

Early Childhood Care and Education A Way Forward

A Handbook for Teachers and Teacher Educators

G.C. Upadhyay

EDITED BY
Padma Yadav

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NCERT

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FOREWORD

The prime objective of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is to give all children strong foundations to promote their holistic development. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) has its own special identity and therefore, it is more than a preparation for the next stage of education. Preschool education is the most significant component of ECCE. A preschool experienced child is expected to have developed competencies necessary for taking on Class I curriculum i.e. readiness for reading, writing and number work and positive attitude towards learning and schooling. The present document “ECCE: A Way Forward” provides an analysis in terms of need and significance, contents, methods and issues that concern the quality of ECCE in general and preschool education in particular. The document has been developed based on the studies of the load of curriculum on children. The handbook also attempts to provide perspective for future in order to have universal coverage of good quality ECCE.

We deeply appreciate the efforts of Dr G.C. Upadhyay (*Retd.*), Department of Elementary Education, NIE in preparation and finalisation of the document. I hope this document will help teacher educators and teachers in understanding the issues and concerns of ECCE in general and preschool education in particular. We welcome comments and suggestions from all concern.

B.K. TRIPATHI

Director

National Council of Educational
Research and Training

New Delhi
November, 2014

Do You Know ?

According to the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002, free and compulsory education for all children in 6-14 year age group is now a Fundamental Right under Article 21-A of the Constitution.

EDUCATION IS NEITHER A PRIVILEGE NOR FAVOUR BUT A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT TO WHICH ALL GIRLS AND WOMEN ARE ENTITLED

*Give Girls
Their Chance !*



PREFACE

ECCE having the components of stimulation, preschool education, nutrition and health care for children under eight years plays a crucial role in all round development of a child and his/her future learning. It has been accorded a high priority in National Policy on Education (1986) in the context of universalisation of elementary education especially for children who belong to deprived section of society and are first generation learners.

Although the need and significance of preschool education have been recognised at may fora but the coverage and the quality of preschool education has always remained a concern. The present document has been conceived in a holistic manner and suggests various measures to improve the quality of preschool education in the country.

The document highlights the need and significance of ECCE, curriculum, methods for preschool education and discusses various issues related to coverage and quality with a perspective for future. This document would help to bring about necessary changes in the system and making learning of children natural, enjoyable and developmentally appropriate. It is also expected that the document would help teacher educators to understand the concept and issues of ECCE and serve as an advocacy material to generate awareness among various stakeholders, administrators and policy makers. I would like to put on record my appreciation for the efforts of the author Prof. G.C. Upadhyay (*Rtd.*) in preparing this book.

It is hoped that the document will be very useful for researchers, various institutions, personnel, etc. working in this area. Suggestions are welcome.

MANJU JAIN

Professor and Head
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New Delhi
November, 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Professor K.K. Vashishtha, former head of the department gave the idea of developing this book — “ECCE: A Way Forward”, providing a futuristic approach to ECCE. His pursuance has resulted in finalisation of this title. The book has been finalised with valuable suggestions from Professor Veena Mistry, Formerly Pro Vice Chancellor and Head, Faculty of Home Science, MS University, Varodara, Gujarat; Professor Venita Kaul, Director, (ECED), Ambedkar University New Delhi; Mrs Frenny Tarapore, Ex-Principal, SNTD College, Pune, Maharashtra; Dr Adarsha Sharma, Former Director, National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, New Delhi; Professor Updesh Bevi, Ex-Professor in ECCE, NCERT; Dr Suniti Sanwal PSSCIVE, Bhopal. The book got its shape because of their suggestions. The support of ECCE faculty in the department and secretarial help provided by Ms. Sunita Narang is gratefully acknowledged.

G.C. UPADHYAY

ABOUT THE BOOK

There is growing realisation in the world over about the need to provide quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to all children below eight years of age. In India too there is growing awareness about the ECCE and the role it can play in human resource development. At both the levels i.e. the centre and the states, there has been considerable efforts to formulate suitable policies and programmes for expanding and improving ECCE provisions. This has been possible because of favourable environment created by the global initiatives of UNDP, UNESCO, WHO, UNICEF etc. The first goal of Education for All (EFA): expanding and improving comprehensive ECCE, especially for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children, has received the due attention of the government. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) the flagship programme of Government of India for ECCE is poised for universalisation. However, there are certain pre-requisites to be fulfilled to create enabling environment at all levels i.e. national, state, district and community for achieving this goal. One of the pre-requisites would be to prepare a cadre of resource persons (teacher educators) at state, district and cluster levels in order to plan and implement quality ECCE. The book has been developed keeping in mind the needs of states to prepare a cadre of teacher educators working in teacher education institutions i.e. SCERTs and DIETs and orient the planners and implementers on the various dimensions of ECCE. The objectives of the book are to;

- Provide a perspective to teacher educators working in SCERTs and DIETs in understanding various issues related to ECCE.
- Promote implementation of child friendly curriculum by providing an understanding about the curricular issues at preschool stage and in early primary grades.
- Appreciate the need for expanding and improving comprehensive ECCE provisions.
- Sensitise planners and administrators and middle level functionaries to act timely in implementing child centered curriculum and child friendly methods, as there is a dire need to alter the practice of downward extension of primary education to pre-primary stage.
- Bridge the gaps in policy and practice.

The book has been visualised to be also used as a textbook in various pre-service and in-service courses related to ECCE. One of the dominant features of this book is to suggest a future course of action i.e. the way forward, after discussing the present status of various provisions of ECCE and gaps there in. Major dimension of ECCE programmes namely the curriculum, the teacher preparation, advocacy, monitoring, evaluation, community participation, convergence and coordination, inclusive education and linkages with primary education have been discussed at great length. The first chapter highlights the 'Need and Significance of ECCE' to sensitise the teacher educators and other readers about the urgency to universalise ECCE with quality in order to address the learning and development needs of young children and to lay the foundation for human resource development and national development. The second chapter 'ECCE: The Indian Context' provides an overview of ECCE in India presenting developments in the area of ECCE. The future course of action to create an enabling policy environment has been attempted. Similarly, chapters from three to nine i.e. 'Curriculum of ECCE', 'Planning and Managing ECCE Programmes', 'Teacher Education for ECCE', 'Linkages with Primary education', 'Advocacy', 'ICT and ECCE' respectively have been attempted with a futuristic vision and suggested action points. The last chapter provides the summary of the main action points to expand and improve ECCE throughout the country.

The book intends to sensitise the state level functionaries and the teacher educators about the need to create an environment for children with elements of freedom, creativity, expression and joy of childhood promoting all round development of children. It heavily draws from the National Curriculum Framework 2005 and the guiding publication of MHRD 'Learning without Burden'. The terms 'ECE' and 'Preschool Education (PSE)' have been used interchangeably and ECCE has been used to denote services of preschool education plus health care and/or nutrition components.

ABBREVIATIONS

ASHA	:	Accredited Social Health Activist
BRC	:	Block Resource Centre
CABE	:	Central Advisory Board on Education
CDPO	:	Child Development Project Officer
CEAFDAW	:	Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CMR	:	Child Mortality Rate
CRC	:	Cluster Resource Centre
CSWB	:	Central Social Welfare Board
DIET	:	District Institute of Education and Training
DPEP	:	District Primary Education Programme
ECCD	:	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECCE	:	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	:	Early Childhood Development
ECE	:	Early Childhood Education
ECEC	:	Early Childhood Education and Care
EFA	:	Education for All
EGS	:	Education Guarantee Scheme
GOI	:	Government of India
ICDS	:	Integrated Child Development Scheme
ICPS	:	Integrated Child Protection Scheme
IGNOU	:	Indira Gandhi National Open University
MDGs	:	Millennium Development Goals
MHRD	:	Ministry of Human Resource Development
MMR	:	Maternal Mortality Rate
MOHFW	:	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
MWCD	:	Ministry of Women and Child Development
NCERT	:	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NCF	:	National Curriculum Framework
NCTE	:	National Council for Teacher Education
NFHS	:	National Family Health Survey
NGO	:	Non Government Organisation
NIOS	:	National Institute of Open Schooling
NIPCCD	:	National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development
NMR	:	Neonatal Mortality Rate

NPE	:	National Policy on Education
NPEGEL	:	National Programme of Education for Girls at Elementary Level
NREGA	:	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NRHM	:	National Rural Health Mission
POA	:	Plan of Action
PSE	:	Preschool Education
SCERT	:	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SHG	:	Self Help Group
SNP	:	Supplementary Nutrition Programme
SSA	:	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
UEE	:	Uuniversalisation of Elementary Education
UNCRC	:	United Nation Convention on Rights of Children
UNDP	:	United Nation Development Programme
UNESCO	:	United Nation Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	:	United Nation International Children's Emergency Fund
WHO	:	World Health Organisation
ZPD	:	Zone of Proximal Development

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CHILDREN'S BILL OF RIGHTS

A child is every person under the age of 18 years. Parents have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child. The State shall respect and ensure the rights of the child.

Dignity and Expression

- I have the right to know about my Rights. *(Article 42)*
- I have rights being a child and no matter who I am where I live, what my parents do, what language I speak, what religion I follow, whether I am a boy or a girl, what culture I belong to, whether I am disabled, whether I am rich or poor. I should not be treated unfairly on any basis. Everyone has the responsibility to know this. *(Article 2)*
- I have the Right to express my views freely which should be taken seriously, and everyone has the Responsibility to listen to others. *(Article 12,13)*
- I have the Right to make mistakes, and everyone has the Responsibility to accept we can learn from our mistakes. *(Article 28)*
- I have the Right to be included whatever my abilities, and everyone has the Responsibility to respect others for their differences. *(Article 23)*

Development

- I have the Right to a good education, and everyone has the Responsibility to encourage all children to go to school. *(Article 23, 28, 29)*
- I have the Right to good health care, and everyone has the Responsibility to help others get basic health care and safe water. *(Article 24)*
- I have the Right to be well fed, and everyone has the Responsibility to prevent people from starving. *(Article 24)*
- I have the Right to a clean environment, and everyone has the Responsibility not to pollute it. *(Article 29)*
- I have the Right to play and rest. *(Article 31)*

Care and Protection

- I have the Right to be loved and protected from harm and abuse, and everyone has the Responsibility to love and care for others. *(Article 19)*
- I have the Right to a family and a safe and comfortable home, and everyone has the Responsibility to make sure all children have a family and home. *(Article 9,27)*
- I have the Right to be proud of my heritage and beliefs, and everyone has the Responsibility to respect the culture and belief of others. *(Article 29,30)*
- I have the Right to live without violence (verbal, physical, emotional), and everyone has the Responsibility not to be violent to others. *(Article 28,37)*
- I have the Right to be protected from economic exploitation and sexual exploitation, and everyone has the Responsibility to ensure that no child is forced to work and is given a free and secure environment. *(Article 32,34)*
- I have the Right to protection from any kind of exploitation and everyone has the Responsibility to ensure that I am not being subjected to be taken advantage in any manner. *(Article 36)*

IN ALL ACTION CONCERNING CHILDREN, THE BEST INTERESTS
OF THE CHILD SHALL BE A PRIMARY CONSIDERATION

All these rights and responsibilities are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989. It contains all the rights which children have all over the world. The Government of India signed this document in 1992.

Source: National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), Government of India

1

Need and Significance of ECCE

What is the need of early childhood care and education? Why it is important to provide preschool education before formal schooling? Is it worth to spend on ECCE when there is dearth of resources for primary education? If we do not expand ECCE what harm it will do? These are some questions that have been frequently raised to justify the low priority given so far to ECCE and under-valuing of the need and significance of ECCE. Until we are convinced about the real value of ECCE it would not be possible to spend on its expansion and quality enhancement. In this chapter, an effort has been made to lay emphasis on the need and significance of ECCE so that teacher educators get convinced that basic foundations of personality development are laid during the ECCE stage and until we prioritise ECCE, it would not be easy to universalise quality primary education.

1.1 THE NEED FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

The need for providing a young child with early childhood experiences through an organised early childhood care and education programme may not have seemed very significant in the past, since children were generally brought up in a joint family system where they felt more secure and loved. The bonds of the child with the mother were strong since she had the time to play, talk and sing lullabies to her child. At the same time, grandparents and other members of the extended family provided a stimulating environment by narrating stories and taking care of the physical, emotional and cognitive needs of the child during early years. In the case of even moderately educated families children were exposed to learning the basics. In a way this provided the necessary preparation needed by a child for formal schooling. The major social and demographic changes, which have necessitated new responses and provisions to attend to the needs of young children, pertain to-

- Increase labour force participation by women
- Change in traditional family patterns
- Decrease in primary school attendance as the older siblings stay at home to look after young ones
- Increased survival rates of children due to fall in infant mortality rate
- Migration of families to cities in large scale
- Greater focus on girl child education.

With nuclearising of families and the economic necessity of an increasingly large number of mothers going out to work to supplement family income, particularly in urban areas young children do not always get the benefit of a stimulating, secure and protected environment at home. This is also true for poor families in rural and tribal contexts. As a result, a child is deprived of nurturance and parental care that are so crucial during early years. Long-term effects of inadequate childcare, absence of a stimulating environment, poor nutrition and exposure to frequent ill-health during early years often result in poor school attendance and performance. Children, in the absence of an optimal environment at home, fall easy prey to anti-social behaviour leading to juvenile delinquency. In order to overcome the deprivation at home, early childhood care and education provides a link between the home and formal primary schooling. Here, the children are exposed to an integrated approach of improved childcare, early stimulation and learning. The disadvantages children face at home can be compensated through a stimulating environment of early care and education. Organised centre-based good quality care and preschool experiences compensate for the losses due to lack of stimulation at home.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

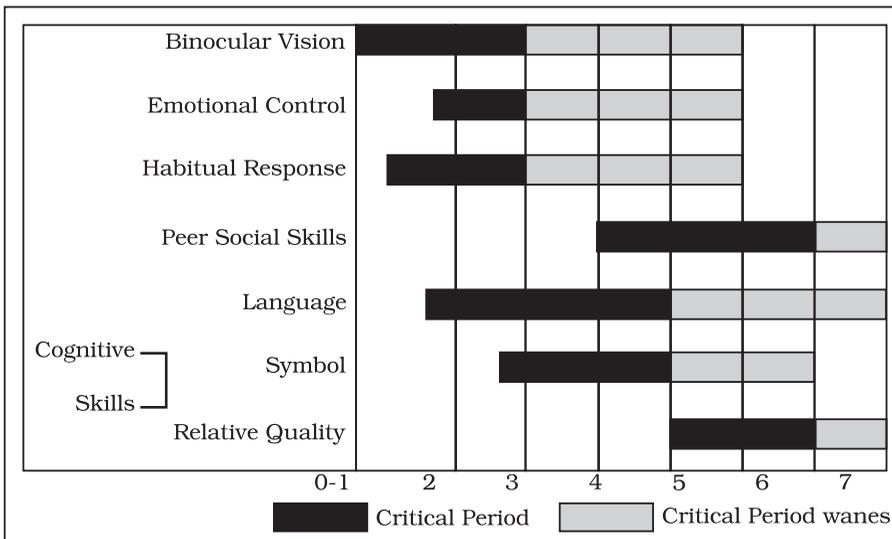
1.2.1 *Early Childhood Care and Education lays the Foundation for Life-Long Development and Learning*

The first six years of life are critical in a child's life since the rate of development in these years is most rapid than at any other stage



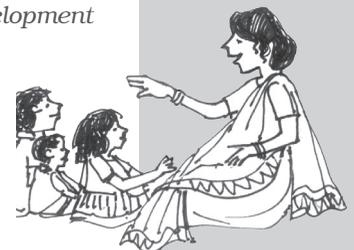
of development. Development of intelligence, personality and social behaviour takes place at a very fast pace. Children gain confidence and learn to assert themselves. Curiosity is at its maximum and children learn to explore, enquire and discover their surroundings. Positive and success-oriented experiences provided to children during this period help develop a positive self-concept, thus enabling them to adjust well in later life.

A great deal of evidence is emerging from the field of neurosciences that the period from conception to six years is very significant from the point of view of brain development. There are some critical periods in the course of brain development, particularly for binocular vision, emotional control, habitual ways of responding, language development etc. which can influence school learning and achievement (Mustard et al, 1999). This is, therefore, a period when a child should get enough opportunities for planned cognitive and creative activities, besides quality interaction with peers and adults. The figure below illustrates the critical periods and waning of critical periods for certain areas like binocular vision, language development and emotional control.



Source : *Reaching out the Child*, World Bank, 2004.

Fig. 1 – Critical periods for some aspects of brain development and function



We know that development results from the dynamic interplay of nature and nurture. Research studies (Sara Gable, et al, 1994; Mustard et al, 1999) on early brain development have revealed that how interaction between child and care givers (parents, grandparents, ECCE teachers, workers, other care providers) provide the foundations for future growing and learning. Brain development is the result of genetics, nutrition, psycho-social stimulation and metabolism on billions of brain cells. If there is prolonged deprivation and lack of care during infancy than the brain and the abilities that depend upon brain development can be compromised. Research studies also show that at birth brain's neuron exists mostly apart from one another. The critical periods are those periods when development of a particular skill takes place in different-domains. If child is denied proper early stimulation in those particular aspects of development, than slowly the periods wane out and child is deprived of those valuable skills for ever.

4

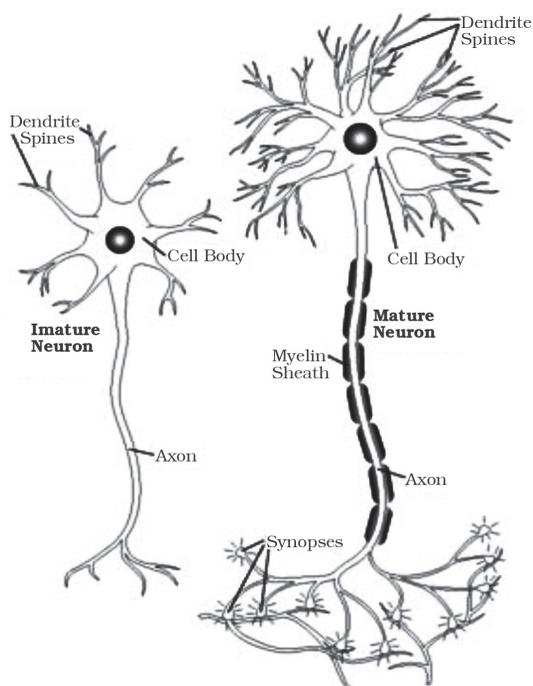
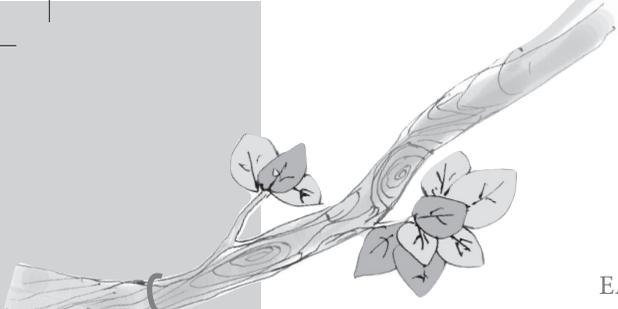


Fig. 2 – Maturing of Neurons and Formation of Synapses (Neuron matures when axons send messages and dendrites receive them to form synapses.)



The brain's task in the first three years is to make connections among the neurons. These connections are formed when the impulses are sent or received by the neurons. The quality of the connections depends on the nature of impulses received or sent. Axons send impulses and dendrites receive them. The connections or synapses are formed in abundance during early childhood stage. The connections which are reinforced and used a lot become permanent part of the brain and those which are not reinforced and remained unused are eliminated. This is where early childhood experiences play an important role. Positive social experiences help the child to succeed and negative social and learning experiences become detrimental to child's future development. Early childhood experiences are thus the stimulations which when reinforced make permanent impressions in the brain. Deprivation of love, warmth and stimulation or traumatic childhood experiences affect the brain development. If any such negative stimuli are reinforced then they also become permanent in child's brain and lead to problematic future. There are evidences that early experiences of violence lead to over activity of neurons (axons and dendrites) resulting in loss of emotional control.

Early years of child's life are the most critical years for brain development. Studies indicate that the quality of relationship with infants is fundamentally important to their present well-being as well as to future. The researches in brain development distinguish between sensitive periods (broad window) and critical periods (narrow window), of development. During critical periods (narrow window of time), as explained earlier, specific parts of the body function are most vulnerable to the absence of stimulation. For example, if during the first few weeks unless a new infant sees the light, the nerves leading from eye to visual cortex of brain may degenerate, resulting in a permanent loss of sight. The pre-natal period also have critical periods. It has been found that the second and the third month after conception are critical for growth of child's body parts. Broad window (sensitive period) represents a longer period of time when particular skills could be influenced with proper stimulation



or absence of that. However, if opportunities could not be made available during the sensitive period there still remains chances to get those skills developed at a later stage, for example, acquisition of second language is fast during early childhood stage, but one can also learn it at a later stage. Child care givers, parents and teachers of young children need to know of these critical and sensitive periods so that appropriate stimulation and learning opportunities are provided to them. Young children need proper nutrition, love, safety, warmth, conversation and stimulating environment.

