vilayadi Karpom : Creative Play** (Structured Play, Stories, Role Play, Dumb Charades or Rhythmic Movement)
- **Arindhu Magizhvom : Concept Time** (Thematic discussion, Tamil, English, Maths, Environmental Science)

Time Table

Odi Vilayadu Pappa

Time	Category of Activity
10.00 -10.20	Individual Choice Time: Seidhu Arivom
10.20-10.50	Circle Time: Pesi Padi Magizhvom
10.50-11.10	Free Play
11.10-11.40	Creative Time: Vilayadi Karpom
11.40-12.15	Concept Time: Arindhu Magizhvom
12.10-12.15	Preparation for Lunch
12.15-1.00	Lunch
1.00 - 2.00	Rest
2.00-3.00	Individual Choice Time Seidhu Arivom
3.00 - 3.15	Free Play

The domains addressed in the Curriculum are:

- Sensorial Alertness
- Physical Growth Needs (gross and fine motor development, coordination, balance)
- Self Care - Life Skills (food, toilet, cleanliness, participation in daily life)
- Communication (listening, responding, speaking, conversation)
- Social - emotional development (moral, social)
- Cognitive Development (concept formation, discrimination, pre-reading, pre - writing, pre - math, imagination)

For the above framework, at State level, Training of Trainers (ToT) was conducted for 5 days for selective Child Development Project officer (CDPO) and Trainers. At District level, all CDPOs and Supervisors were trained for 3 days by the Master Trainers who were trained at State level and at the Block level, all Anganwadi Workers (AWW) were trained by the District level Trainers. At the Sector level, sharing and demonstration of activities are being held every month for AWWs.

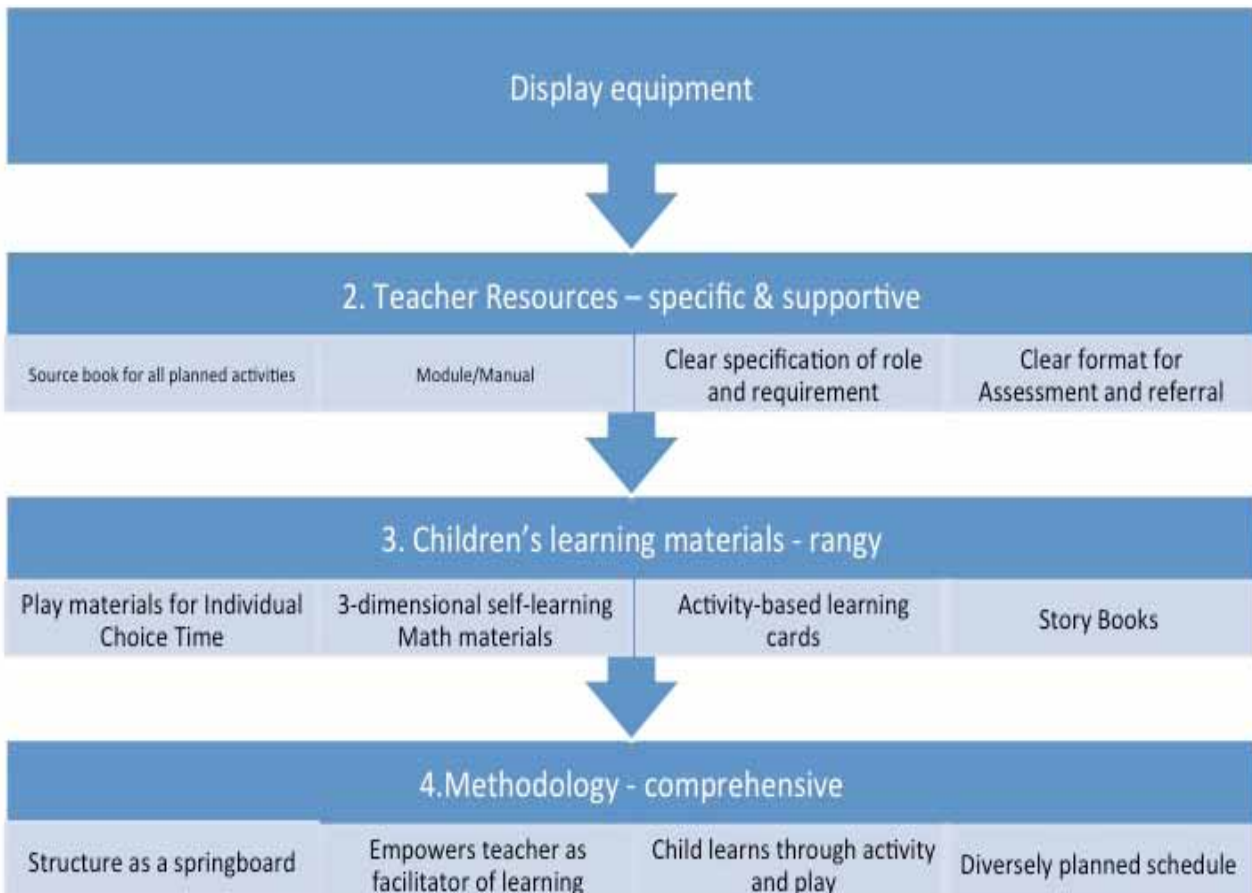
The Current system of Pre-School Education in ICDS:

- Odi Vilaiyadu Pappa curriculum
- Supply of Child centred play materials
- Supply of Maths Mini kits to Upgraded Anganwadi centres
- Supply of activity book for Anganwadi workers.