The social and cultural experiences are instrumental in laying down the foundation for values to be imbibed. Child imbibes values through the process of socialisation. We preserve and transmit our values through children. The idea propagated by Maria Montessori that “new man begins with new child” has its significance rooted in early childhood care and education or preschool education. Since learning begins at birth, the importance of reaching children at a very young age cannot be denied. An enriching early childhood experience helps in providing the required stimulation for optimal development of a child’s faculties in all areas-physical, cognitive, social, language, creative and emotional. It ensures to a large extent, inculcation of good habits and helps in laying the foundation for values. For incurring such benefits participation of children in quality ECCE programmes having inputs of health, nutrition and stimulation is essential. Health and nutrition are the building blocks for development. Because under-nutrition is a major cause for stunted and wasted growth in children and has a negative impact on cognitive, social and motor development of child. The number of under-weight, malnourished and anaemic children are unacceptably very high in India, comparing to other nations. The need for improving child development related indicators i.e. reducing the infant mortality rates, morbidity rates, under-weight and malnourishment, it is important that children’s nutritional status is improved.

Extending provision for safe drinking water and proper sanitation would reduce infant and child mortality rates dramatically especially when compensated by parenting programmes focusing on



improved breast-feeding and weaning practices. (Global Monitoring Report 2007)

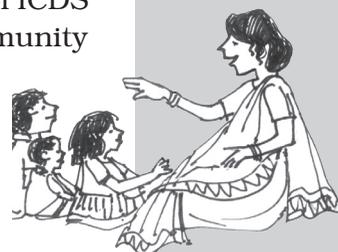
1.2.2 Early Childhood Care and Education Strengthens Universal Elementary Education

Preschool education has been globally acknowledged today as an important input in a child's learning leading to positive gains in primary school years. It not only compensates for early environmental deprivation but also prepares a child for formal schooling, thereby facilitating the realisation of the goals of UEE (Universal Elementary Education) i.e., universal enrolment, universal retention, and improvement in the quality of learning.

Researches, both within and outside the country have conclusively shown the positive impact of preschool education on primary stage of schooling both, on attendance and learning achievements of children. A study conducted by the NCERT (Kaul V. et al 1993) on Impact of ECCE on Retention of Children across eight states has shown increased rates of retention of children at the primary stage of education for those children who were exposed to preschool intervention programme in comparison to those who did not have ECCE experience. There was also a reduction in the number of dropouts and failures.

Children in the age group of 3-5/6 years are in their formative years of growth and are learning to adjust to their new surroundings away from home. The formal setup of a primary school does not necessarily provide for a child-friendly play-way approach to learning and fulfill the basic needs of children at this stage. Quality ECCE programmes can effectively overcome this deficiency by ensuring a loving, caring and stimulating environment and enabling children to develop the necessary skills and competencies which are a pre-requisite for learning of 3 Rs i.e. reading, writing and arithmetic in a meaningful way in formal schools. In this sense, ECCE promotes school readiness by facilitating a child's transition from an informal environment of the home to a more formal and structured environment of school.

In an another study of preschool education component of ICDS and its perception and extent of utilisation by the community



conducted by the NCERT in eight states (Upadhyay, et al 1998) it was found that children with preschool experiences entering Class I had some advantages over those who entered Class I without any pre-school experience. Children with preschool experiences had better understanding of various concepts, comprehension, expression and adjustment. Studies conducted internationally also show that how effective are ECCE programmes to influence education at primary level and beyond.

Advantages of ECCE

"If children arrive at a primary school better prepared, they can make better use of the school. Not only will dropout and repetition decrease, affecting costs, but also the quality of education will rise because one of the most important input into the school system is the child. When children are better prepared, teachers are stimulated more, facilities and materials are used better and children learn more from each other."

Robert Myers, 1991

1.2.3 Early Childhood Care and Education and Social Equity

Children, whether from villages or towns, belonging to literate or illiterate families, have the same requirement for the development of their potential and deserve a 'fair start' in life. The impressionable, playful, spontaneous and educationally potent period of children's life has to be fully utilised and enjoyed by them. A majority of children in India still continue to live in conditions of poverty, lack of proper nutrition, poor health and prolonged deprivations. Lack of space, shortage of toys and play material, absence of a favourable environment at home, parental lack of knowledge and skills in dealing with children are some of the serious limitations in most homes. In the case of children belonging to poor households, the effect of these multiple factors is compounded by parental compulsions to be away from home for long stretches of time. Moreover, parents who are illiterate and belong to the underprivileged sections of the society are more constrained to interact effectively with their children or help them develop appropriate cognitive, language or social skills, as compared to children from literate families. This also includes first generation learners belonging to families where no one has ever



gone to school. Children belonging to such families are deprived of the chance to develop their full potential and grow into healthy individuals. As a result, they are unable to cope adequately with the changing demands of the society and feel insecure and unwanted.

Integrated approach to improved childcare, early stimulation and learning provided through ECCE programmes could produce changes in the way families perceive the future of their young children. It helps reduce gender-linked disparities and provides a link between the home and formal schooling. A good ECCE programme can serve to effectively compensate for home deprivation and provides children from these backgrounds a head start in education, thereby contributing to the goal of social equity by reducing inequalities rooted in poverty and discrimination.

A good quality ECCE programme can also promote equity by promoting multilingual education, greater opportunities for disabled and children in emergencies and precarious circumstances. Studies show that families in which the environment is language rich, the vocabulary development is fast than those where there is less verbal interaction. Exposing children from low social economic backgrounds to language rich environment during early years benefit them for lifelong learning. If language problems are not addressed early in life then children are likely to face more problems in later life. While mother tongue is necessary during early childhood, children exposed to second language get self-esteem as they can quickly learn more than one language at this stage. Similarly, good quality ECCE programmes don't allow gender stereotype to enter into child's life. ECCE programmes if make distinction between games and toys for male and female young learners may promote stereotypes rather than diminish them. If girls are praised, given opportunities like boys they can also perform equally and be confident in life. This would help in bridging the gender gap that exists at present. One of the most important aspects that help in bringing equity is to prioritise ECCE for the disadvantage groups and providing an inclusive environment to help disable child to get a level playing field.

1.2.4 Early Childhood Care and Education and Increased Girls' Participation in Schooling

In rural areas and many urban settings, girls play adult roles even when they are still children of 5-6 years age or even less. A major



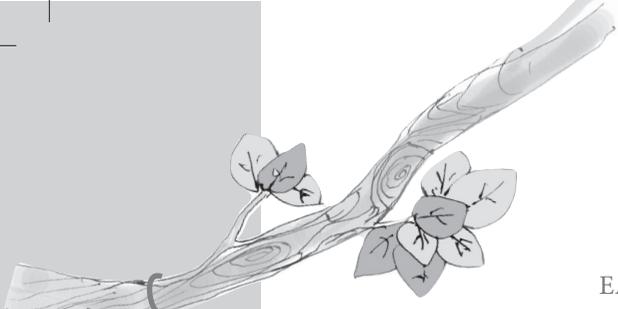
responsibility for them is to look after their younger siblings. They are not only denied the joy of childhood but also become unable to attend school. When younger siblings start attending an ECCE programme, the older girls, freed from the burden of minding the young ones, can attend regular schools and get educated. This will not only ensure larger participation of girls but will also have a positive impact on enrolment and retention of girls in elementary education, thereby addressing the issue of gender equity. In this context, provision of childcare services for infants and toddlers will also lead towards a better quality of life for girls and make them independent and responsible citizens. It is in this context NPE 1986/92 has stated that 'a full integration of pre-primary and child care will be brought about...'

Even today, in most homes, there is a preference for boys, and girls tend to suffer discrimination early in life and are denied the right to protection, care, education and development. Boys, traditionally, have been seen to get more opportunities to enter and continue in schools. The gender-linked disparities have been rooted in our culture and in the early child-rearing practices where boys are given more importance as compared to girls. Early childhood education helps and must help in reducing the gender related disparities through parents' education and advocacy programmes.

1.2.5 Early Childhood Care and Education and Children with Special Needs

A major concern in our country today is the inclusion of children with special needs in regular preschool programmes and primary schools. The recently enacted legislation requires that the rights of children with special needs be protected and equal opportunities be provided to include these children in mainstream programmes.

Children with special needs, who are also referred to as differently abled children, are those who have one or more handicaps and are, therefore, unable to cope with the requirements of a normal life. To ensure positive experiences for these children and help them in developing their faculties, it is necessary to place these children in inclusive settings in regular preschool programmes. This would not only help them develop a sense of acceptance and belongingness



but will also help develop a positive attitude among the normal children towards these special needs learners. Good quality ECCE programmes are inclusive in nature.

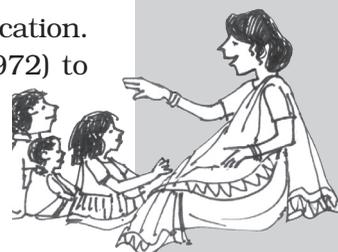
ECCE programmes have been found effective in the early detection and identification of children with special needs. This is possible by carefully observing children during programme intervention and monitoring their individual progress. Identification of their special needs early in life can help in timely intervention and can, to a large extent, serve to compensate for their handicaps by providing a secure and stimulating environment, thus ensuring their optimal development. Through its various developmental and creative activities for children in 0-6 age group, the ECCE programmes can help these children realise their full potential besides providing guidance to their parents to cope effectively with their special needs at home.

1.2.6 Early Childhood as a Crucial Support Service for Women in their Multiple Roles

Women in India have always been engaged in economic activities — for instance, in various agricultural operations — although their contribution to economic growth is seldom stressed. With changing economic patterns the need for participation of women in the world of work has grown. More and more women are going out to work to support the family income and ensure a better standard of living. Girls are being encouraged and provided with opportunities to study and excel in different fields of education, thereby gaining entry in all sectors of employment. In order to take up employment, mothers in urban areas generally leave their young children either in the care of a neighbour or a nearby crèche. The provision of a good quality child care and preschool programme as integral part of all Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes will not only ensure support services to working mothers but also at the same time provide children the needed physiological and psychosocial stimuli.

1.2.7 Early Childhood Care and Education can lead to increased Productivity and Savings, besides Improving Efficacy of other Programmes

Increased productivity is found associated with the level of education. Elementary Education has been found (Aso and Amano 1972) to



be positively associated with rise in productivity of the workers. The gains are reported to be two to three times in comparison to those who are illiterate. Pre-schooling which strengthens primary and elementary education therefore directly contributes towards the national development. Pre-primary education is also found to be associated with improvement in efficiency of education system through reduction in dropout and repetition rates and remedial programmes. Children who participate in early childhood care and development programmes show higher performance. They are also less likely to repeat grades or be placed in remedial or special education classes. It is, therefore, argued that the efficacy of programmes like primary health, primary education and parent education can be improved by according highest significance to programmes of early childhood care and education.

Because of the perceived benefits there is a growing realisation about the significance of preschool education and early childhood development. This realisation has led to a serious consideration of the need for expansion of ECCE facilities to all children with special focus on children belonging to deprived section of the society and improvement in the quality of programmes through planned strategies.

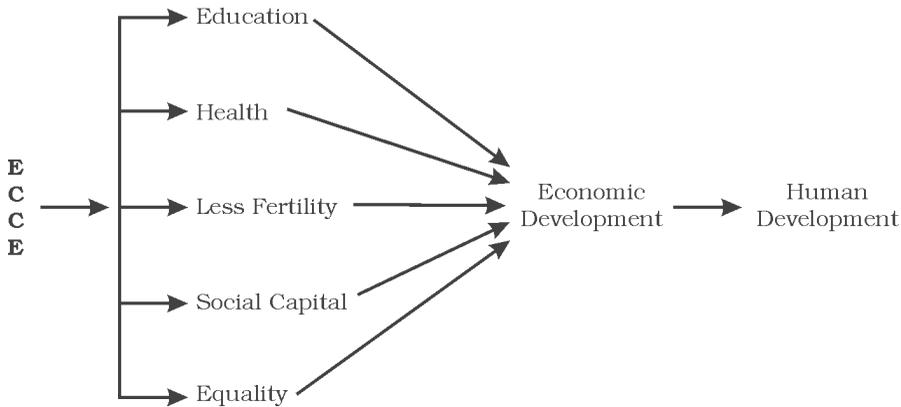
The path from child development to human development can be explained through the following illustration:

Benefits of ECCE Programme for Children

- Stimulating environment for development
- Secure and protected surroundings
- Improved health
- Positive maternal care
- Improved interaction with peers and adults
- Positive self-concept
- Enhanced social skills and behaviour
- Inculcation of values
- Better socio-emotional adjustment
- Acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies
- Better prepared for primary school
- Interest in classroom activities
- Increased enrolment, retention in primary schools
- Decreased failures and repetition rates
- Better equipped to face the challenges of life



Illustration 1
The path from ECCE to Human Development



The above illustration depicts the many ways ECCE influences the human development. We have discussed how ECCE strengthens universalisation of elementary education and promotes girls education leading to greater number of children acquiring elementary and higher level of education. With increase level of education there is higher percentage of skilled manpower available to affect higher productivity. Better status of health acquired due to ECCE interventions during childhood has, too, direct effects on person's productivity. If the number of children who are wasted and stunted are reduced, mortality and morbidity rates are minimised then there will be proportionate gains in terms of healthy manpower availability resulting into higher productivity. Not only this, the gains get multiplied when the burden of illness is reduced drastically. Otherwise, more and more hospitals are needed to reach out to the ever increasing population who need urgent health services. Similarly, ECCE has direct impact on fertility control and spacing of children thereby to a healthy childhood. A healthy child would lay the foundation of a healthy nation. Social capital is defined in terms of faith and brotherhood among various religious and caste groups and the seeds of which are shown and germinated during early childhood stage through a quality care and educational intervention. These are related to values of learning to live together and respecting others views, religion and ways of living from the



early childhood years itself. ECCE has great potential to bring about the social equity through addressing gender equity, bringing special needs children at par and targeting and prioritising programmes for the disadvantaged sections of population, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The strong impact of ECCE on education, health, equity, social development fertility control together lead to higher productivity and higher economic development. Higher economic development is essential condition for human development, though may not be sufficient condition. ECCE, therefore, has the power to lead the path from child development to national development and human development, provided the quality of ECCE is ensured. The impact may not be same if the quality of ECCE programmes is compromised. There are many longitudinal studies to show and substantiate the impact of quality ECCE on long term basis. Raine et al. 2003 found that children who had attended the quality preschool showed better social skills and more organised thinking. They had more friends than those who were in the control group. He found that at age 17 and 23 the positive effects were still pronounced. The young adults were more socially adjusted, better able to go along with peers and up to 52 per cent less likely to commit a crime. Another similar study was conducted in Turkey by Kagitcbasi in 1996. He tested the question that whether the quality and design of ECCE programmes make a difference, as there are programmes which differ enormously in design and quality. Children who received no form of care, those who were looked after by child care workers and those who attended some kind of preschool education were compared. The results were better for the third group who had attended some kind of preschool. Parental education support component was found to produce important results regarding children's cognitive development and school performance. Studies conducted in USA (Schweinhart et al. 2005) found high economic returns of ECCE programmes in long term. Cost benefit analysis suggests the programme cost US Dollar 15,166 per participant and yielded Dollar 258,888, a 17.1: 1 benefit /cost ratio.



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Early Childhood Care and Education: The Indian Context

2

In the previous chapter we have tried to understand the need and significance of ECCE. ECCE makes a difference in the lives of children. Children whose basic health, nutritional and physical needs are being met will develop and perform better than those less fortunate. Children with appropriate development are more likely to be a happy and productive member of society. Early childhood learning and development can be enhanced by ECCE programmes. The effect of such programmes is likely to be greater for children from disadvantaged background. Good programmes are sensitive to cultural and socio-economic contexts.

We have yet to cover lots of ground as far as coverage and quality of ECCE are concerned. The coverage of ECCE is low and quality has serious concerns of contents and methods. If we are convinced about the need and significance of ECCE then we need to answer – (i) Are we having enough provisions for children’s health, nutrition and psycho-social development? (ii) Are we satisfied with quality and coverage of ECCE provisions? (iii) If not where do we stand with regard to these dimensions. The present chapter provides a bird eye view of the status of children in India based on the major child development indicators. This would provide readers a reference point to understand where do we stand with regard to development of ECCE i.e. how much progress we have achieved so far and how far we have to move ahead to achieve the desired goals. A brief historical account of child development and preschool education in India has been given to understand the pace at which we have tried to achieve the progress. It also reflects the paradigm shift in child development and preschool education policies that have occurred in the course of time. The schemes

and programmes of ECCE implemented in accordance with policy perspectives are therefore an integral part of the discussions in this chapter.

2.1 STATUS OF CHILDREN IN INDIA

The status of children has been discussed with regard to their survival rate, nutrition, health status and access to pre-primary education. Regional and caste variations in these dimensions are also indicated to understand the problem better. The indicators are infant mortality rates, under five year mortality rates, proportion of under-weight children, status with regard to immunisation of children against diseases, malnutrition among children, care facilities and access to preschool education i.e. gross enrolment ratio at preschool stage, etc. are the factors very closely linked with maternal mortality rates and maternal care as far as well being of the children is concerned. The magnitude of problems related to maternal health and nutrition, and nutrition and health education of parents impacting on child's well-being have also been highlighted here.

2.1.1 Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)

IMR is one of the strongest indicators of child survival, growth and development. The progress regarding reducing the infant mortality rate has been steady but slow as is evident from the following data.

Table 1: Infant Mortality Rate since 1951

1951	1981	2000	2006	2011
146	110	70	57	44

(Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, National Rural Health Mission (web site-mohfw.nic.in.rhm.doc)

The above figures reveal that we have been able to reduce the infant mortality rate from 146 per 1000 live births in 1951 to 44 in 2011, however, the progress has been slow to bring it to the acceptable level in comparison to countries where the IMR is about



4 per 1000 live births. We have not been able to bridge the gap between the rural and urban areas and among caste groups. The large rural urban disparities are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: State Level Variations in IMR-SRS 2012

	Total	Rural	Urban
India	42	46	28
Assam	55	58	33
MP	56	60	37
Odisha	53	55	39
UP	53	56	39
Delhi	25	36	23
Tamil Nadu	21	24	18
Kerala	12	13	9

(Source: Sample Registration System (SRS) 2012)

The high rate of IMR in rural areas is indicative of the difficulty in reaching out of the programmes and services to them.

Large variations appear not only in rural urban areas but among various caste groups too. The inter-state variations were also reported wide i.e. under-weight children range from 27 per cent in Kerala to 55 per cent in Madhya Pradesh. Eleven states have significantly higher IMR for female child. (NHFS-1998-99). In the context of child survival, female feticide remains a serious concern. In four states (Haryana, Punjab, Chandigarh, Gujarat), which are comparatively more prosperous, the sex ratio had declined to less than 900 in many districts. The 10 districts with the worst sex ratio, all below 800, in the country are in Haryana and Punjab.

Table 4: Maternal Mortality Rate per 100,000 —State Level Variations

	2000	2010	2011
India	408	254	212
Kerala	87	95	81
Bihar	707	312	261
Uttar Pradesh	707	440	359

(Source: Annual Report MOHFW2000/2010/2013)



The health of the child is related to the health of the mother. Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) is one of the strong indicators of maternal health and care. The MMR is unacceptably very high in India. During 2000 the MMR was 408 per 100000. It means for every 1000 mothers there were about 4 deaths due to unsafe pregnancies, poor maternal health and lack of institutional care facilities. As per the Sample Registration System 2001, 65 per cent deliveries in India take place at home without institutional care facilities. These figures have although declined since 2000 but still remain one of the highest among all the nations.

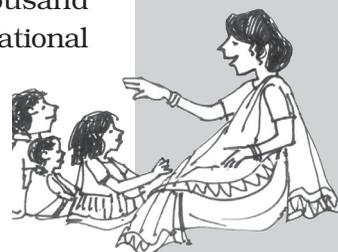
2.1.2 Nutritional Status of Children

As per NHFS-2 there are 47 per cent children malnourished in the age group 0-6. A significant number of children below the age of three years suffer from endemic malnutrition. The studies indicated that 12.3 per cent children were found severely malnourished, 29.1 per cent moderately malnourished and 37.1 per cent as mild malnourished leaving only 21.5 per cent in the normal nourished zone. There exists large inter-state variation. Bihar has the maximum number of severely malnourished children. (National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau and Food and Nutrition Board, 2002).

2.1.3 Immunisation Status

Over 50 per cent of one year old and 42 per cent children between one to two years were not fully vaccinated. Sharp inter-state variation existed as best performing states had this figure up to 80 per cent and poor performing states had less than 20 per cent. The complete immunisation with all doses of BCG, DPT and Poliomyelitis vaccination was registered only for 51 per cent boys and 49 per cent girls. (Tondon 1992). BCG vaccine for 12-23 months children was 82.19 per cent-88.4 per cent, DPT vaccine in the range of 64.3 per cent -79.1 per cent, SNP to below three children was 35-53 per cent and health checkup to the extent of 27-57 per cent (Nayar et al, 1998).

The status of Indian children (source: State of World Children, UNICEF 2005), when compared to the status of children in developed nations, presented a grim picture. IMR in 2002 was 63 per cent per thousand. Mortality Rate under five children was 87 per thousand in 2003. Low birth-weight, which is indicative of an intergenerational



cycle of malnutrition, was 30 per cent. Neonatal mortality (NMR) was a major contributor to IMR and CMR. Neonatal mortality was 2/3 of IMR and nearly half of U5MR (NHFS II 1998-99). In addition to 30 per cent of low birth weight babies, there were 47 per cent under-weight children in “under-three” age group. There were 74.3 per cent children, 67-90 per cent adults and girls, pregnant and lactating women with anemia and 39 per cent women with Chronic Energy Deficiencies. The percentage of Iron Deficiency Anemia for “under three” children was 74.3 per cent (NHFS-II).

The improvement in child’s health and nutrition status was provided by NHFS –3 conducted during 2005-06. According to this survey there was significant decline in infant and child mortality rates. The infant mortality was 57 per 1000 live births compared with the NHFS-2 estimate of 68 deaths per 1000 live births and NHFS-1 estimate of 79. There was reduce in infant mortality by 22 per thousand. However, the infant and child mortality was still high and unacceptable in comparison to developed countries like UK and USA (where it is 4 per 1000 live birth). Still more than one in 18 children die within the first year of life and more than one in 13 die before reaching five. Higher infant mortality rate in rural areas continue to prevail. Children whose mother has no education are more than twice as likely to die before their first birthday as children whose mother has completed 10 years of schooling. Children from schedule castes and tribes are at greater risk of dieing than other children.

The peri-natal mortality (still births and deaths in first week of birth) was 49 per thousand, which constitute more than two third of infant mortality. About the utilisation of services of anganwadi centre the NFHS-3 found that one in four received SNP from an AWC, one in five received an immunisation and one in six received a health check up in the 12 months preceding the survey. One fourth was getting preschool education and 18 per cent of children in 0-6 years were weighed in the AWC. Only one quarter of last born children who were ever breast fed started breast feeding within half an hour of birth. Slightly less than half of the children under six months of age were exclusively breast-fed. Almost half of children under five years were stunted and 43 per cent were under weight,



20 per cent were wasted, 70 per cent children were anaemic in 6-59 months age bracket. The children in 12 –23 months fully vaccinated were 44 per cent and 5 per cent did not receive any vaccination, which appeared to be a significant improvement over earlier estimates of vaccination.

2.1.4 Preschool Education

Access to good quality preschool education is one of the easily measurable indicators of ECCE. In India the major programme providing preschool education is ICDS which provides non-formal preschool education

for children in 3-6 age group. Other programmes of preschool education in private and NGO sector have significant presence in the system but the accurate data about number of beneficiaries is always evading due to the absence of any regulation and monitoring of these sectors. However, some estimates of coverage of preschool education in private sector have been projected.

Situation of the Children in India

- The child population of 0-6 years is 158 million.
- 42.5 per cent children under-threes are under weight
- Number of pre- school age children is nearly 60million.
- 34 million children are getting preschool education under ICDS.
- One third of the babies born in country have low birth weight.
- Only 44 per cent children, 12-23 months, are fully vaccinated.
- 14 per cent children are not at all vaccinated.
- The infant mortality rate is 50 per 1000.
- Of the 16 crores children below 6 years, only one third are getting supplementary nutrition.

(Source: Census 2011 SRS Bulletin IIPS. NFHS-3, 2005-06.

Table 5: Enrolment in Pre-primary

	1989	96-97	2004	2012*
ICDS and other Government Programmes	15%	16.9%	20.95%	58%

(Source: Lok Sabha Starred Questions 2004, reported on www.indiastat.com)

**World Bank 2012*

The numbers of children enrolled in private sector are estimated to be 10 million as per the National Focus Group report on ECCE prepared under NCF 2005, NCERT. The total enrolment including private initiatives reaches up to 34 millions, just above half way



mark, still leaves behind 24 million children un-enrolled. The Gross Enrolment Ratio in pre-primary as per the figures given by EFA: Global Monitoring Report 2007 is 36 per cent. It has also been found that areas where vulnerable and disadvantaged children reside and where the provision of ECCE is most required the coverage has been quite insufficient and insignificant.

The above analysis provides an understanding that though we have achieved a significant progress in all the indicators of child development and variables influencing child development during the last two-three decades, the progress has been far below the targets set for us and also not in tune with the urgency of the situation. If we analyse the enrolment in pre-primary during past decades we will find that the progress has been at a very slow pace. If the progress continues with the existing rate it would take a long time to universalise the services and reach out to the most disadvantaged sections of society. This is also true for the other indicators (health and nutrition) of ECCE. Why has the progress been so slow may be explained in the context of prevailing socio-economic and political conditions. The growth and development of ECCE can be traced in a historical context, from the Indian traditional point of view to modern perspective of growing and developing economy of the largest democracy in the world.

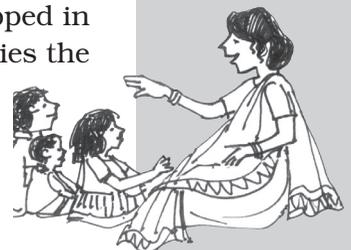
2.2 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF ECCE

2.2.1 Traditional View

In ancient India, generally, education started between the ages of about five to seven years. Before this age the child received education, care and stimulation from elders and grandparents in a joint family set-up. The joint family provided a rich environment for socialisation, inculcation of family values, love, care, stimulation of the child. The glorious tradition of early childhood care and stimulation provide for a culturally approved utopia of Indian childhood. The Indian idea of child and the study of childhood consider the child not in isolation but in the larger context of mother-child unit. The central idea of Indian child development is the belief that the basic contours of personality are laid down in the uterus. The critical period for the psychological development of an



individual is said to commence from fourth month of pregnancy, when the latent mind of foetus becomes activated. This view has been supported by the modern researches in brain development referred in the previous chapter. The expectant mother is treated with high respect and honour, even if she is a stranger. The child in India is perceived as God. The inter-play between mother and child has remained the guiding force in shaping the conscience of Indian women towards child and child rearing. The attributes of childhood in Indian context that are —freedom, spontaneity, simplicity, charm and delight are admirably described as divine. In addition to mother child inter-play, the admiring circle of adults played a central role in satisfying child's needs. To grow up at the centre of his human world, absorbed in inter-play with his mother, admired for his spontaneity and self delight seem to be the child's birth right. In Indian tradition, various childhood stages and transition from one stage to another have been envisioned. The differential treatment required at each stage by the caretakers has been the part of Indian folk-consciousness. The sub stages of childhood (Kakkar Sudhir 1981) formally recognised in Indian tradition are – Garbha (foetal period), Ksheerda (0-6 months, when the child lives entirely on milk), Ksheerannanda (6 months — two years, the period in which weaning takes place), Bala (2-5 years), Kumara (5-16 years). Early childhood characterises gradual integration of child into the society i.e. strengthening the process of socialisation. The institution of family plays a major role in the process of socialisation of child. This traditional wisdom about the significance of early childhood period and role of family in child's all-round development still makes the conscience of the nation. Its application has been hampered due to various socio-economic compulsions. With the gradual breaking down of joint families and increase in nuclear families due to the forces of urbanisation, industrialisation globalisation, the emphasis on these traditional practices is being gradually diluted. The family today fails to provide stable role models for the child because of changing role patterns of parents. Old grandparents are no longer there in the family to transmit folk tales, stories about great character who were the role-models. Children are handicapped in regard to socialisation in family values. In advanced countries the



evolution of families has not stopped at the break-up of extended families into nuclear families but gone beyond this to the extent of separation, divorces, single parenting. Indian family has been comparatively stable and united. The sheer size of population and high population growth rate has, however, added to the woes of providing good quality ECCE. Though there is a need to have organised and institutionalised facilities for child care and education due to increasing women's participation in work force, there is an equal need to equip the parents and the communities to share the responsibility of child care and education in the changing context. Enabling policy environment for women to do the dual roles of becoming economically independent person and discharge her role of a good mother would be necessary for pre-empting any adverse impact on children on account women's participation in economic activities. How ECCE has evolved historically within the changing socio-economic context would be important to understand the growth and development of ECCE in India.

2.2.2 Evolution of Early Childhood Care and Education in India

ECCE in the past has been generally taken in narrow sense to mean preschool education for 3-6 year old children. The care of children below the age of three years, by and large, was viewed solely as the responsibility of the family. The provisioning for child care has remained mostly neglected in government sector except a few provisions for crèches, especially targeted to help working and ailing mothers. There is, however, an ever increasing demand for care facilities at present which has been left largely to unorganised private players. Preschool education on the other hand has been perceived central to ECCE programme. Historically also pre-primary education has received greater attention than other aspects of child's development. In fact, the word ECCE has come in vogue very recently. In India the term was first used in National Policy on Education 1986 and intended to cover all aspects necessary for holistic development of the child. Before National Policy on Education we find that pre-primary education has been often deliberated as a distinct stage before the start of formal schooling.



If we go through the minutes of CAGE meetings since 1937 onward we would find a regular dialogue happening on issues of pre-basic education of Gandhiji and, later on, pre-primary education. The following account provides an understanding of how pre-primary education got started and developed in India.

The first formal institutions for the preschool age children in India, opened mainly by foreign missionaries in late nineteenth century, were the kindergarten schools, which expanded further in the next two to three decades. Singh U.K. et.al 1996 records that Loreto Convent School started in 1874 at Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, St. Hildas Nursery School at Poona in 1885 and Saidapeth High School as training school for nursery teachers at Madras in 1888 were some significant institutions. During early period of Twentieth-Century Mrs Anne Besant, a British by birth, who became the president of International Theosophical Society in 1907 started many schools for young children after she came to India and adopted India as her country by her own. She opened a school in Adiyar Madras which was later shifted to Rishi-Valley, where Theosophical Society has started educational work. Many schools for young children were opened in south India during 1920-30. Dr George Arundale became the president of Theosophical Society after Mrs Anne Besant in 1934 and started a Montessori centre at Adiyar as Anne Besant memorial school. She invited Maria Montessori to India and started Montessori Training centres in various parts of the country i.e. Chennai, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Karachi, Kodiakanal. In Western India, Montessori schools were opened and such pioneers as Gijubai Badeka, Tarabai Modak; others expanded the Montessori approach. Gijubai Badeka started his first institution in 1920. He started his first training centre in 1924, Dakshinmurti Training College, Bhavnagar. He formed Bal Nutan Sangh in 1926 covering Gujarat and Maharashtra states. Bal Nutan Sangh also started training centre at Dadar in 1938. In 1945, a rural centre was started by Bal Nutan Sangh at Bordi in district Thane, Maharashtra, and named as Gram Bal Shiksha Kendra. These were all private efforts. The need for an inexpensive system of preschool education was emphasised and conceptualised by Mahatma Gandhi, which was called pre-basic education. Under pre-basic education



children up to the age of seven years were covered. The pre-basic education as per Gandhiji's scheme of things was visualised in four sub stages. These were: the first stage from conception to birth, second stage from birth to two and half years, third stage from two and half to four years and fourth stage from four to seven years. This was expected to be the preparatory stage to Gandhiji's basic education. The first pre-basic institution was started at Sevagram in 1945 under the guidance of Shanta Narulkar.

In course of time the focus of preschool education shifted to meeting the needs of masses and the first generation learners, instead of remaining confined to those who could pay for such education. Thus, the concept, focus and forms of early childhood care and education have changed significantly over the last few decades. This is evident from the deliberations that took place in the various meetings of Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE). The recommendations came from Sargent Report in 1944 to provide for facilities of pre-primary schooling to give young children social experience rather than formal instruction. The report suggested that one million places should be provided as a start in the age group 3-6 years

In the post-independence period, the Government of India took various measures to address the issues pertaining to children and women. Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW) was formed in 1951. Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) was formed in 1953. ICCW and CSWB started grant-in aid scheme for voluntary organisations running pre-primary centres. The Ministry of Education, GOI in their report "Progress of Education in India 1947-52" remarked — "pre primary education was for the most part confined to urban areas and has been the responsibility of parents. The policy of GOI in this regard has been of assistance and encouragement". Somewhat similar sentiments were reflected in the report of the "All India Conference on the Problems of Child Education" held at Indore in 1955. It remarked — Need for preschool education in five year plans stressed but no financial provision made. Neither first five year plan nor community development projects mentioned anything about the need for preschool education. The importance of preschool education escaped the attention of the planners.



There has only been one committee in the educational history of India that solely devoted itself to the pre-primary education. This was the Committee on Pre-primary Education in Mysore State, set up in 1961 by the State Government of Mysore. The CAGE adopted its many recommendations equally applicable to other states. Pandit Nehru, while addressing the 28th session of CAGE meeting on 16-17 January 1961 had emphasised the significance of pre-primary education. He observed '...when I say education I don't mean just reading writing and all that, but the capacity to do things in several thousand ways. And this leads to inevitably to the spread of education to all the country. That, of course, ought to be done at the initial stages, and the initial stages, it is now recognised, begins from birth, not from the age of your primary school but from the pre-primary school. That is highly important'. The issue of pre-primary education was addressed by Education Commission 1964-66 with positive recommendations for its promotion. The Commission hoped that 5 per cent of 3-5 and 50 per cent of 5-6 age group children would find place in nursery classes. Early childhood care and education remained within the preview of voluntary and private sector until 1968 when the Ganga Saran Sinha Committee highlighted the need to provide early childhood care and education within the government sector. The CAGE in its 35th meeting in 1970 commended the proposal to tryout pilot projects in early childhood care and education by mobilising local community support and resources especially in rural areas. Government of India accordingly set up a Study Group to prepare a programme of action for the development of early childhood care and education. The Committee dealt with 3-5 age group children and made recommendations regarding significance of pre-primary education, strategies needed, variety and experimentation, low cost models, training of personnel, equipments, methods, research, evaluation and administration. Then the schemes of supplementary nutrition in 1970 and crèches for ailing and working mothers were initiated in 1974. The emphasis got shifted from welfare to development and the National Policy for Children was formulated. Subsequently, Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) scheme



was proposed and implemented in 1975. Government constituted an expert group in 1980 on Early Childhood Education (ECE). The recommendations of which resulted in grant-in-aid scheme for voluntary organisations to run ECCE centres in educationally backward states.

The National Policy on Education 1986 revised in 1992 accorded top priority to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and emphasised the need to invest in the development of young children, particularly children from those sections of the society where first generation learners predominate. It laid emphasis on integration of programmes of child-care and preschool education and took a holistic view of child development. The policy categorically laid emphasis on discouraging the early introduction of three Rs i.e. reading writing and arithmetic and use of formal methods of teaching at this stage. The programmes of child-care and education were viewed as feeder services to strengthen primary education in particular and human resources development in general.

Preschool facilities were augmented under District Primary Education, started in 1995 and under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), started in 2001. This was done to bridge the gap in access to pre-primary in areas where there was no ICDS coverage for preschool education. Recently the Government of India, through the Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act 2002, has altered the Article 45 to read 'the State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years'. This directive principle seeks to provide care as well as education to all children up to the age of six years and the responsibility to achieve this lies with the ICDS being the main vehicle for ECCE. Accordingly, Universalisation of ECCE with quality has been targeted by the WCD to fulfill the directive principles enshrined in our constitution. It is clear from the above that approach and focus to ECCE has undergone changes not only in nomenclature but also in comprehensiveness, coverage of children of under three years of age and extending its scope from birth to eight years.



2.2.3 Changing Concept

The approach to early childhood development has undergone significant change during past few decades and accordingly the terms used have also undergone conceptual reorientation. During early periods i.e. in thirties and forties the emphasis was on 'child education' and the term was commonly used in all Indian languages. The focus was on preparing a child for primary schooling. The term 'pre-primary' was used (and is still in vogue) to denote different approaches like kindergarten and Montessori and different schools of thought. The term Early Childhood Education (ECE) came into effect, when the needs of children were considered in developmental continuum along the preschool stage. Early stimulation activities for young children is part of ECCE, hence a more holistic concept of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) was articulated including components of health, nutrition and psycho-social development of children. The concept was first used in India in the National Policy on Education 1986. The growing body of knowledge about brain development and relationship between body and mind has led to use a still more holistic and integrated concept of Early Childhood Development (ECD), which rests on the premises that the child development is holistic, continuous, cumulative and determined by the synergic influence of health, nutrition and psycho-social stimulation. The term ECD (Early Childhood Development) and ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) are used interchangeably. The term development in ECD encompasses both care and education of ECCE. Similarly, it is agreed that the distinction between care and education is artificial, as care and education are integral part of each other. There is a growing consensus among researchers and practitioners that childcare and early education is inseparable and must be considered as one. For example, good childcare involves developmental and socialisation experiences, cognitive stimulation and physical care. Children cannot be well cared for without their being educated, and children cannot be well educated without their being cared for.

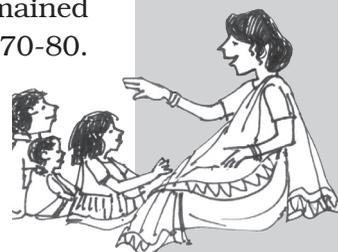


UNESCO Policy Briefs on Early Childhood (2002) has explained the various concepts through its article - “Early Childhood Care? Development? Education?” It states that the term ‘Early Childhood Education (ECE)’, is favoured by education authorities, who are inclined to see ECE from educational point of view. Learning is central to this tradition. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is an expansion of ECE, with the care component added. The Term ‘Early Childhood Care (ECC)’ without the education component, lay attention to health and nutrition of children in developing countries and as social service to children of working mothers in developed countries. Historically, ECC has been associated with institutional social service for disadvantaged children where it was considered a service to child’s early learning process. In order to assert the inseparability of ECC and ECE researchers have coined the word ‘Educare’. Early Childhood Development (ECD) is another term whose popularity is increasing, as it is holistic in approach. Common variant of this term is Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) which again tries to span the divide between care and education/development. Yet another variant is Early Childhood Care for Education and Development, which places the emphasis on the care which affects development and learning. Several other terms are in use, but they are either variation or different combinations of the three key concepts— early childhood care, education and development or specific programmes that are arranged for them (e.g. preschool education for ECE). From the child development perspective these three terms cannot be treated independently of one another. In reality ECC, ECE and ECD are not invariably institutionalised or practiced separately. In most of the developed countries kindergarten education is child-centered, stressing the child’s holistic development. In such case the need for distinction between ECE, ECD, ECC would not arise. In some countries preschool education is a generic term for early childhood programmes including those for children under three. Whatever the terminology being used the objective is the all-round development of child addressing all needs —of survival, growth and development.



2.2.4 The Paradigm Shift

We have seen how concept of child education has undergone changes during the last century. Accordingly there has been a paradigm shift in approach to child education/development. The approach to ECCE shifted from welfare to development and then to rights of children. Till third five year plan after independence the approach had remained confined to welfare only. In this approach the welfare activities for children were integrated with community development programmes during 50s and 60s. Age specific programmes were not thought of. Instead the focus was mainly on pre-primary education. These programmes were implemented through extension projects. ECCE was not given adequate attention because of resource constraints. BG Kher Committee report on pre-basic education of Gandhiji considered by Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) in 1938 observed that “although provision of pre-basic education is highly desirable it would not be possible to advocate for pre-primary on compulsory basis because of lack of funds and manpower”. Similarly, there was recommendation in Sargent Report 1944 for providing one million places of pre-primary within a span of 40 years. However, the target is still unmet even after 64 years. Till third plan period preschool education remain enmeshed with welfare approach. The Central Social Welfare Board and Indian Council for Child Welfare the two NGO wings of Government of India promoted preschool education and other child welfare activities. There was no direct responsibility of government for ECE or ECCE. In 1968, Ganga Saran Sinha Committee recommended that government should invest heavily on preschool education of children and reversed the stand that preschool education should be left to NGOs/voluntary organisations. However, action taken on the recommendations remained limited. During the fifth plan period the focus shifted from welfare to development. It brought the scheme of pre-primary to rural areas. National Policy on Children was formulated in 1974 and the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme with a package of integrated services was started in 1975. Though the shift was significant but the preschool centres/anganwadis remained mostly as feeding centres and custodial in nature during 1970-80.



The psychological aspect was neglected and downward extension of primary education was emphasised. The holistic development of child was addressed by the National Policy on Education 1986. It also provided a comprehensive vision for child development focusing on linkage between ECCE and primary education, discouraging teaching of three Rs, provision of day care facilities, integrating day care with pre-primary, converting anganwadis into anganwadi-cum-crèche and trying home based models for early stimulation. Sri Ram Murthy Committee 1990 also attached a lot of significance to ECCE and suggested that article 45 should include 0-6 year children in its purview taking ECCE further towards rights' perspective. In eighth plan ICDS expansion was targeted, national crèche fund established in 1994. A significant report —“learning without burden” was published highlighting the need for promoting children’s freedom, right to play and childhood joys. In ninth plan, universalisation of ICDS, joyful learning, linkages with primary and emphasis on play way approach were targeted. The rights’ based approach may be considered to have been started from 1992 when Government of India ratified United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child (UNCRC) and shown its commitment to children’s right to survival, right to development, right to protection and right to participation. National Plan of Action for Children was prepared in 1992 based on UNCRC and its ratification by the GOI. During tenth plan, in ICDS, life cycle approach, which includes four initial periods: prenatal and perinatal, 0-3, 3-6 and 6-8 as well as parental education and support, was focused. Universalisation of ICDS with quality and linkage with primary became the priority areas. National Plan of Action for Children 2005 again renewed the focus on child’s rights. Eleventh plan envisages reducing the divide between ECE and ECCE and for that a fresh approach to care facilities has been emphasised. Higher investment on ECCE, advocacy, training of functionaries and scientific planning for ECCE are prioritised.

With focus towards more comprehensive programmes of ECCE covering children below 8 years of age and developing strategies for smooth transition to primary school and also to meet the commitments towards the international instruments ratified by



the government, enabling policies and programmes need to be formulated for better quality and coverage.