The activities and skills include:

- Mathematical skills
- Language skills
- Dramatic Play
- Stories
- Performance skills
- Arts and Crafts

Learning Environment



Self Attendance Register

The Child is made to mark attendance with the help of its mother.



Play Materials for Individual Choice Time



Individual Choice Time

For the individual choice time, 14 types of items have been supplied by SSA.

Wooden and plastic blocks of different shapes

Puzzles [Jigsaws]
Kidi Kut; Balls of various sizes

Stacking Cubes
[Nesting cups]
Coloured Beads

Geometric Pin Board
One board with holes and one set of pegs ;
Lacing Boards

Shape and Colour Sorter:
Wooden shape slotter-3 D

English and Tamil alphabet insets;
Wooden numbers

My First Shape, Size and Colour Game:
Counters of various colours, shapes and sizes – with and without pictures

Sorting and Sequencing Frame with wooden picture pieces

Maze Chase- moving counter in the maze

Mathematical Skills

The mathematical skills include Pre-numbering skill, matching classifying shapes, counting, sorting, puzzles etc.



Language Skills

The Language skills include Listening- informal talk, Speaking – discussion, Reading - picture reading, Vocabulary writing, Colouring / Drawing



Activity based Learning Cards



Science Experience

Observing/ Classifying/ Comparing/ Predicting/ Analysing names of animals/ Identifying parts of animals and uses of animals.



Arts and Crafts



Play Materials



Stories, Dramatic Play, Performance Skills

Stories on animals, Stories with Puppets, Stories with pictures are narrated to children and they are also trained for creating stories.

They are also made to enact Role Play, Creative Play etc. Performance skills include Music, Songs, Dance etc.



A Study on QUALITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) AND LEARNING COMPETENCIES OF CHILDREN was undertaken in 2000 by MSSRF to explore the relationship between various components of ECE and learning competencies of children. The tools used for the study were:

1. Tamil Nadu Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (TECERS)
2. Child Learning Competency Test
3. Parent Interview
4. Teacher Interview

Tamil Nadu Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (TECERS)

The Seven components of quality in Tamil Nadu Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale are:

- Infrastructure
- Personal care and routine
- Physical learning aids
- Language and reasoning experience
- Fine and gross motor activities
- Creative activities
- Social development

Infrastructure

- Availability of toilet facilities
- Class room space
- Space for gross motor play
- Availability of drinking water
- Absence of hazards
- Unclean surroundings
- Noise pollution
- Condition of building
- Storage for teachers
- Table & chair for teachers
- Storage for play materials

Personal Care & Routine

Meals & snacks, rest, toileting, personal grooming, hand washing.

Physical Learning Aids

- Equipment for gross & fine motor learning activities
- Materials for concept, interest area
- Child related display/Child produced display.

Language & Reasoning Experience

Child's understanding of language, speaking opportunity, adequacy activities or materials by teacher, style of use of materials/ numbers.

Fine & Gross Motor Activities

Use of materials by children, nature of gross motor activities, children's participation, supervision.

Creative Activities

Use of arts & crafts by children, guidance, child's participation, music & movement.

Social Development

Social interaction, Co-operation and sharing, Spontaneous leadership, Free play, Duration of inactivity, Conflict resolution.

OBSERVATIONS

- Difficulty in locating adequate sample in Anganwadis.
- Significant relationship between quality of ECE & level of learning competencies in children.

- Active learning involving perceptual & motor skills is key to developing children's learning competencies.

ISSUES

- Improving Quality: Infrastructure, materials, time availability of teacher, status of teachers.
- Awareness Generation: Awareness generation about ECE and celebrating ECE day like Nutrition day.
- Synergy between Government departments : Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Department of Elementary Education.
- Regulation of Private Nursery Schools: Private school teachers should be trained properly and quality environment is required.



The Vice-Chairperson, SPC remarked that in rural AWCs, teachers are not making proper use of materials, which should be ensured and she enquired the Anganwadi staff about their requirements so as to make the AWC more effective.



The Member Secretary, SPC remarked that as per a study conducted by Loyola College, Chennai, many parents prefer to send their children only to schools which offer full-fledged education right from LKG to XII std. instead of separate schools, which have only upto Primary/ Middle sections. He also stated that, the curriculum in AWC is urbanised and as a result, the materials in rural AWCs are lying waste.