2.3 POLICIES OF ECCE

For expanding and improving Early Childhood Care and Education, favourable policy environment and programmes suited to children of different sub stages, i.e., under-three, preschool and grades I and II children in accordance with their developmental needs are necessary. Government of India incorporated various provisions in the constitution for children and their education and development. We have National Policy on Children, National Policy on Education, National Health Policy, National Nutrition Policy, we have ratified UNCRC in 1992 and we are a signatory to various international instruments for ECCE. We have also formulated the charter for children, deliberated on constituting the national commission on children; we have passed many other acts and amendments concerning children and their well being. However, all these policies cover children from birth to 16/18 years. Although we have policy on children, policy on education, policies on health and nutrition targeting children but as such there was no separate policy for ECCE, especially targeting young children in 0-6 age group, with regard to financing, monitoring, supervising and above all regulating it in private sector. Recently in 2013 National ECCE Policy has been formulated and approved. The state of Chhattisgarh has also recently developed a policy for ECCE. There appear to be many advantages having a policy on ECCE— for coverage, quality regulation, monitoring, financing, etc. This will also help in bringing convergence in efforts and sharing inter-departmental roles and responsibilities. States are also developing and many have already developed curriculum for ECCE and quality standards. The review of various existing policies, documents, instruments providing policy guidelines for implementation of ECCE programmes would provide some answer to the question. Significant provisions in constitution and policies related to young children of 0-6 years are as follows:

2.3.1 Constitutional Provisions

Constitutional provisions impacting on child development are either in the form of fundamental rights or directive principles for state



policy. Under the fundamental rights article 15(3) of the constitution of India empowers the state to practice positive discrimination favouring economically and educationally weaker groups, allowing special provision for girls and children of disadvantaged and socially deprived groups. Under directive principles the articles impacting children are:

Article 39 (i) — that the health and strength of workers, men and women and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter vocation not suited to their age and strength, and the tender age of children are not abused, (ii) that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in condition of freedom and dignity and that child and youth are protected from exploitation and moral and material abandonment.

Article 42 — relates to working women and directs state to secure humane condition of work and maternity relief.

Article 45 — after the constitution eighty sixth amendment act 2002 it reads “the state shall provide free and compulsory Early Childhood Care and Education to all children up to the age of six years”, by replacing “the state shall provide free and compulsory education up to the age of fourteen years”.

2.3.2 National Policy for Children 1974

On 22nd August 1974 Government of India enunciated the policy on children as below:

It shall be the policy of the state to provide adequate services to children, both before and after birth through the period of growth, to ensure their full physical, mental and social development. The state shall progressively increase the scope of such services so that, within a reasonable time, all children in the country enjoy optimum condition for their balanced growth. In particular the following measures will be adopted towards the attainment of these objectives.

- All children shall be covered by a comprehensive health programme.
- Programmes shall be implemented to provide nutrition services with the objective of removing deficiencies in the diet of children.
- Programmes will be undertaken for the general improvement of the health and for the care, nutrition and nutrition education of expectant and nursing mothers.



- The State shall take steps to provide free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 for which a time bound programme will be drawn up consistent with the availability of resources. Special efforts will be made to reduce the prevailing wastage and stagnation in schools, particularly in the case of girls and children of the weaker sections of the society. The programme of informal education for preschool children from such sections will also be taken up.
- Children who are not able to take full advantage of formal school education should be provided other forms of education suited to their requirement.
- Physical education, games, sports and other types of recreational as well as cultural and scientific activities shall be promoted in schools, community centres and such other institutions.
- To ensure equality of opportunity, special assistance shall be provided to all children belong to the weaker sections of the society, such as children belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and those belonging to the economically weaker sections, both in urban and rural areas.
- Children who are socially handicapped, who have become delinquent or have been forced to take to begging or are otherwise in distress, shall be provided facilities of education, training and rehabilitation and will be helped to become useful citizens.
- Children shall be protected against neglect, cruelty and exploitation.
- No child under 14 years shall be permitted to be engaged in any hazardous occupation or be made to undertake heavy work.
- Facilities shall be provided for special treatment, education, rehabilitation and care of children who are physically handicapped, emotionally disturbed or mentally retarded.
- Children shall be given priority for protection and relief in times of distress or natural calamity.
- Special programmes shall be formulated to spot, encourage and assist gifted children, particularly those belonging to the weaker sections of the society.
- Existing laws should be amended so that in all legal disputes whether between parents or institutions, the interest of children are given paramount consideration



- In organising services for children, efforts should be directed to strengthen family ties so that full potentialities of growth of children are realised within the normal family, neighbourhood and community environment.

In formulation of programmes in different sectors, priority shall be given to programme relating to:

- (a) Preventive and promotive aspects of child health;
- (b) Nutrition for infants and children in the preschool age along with nutrition for nursing and expectant mothers;
- (c) Maintenance, education and training of orphan and destitute children;
- (d) Crèches and other facilities for the care of children of working or ailing mothers; and
- (e) Care, education, training and rehabilitation of handicapped children.

The policy provided for constitution of National Children's Board, ensuring effective role of voluntary organisations in ECCE, legislative and administrative action needed and also ensuring people's participation. National Policy on children has been revised in 2013.

2.3.3 National Policy on Education 1986/92

The National Policy on Education specially emphasises investment in the development of young child, particularly children from sections of the population in which first generation learners predominate.

It states :

“Recognising the holistic nature of child development viz. nutrition, health and social, mental, physical, moral and emotional development, ECCE will receive high priority and be suitably integrated with the ICDS programme, wherever possible. Day care centres will be provided as a support service for universalisation of primary education, to enable girls engaged in taking care of siblings to attend school and as a support service for working women belonging to poorer sections.

Programme of ECCE will be child-oriented, focused around play and the individuality of the child. Formal methods and introduction



of the 3 R's will be discouraged at this stage. The local community will be fully involved in these programmes.

A full integration of childcare and pre-primary education will be brought about, both as a feeder and a strengthening factor for primary education and for human resources development in general. In continuation of this stage, the school health programme will be strengthened.”

2.3.4 ECCE in National Policy on Education: Programme of Action 1992

Programme of action 1992 sets the target to universalise ICDS by AD 2000. It also suggested that anganwadis will be converted into anganwadi cum crèches in a phased manner and 25 per cent anganwadi will be converted into anganwadi-cum crèches by 2000 A.D.

Following strategies were recommended to be continued and strengthened:

- Each Anganwadi Workers' Training Centre (AWTC) adopting 20-25 anganwadi centres for providing trainees adequate field experience.
- Placing trainees for at least one month in anganwadis for practical training.
- Developing CDPO's office into resource centre.
- Refresher courses for trainers and supervisors in preschool education.
- To develop a small percentage of anganwadis into day care centres.
- In ECCE centres operated under the government's schemes, in pre-primary school and classes, nutrition component should be added with immediate effect.
- Use of play way method and discouraging early teaching of three R's.
- System of monitoring be established.
- ECCE centres, Balwadis run by voluntary sectors need to be converted into total child development centres with components of health and nutrition.
- Day care centres need to be reviewed and strengthened for provision of safety, safe drinking water, nutrition, toys and play material, adequate child worker ratio.



- Innovative home based model, day care centres, family day care centres be promoted.
- ECCE will continue to be directed to the most under privilege groups i.e. very poor urban slum communities, ecologically deprived areas where children are required to fetch fuel, fodder and water, artisan households, itinerant or seasonal labours, construction workers, nomadic communities and pastoralists,
- Developing and utilising media support.
- Greater technical support to ECCE through NCERT/SCERT and DIETs.
- DIETs should play pivotal role in areas like training and curriculum.
- Mother tongue as medium of communication.
- Devising norms and minimum standards.
- Review of policies/curriculum.
- Evolving management information system to strengthen monitoring and evaluation of the children.

(For full text see NPE Programme Of Action 1992)

2.3.5 Plan of Action for Children 1992

The Government of India acceded to the UN convention on the rights of child on 12 November 1992. India is also the signatory to the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of children. In pursuance to the commitment to world body the DWCD formulated the National Plan of Action for children. The priority areas were health, nutrition, education, water and sanitation and environment. The plan gave special consideration to children in difficult circumstances and provided a framework of goals and objectives for actualisation of convention's aims. Central government asked states to prepare plan of action for children. Objectives of the National Plan of Action 1992 in areas of health nutrition, sanitation, education, Early Childhood Care and Education, girl child, children in difficult circumstances and related to environment were targeted. In the area of child health targets were set to eradicate poliomyelitis, eliminate neonatal tetanus, reduction in death due to measles, diarrhea, acute respiratory infection (ARI) and achieving



high level of immunisation of children. In the area of nutrition it had set the targets for reduction in severe and moderate malnutrition for children under five year, reduction in incidences of low birth weight babies and micronutrients deficiency. Improving status of girl child, protecting children in difficult circumstances. Targets were also set for improving the status of maternal health and nutrition. Other significant aspects covered were safe drinking water in rural areas, sanitation facilities, conserving and protecting environment for ensuring health and well-being of young children. (The full text is given in the appendix.)

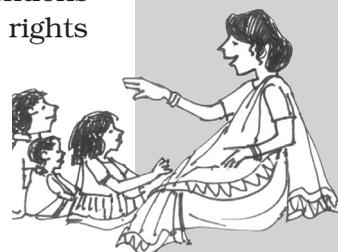
2.3.6 National Nutrition Policy 1993

National Policy on Nutrition highlighted that children below six years are nutritionally vulnerable and constitutes one of the high risk groups and accordingly gives highest priority to them through interventions and policy articulation.

The National Nutrition Policy was adopted in 1993 under the aegis of Department of Women and Child Development. The Policy recognised the multifaceted problem of malnutrition and advocated a multi-sectoral approach for controlling the same. A series of actions were identified in various spheres like food production and distribution, health and family welfare, agriculture, horticulture and rural development. In pursuance of this Policy, the Food and Nutrition Board was transferred to the Department of Women and Child development on 1st April 1993. A National Nutrition Mission launched in 180 selected nutritionally backward districts of the country to further carry forward the goals of National Nutrition Policy. Nutritional literacy programmes were planned through massive advocacy measures. (Full text is given in the appendix.)

2.3.7 National Policy for the Empowerment of Women 2001

Empowerment of women in different facets of life has direct bearing on child development. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the Constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local levels. India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights



of women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1993.

However, there still exists a wide gap between the goals enunciated in the Constitution, legislations, policies, plans, programmes, and related mechanisms on the one hand, and the situational reality of the status of women in India, on the other. This has been analysed extensively in the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, "Towards Equality", 1974 and highlighted in the National Perspective Plan for Women, 1988-2000, the Shramshakti Report, 1988 and the Platform for Action, Five Years After An Assessment".

The goal of this policy was to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. Specifically, the objectives of this policy included:

- Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realise their full potential.
- The de-jure and de-facto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres – political, economic, social, cultural and civil.
- Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation.
- Equal access to women to healthcare, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.
- Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
- Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.
- Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process.
- Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child; and
- Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organisations.
- The provision of support services for women, like child care facilities, including crèches at work places and educational



institutions, homes for the aged and the disabled will be expanded and improved to create an enabling environment and to ensure their full cooperation in social, political and economic life.

- Women-friendly personnel policies will also be drawn up to encourage women to participate effectively in the developmental processes.

2.3.8 National Health Policy 2002

The main objective of the revised National Health Policy, 2002 was to achieve an acceptable standard of good health among the general population of the country and had set goals to be achieved by the year 2015. Some of the major policy prescriptions were:

- To increase public spending from 0.9 to 2 per cent
- Two years' mandatory posting of medical graduates in rural areas before awarding the degree
- Decentralised implementation of health programmes through local self governments
- Promoting public health discipline (see Appendix for full text.)

2.3.9 National Charter for Children 2003

The government of India in 2003 announced the National Charter for Children intending to secure for every child its inherent right to be a child and enjoy a healthy and happy childhood. It provided that state and community should undertake all possible measures to ensure and protect the survival, life and liberty of all children, address the problem of infanticide and female foeticide. Promoting high standards of health and nutrition, ensuring fulfillment of basic minimum needs, security of children, ensuring early childhood care for survival growth and development, play and leisure, protection from economic exploitation and all forms of abuse should be ensured by state and the community. It focuses on the right of every child to have a family, both parents sharing the responsibility of child care and development and child friendly procedures especially for children in conflict with law. (The full text is given in the Appendix.)

2.3.10 National Plan of Action for Children 2005

The National Plan of Action 2005 is divided into following four sections representing different categories of rights and all categories of rights apply to all age group including before birth.



- 1) Child Survival
- 2) Child Development
- 3) Child Protection
- 4) Child Participation

The POA for Children 2005 based on UNCRC has identified 12 key areas, keeping in mind priorities and challenges that require sustained attention in terms of outreach, intervention and resource allocation. These are:

- Reducing Infant Mortality Rate
- Reducing Maternal Mortality Rate
- Reducing Malnutrition among Young Children
- Achieving 100 per cent civil registration of births
- Universalisation of quality ECCE and elementary education i.e., achieving 100 per cent enrolment access, retention in schools including preschools.
- Complete abolition of female feticide, female infanticide and child marriage and ensuring the survival, growth and development of girl child.
- Improving water and sanitation coverage in rural and urban areas.
- Addressing the rights of children in difficult circumstances.
- Securing for all children all legal and social protection from all kinds of exploitation and abuse.
- Complete abolition of child labour.
- Monitoring, review and reform of policies to ensure children's interest and rights.
- Ensuring child's participation and choice in matters and decisions affecting their lives.

2.3.11 National Curriculum Framework 2005

National Curriculum Framework-2005 focusing on ECCE stage, from birth to six to eight years of life, as critical period for realisation of full potential of child laid emphasis on holistic approach viewing health and nutritional needs of children along with learning and developmental needs as integral and related to their psycho-social development. It therefore, recommends that ECCE must be based



on this holistic perspective. It suggests that children should be provided an environment which is rich in stimulation and experience and allows children to explore, experiment, and express freely and embedded in social relations that gives them a sense of warmth, trust and security. It specifically cautions against pressurising children into the three Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic) and also making preschools into training centres for admission to primary schools. The NCF-2005 recommends that the fund for ECCE be enhanced so that ECCE of equitable quality could be provided to all children. Early identification of disabilities is one of the crucial aspects of ECCE stage which when done professionally may help children in their development and prevent aggravation of disadvantages.

Important International Instruments Influencing Policies

2.3.12 UN Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC)

Government of India acceded to this convention on 11th December 1992 and reiterated its commitment to the rights of children. There are 54 articles presented in three parts in the convention. The part I have 41 articles covering various rights to children, i.e., right to life, care or protection, survival, growth and development, right to identity, not to be separated from parents (subject to judicial review determine), state parties to take measures to combat illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad, child's right to express his/her views freely in matters affecting him, freedom of expression (i.e. seek receive and impart information), freedom of thought and religion, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, right to protection of law against interference or attack on his or her honour/reputation and access to information. Assisting parents in the performance of child rearing responsibilities and ensuring that working women have facilities for childcare, protection from all form of violence, abuse and neglect would help ensure rights of children. Through its article 21 it permits the system of adoption, including inter country adoption, in the best interest of the child. It recognises the rights of the disabled child for a full and decent life. Article 24 and 25 secures the highest standard of health to every child including mental health. Similarly, right to primary education



and encouraging different form of secondary education, making higher education accessible and providing vocational education are recognised. Child's right to leisure, rest, play, recreational activities and protection from economic exploitation, illicit use of narcotic drugs, all form of sexual exploitation, sale or traffic in children, capital punishment, torture, degrading or inhuman treatment and protection and care of children who are affected by armed conflict have been recognised. The part II, from article 42-45, relates to the implementation strategies and monitoring the implementation of CRC by the state parties and encouraging international cooperation. Part III, from article 46 to 54, provide guidelines to state parties how to go about it. In brief, the convention drew attention to following four major categories of child's rights -

The Right to Survival: include the rights to life, the highest attainable standards of health, nutrition and adequate standard of living. It also includes the right to a name from birth, the right to acquire a nationality and as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.

The Right to Protection: includes freedom from all forms of exploitation, abuse, inhuman degrading treatment and neglect, special protection in situations of conflict and emergencies.

The Right to Development: includes the right to education, support for early childhood development and care, social security, and the right to leisure, recreation and cultural activities.

The Right to Participation: includes respect for the views of the child, freedom of expression, access to appropriate information, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

2.3.13 Education for All: The Six Goals

Building on the two international instruments, the universal declaration of human rights and the convention on the rights of child, the international community adopted the world declaration on Education for All (EFA) at Jometien, Thailand, in 1990. The 2000 Dakar Framework for action sets the six EFA goals.

1. Expanding and Improving Comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children”.



2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minority, have access to and complete primary education of good quality.
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skill programmes.
4. Achieve a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015.
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, achieving gender equality in education by 2015.
6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

The first goal of EFA relates to ECCE targeting children in the age group 0-8 years. The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007 focused on ECCE as main theme.

2.3.14 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The millennium development goals were approved by world leaders at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000. For each goal one or more targets have been set. There are five goals which directly relate to ECCE. These goals are:

Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day
- Reduce by half the proportion of people living in hunger

Goal 2 Achieve universal primary education

Goal 3 Promote gender equality and empower women

Goal 4 Reduce under five child mortality by two third

Goal 5 Improve maternal health

- Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio

Goal 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

- Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
- Halt and begin to reverse the spread of malaria and other diseases.



Goal 7 Ensure environmental sustainability

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into national policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environment resources.
- Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.
- Achieve significant improvement in lives of 300 million slum dwellers by 2020.

Goal 8 Development of global partnership of development

- Develop further an open trading and financial system.
- Address the least developed countries' special needs.
- Address the special needs of landlocked and small island countries.
- Deal comprehensively with developing countries debt problem.
- In cooperation with developing countries develop decent and productive work for youth.
- In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.
- In cooperation with private sector make available the benefits of technologies especially information and communication technologies.

The above national policies and the international conventions ratified by the country create a policy environment to act for improving the lives of children in general. Children in the specific age group 0-6 are also covered with these policies along with elder children up to the age of 16/18 years. These policies need to be implemented by different departments in convergence and coordination for their success. Achieving the desirable level of convergence has remained a difficult task. Moreover, young children's development is also dependent upon the maternal health and nutrition status. The need to have a separate policy for ECCE may be desirable as formulation of policy on ECCE may help in convergence and coordination and also in implementation of programmes and monitoring the progress in different aspects of young children's learning and development. As the National policy on ECCE has been approved, its effective implementation is needed. The need to strengthen policies for ECCE is further discussed in the last chapter 'A Way Forward'.



2.4 PROGRAMMES OF ECCE

Policies have resulted in formulating various programmes and schemes of ECCE. The assistance to voluntary organisations after independence, Balwadi scheme, ICDS scheme after the formulation of policy on Children in 1974, National Creche fund, scheme of assistance to NGOs for running ECCE centres, now merged and named as Rajiv Gandhi National Scheme of Crèches for Working and Ailing Mothers, early childhood education in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, childcare provision under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, child care provision under National Programme of Education for Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) are some of the programmes in the area of ECCE.

Programmes providing Early Childhood Care and Education:

- *Balwadis* run by voluntary organisations and local bodies.
- *Anganwadis* under integrated child development scheme (ICDS) of Government of India.
- Pre-primary/preschools run by state governments.
- ECE centres with different nomenclatures under DPEP (District Primary Education Programme) in various states.
- ECE under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
- National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) under SSA.
- ECCE under National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.
- National Rural Health Mission.
- Nursery schools, kindergarten schools, preparatory schools, play schools run under different nomenclatures in the private sector.
- Crèches under Rajeev Gandhi National Crèche Scheme.
- Mobile Crèches.

2.4.1 Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS)

Among all the programmes of ECCE, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme is holistic in nature and also acquires a distinct status by being the largest programme of ECCE in the world. It aims to cater to health, nutrition and psycho-social stimulation needs of children of 0-6 years age group in an integrated

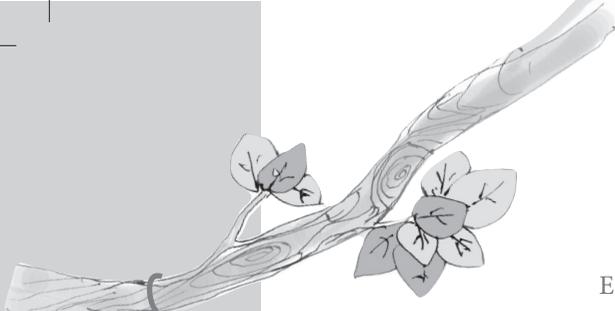


manner. It also caters to health and nutritional needs of mothers and helps adolescent girls by imparting necessary skills and knowledge to prepare them as informed future mothers. The programme is run through the anganwadi centres located in each habitation, big or small. In small habitation where population norms are not met mini anganwadis are opened. Each anganwadi is run by an anganwadi worker who is assisted by a helper. ICDS was started in 1975 with 33 projects on experimental basis and has reached to more than 7000 sanctioned projects, with 14 lakh anganwadi centres catering to the needs of 774 lakh children in the age group 0-6 and 353 lakhs children in preschool age as on 31st March 2013. The scheme is poised to be universalised in the country. The efforts are on to universalise ICDS with quality. As per Supreme Court direction Ministry of Women and Child Development is expected to further enhance the number of anganwadis. The package of services under ICDS includes-Immunisation, health checkups, referral services and treatment of minor illnesses, supplementary feeding, growth monitoring, nutrition and health education, preschool education for 3-6 year age group, early stimulation to children under three years. The three services namely the immunisation, health checkups and referral services are delivered through public health infrastructure.

Preschool Education in ICDS

ICDS is one of the well designed programmes, with built-in elements of community participation and holistic approach. Yet the programme has suffered with some weaknesses. One of the weaknesses is limited attention given to pre- school education component in many states and project areas. Another weak aspect is that communities' participation level has remained low in general. Provision for in service and pre service training of functionaries has remained neglected. There are sharp state level differences in effectiveness of programme. As per the report citizens' Initiative for the Rights of Children under Six, New Delhi on "Focus on Children below Six" (2006) - states like Tamilnadu, Maharashtra and Himanchal are doing well whereas state like Uttar Pradesh, Chhatisgarh and Rajasthan has been relatively passive.

Being the holistic child development programme for the children up to 6 years of age ICDS has also the largest outreach of any

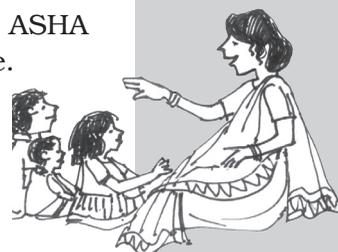


programme. Compared to ICDS, other programmes suffer from deficiencies either in providing the nutrition or health services, and mainly cater to children of 3-6 year age group. The scheme of ICDS has been restructured in 11th plan keeping in view the challenges and the bottlenecks faced in past decades. Population norms for anganwadi, financial norms for supplementary nutrition programme (SNP) training and other certain components, have been revised to increase the outlay for each. Other significant aspects of universalisation of ICDS with quality are – focus on children below three years, enhanced honoraria for workers and helpers, emphasis on reaching out to socially excluded groups like SC/ST and minorities, increasing coverage of children to 100 million in 0-6 age group, expansion of anganwadis to beyond 14 lakh, flexi fund of rupees 1000 for each anganwadi per annum and improving monitoring mechanism.

2.4.2 National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) 2005

The National Rural Health Mission has been launched in convergence with ICDS focusing on micronutrients control programme. Micronutrients of public health significance are Iodine, Iron, Vitamin A and Zinc. The NRHM was launched for a period of seven years (2005-2012) by the Prime Minister on 12th April 2005. Reproductive and child health (maternal health, child health, population stabilisation) is an important component of NRHM. Core strategies detailed out are:

- Train and enhance capacity of PRIs to own, control and manage public health.
- Promote the access to healthcare to household through the female Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA).
- Preparing and implementing health plan for each village and district through the district health missions, including sanitation and hygiene, drinking water and nutrition.
- Achieving inter-sectoral convergence at the grassroots level through the empowered programme committees at various levels.
- Anganwadi to be the hub of the activity for mother and child care with village health team comprising of ANM, AWW, ASHA and SHG under village health and sanitation committee.



- Three strategies for correcting micronutrient deficiency would be—supplementation, fortification and dietary diversification.
- The tenth plan goals i.e. reducing severe malnutrition by half, elimination of vitamin A deficiency, promoting early initiation of breast feeding from 15.8 per cent level to 50 per cent, exclusive breast feeding in first six months from 55.2 per cent to 80 per cent level, complementary feeding from 33.5 per cent to 74 per cent, reducing IMR to 30 per thousand and reducing NMR to 20 per thousand still need to be achieved with renewed focus during 11th Plan. New targets for 12th plan have been set. These are: Reduction of IMR to 25, reduction of MMR to 100 per 100,000 live births, reducing undernourished children under 3 years to 26 percent.

2.4.3 Integrated Child Protection Scheme

Child protection refers to protection from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. Every child has a right to protection. Violations of child's rights to protection are under reported and under recognised. Children subjected to violence, exploitation abuse and neglect are at risk of shortened lives, poor physical and mental development. These children are mostly homeless children, orphans and abandoned children, children of parents who cannot take care of their children, street and working children, children of prostitutes, children affected by disaster, children affected by HIV/AIDS, disabled children, child beggars, girl child, children who are in conflict with law, among others. The two fold strategy needed to help these children grow normally is both preventive and protective. Intervention services for rescue, care, rehabilitation and reintegration would need to be provided. National Plan and state level plans of the magnitude of ICDS would need to be developed and implemented for ICPS (Integrated Child Protection Services). The scheme was given priority in 11th plan as there was little progress during 10th plan in areas of child protection. The scheme has been re-structured in 12th plan.

2.4.4 Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for Children of Working and Ailing Mothers

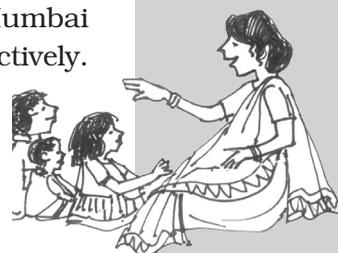
The policy on Education 1986 had clearly provided for the services of crèches and day care centres in an integrated manner with



pre-primary and primary education, to support universal primary education by freeing elder siblings mostly girls to attend school. But the services have not been increased in any significant manner after the policy announcement, nearly two decades ago. The importance of good quality care and education especially to children of under-three years and to those who are living in deprived socio-economic condition was the top most priority. The target is yet to be achieved. The scheme of anganwadi-cum-crèches as mooted in NPE 1986/92 could not be given sufficient expansion and quality inputs. The coverage of crèches and day care centres under the Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme (www.wcd.nic.in) for children of working and ailing mothers sanctioned till September 2006 were merely 22038. Whereas, the services required for an estimated 22 crore female workers in informal sector alone would be 8 lakhs. Increasing the coverage and improving the quality of crèches and day care centres would be priority in future. There is a need to expand institutional base for training the crèche workers for upgrading their skills. The integration of day care facilities with preschool education and primary schooling also need to be given top priority in order to achieve the goals of universal elementary education, especially for girls who otherwise are held up at home for care of younger siblings. Day care facilities in educational institutions and after school day care facilities would help women to attend to her work. The scheme of anganwadi cum crèches or community crèches may be promoted to expand the care facilities to young children. The scheme of mobile crèche for children of working mothers who work in construction sites and are mobile may be effective in providing timely intervention and stimulation to young children and help them to participate in the schooling process need to be seriously considered and promoted.

2.4.5 Mobile Crèches

Mobile Crèches in Delhi provide child care services at 25 day care centres at construction sites and in slums of Delhi, NOIDA, Gurgaon (Haryana). Day care services are provided from 9 am to 5 pm, 6 days' a week. Since 2007 it has its branches at Pune and Mumbai called Tara Mobile Crèches and Mumbai Mobile Crèches respectively.



These are run as independent branches. In Delhi, 25 Mobile Crèches reach out to 5000 children per annum covering children in the age group from birth to 12 years. There is a staff of 132, mostly females, working in these crèches. Programme for children in these crèches include nutrition support, health and hygiene services, stimulation, educational activities and school admission support. Mobile Crèches has spear headed the movement of child's rights and pioneered the ECCE movement linking issues of work, women and children. The need of the country is vast and there is the issue of scaling-up.

2.4.6 ECCE in District Primary Education Programme

During DPEP phase I, which started in 1996, large numbers of ECCE centres were opened by states as a potent strategy to help girl child to participate in schooling by way of relieving her from the job of child care at home. However, these centres were opened in areas where there was no anganwadi (ICDS) coverage with the understanding that in due course of time ICDS will be taking over these centres. These ECCE centres were mainly for 3-5 year's age children and some states also opened play centres for younger children like *Jhoola-ghar* in Madhya Pradesh. Some states undertook massive programmes of school readiness for children before entering primary schools. There were efforts to establish linkage between ECCE and primary education by shifting anganwadis to primary school campuses and organise joint training programmes for the teachers of Class I and anganwadi workers to facilitate the programme planning for Class I as well as children in preschool. There were also efforts to synchronise the timings of primary school and anganwadi and provide additional honorarium to worker for additional work. Nearly 10000 ECCE centres were established under DPEP (National Focus Group report on ECE, 2006, NCERT). The study conducted by the NCERT for the effectiveness of such linkage between ECCE and primary education found that such linkage was effective in promoting the cause of universal elementary education

2.4.7 ECCE in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Under SSA the strategy has remained more or less the same as under the DPEP. However, the provision was limited to Rs15 lakhs per district per annum. There were efforts under SSA to provide



play material kits to anganwadis/ECCE centres functioning in the premises of primary schools out of the provision of Rs 15 lakhs for ECCE activities under the head “innovation activities”. It also supported the joint training programmes and refresher courses for workers and the early primary grade teachers. The linkage between ECCE and primary school was promoted by shifting anganwadis in primary school campuses. Synchronisation of timings between anganwadi and primary school was brought about. These measures were found effective in promoting higher attendance and retention rates during primary grades. In 11th five year plan one year ECCE as part of SSA was proposed universally that helped anganwadis to concentrate better on child development and early stimulation aspects.

2.4.8 ECCE under NPEGEL

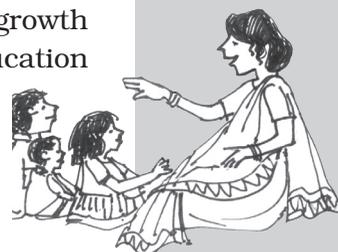
National Programme of Education for Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) under SSA had provision for opening ECCE centres at the cluster level to help girl child to participate in schooling after getting relieved from the duties of sibling care. The scheme was significant in relieving the girl child from house hold chores and sibling care for promoting girl education.

2.4.9 ECCE in National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

One of the opportunities provided by the government to plan and execute child care and preschool education services was through the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) and help mothers to look after their children when they are away for work. How much of this provision could be utilised depends upon the awareness and organisational skills of rural communities and leaderships. The provision needs high level of participation, ownership and leadership from the PRIs and other local bodies.

2.4.10 Private and Voluntary Sector Initiatives

While in the government sector especially under the ICDS programme, there are attempts to provide services to young children in a holistic manner including health, nutrition and education component, private initiatives have resulted in considerable growth of variety of programmes mainly focusing on preschool education



component with varying content and approaches. The latter caters mainly to the aspirations of an emerging middle class and is gradually spreading to semi urban and rural areas. It provides pre-primary education, which is primarily a downward extension of primary education with heavy emphasis on teaching of 3 Rs. With no government regulatory mechanism in place, private sector seems to enjoy monopoly and freedom to adopt curriculum, methodology and procedures of admission which suite their interests. Though there may be a few good institutions in private sector, the large majority that have mushroomed in every nook and corner, implement a preschool programme of doubtful quality.

In recent years, non-governmental organisations have shown interest in this area. Some of the efforts have been highly innovative; their coverage and scale of operations remain small. The significance of voluntary organisations' efforts in addressing the needs of children in local specific and cultural contexts is well recognised. The area of ECCE by its very nature demands a strong affiliation with communities, parental groups and village level organisations. The private public partnership is promoted at government level to enhance the coverage and the quality of ECCE services.

We have briefly tried to understand the various policies and programmes of ECCE in Indian context along with the status of children with reference to health, nutrition and development related indicators at ECCE stage.

In the ensuing two chapters the discussion would be centered around the programme contents, planning and organisation of curriculum highlighting the present status of curriculum transaction, issues involved and focus on developmentally appropriate practices.

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Early Childhood Care and Education Curriculum

3

There are issues related to quality of ECCE programmes in various settings mentioned in the previous chapter. We have briefly discussed above the concerns over the quality of programmes as many of these programmes are not sensitive to the needs of preschool children and put academic burden on them. Large number of programmes therefore lack on quality parameters in varying degrees including curriculum, training of personnel, advocacy, linkages with primary education, convergence and coordination, community participation, minimum essential facilities, holistic approach etc. These aspects of quality of ECCE will be discussed in the ensuing chapters. In this chapter we would focus on learning and development during early childhood vis -a-vis ECCE curriculum and the concerns for quality.

3.1 UNDERSTANDING LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN DURING EARLY CHILDHOOD

The stage of ECCE (birth to 6-8 years) encompassing wide variety of needs of children in its sub-stages would need different treatment at different sub-stage. The learning starts from birth, but the development of child has started much earlier, i.e. from the conception itself. The development of child till birth is dependent on mother's well-being and education. Any intervention at this stage has to be through the mother. The whole ECCE stage can be therefore divided into three sub-stages. The first sub-stage comprises from prenatal to three years, second sub-stage from 3 to 6 years and the third is from 6 to 8 years. Within these sub-stages there are significant variation based on age and the stage of development. The first month in the child's life is crucial for survival and development. Similarly, the first three years in the child's life are very important. Significant milestones of physical, motor and language, cognitive and social

development are achieved during the very first years. Toddlers show enhanced learning needs to understand the environment around them. The needs and characteristics of this period within the first sub-stage are different. During preschool stage, 3-5/6 years, the pace of learning is so fast that the child learns a new skill every day. Children during early primary grades show all together new set of skills of understanding and moves toward abstract thinking. This highlights the need towards a flexible need based curriculum suitable to each sub-stage. What experiences could be planned for each sub-stage and what are the characteristics of each of these sub-stages are important to plan interventions and experiences for young children. We shall first try to understand the learning and developmental needs of children at each sub-stage and then only we would be in a position to appreciate the early stimulation experiences provided to children under three years and children between three to six years. To understand the nature and process of learning of young children it is necessary to know their developmental characteristics during ECCE stage, since development and learning are closely interrelated. Good nurturing and fostering is based on understanding the child's developmental and learning needs. Children learn by experiencing the environment. The interactions with environment both human and physical are very important for young child's learning.

3.1.1 Views of Maria Montessori

The following description based on thoughts and work of Maria Montessori would help teachers and teacher educators to understand the nature of learning and development among young children during early years. Maria Montessori in her book "The Formation of Man", 1967 lays great emphasis on psychic power the child is endowed with and in providing an understanding how a new born human child develops into an intelligent human being.

"Man appears in this world in the form of child. The new born possesses neither the language nor the intelligence or memory or will, not even the power of moving about or keeping himself upright. At age two he speaks, walks and recognises people in his environment. At five years of age he acquires psychological development to be

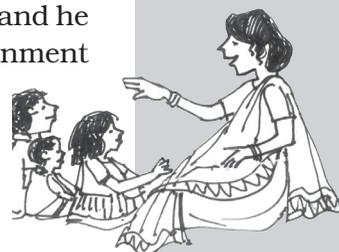


admitted to a school to start formal education. The formation of the intelligence of the human personality is a miracle. How it is formed, what laws govern it is not given serious thought for centuries. Man at the age of five has become an intelligent being must have gone through a constructive evolution.” She outlined how this constructive evolution takes place in children when compared to other new born mammals. “If we see the development of new born human child how he differs from new born of mammals we would find that young mammal inherits a special behaviour. This behaviour is as fixed as morphological features of their body. The bodily form is precisely suited to the functions in life and these functions are fixed for each species. The legs of those who jump, run, climb or dig are developed in such a way that correspond to the task of each. In some species there is limited power of adaptation. The greater part of the animals preserves an absolute rigidity in their hereditary characteristics. Man on the other hand has an unlimited power of adaptation to live in all geographical regions and assume innumerable forms of habit and work. It is also true that no young of a mammal is born as inert, as incapable of actualising the characteristics of adults of its species, as the newly born human being. Many animals stand on their legs almost at once and during the period of lactation they run after their mothers. Even monkeys considered nearest to man clings to their mother with their own strength and need not be carried in arms. The human child is inert for a long time. He does not speak, whereas all others immediately begin to chirp or bark. The long inertia and incapacity of the child belong truly to human species alone. We cannot explain how the human child became passive through the stages of evolution from what it could do in previous stages of evolutions. If the newly born child is so inferior to that of mammals than she/he must have some special function which others do not share. There are therefore additions in evolution not only transformations. The child must have a special function besides being smaller and weaker. The human child is therefore different from animals precisely with regard to heredity. The child evidently did not inherit characteristic features, but only the potentiality to form them. Take the examples of language. There does not exist any particular language, which is transmitted. The child does not



hereditarily reproduce the language. If she/he is taken to other country where his parents are not there the child reproduces the language spoken in the environment. Italian baby taken to USA will speak English and those, jungle children, abandoned in forests survived through exceptional circumstances were found mute even at the age of twelve. None of them reproduce the cries of animal. Language, therefore, is developed *ex novo* by the child himself. The child has inherited the power to do so". Montessori further, in her book "Education for a New World", 1946 provides fascinating account of psychic construction specifically language construction during the early childhood stage, between 2-3 years, as follows.

"Observation proves that small children are endowed with special psychic powers and points to new ways of drawing them out-by cooperating with nature. The child's constructive energy, alive and dynamic, has remained unknown for thousands of years, a mine of mental treasure, just as the men who first trod on this earth knew nothing of the immense riches that lay hidden in its depths. So far is man from recognising the riches that lie buried in the psychic world of the child, that from the beginning he has continued to repress those energies and grind them into the dust. Now for the first time a few have come to suspect about their existence, a treasure which has never been exploited, more precious than gold, the very soul of man. Observation of first two years of life has thrown new light on the laws of psychic construction. It will not be the professor who teaches the child but the child who teaches the professor. This is proved by the child's acquisition of language – a great intellectual feat. The child speaks the language of his parents though no one has taught him. Child learns to use names and words connected with his environment and soon master the use of all syntactical construction. Within the child there is a very scrupulous and exacting teacher. The sounds used in composing language are few. They can unite in many ways to make words. Pages of daily news papers and voluminous books use words and sentences in various combinations made of a few alphabets in different languages which have been commonly agreed upon in a cultural context. Only child under three years can construct the mechanism of language and he can speak any number of languages if they are in his environment



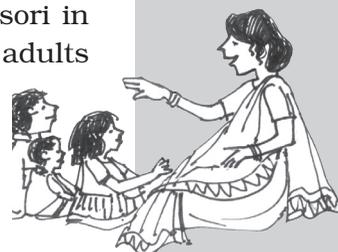
at birth. The sounds which compose words are made by the use of certain bodily mechanisms, as the tongue, throat and nose and certain muscles of the cheeks. The mechanism is perfect for the speaking of the mother tongue. No child becomes tired of learning to speak. His mechanism has supplied language in wholeness. There is a mysterious inner development while the corresponding outer signs is very little. Progress is not found regular and linear, but in jerks. Between the conquest of syllable and that of words months elapse. Again the child seems stand still with few words for a long time. But in the inner life there is great progress. At the end of two years the child uses with ease the idioms and lingual idiosyncrasies. These phenomena continue after two years, mastery of the use of complex sentences, tense and moods of verbs appear in the same explosive way in turn till the expression of language is complete. The treasure prepared by the sub conscious is handed over to the consciousness and the child makes the use of his new power. After two and half the language development is no longer explosive. The child enriches his vocabulary in a cultured environment and at five knew thousands of words and used them". How child develops the mechanism to create language? She explains.

"In the cortex of the brain there are two parts i.e., the aural and the motor. The aural is for heard language and the motor is for production of language. The receptive part (aural) is in relation with that mysterious part of the psyche in which language is sub consciously developed. The hearing centre is specially built for human language that man can speak not any other. Human babies for one reason or the other who were abandoned in jungle and managed to live do not have human speech developed. Children of jungle getting wild sounds have remained dumb as they had not received human speech which alone could provoke the mechanism of spoken language. Humanity is powered with, not to possess language but the mechanism to create language. Every human group creates its own music and language and responds to music with movements. Music attaches itself to words and words have no sense in themselves until human agreement put the meaning to them. The child at four months perceives that music (sound) and touches him so deeply, comes from the human mouth. Lips move to



produce it. Child watches the movements of the lips. Child produces his own sounds and suddenly produces syllables like ba-ba, da-da or ma-ma. He discovers that these words are not simply music but has some purpose and meaning. By the end of the year he has understood in the depths of unconscious, and in the height of consciousness created the language. It is the conscious impulse that makes this hurried acquisition of language, and the inner teacher makes him to go to adults who are talking to each other. When adults talk “baby language” to him they are not helping the child as child’s impulse forces him to take the language in its correct form. Rage is the only expression if the right means are lacking to enable him finds right words to express. Children having more favourable environment go straight to independence—the normal development without regression. The same is with the conquest of language. The effect of obstacles at this stage will remain permanently since all the impressions at this epoch are registered eternally. Any form of violence in speech or action does irreparable harm to children. Some form of impediments are obvious if care giver has the tendency to say don’t do this or don’t do that to child. Many senseless fear and nervous habits found in adults are traced back to some violence to the child’s sensitivity.

Children absorb language in a grammatical way unconsciously. While they remain inert for a long time, all of a sudden, they reveal a phenomenon within about two years three months—the explosion of language. When the baby was unable to express until two years three months the inner development of language was completing. In every race the child begins to speak at about two years of age. In India long ago children must have spoken Sanskrit which is found of surmountable difficulty. The Tamil language is very difficult for many because of its imperceptible sounds and accents where the meaning of the sentences is changed with slight lowering or raising of voice. Yet children of two year of age in villages speak the language. There exists in a child an unconscious mental state which is of the creative nature called absorbent mind. This mind constructs with inners sensitivities we call sensitive periods”. Montessori in her deliberations, time and again, has constantly exhorted adults



in society to follow the laws of nature in upbringing of children. Elaborating further she explains that:

“Life is divided into well-defined periods. Each period develops properties the construction of which is guided by the laws of nature. If the laws are not respected than the construction of the individual may become abnormal, even monstrous. If we follow nature’s laws than we recognise in children inner mysterious functions which direct the psychic creation of man. At present one of the most imminent dangers is that of going against the nature’s law in the education of the child. If the child has to incarnate the language of his people, than he ought to hear them talk and be present in their conversation. The child has the capacity to learn many languages at the same time. In the construction of mother tongue by the child, language is initially built up on the sounds of words and on grammar i.e. the order in which the words have to be placed to express thought. This is the first fundamental construction completed immediately after the child reached two years of age. Afterwards language is enriched spontaneously and new words are added which find their places in the order already established. Natural process of psychic development can happen when no obstruction is placed in the way of individual activity of children”.

Maria Montessori has influenced early learning (nursery education) of children all over the world in a significant way. She advocated freeing the child from the shackles of adult prejudices. “The prejudices of the whole society, organised by the adults, weigh upon the child although he/she is isolated in the family. In the course of evolution and the successive social movements for the rights of man the child is forgotten. The history of injustice committed against the child has not yet been written officially and is, therefore, not taught as part of the history studies. History of unrecorded martyrdom – children were tortured, their fingers tied to pen holders, they were beaten with rods, and forced to cruel exercise. The suffering of these little prisoners is too well-known —even if their spinal cord was twisted and deformed by being condemned to sit on wooden benches for hours on and, day after day, year after year and that during the years of early growth”.