Dr. Rama Narayanan, MSSRF mentioned that Tamil Nadu is the only State where AWCs function from 10 AM to 3 PM. Further, the teachers in AWCs have more work than teachers in private schools and she suggested that their salary may be hiked. She stated that lack of synergy between Govt. departments results in duplication of the amount spent and wastage of resources and hence, the linkage between AWCs and schools should be strengthened. A report of assessment (not in terms of marks but grades) may be prepared for the children studying in AWCs.



The Secretary to Government, Social Welfare & Nutritious Meal Programme Department remarked that the children should be made to absorb the environment rather than made to write in the tender age of 3 years as in private schools. He suggested that slight rural modification may be done in the curriculum of Anganwadi children. He stated that integration between SSA and ICDS has been made wherever possible.



The Director of Elementary Education informed that among the schools functioning under the Corporation of Chennai, Kinder Garten (KG) has been introduced in about 30 schools and the same has been proposed to be extended to another 90 schools.



Tmt. K. Kanmani, Deputy Director, ICDS stated that previously low cost learning/ play materials were used, but now with the support of SSA, good quality materials are being provided and many activities are undertaken. Every year, refresher training for the Anganwadi workers is given for 5 days.

Growth of the children are also monitored and if care is required, that particular child is referred to the nearby Primary Health Centre and then the Institute of Child Health.



Tmt. K. Sasikala, Joint Director, SSA mentioned that Tamil Nadu is the first State to develop "**Odi Vilayadu Paapa**" based on draft curriculum of Central Government. She stated that, SSA has been continuously innovating and experimenting teaching modules. After SSA's intervention, much has improved and the parents / children show more interest in attending AWCs.



Tmt. G. Chitra, Senior Instructress, ICDS, mentioned that the Government of India has appreciated the functioning of ICDS in Tamil Nadu.



The Anganwadi staff stated that AWC's atmosphere attracts more children/parents. Hence, more teaching materials/models are required (atleast 4 nos.). Further, AWWs are overloaded, for example, in rural areas, everyday the AWW has to go to collect the eggs and food materials and often they are deputed to election related works which ultimately disturbs their concentration on pre-school duties.



One of the Anganwadi teachers, Tmt. J. Kalinga Rani shared her experiences stating that she has been serving as AWW for about 33 years and that many of her students are now in a reputed position. She introduced one of her students, who is now sending her child to the same centre and said that she is having the privilege of teaching both mother and her child.



- Linkage between AWC and Schools to be ensured.
- Proposals may be brought under Part II schemes by Social Welfare department, if more funds are required for implementing schemes.
- ICDS can take up a study on the impact of AWCs, which can be funded by the State Planning Commission.
- Co-location of AWCs in schools (only 30% AWCs are co-located in Tamil Nadu).
- Only 10% of AWCs have been covered by SSA. ICDS has to initiate for implementation of curriculum revision in all AWCs.
- More number of learning/play materials to be provided to AWCs. Maintenance/ Repairing to be done periodically.
- Additional budget allocation may be provided for ICDS from Government pool.
- Special children like slow learners, Autistic, Dyslexic etc. should also be attended in AWCs. AWWs need to be trained in attending those children and parents to be counselled to proceed further, till the child is mainstreamed into the regular curriculum.
- Separate Anganwadi Workers for 0-3 years and 3-6 years children may be appointed.
- AWC may issue a certificate to the children on completion of pre-school education, which will be an authentication to get into mainstream schools (ie, admission into I std).
- MSSRF may suggest a framework on Regulatory work on the curriculum. Further, the mal-functions of the system because of distorted priorities may also be highlighted, which would be circulated to the concerned departments.



List of Participants

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5	<i>Thiru. R. Rajasekaran,</i> Deputy Secretary to Government, Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme Department, Secretariat, Chennai.
6	<i>Dr. V. C. Rameswara Murugan,</i> Director of Elementary Education, College Road, Chennai.
7	<i>Dr. Rama Narayanan,</i> Ford Chair for Women and Food Security, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai.

8	<i>Tmt. K. Sasikala,</i> Joint Director, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, DPI Compound, College Road, Chennai.
9	<i>Tmt. K. Kanmani,</i> Deputy Director, Integrated Child Development Services, Taramani, Chennai.
10	<i>Tmt. G. Chitra,</i> Senior Instructress, ICDS, Taramani, Chennai.
11	<i>Thiru. A. Maria Rathinasamy,</i> ECCE-Coordinator, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, College Road, Chennai.
12	<i>Tmt. V.R. Kasthuri Vijayalakshmi,</i> Child Development Project Officer, ICDS, Chennai.
13	<i>Tmt. K. Pushpa,</i> Supervisor Gr. I, ICDS, Chennai.
14	<i>Tmt. J. Kalinga Rani and Tmt. D. Nandhini,</i> Anganwadi workers. ICDS, Chennai.
15	<i>Tmt. S. Thaslim and Tmt. S. Sarala,</i> Pre-School mothers.