The cruelty and violence toward children is still very much in practice in various forms. Some of these have been elaborated elsewhere under the heading 'issues of ECCE curriculum and its transaction'. Montessori was of the firm view that education must be reconstructed and based on the laws of nature and not on the pre-conceived notions and prejudices of adults. Putting great emphasis on psychic needs of child she stated that—"the needs of the child are more than that of simply physical life. Those of his intelligence and personality as a human being are equally urgent and much loftier. Ignorance is even more fatal than under nourishment or poverty. Learn to read and write is the beginning of education. The revelation of the child is not at all difficult to obtain. About four year old children revealed an unexpected phenomenon—the explosion into writing—the real explosion of activity and enthusiasm. This was not attributed to psychological fact. In everybody's eye children are empty being and suited for sleep and play. Serious mental work done by children seems sacrilegious. In the epoch of early childhood they are urged by nature to coordinate the movements of the hands, as is seen by their instinct to take everything in their hands. The hand of the child in the play age is led by life itself to lend itself to the indirect preparation for writing. The child also has real passion for drawing in that epoch. The hand can be prepared directly to trace the signs of the alphabets by the help of the tactile and muscular sense not by that of sight. Teaching children to trace them exactly by moving two fingers over each of them in the same direction as is followed in writing prepares children for writing. Reading also starts with preparation. It does not start with books. Apparatus consisting of small slips of paper on which are written the names of familiar objects, the child has to recognise the meaning of the word and place the slip near the object it indicates. Children are introduced action statement to teach nouns and verbs. Just as the analysis of words into their component sounds, performed during the word building, helps the child to realise his own language consciously, in the same way reading based on part of speech helps him to acquire consciousness of grammatical construction and function of each part of speech and place it should occupy in the sentence".



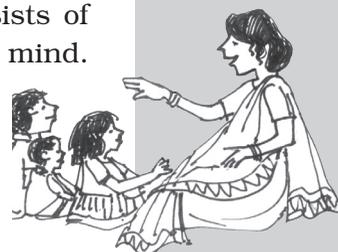
Maria Montessori on 'what you should know about your child', 1961 while addressing teachers and parents said— "for physical hunger you feed the child and for mental hunger you have to feed the mind and the spirit of the child. She elaborates that all efforts of growth are efforts to acquire independence. 'Help me to do it myself and self activity becomes the basis of education. Many parents who, instead of helping child to acquire independence, do things for the child and create situations where he/she becomes more and more dependent upon them. This results in hindering child's self activity and initiatives. The child derives happiness from accomplishing an activity and loves to achieve a complete unit of activity. The achievement, however, is trivial for adult but gives a sense of independence and power to the child. For example, child climbs stairs and tumbles down in the process of learning to climb. The child learns to climb without any outside help and moves to independence within a few efforts. Many teachers and parents who need punishment as necessary condition in learning, as they consider that spare the rod spoil the child, but there are many who think freedom brings discipline in class. Those who could study the child and penetrate into the psyche of the child could achieve the discipline. Children have been getting slaps, insults, beatings, locking up etc. a barrier has been raised from the ancient times in the hearts. The inner powers of child have never been recognised." Montessori advocates 'indirect intervention' while helping the child in his natural development. In learning child follows the inner laws of mental formation. There is direct link between the child and the environment. The teacher constitutes a link between them. The child learns from his own activity taking culture from the environment according to the natural process of absorbent mind".

3.1.2 *Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky on Young Children's Learning and Development*

While Montessori emphasised a great deal on how to facilitate child development to gain independence and maintained that all efforts of growth are efforts to acquire independence, Piaget focused on autonomy as the aim of education and to prepare autonomous learner as the main concern. Autonomy refers to the ability to make



decisions about right or wrong in the moral realm and what is true and untrue in the intellectual realm. It means to be governed by self. Heteronomy, as opposed to autonomy, means to be governed by others without verifying facts. If the child is continuously regulated to do this and to do that, or don't do this and don't do that then child has no opportunity to construct internal rules and be autonomous. In traditional methods of teaching 'to teach' means to put knowledge and moral values in child's head and 'to learn' means to internalised what is transmitted from outside. In constructivist approach of Piaget the child is guided to be autonomous learner. In this approach the children's development needs include self confidence, autonomy, self-help skills, personal social development, and communication skills. For achieving these goals safe, loving, joyful, encouraging, challenging and unhurried environment is created. Piaget's theory is based on the idea that developing child builds cognitive structures or mental maps or concepts for understanding physical experiences within his or her environment. He advocated that teachers must plan a developmentally appropriate curriculum that enhances student's conceptual and logical growth. Piaget identified four stages of development and process by which children progress through them. The stages are : i) Sensory Motor Stage (birth-2 years old), ii) Pre-Operational Stage (ages 2-7), iii) Concrete Operations Stage (ages 7-11) and iv) Formal Operations (ages 11-15). Child experiences environment using whatever mental maps he/she has constructed so far. If experience is repeated it is assimilated into the cognitive structure. If experience is different or new the child loses equilibrium and alters cognitive structure to accommodate new conditions. This process goes on till more adequate structures are created. The early childhood belongs to sensory motor and pre-operational stages. Piaget distinguished three kinds of knowledge based on their source: Physical knowledge, Logico Mathematical knowledge and Social knowledge. Physical knowledge is knowledge of objects in external reality. The color, shape, size, weight of objects which can be known empirically by observation are examples of physical knowledge. Logico mathematical knowledge consists of mental relationship and source of these relationships is mind.



Examples of social knowledge are holidays, written and spoken languages, and celebrations. Sources of this knowledge rest in social conventions.

Child learns through experiencing objects i.e. observation and acting on them. During the pre-operational period the physical and logico mathematical aspects remain undifferentiated and the child remains interested in the results of his action on objects. During the period of concrete operation the logico mathematical aspects become partially dissociated from the physical aspects. The child coordinates relationships and structures them in operational system. These systems become more powerful and child is able to make logical deductions. With the attainment of formal operations logico mathematical pole becomes independent. The above developmental sweep convinces us of the importance of physical knowledge activities for preschool children because at this point of time in their development children are keenly interested in objects and creating and coordinating the basic relationships. Since later relationships are created by coordinating the ones that were created earlier, that those are created during early childhood stage are indispensable for the later construction of knowledge. Physical knowledge activities are important also because they contribute to the development of certain attitudes which are necessary for intellectual development. This aspect is explained below in greater details under the heading 'children construct knowledge'. Social knowledge is similar to physical knowledge in that it requires specific information from the external world. Without specific inputs the child would not know the school is closed on Sundays or particular object is called glass. As the source of physical knowledge is objects the source of social knowledge is agreement among people. The distinction is made between the knowledge agreed upon solely by convention (social knowledge) and knowledge whose basis is coordination of points of view about what is good and what is bad concerning conduct was termed moral judgment. Example of social knowledge is, "no school on Sundays". Why on Sunday? There is no logic only convention. The example of morality concerning moral rule are governed by people as they regulate their actions like cheating stealing, lying etc.



Another very important perspective on learning was provided by Lev Vygotsky. He maintained that teaching learning process is in no sense the transmission of concepts defined verbally. The concept of 'Zone of Proximal Development' must be given its full weight. The zone of proximal development refers to the gap between what the children can do alone and what they can do with the help of teacher. Vygotsky talks of collaborative activity. In this process children are invited to think in spheres in which they are not used to operating. They do not do it alone. Teacher questions them, asks them to provide explanation and guides them in their pursuit. Teacher can help bring the child's knowledge to a higher level by intervening in the zone of proximal development through scaffolding.

3.1.3 Children Construct Knowledge

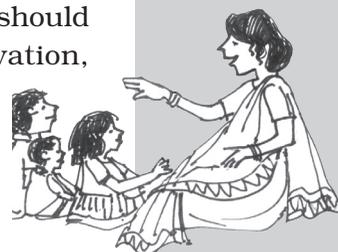
As discussed above, one of the basic principles that needs to be kept in mind while dealing with young children is that children construct their own knowledge. Children learn about their environment with experiences they gain on day-to-day basis. This process starts since the birth of the child. The interactions with socio-cultural and physical environment around child are the key elements to

Constuction of Knowledge

The basic essentials of constructivist theory are:

- Children construct their own understanding based upon their experiences.
- Children are not born as blank slates on which to write endless information.
- We all have experiences to draw upon and what we learn is affected by what we already know.
- Our experiences are unique therefore our understandings are unique.
- To learn, we apply what we already know to a new situation.
- Often understanding new information means that we have to adjust our thinking about the existing information

learning and construction of knowledge. Discovering relationship through direct experiences with objects, people and socio-cultural environment is important. Processes that are important and should be planned for construction of knowledge are — observation,



exploration, enquiry, encouragement, manipulation etc. For construction of knowledge by children the environment at home and preschool may need planning and organisation of experiences. The freedom and creative aspects need to be promoted providing facilities for art, craft drawing, painting, clay work and dramatisation and creative story making and story telling. The need to provide toys, suitable to age and stage of child is an equally important dimension of learning and constructing knowledge. We have rich cultural heritage of toys in all parts of the country. It would be most appropriate and in tune with the sound pedagogic principles to revive those toys and use in preschool education context. The local artisan can be of great help to provide these cultural items to children and make their learning joyful and socially relevant. As indoor environment can be made attractive with local toys, the outdoor environment can be organised in similar way by making play things available to ECCE centres like – swings, slides, climbing ropes, balancing beams made with locally available material. Sand, art material and science related items can be collected from the environment in rich quantities. Teacher preparation programmes may reflect these organisational needs to make ECCE culturally relevant. No less important is the need to make teachers and teacher educators understand the process through which children construct knowledge and how these material mentioned above are useful in the process of construction of knowledge. Jean Piaget work on how children think and how children construct knowledge has provided a valuable framework for promoting learning and development during early childhood stage. The work of Constance Kamii and Rehta De Veries 1978 'Physical Knowledge in Preschool Education' based on Piaget's theory highlights the process of child's learning and understanding of physical world, as discussed below.

"All babies and young children are interested in examining objects, acting on them and observing the object's reaction. Our aim should be to use this spontaneous interest by encouraging them to structure their knowledge in ways that are natural extension of knowledge they already have. In construction of knowledge, observation of the objects and action on the objects are both important. In the activities involving the movement of objects the



role of child's action is primary than that of observation. Whereas in activities where there is changes in objects, role of observation is primary and that of action is secondary. Aiming a ball toward a container is an action oriented activity. Activity for examining which object sinks and which floats is an observation oriented activity rather than action oriented. The purpose of making ice cubes is not to teach children about ice cubes but to stimulate ideas within the total atmosphere of experimentation. The approach thus emphasises children's initiative, their action on objects and observation of the feedback from the objects. Movement of objects—pulling, pushing, rolling, rocking, jumping, blowing, sucking, throwing, swinging, twirling, balancing and dropping, all activities in this category are examples of structuring of space and logico -mathematical knowledge in addition to physical knowledge. For example with an activity of blowing the straw child learns that it can move straight if blown at centre otherwise it may take a complete turn. If we ask children out of the given things (toy, stick, marble, small block, stone and straws) which can be blown and which can't be. The "blowability" of things is known. Some always blow some never blow or some time blow. The child must be able to produce the movement by his own action and vary his actions. The reaction of the object be observable and immediate. The activities that rely heavily on the role of observation are making paints, pottery, making candles, playing with ice and water. Here the actual change in objects is observed. The change is because of inherent properties of objects. There are activities which fall between these two categories like objects sinking or floating, shadow play, playing with mirror, producing echoes, looking through a magnifying glass touching various objects with magnets. The child constructs knowledge by acting on objects not by demonstration of readymade concepts. There are countless activities throughout the day when child elaborates physical knowledge".

The use of physical knowledge activities is conducive to knowledge of objects in the physical world but also to the development of intelligence and knowledge in a more general sense. The work of Piaget provides an insight into the nature of children's thought and stage of development. The questions such as how does the child think? And how does the child think differently at different stages?



He addressed the questions like what is knowledge and how did it develop? How do we know what we know? The distinction between the source of physical knowledge and logico mathematical knowledge is not entirely different. Physical experience bears directly on the objects and leads to knowledge. The child obtains information from objects by empirical abstraction. In empirical abstraction child focuses on a certain aspect and ignores others. In the logico mathematical experience the knowledge, the child gains from the experience, is derived not from the object but from the action bearing on the objects. Logico mathematical knowledge is constructed from reflective abstraction not from empirical abstraction. The word action has two meanings in Piaget's terminology. One is manipulative one when the child pulls, pushes and putting things. The second meaning is that child can act on objects even without touching them. He can sort, order, quantify objects mentally without physical manipulation, at this point physical manipulation becomes unnecessary. Mental action is necessary for the construction of knowledge —both physical and logico-mathematical; the physical manipulation is indispensable condition for mental action to become possible. Prior to learning of numbers a preschool age child has to acquire the experiences of qualitative measures such as more, less, the same, as many etc. which are logical notion of number. Piaget recognised the early use of seriation, conservation and classification as a start of representation. Knowledge of space and time is constructed by children as they make sense out of changes in objects and events by putting them into spatiotemporal relationship. Children asked to imagine what the level of the water look like in the tilted bottle? They draw level of water parallel to the bottom of the tilted bottle. Similarly, time too is a framework constructed by the children. Suppose two containers of different size are put below the taps of same size (allowing equal amount of water to flow) and removed after some time. When asked did we remove both the containers (of different size) from under the taps the same time? The answer was no because the larger one is not full. They were struck by the fact that smaller container is full while larger one is not and concluded that taps were not stopped at the same time. From this, it is obvious that children have not yet constructed a framework



in which simultaneity; temporal order; duration and final results can be coordinated. Children, therefore, need to be provided such learning environment where children can act upon, experiment, explore and manipulate to drive meaning for them.

Illustrations of activities

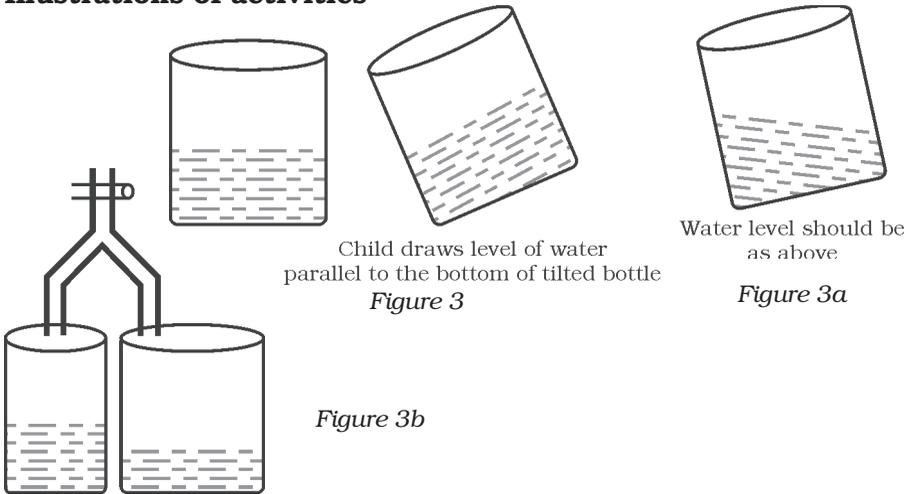


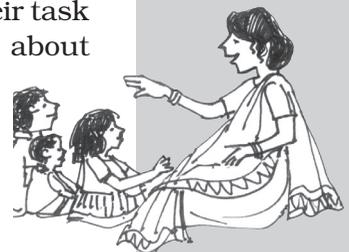
Figure 3

Figure 3a

Figure 3b

Example 1 : Rolling a ball to knock down empty bottles

Playing Group games have been found effective for socio-emotional development. This can be planned differently to develop autonomy in children as well. Children of preschool age are given some basic rule i.e. they have to roll the ball to knock as many bottles as possible. Children are then helped to negotiate themselves to decide who will play first, second, third or fourth. They also are helped to decide that who will stand where to perform the game. This is done to develop the skills of governing themselves and becoming autonomous, instead of depending on teacher to exercise control. Children negotiate and reach to an agreement to conduct the game. Negotiations are good not only for socio-emotional development but also for developing logico-mathematical knowledge. Children make numerical relationships as they count the number of bottles knocked down. The qualitative notion of number that the first child knocked down more bottles than the next one leads to development of number concept. They make spatial relationship as they want to stand close to the bottles as shorter distance would make their task easier. They also make temporal relationship when decide about



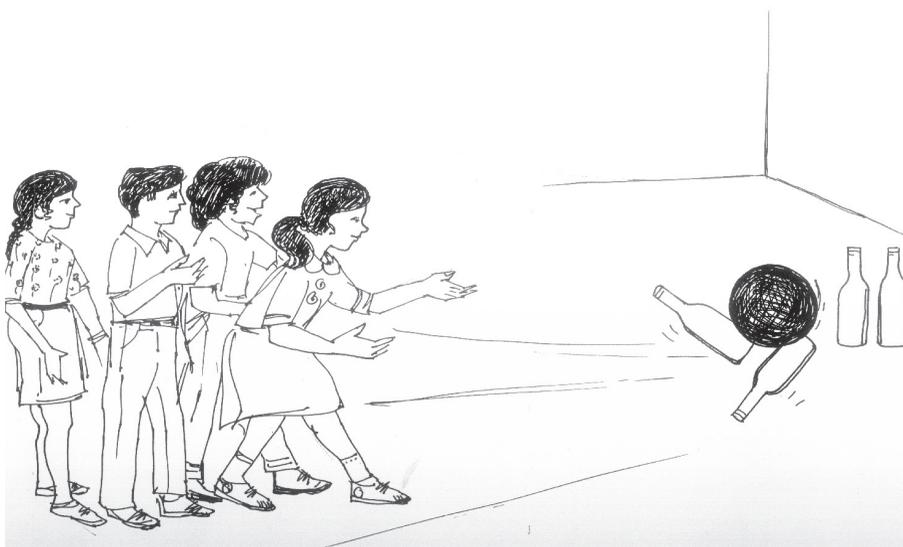


Figure 4

the turn of each one. The role of teacher has been of a facilitator. The objective was to achieve autonomy in children and accordingly teacher planned the activity. The instructions from teacher were minimal to initiate the activity and intervention of teacher was only when it was needed to help the child to take his/her own decision. Planning the activity by the teacher to achieve objectives was most important.

Example 2: Playing with pendulum

Teacher has to plan the activity by tying a string to the ceiling of the roof of the classroom and a knob is attached at the lower end of the string to make a pendulum, almost touching the surface of the floor. The knob is held and released from a distance from the point of suspension. It swings to and fro in a circular motion. Children love to play with it. If some object is placed on the path of the movement of the pendulum, at an appropriate distance, it would hit the object. In playing pendulum children take their turn to release the knob one by one and try to hit the doll or any object placed on the route (trajectory) pendulum takes when released. In this activity children get opportunities to think logically in making relationship between target point (where the doll or any other object of the doll's height is placed) and the point from where the pendulum is released. If the



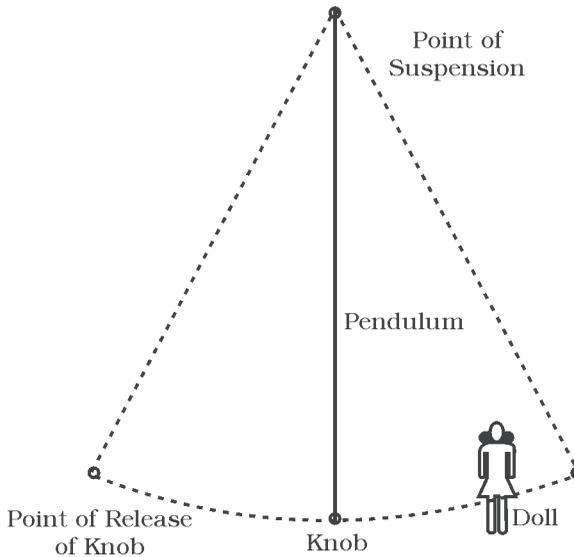
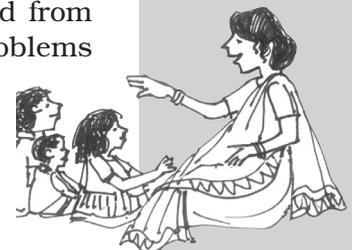


Figure 5

child puts the doll outside the path of the pendulum it won't hit the object (doll). Some children succeed and some may not. But with some efforts and clues provided by the teacher children get to know that there is a relation between the point of releasing the pendulum and the point where the object is placed in order to be knocked down. The activity is performed in two ways. Either the child has to go to a point where from he can hit the doll already placed or the child is asked to place the doll at a point in relation to the point of release of the pendulum. In both cases spatial relationship need to be established. This can be facilitated by the teacher or peer group. After placing the object child is asked would the pendulum hit it or not? If yes, why do you think so? If not, where should the object be placed to be knocked down? Child has to think and come out with logic to place the doll at distance. Child is given the trial to verify his/her answer. If not correct again chances may be given to try and come to logical conclusion for establishing spatial relationship. (Figure – 5)

Example 3: Problem solving

Children encounter various problems in their daily life, during their play times. Problem solving skills could be developed from the early stages if children are helped to solve their problems



encountered in learning and play situations. The approach adopted in solving problem may help children to develop thinking skills and independence. For example child during playing ball finds that it has landed above the almirah or a rack kept in the classroom having height is difficult to reach by the child. How to get it back for playing is the problem to be solved immediately. Child is not in a position to lay his hands because of the height of the almirah being nearly six feet. What could be the ways to solve this problem? One of the children who had experienced similar difficulty being solved at home suggested that if we can put the chair or a table below it and climb on it to reach the ball. Another child may suggest why we can't get a long stick to reach out to the ball. Yet another idea of climbing on the back of an older child to get it back may come forth. Some suggested hitting the ball with another ball to allow it to drop down. Many ideas may be generated and thinking skills could be promoted to solve a particular problem instead of getting the task done for the child by an adult. Children may use finally one strategy or combining more than one strategy to execute the plan. Execution of the plan depends upon the available resources. If a table is available the same may be used. If climbing on the table is difficult another plan to get a smaller stool may be mooted to reach first on the table. Children are encountered with such problems in their daily schedule. The need is to utilise such occasions for learning constructively. A lot depends on teachers how to handle the situation turning it into a learning experience, of course ensuring the safety of children.

Example 4 Creative storytelling

Children of preschool stage love to listen to stories. Children's thinking skill could be developed by seeking children's participation in story construction guided by the teacher. Children come out with various ideas while prompted to reveal what would happen next and build story on the feelings and thoughts of children. Child is first initiated into the story by introducing a situation to construct a story further. For example children are told that a calf lost her way in the jungle while grazing and left alone from her mother and the other cattle herd. What did the calf do, asked the teacher? She looked here and there for his mother and other animals came the reply from one of the children. He cried for help amma! amma!, said another child. He ran fast towards home revealed the next child.



What happened next, asked the teacher? There was silence; no response came. Teacher provided a clue to proceed. She suggested that cow mother might have heard the cry of her child. What would happen if her mother heard the calf's lowing, asked the teacher? When the mother heard the calf's cry for help she cooed back, responded one older child. Calf ran toward the direction from where her mother's cooing sound came, revealed yet another child. He ran fast and faster and located the herd said the next child. The calf was again united with the herd of cattle. Teacher can ignite children's imagination by asking some of the questions like— what would happen if no contact could be made between the calf and the cattle herd? What the calf do if he spotted dangerous wild animal nearby him in the jungle? If all cattle had reached home except the calf what the cattle owner would do? Teacher has many routes to ignite children's imagination, develop thinking skills and feelings of empathy and alertness.

3.1.4 Role of teachers as facilitator in construction of knowledge

Teachers' role has to go a major paradigm shift from the existing traditional approach to constructivist approach to learning. In constructivist approach the role of teacher in teaching learning is visualised as facilitator in construction of knowledge by child as against the behaviourist approach in which learning is conceived as a process of changing or conditioning observable behaviour. In the behaviourist approach the assumption is that there is a fixed world of knowledge and children's efforts are directed to accumulate knowledge and teachers' role is perceived to transmit it. It therefore relies on a transmission, instructional approach which is largely passive, teacher-directed and controlled. The mind of child is seen as an empty vessel. There is little room for student-initiated questions, independent thought or interaction between students. The goal of the learner is to regurgitate the accepted explanation or methodology expostulated by the teacher. Where behaviourism emphasises observable, external behaviours and, as such, avoids reference to meaning, representation and thought, constructivism takes a more cognitive approach. This subtle difference has profound implications for all aspects of a theory of learning. The way in which knowledge is



conceived and acquired, the types of knowledge, skills and activities emphasised, the role of the learner and the teacher, how goals are established: all of these factors are articulated differently in the constructivist perspective. In constructivist conception of learning, the teacher play the role of a “nurse in the birth of understanding” as opposed to being “mechanics of knowledge transfer”. Their role is not to dispense knowledge but to provide students with opportunities and incentives to build it up. Teachers are described as ‘guides’, and learners as ‘sense makers’. Understanding the role of the teacher in the constructivist classroom provides a useful vantage point from which to grasp how the theory impacts on practice: The role of the teacher has two important components. The first is to introduce new ideas where necessary and to provide the support and guidance for students to make sense of these for themselves. The other is to listen and diagnose the ways in which the instructional activities are being interpreted to inform further action. Teaching from this perspective is also a learning process for the teacher. Methodological approaches are required to be much more circumspect and reflexive because there is no “royal road” to truth or near truth. An awareness of the social construction of knowledge suggests a pedagogical emphasis on discussion, collaboration, negotiation, and shared meanings.

In this paradigm, learning emphasises the process and not the product. How one arrives at a particular answer, and not the retrieval of an ‘objectively true solution’, is what is important. Learning is a process of constructing meaningful representations, of making sense of one’s experiential world. In this process, students’ errors are seen in a positive light and as a means of gaining insight into how they are organising their experiences. The notion of doing something ‘right’ or ‘correctly’ is to do something that fits with “an order one has established oneself”. This perspective is consistent with the constructivist tendency to privilege multiple truths, representations, perspectives and realities. The concept of multiplicity has important implications for teaching and learning. Multiplicity is an overriding concept for constructivism. Teacher has to play a significant role in respecting this multiplicity. At preschool stage this view holds all the more significance because of its direct bearing to the context in which learning takes place. There is no place for the belief that ‘spare



the rod spoil the child' in this perspective of teaching. Teachers who think freedom brings discipline in class are nearer to this perspective. If we try to cram children with lot of facts and adopt content approach, to mug up, as traditional educators try to do, we will have the short term illusion of having taught a great deal when in fact we have contributed to the stifling of construction, on the long run? In constructivist approach while it is vital to encourage free activity by the child in the course of cognitive exploration, a certain degree of systematisation coming from the teacher may be needed in the interest of developing the capacity of child to reason intellectually. Child is not seen operating in a total solitude.

The above explanation attempts to outline the differences between the two approaches— the traditional (behaviourist) and constructivist and the respective roles of teacher. During preschool stage foundations for construction of knowledge by children need to be firmly laid and teacher need to be acquainted with the basic features, methodologies and advantages of constructivist approach to teaching and learning. The role of teacher in preschool class has to go a major shift toward child centered and constructivist approach from the present practice of formal and rote teaching learning methods. The role reversal could be further highlighted with the help of examples of activities already given above where children are helped to become autonomous learner and teacher acted as a facilitator.

In the first example we saw teacher had a well planned activity of 'rolling a ball to hit the empty bottles' with clear objectives to guide children to observe and verify for themselves the numerical, spatial and temporal relationships. Teacher only helped children to reflect on the action each child was involved. There were opportunities for children to adjust their positions and actions to get maximum bottles knocked down and evaluate the efforts. Children were put from the very beginning in a collaborative and peer learning mode. Teacher's interference was not at all there in the conduct of the activity. It was a deliberate and purposeful intervention by teacher when the same was needed. In contrast what we see in preschool classes mostly is that children are subjected to rote learning and there is hardly



any space given to children to enjoy freedom collaboration and be absorbed in meaning making process or activity. In the second example of 'pendulum' teacher was constantly observing the children and helping them to understand the spatial relationship between pendulum and the distance at which an object is placed on a path of the movement of pendulum by asking children various questions and providing clues to them such as (i) would pendulum hit the object if it is placed at a point outside the path or at a distance outside the reach of the pendulum? (ii) If object is placed at point on the route of the pendulum than what would be the point of release of the pendulum to be able to strike the object? Children develop reasoning trying to answer such questions and performing action to verify the same. Understanding the process through which the child has reached the conclusion is what is important.

Another example for highlighting the needed shift in teacher's role in a constructive class of preschool children could be 'creative art activities'. It is often seen that teachers by and large dictate what has to be made by children and intervene in children's work, for example, correcting a piece of child's drawing or clay work to suite the adult psyche. Children's thoughts are not respected or given importance. Children are expected to follow a pattern that already exists. This is really not the way a constructivist teacher has to play her role. Instead whatever the child has drawn has to be looked from the child's point of view and the meaning child has given to it. It has tremendous value for a teacher to understand the child's context and thinking process. Then only child will be motivated to express his/her feelings and emotions freely. The concept of right and wrong has no meaning whatsoever in art activities. Once a child had drawn an apple and coloured it with green colour. Teacher made him correct the colour by replacing the green with red. Without understanding child's perspective teacher changed the creation of the child. What we see in this example is that all the principles of construction of knowledge—that there is multiplicity in children's perspectives, that there is no royal road to truth, that there is no one right or wrong answer, that the process is important not the product etc., were divorced by the teacher. With above description



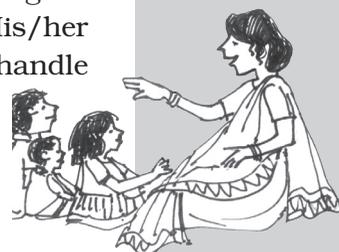
of views and perspective on learning and development of children during early years we need to clearly articulate the needs and characteristics of children during the sub-stages of ECCE for designing developmentally appropriate programme for each of the sub-stages. The sub-stages are categorised as under- three (birth -3 years), preschool (3-6 years) and early primary (6-8) stage.

3.1.5 Needs and Characteristics of Under-three Children

Some common characteristics of children below three years are: they love to play with attractive, colourful toys and mobiles; they like to explore the world around them; they are active, full of energy and curious to know about the immediate environment. Besides the physical need for food, sleep, rest, exercise, fresh air and sunshine, the first basic need of a child is for security and acceptance. A child gets this from love, warmth and support of the immediate caregiver. The second basic need is for exploration and activity, and for self-expression. Exploration, which forms a basis of learning, is through five senses. Solitary play is the norm at this stage. The first three years are the most critical years of life for allround development of a child. This is the time when children are learning various social, cognitive, language and motor skills very fast. Child learns to walk and talk and he/she is in the process of acquiring other life skills. Stimulation in the form of stories, songs and lullabies help children learn basic language skills. Interpersonal communication helps child immensely to acquire language competence. The child attempts to reach out to things, explore the environment and learns to deal with it. He/she is also learning to make the sense of the social world, developing an understanding of social relationship and developing a feeling of trust and love.

3.1.6 Characteristics of Preschool Children

The development of self concept at this stage is important. Some common characteristics are seen in 3 to 6-year-olds attending preschool centers. It has been observed that preschool children are full of energy, curious to know and eager to learn things, look at the world from their own point of view. A child at this stage is very active; his/her bones and muscles are still developing. His/her thinking is controlled by his own perception, He/she can handle

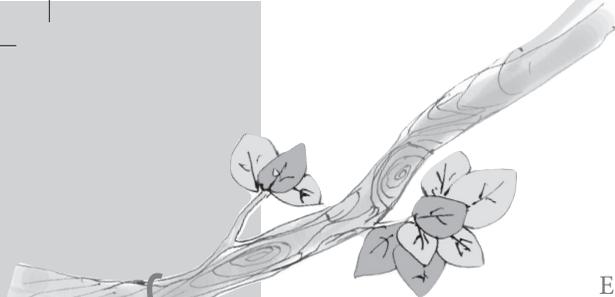


one object at a time; responds spontaneously to music rhyme and rhythm; wants to play and needs to jump, crawl, run and balance as he/she finds all these activities enjoyable and fun. The young child finds it difficult to sit still for a long time, pay attention to or concentrate on one activity for more than 7 to 15 minutes. He/she has a natural tendency to explore his/her environment and discover properties, patterns and relationships. He/she likes to play with toys, games, puzzles, blocks, enjoys song, stories, puppets, drama, mask plays etc. The child plays parallel to other child at this stage and slowly moves to associate other child in his/her play. A child responds instantly to love, praise and criticism. A child, like a scientist, is constantly manipulating, experimenting, trying-out, exploring, hypothesising, problem-solving, discovering and learning about her/his surroundings and the people in it. This need, though present right from birth, becomes stronger during preschool years. Research evidence indicates that maximum learning takes place when preschool children actually experience and do things for themselves with concrete objects. These characteristics have a lot of bearing on the kind of content and methods selected for young children's education.

3.1.7 Characteristics of 6-8 year olds

Children at this stage, i.e. during early primary grades, demonstrate considerable verbal ability and begin to read, write and reason out things. They develop concept and skills of problem solving. They have shifted from solitary and associative play to group play and show keenness to adhere to the rules of the games and participate actively in team games. Socially they respond and try to understand others point of view and show mutual give and takes. Children can take on structured activities both academic and co-curricular to some extent. However children's learning remains largely based on their experiences of the immediate environment.

Based on the developmental characteristics and needs of 0-6 years' children the following objectives have been formulated. Achieving the objectives of Early Childhood Care and Education has significance for allround development of a child's personality and also for national development.



3.2 OBJECTIVES OF ECCE

In conformity with the developmental characteristics and the needs of children during early childhood stage (birth-6 years) the objectives of ECCE are:

- To develop in child a good physique, adequate muscular coordination and basic motor skills.
- To develop in the child good health habits and to build the basic skills necessary for personal, social adjustment such as washing, cleaning, dressing, and going to toilet.
- To develop the child's ability to express his/her thoughts and feelings in fluent, correct, clear speech.
- To encourage independence and creativity by providing the child with the sufficient opportunities for self expression.
- To stimulate intellectual curiosity and to help him/her understand the world around him and foster new interests by providing opportunities to explore, investigate and experiment.
- To develop desirable social attitudes and manners to encourage healthy group participation and making child sensitive to the rights and privileges of others.
- To develop emotional maturity by guiding the child to express, understand, accept and control his feelings and emotions
- To encourage aesthetic appreciation.

The ways in which we can organise experiences for allround development of children at under-three and preschool stage is important for achieving the objectives of ECCE.

3.3 DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PROGRAMME (CURRICULUM) FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Curriculum is defined as the sum total of all the experiences planned for the child in accordance with his/her needs, keeping in mind the age and stage of development. In ECCE we should use the word curriculum with caution so that it is not taken in its formal sense as is applicable for primary, upper primary and higher stages of education. Kothari Commission 1964-66 had clearly suggested that the word "programme" be used for preschool stage



instead of curriculum. This was perhaps done because there is a danger of treating ECCE stage strictly in a formal way and devising syllabi and textbooks for this stage alike the primary stage. This is what exactly happening at present. It is, therefore, suggested that word curriculum be used for planning and organising variety of experiences for children strictly in accordance with the objectives of pre-primary education. In order to organise such experiences there would be a need to develop suitable curricular guidelines for this stage instead of curriculum and syllabus in the formal sense. Developing curricular guidelines would be important because as soon we say curriculum it is translated into a syllabus with content of formal teaching of three Rs. This is not the purpose of ECCE.

Based on the objectives of ECCE activities need to be planned for development and learning of children within birth-6 age group i.e. infants and toddlers and preschool children. Brief outline of activities and programme for children at different stage is presented below

3.3.1 Early Stimulation for Young Children (birth-3 years)

Children are curious at this stage and want to explore the world around them. They learn through experimentation, manipulation and experiencing things around them. It is important for a child, whether at home or in an institutional setting, to experience a stimulating environment filled with colourful and manipulative objects, rocking toys etc. that appeal to infants and toddlers. Children learn to relate with others by rich sensorial activities, which provide the base for concept formation. An appropriate programme for under-three invites play, active exploration and movement and protection from excessive stress. Within homes mothers massage the baby, sing lullabies, infant rhymes and play baby games that stimulate them. These help child to distinguish the familiar face from the strange; a task mastered by the time the baby is nine months old. Babies need to be held, spoken to and rocked and cuddled. There must be visual stimulates, objects to help and manipulate. Non-mobile children need to be held and carried to enable them to value movement and later exploration. In the second year of life, infant is able to recognise the people and has the beginnings



Early Stimulation

Music, toys, listening to stories, lullabies, playing games and making use of them in daily activities like bathing, dressing, feeding, going to bed are strong stimulators. Promoting early stimulation activities through home base models/institutional setup would be an important aspect under all the interventions.

Feeding Practices

Feeding the child is important but how feeding is done is more important for security, trust and social bonding. Each child needs experientially rich environment for development, rich not merely in terms of costly clothes, good food, and expensive toys but it is richness reflected of the experiences in terms of parent child interaction and its quality.

of language. Conversation, picture, books and objects are essential part of the infant's environment. The two year old needs sand play, ball play and many experiences of filling and pouring to allow fine motor experiences. At home setting mother can use household material to engage the child in cognitive stimulation activities. The guiding principle for the under-threes is the importance of relationship with the familiar adult. Stimulation at early childhood stage involves efforts to activate the child's early development. Development

takes place as result of interaction between maturation and learning. The components of early stimulation are warmth, love, support of the mother, sensory experiences for building basic trust. Hugging, fondling, watching and reaching out to mother, listening to mother, playing with toys and games, listening to stories, memory games, hide and seek games, music, lullabies, rhymes, song all are strong stimulators.

3.3.2 Status of Programmes for Under-threes

The emotional, social, cognitive, language, physical and personal needs of children during first three years are most important and lay the foundation for later development. This is the period when maximum brain development takes place and foundations for healthy habits and values are laid down. But this age group during early childhood stage has remained left out by and large.



Outreach of programmes for the birth-3 year age children is very limited. The coverage of children in crèches and day care centres under the government sector is largely through Rajiv Gandhi National Scheme of crèches. The coverage of this programme as per WCD estimate is limited to 22038 only. However, expansion of the scheme is on high demand. There is provision for child care facilities under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. But how much awareness is there to use this provision at grassroots level is to be assessed and needs to be promoted for optimal utilisation of the available provision. Similarly, in SSA under NPEGEL (National Programme of Education for Girls at Elementary Level) the provision was made for child care facilities for facilitating girls' participation in schooling process. However, the coverage was limited and opportunities underutilised. The quality of interaction between the care giver and the child for rich stimulation of child, needs a lot of improvement. Not only there is need to improve the quality of crèches wherever they exist, there is need to reach out to parents to help them to be an educator of their children through improved knowledge, skills of early stimulation activities. There is need to implement the provision made in the National Policy on Education 1986/Programme of Action 1992 for upgrading anganwadi into anganwadi cum crèche in a phased manner. The recommendation that childcare will be integrated with pre-primary has remained neglected so far. The programme of action had suggested implementing home-based model, day care and family day care model to enhance the coverage of quality early stimulation to young children. The home-based model envisages to promoting skills of parents and care-givers to be the educators of their children. These models need to be revived and promoted. Therefore, mass mobilisation of parents through planned strategies is needed.

3.3.3 Early Childhood Education (ECCE) Curriculum

ECCE or preschool education aims to achieve an allround development of all the children of 3 to 6 years of age. It is an institutionalised programme to promote allround development of the child. It aims to compensate for the deprivation of any kind at home and helping child develop normally and optimally. Allround



development includes cognitive development, language development, social emotional development, physical motor development, development of creativity and values.

Cognitive or mental development includes development of five senses, memory, problem-solving, imagination, concept formation, concentration and skills of observation and understanding of the environment around him or her.

Language development is the ability to communicate with others, to comprehend speech and express thoughts (i.e. receptive and expressive language).

Social and emotional development includes an understanding of the relationship of self to other, ability to regulate oneself and one's emotion, development of social skills.

Physical and motor development means ability to control body movements through gross and fine muscle coordination, coordination of hand and eye movements.

Development of creativity and aesthetic appreciation includes ability to appreciate nature's beauty, patterns and forms and express through creative and art activities.

Development of values relate to personal, social, cultural, secular and scientific values; development of healthy habits and also inculcating a sense of discipline.

Two years' preschool education has been part of school education as envisaged in National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2005. The activities, experiences and environment necessary for promoting the development in all the above areas constitute the core of ECCE programme (curriculum). The National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT), through various advocacy measures, have highlighted the need for good ECCE programme. It advocates that a good (quality) programme of early childhood care and education–

- Focuses on holistic development of a child.
- Is child-centered, which follows the play way and activity-based method.
- Provides stimulating play environment for intellectual, social, physical, emotional and creativity development.
- Prepares children for primary schooling.



- Lays emphasis on concrete experiences through interaction with and exploration of the environment, both physical and socio-cultural.
- Has flexible planning and scheduling.
- Provides an opportunity to all children, especially disadvantaged children, for a fair start to formal schooling.
- Is inclusive in organisation and implementation.

Learning and development occur continuously at all times and all places. The entire-range of experiences is a child's curriculum for learning at preschool stage. The environment for learning experiences is important for the quality of early childhood care and education. Designing an environment that is conducive to child's learning and development becomes the real challenge. One of the surest ways to ensure such an environment is to organise a centre based preschool programme which is balanced and promotes allround development and addresses developmental and learning needs of children. A developmentally appropriate programme is that which provides enough flexibility and scope to address developmental and learning needs of 3 to 6 year age children. A balanced programme provides adequate coverage to various aspects of child's development and learning viz. cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social, physical and motor development and the development of creativity and values. It has been reiterated by National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2005, which emphasises that the curriculum framework and pedagogy for ECCE must be based on the holistic perspective. It means that during ECCE stage, along with education and stimulation, health and nutrition components should be integral part of the curriculum. It also emphasises on early identification and assessment of disability and providing appropriate stimulation right from the early childhood stage. The underlined principles of ECCE Curriculum as per the NCF 2005 are:

- Early childhood is valid in itself.
- It has its own identity and is a part of life, not simply preparation for the next stage of education.
- Learning is holistic for the young child not compartmentalised in subject.



- The social, emotional, cognitive physical developments are nature related.
- Children construct knowledge and learn through first-hand experiences.
- What children can do, not that they cannot do, is the starting point of children' education.
- The adults and children to whom child relates are of central importance.
- The child's education is seen as an interaction between the child and the environment, which includes people as well as material and knowledge.
- There are individual differences and each child is unique.

Keeping in mind the basic principles of learning and child development and the principles of programme planning stated above there is a need to understand and organise a balanced programme for three to four year old children and for the five-year-olds. The following programmes, for 3-4 year and 5+ year olds, have been suggested as model programmes.

3.3.4 Programme for the Three to Four Year Olds

The child leaves home and comes to a nursery school for the first time. The first task is to win his/her trust and confidence. A child should feel that he/she is welcomed. Teacher has to work with children individually. The child should get sufficient opportunities for indoor and outdoor play. During first year of pre-schooling more of free play and child initiated activities should be promoted.

To promote allround development, activities planned for physical motor development could include - throwing ball, jumping, climbing, pedaling, rhythmic movements, crawling, creeping games, imitating animal's walk, balancing, brush painting, tearing, pasting, threading etc. with appropriate provision of equipment and materials. These activities may continue for older children with higher levels of difficulty.

For language development, activities like- storytelling, rhymes, dolls' play, free conversation, show and tell activity, dramatisation, puppet play focusing on listening and speaking skill, are planned.

For cognitive development a variety of activities suitable for 3 to 4 year age group children are planned, which may include activities for



sensory development, colour and shape concepts, memory games, building blocks, classification and matching games and pre-number concepts. Children are also provided science experiences through simple experiments, excursions and nature walks.

For creative expression and development of aesthetic appreciation children are provided activities for drawing, painting, collage work, music and movements, dramatisation, pattern making, creative thinking, flower arrangement, craftwork, etc.

For social development children are given opportunities to share play materials, play with dolls and play group games. They are encouraged to use words like “thank you”, “please” etc. They also are provided with experiences for cleanliness, waiting for their turn and set their own standards of behaviour.

For emotional development children are encouraged to express their thoughts, act out their problems through various play situations and release pent-up emotions. Pretend plays, socio-dramatic play, dolls play help children express their emotions.

As learning occurs in a context rich with social and cultural interactions, organising religious festivals like ‘Id’, ‘Diwali’, ‘Holi’ and national festivals like ‘Independence Day’, ‘Republic day’, etc. provide children experiences about learning to live together and to appreciate others’ culture and respect others feelings.

It is important to understand that development occurs holistically and all the above areas of child development are inter-related. It’s impossible to dissociate physical, motor, language, social and cognitive development from one another. A tense and emotionally insecure child cannot undertake cognitive adventures. Similarly, cognitive and physical developments are interrelated. Cognitive development almost never occurs without emotional or social development and vice-versa. Activities for promoting different developmental aspects are planned for ensuring a more balanced and holistic programme.

3.3.5 Programme for 5+ Year Olds

The programme for 5+ year old children in preschool is geared towards promoting school readiness through free play, outdoor play, activities for aesthetic and creativity development such as, music, dance, painting and science experiences etc. What is the ‘readiness’



that is needed? Preparing children for formal schooling i.e. the readiness programme, involves activities for reading readiness, writing readiness and readiness for numbers. It is required for developing an interest and enthusiasm for school. It is also necessary in terms of developing certain specific skills and abilities, which are prerequisites for learning 3Rs in a meaningful way. For example, in order to learn to read with understanding, it is necessary to have an adequate vocabulary, the skills of differentiating between sounds, as also between shapes and the ability to relate sounds with words. For writing readiness, development of fine muscular coordination and skills are necessary. Similarly, for learning mathematics children must have pre-number concepts and be able to classify and place objects in order skillfully prior to learning and understanding actual numbers.

For reading readiness; picture reading, story reading, dramatising a story, playing word games, identifying initial and last sounds of words (auditory discrimination), discrimination between different forms (visual discrimination), matching sound with objects (audio-visual association) sentence comprehension with the aid of action pictures, vocabulary building games etc. are promoted. Opportunities are also given to develop skills of comprehension, sequential thinking, classification, generalisation etc. with the help of flannel-graph or use of picture cards.

Writing readiness is developed by means of such activities as drawing, copying, tracing, completing figures, crayon work, painting with brush etc. Children are also helped to acquire sense of direction from left to right or right to left for both reading and writing readiness

Readiness to work with numbers is developed through various activities related to pre-number concepts, sequential thinking, classification and matching games.

These experiences are given through concrete objects. The experiences for the development of pre-number concepts like - more-less, heavy-light, long-short, far-near, thick-thin and seriation activities in the form of big, bigger, biggest; light, lighter, lightest; or heavy, heavier, heaviest; far, farther, farthest; near, nearer, nearest at three choice level difficulty are introduced.



What should be a balanced and developmentally appropriate programme for 3-4 years and 5+ year old children has been briefly discussed above to provide an idea to teachers and teacher educators. However, keeping in view the trends of downward extension of curriculum to preschool stage, it is equally important to caution the teachers and teacher educators about— 'what preschool education is not and should not be'.

3.3.6 What Preschool Education should not be?

There is a nation-wide concern about the quality of early childhood education especially on account of early introduction of three Rs and putting heavy academic burden on children at such a tender age. In this context, it becomes important to know not only what preschool education is, but also what preschool is not (or should not be). The following points are made to make it clear to parents and educators about what preschool education is not. It may provide relief to children from the tyranny of teaching of 3 Rs and pressures of rote learning. There is therefore a need to emphasise that early childhood education is not:

- a teacher centered programme.
- a programme focusing on academic achievements.
- a programme with emphasis on teaching of 3 Rs.
- the downward extension of primary grades.
- a rigid syllabus bound programme.
- a programme focusing on formal evaluation of children on academic subjects.
- a programme that robs children's freedom at home by way of home work on 3 Rs, i.e. reading, writing and arithmetic.
- a programme with formal classroom approach i.e. use of blackboard, chalk, table and chairs suitable for the older children.
- a programme that is far away from child's home or community and puts burden on children and parents on account of distance and transportation.
- a programme that gives a sense of failure and rejection before he/she has really started schooling,
- a programme that ignores individual differences and individuality of the child.
- a programme that ignores the socio-cultural context in which children live.



As we have discussed that there is serious concern at national level to see that children are not subjected to heavy load of curriculum from the early childhood stage. To address this issue the National Focus Group on ECCE constituted under the National Curriculum Framework 2005 has advocated useful guidelines for planning and managing ECCE programmes. It would be useful for teachers and teacher educators of ECCE to take the following guidelines into consideration while planning implementing preschool activities.

3.3.7 Suggested Curricular Guidelines

The following guiding principles are advocated by the National Focus Group Report on ECE 2006:

Play as the Basis for Learning

ECCE setting must cater for supervised play with objects such as balls, sand, swings and rocking toys. The play area should be appropriate to explore and gain mastery over physical competencies. Jungle gym, walking and balancing areas would help children gain physical balance. Running, jumping, balancing are necessary for 3 year olds. Free play can be both indoor as well as outdoors activity. Beading, peg boards, puzzles, mechanical toys are conducive for fine motor skills and are generally played indoor. Indoor free play area should also provide time for play in small groups, e.g., puzzles, drama or other acts of imitative play.

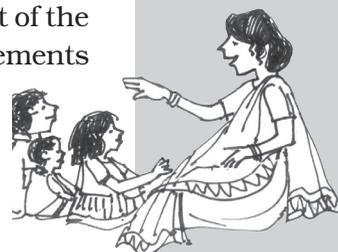
Guiding Principles

Guiding principles outlined by the National Focus Group Report: Position Paper on ECE 2006

- play is the basis of learning,
- art is the basis of education,
- blend of textual and cultural,
- mix of formal and environmental interaction
- Recognising special features of children's thinking
- familiarity and challenge in everyday life,
- emphasis on experience rather than expertise,
- developmentally appropriate practice,
- use of local materials, arts and knowledge,
- Integration of health well-being and healthy habits.

Art as the basis for education

Aesthetic experience through music and art can easily be part of the daily rhythms, e.g., beginning the day with songs, group movements



and physical exercise. Creative drama is particularly an enabling experience. If possible children should be provided experiences with the help of local artists.

Blend of Textual and Cultural

Print rich environment helps children to acquire skills of literacy faster and the cultural context makes the learning meaningful. The focus, therefore, should be on culture specificity and print rich environment. It should not be taken to mean as adopting method of formal instruction before the start of primary schooling.

Mix of Formal and Informal Interactions

Personalising the pedagogical space (or making children feel at home) is most crucial for young children. A special time can be set aside when children can talk about their personal preference, choice and events small group work and big circle time should be organised.

Recognition of the Special Features of Child's Thinking

Children express their feelings and emotions and reveal their interest, aptitude through activities they do or do not want to do. They love to explore, manipulate things around them. Children learn mathematics, science by pouring, filling cups with sand, counting beads, distributing plates for snacks. They enjoy sorting objects, putting objects in ascending or descending order. They learn about transformation in the environment, watch the plants grow. The ECCE teacher needs to turn their attention to such acts of children through conversations in an atmosphere of trust. Asking children to talk about their personal likes, dislikes and emotions and how they think about the world around them and themselves are example of children's meaning-making processes.

Primacy of Experience not Expertise

Children need to experience a diverse range of activities such as songs, musical experience, knowing about different peoples, dresses, food habits, celebration of festivals, etc. Knowing about social diversities is of special significance for developing tolerance and attitudes of peace in multi-cultural contexts. At ECCE stage the emphasis has to be on providing experiences not on expertise development.



Use of Local Materials, Arts and Knowledge

One of the easiest tasks for any ECCE teacher is to pick up leaves, pebbles and flower petals and use them for sorting according to colour, shape or size. Rangoli, kolam, alpana are floor arts prevalent in different regions and children can be helped to use the materials creatively for these arts' forms. Children gain a lot by being exposed to local arts, stories, folk tales, songs and language variations. Their inclusion makes the ECCE setting an extension of the community. Such experiences influenced children's social competence and awareness about the socio-cultural background of people.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices

The ECCE programme needs to cover all areas of development – physical, social, emotional, social, and cognitive and it should be linguistically rich, individually appropriate and contextually meaningful. Activities must be concrete, real and relevant to the lives of children.

The organisation of activities must be multi-cultural and sensitive to gender and caste/ethnic concerns.

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3.4 METHODS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

Play is natural to young children. But the same is not given much emphasis in various ECCE programmes. There is need to promote play way method at preschool stage as it is the primary medium of transacting ECCE curriculum. In ICDS preschool education component is called the backbone of ICDS, but the same is the weakest component among all. ECCE in private and NGO sectors is not regulated for its quality and mostly the programmes of preschool education implemented by these sectors adhere to downward extension of primary education, use of rote learning, lack of use of play way method etc.

3.4.1 Play-Way Method

The most effective way to teach young children of preschool age is through "Play-way method". As mentioned above play is the natural instinct of children. Play may be spontaneous or structured, depending upon needs, age and interests of children. The significance of play in child's learning and allround development has



been acknowledged since time immemorial. The miniature-carts, utensils and toys found in excavation at Indus Valley Civilisation sites are testimony to the use of play materials by children in a by-gone era. All other civilisations of the world besides Indian also recognise the importance of play for a young child's development. Early educators like Comenius, Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel among others protested against drilling and rote memorisation and emphasised the role of play as natural vehicle for learning at early childhood stage. Indian philosophers, poets and educators like Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Vivekananda and others criticised the method of rote learning, emphasis on information feeding and use of uninteresting lessons. "Education is not the amount of information that is put into the brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life building, man making, character-making assimilation of ideas", stated Swami Vivekananda.

In what ways play has an important role in child's allround development?

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) lays the foundation for allround development of the child viz. physical, motor, cognitive, linguistic, aesthetic, emotional, social development and development of values and creativity. Play provides opportunities for development of all these aspects in a harmonious and integrated manner. Play essentially contains the elements of activity-based, child-centered and joyful learning approaches. It is important for caregivers, parents and teachers to understand the potential of play in the context of child's learning and development.

The value of play for physical motor development needs no special emphasis. Child gains both gross and finer muscular coordinations through play activities. Gross motor skills are those that involve the control and coordination of large muscle of the body. Opportunities for jumping, hopping, running, climbing, swinging, balancing etc. provide enough scope for gross motor coordination. These experiences do not need expensive gyms with expensive equipment. They can be provided with inexpensive items of equipment. A small rope ladder made out of thick rope and tied firmly to the low branch of a tree should for example, serve the purpose of climbing and can replace the expensive jungle gyms.



Fine motor skills as the name suggests involve the finer/smaller muscles of the body particularly of hands, fingers and eyes. Fine muscular co-ordination is gained by activities like making clay balls, drawing on sand, brush painting, crayon drawing, tearing and pasting, collage work, threading beads, manipulating finger puppets etc.

Play provides ample opportunities to develop the five senses i.e. hearing, sight, taste, touch and smell for development of five senses different games can be planned. For example, for developing the sense of hearing it is necessary that children listen to different sounds — chirping of birds, the buzzing transport, animal sounds, etc. For the preschool child playing a game of beginning sounds of words is meaningful for language competence. Similar games can be played for developing other senses i.e. touch, taste, visual acuity and smell.

Play situations, which provide children opportunities to classify things, make patterns, manipulate things; and group them on the basis of colour, texture, shape; seriate things from the lightest to the heaviest and the smallest to the biggest; play with puzzles, blocks, construction toys, memory games etc. are conducive to cognitive development.

Play is also important for language development. Maximum use of language occurs in dramatic plays, make believe or pretend plays, use of puppetry, riddles, rhyming words, language games and storytelling. Organising these activities promote skills of listening and speaking. A child progresses in pre-reading and pre-writing skills with suitably planned play activities for language development.

Play is an effective medium for promoting social skills by appreciating others' points of view, sharing things and learning to give and take. A child's pattern of social development is reflected through child's play preferences. In the beginning 3+ children may prefer playing alone i.e. solitary play. But slowly he/she starts playing parallel to other child, which is called parallel play. In due course child plays in association with other child, which is called associative play and finally leads to co-operative play when a child starts co-operating with others in play situations. The child develops



friendship that is not so stable in the beginning but slowly develops more stable friendship. Play also provides opportunities to develop leadership qualities among children from the very beginning.

Imagination is central to contents of education. Play provides ample opportunities for imagination. Children from families where participation in imaginative and pretend play is encouraged show much more imaginative thinking. Preschool centres could compensate this deficiency in the case of children who belong to households where the environment is not very stimulating.

One of the advantages of play is that it leads to emotional development of the child. Play act as a safety valve for tensions and releases pent-up emotions. A child uses play to act out his problem. In this case play has a great therapeutic value.

In pursuance of the National Policy on Education 1986 (modified in 1992), NCERT through its various interventions including training and other programmes, has advocated the use of play way method. However, the impact continues to remain partial. A large number of preschools including those in the anganwadis network do not make effective use of play in providing worthwhile experiences to children. Either play is not given much importance or it is altogether absent from such institutions. A major reason might be that a majority of parents still look upon play as waste of time. Parental education is therefore called for. Educating parents about the educational value of play will help educators of young children to provide a variety of play opportunities and enrich children's learning environment at home.

In many cases teachers themselves do not lay any emphasis on play mainly because of lack of proper training and often the absence of even simple and inexpensive equipment. With opportunities for play restricted the easiest way is to adhere to the teaching of 3 Rs, the use of formal method and chalk and talk. Lack of adequate play provisions is observed both in urban as well as rural areas. Similarly, the emphasis on teaching of three Rs is found both in rural and urban preschool centres (or anganwadis or early childhood education centers etc.). The study conducted by NCERT (Upadhyay et al) 1998 in nine states including Delhi, in the context of preschool education component of ICDS, found that 90 per cent centres practice teaching of 3 Rs. Similarly, the survey of nursery schools



in Delhi revealed that the teaching of 3 Rs is commonly practiced in these schools. Not only this, the contents included are often of the level of Class II.

3.4.2 Theme Based Approach

In order to enhance child's learning in a more guided manner, teacher may adopt theme method approach for providing concrete experiences to children. The Vygotskian approach emphasising social processes, culture and society, has been rediscovered to inform early childhood education practices. It advocates responsiveness to children's current practices, yet aims at moving development forward within the zone of proximal development (ZPD). It begins with where children are, and what they are capable of doing. In order to take child's learning forward teacher guided learning through planned activities is important.

- In this approach teacher selects various project themes, for example, air, water, community helpers, animals, birds etc. and activities for cognitive, language, socio-emotional and creativity development etc. The essence of this method is “integrated learning” and “learning by doing”. For example, under the theme ‘animals’ some of the activities that could be planned by a teacher for learning based on concrete experience may be:
 - Observation of animals
 - Talking about wild and domestic animals
 - Discussing how different animals are important for us
 - Recognising and differentiating sounds of different animals
 - Classifying animals on the basis of their sizes
 - Classifying domestic and wild animals
 - Dramatising animal characters
 - Singing songs on animals
 - Listening to and narrate stories about animals
 - Arranging a visit to zoo

Similarly, through the theme of vegetables, one can plan activities for concept-formation, classification, seriation, matching, colouring, painting etc. Through various other projects children learn through concrete experience about environment and things around them. It is important to keep in mind that the activities planned have the potential to provide children the joy of learning and sustain their



interest. Parents need to appreciate that 'learning by doing' or 'play way' approach is not a waste of time but important for achieving learning and developmental goal.

3.4.3 Field Trips, Gardening and Nature Walks

Field trips, gardening and nature walks are other effective ways of enhancing children's learning and developing in them the skills of observation, communication, exploration, appreciation and understanding. The activity based, child centered and play based approaches are not only effective at preschool stage but equally relevant for primary stage especially for the early primary school years.

The above discussion on curriculum and methods of ECCE emphasised that what should go in the programmes and how activities should be transacted. However, there is a wide gap between the suggested and the delivered curricula. These gaps and issues of curriculum transaction are highlighted below to be able to address them in actual conduct of programmes.

3.5 ISSUES OF ECCE CURRICULUM AND ITS TRANSACTION

We have discussed above the model curricula and methods of ECCE. But there is a wide gap between theory and practice and between the suggested and the delivered curricula. These gaps and issues of curriculum transaction are highlighted below to be able to address them in actual conduct of programmes.

The question of quality, which involves various aspects of content, methodology and preparation of personnel, poses the real challenge. Some of the issues, which have direct bearing on quality, are discussed below.

3.5.1 Admission Age

Many children get admitted in preschool at an early age of 2 or 2½ years, which is not the right age. The right age for a child to enter preschool should be between 3½ to 4 years. Why the child should not be admitted before this age? It is because when the child is admitted to early childhood care and education programme, he/she should be toilet trained, able to withstand weaning from parents



and family and have enough language competence to be able to express and communicate his/her needs.

Young children subjected to a programme meant for the older children feel considerable pressure and anxiety. Parents feel that it is advantageous to send children for academic instruction as early as possible, hence hold the assumption that one can teach to a child anything at any age and he/she will learn early whatever is taught. It is not realised that learning of any cognitive or psychomotor skill requires specific maturational and experiential readiness. Thus, the assumption that admitting a child to a programme for which he or she is not ready physically and mentally will give him/her an advantage contradicts all dictates of child development.

The Government of Delhi increased the age of admission in pre-primary schools to four years based on the recommendation made in advocacy seminars organised by the NCERT during 1995-96 and Ganguli Committee Report-2007. Other state governments also took measures to address the issue of age of admission to preschool. The Government of Maharashtra had enacted a legislation in this regard, on the recommendation of Sri Ram Joshi committee and banned admission tests and admission before the age of three and half years. However, this could not be continued due to pressures from the market forces. In spite of these measures, there is no significant impact seen on the system. There are a growing number of pre-nursery schools, mushrooming in cities and towns where admissions are made even at the age of two years.

3.5.2 Admission Test

Admission tests for entry to preschool education classes are a phenomenon in metropolitan and other big cities. It is practiced when numbers seeking admission are large. Whereas, the problem may be genuine, the answer does not lie only in testing, evaluating and rejecting most of the children. Most school administrators and educationists would agree that it is not possible to formally evaluate a three-year-old child. How can these evaluations therefore serve the purpose of the schools, particularly if they aim at testing merit? Instead of doing any good they may destroy child's self-confidence and self-esteem. The child gets the experience of failure even before



entering a school. Parents even resort to tuition to prepare the child for admission tests. To save children from the trauma and early failure, it is desirable to abolish the admission test at this stage. Some of the alternative methods that could be adopted are:

- Lottery system
- Neighbourhood school system
- First come first serve
- Quota based random selection
- Comprehensive Performa based selection. (To avoid admission test, schools may use a comprehensive performa to be filled in by parents. The performa may include detail information about child and family. Schools may select children, based on information given in the performa, under the criteria already fixed.)

3.5.3 Teaching of 3 Rs

Education system being competitive in nature and examination oriented, parents prepare children and pressurise them to excel in Board's examination. This pressure is extended downward and finally reaches preschool education. The preschool stage is therefore becoming a downward extension of primary school

Starting Early: Despite official stipulations that no textbooks be used at this stage preschool teachers and parents are feeling compelled to burden the child with textbooks and the formal learning they represent. The sense of compulsion comes from a widespread feeling that unless academic training of a child starts early, he or she cannot cope with the fast paced pedagogy and the competitive ethos of the later school years. The pernicious grip of this false argument manifests itself in absurd, and of course deeply harmful, practices in preschools and primary schools, such as early emphasis on shapely drawings, writing and memorising information. Intrinsic motivation and the child's natural abilities are being smothered at a scale so vast that it cannot be correctly estimated. Our national commitment to the development of human resource is daily challenged in our nurseries and primary schools.

-Learning without Burden: Report of the Advisory Committee MHRD, 1993, page 14



curriculum. Teaching 3 Rs in formal manner provides little scope for child-centered, activity-based learning. In some cases 3 Rs are introduced even at the age of 2½ years. This often leads to serious physical, psychological, social and behavioural problems such as vomiting, stomach upset, diarrhoea, bedwetting, loss of appetite, stammering, nail biting and withdrawal etc. Instead of benefiting a child it becomes detrimental to the child's development. A recent survey (Upadhyay et.al.2000) indicated that the syllabus in mathematics for KG classes in one of the public schools included tables up to 5, number names up to 500, greater than/less than up to 500, addition and subtraction of two digit numbers. In English, the syllabus included reading difficult words, fill in the blanks, correcting sentences, gender, singular/plural, making sentences and transcription. Similarly, studies conducted in the past have also shown same trends. Another study (Kaul V, 1993-94) revealed that expectations of so called progressive schools in Delhi from a 3-4 year old child during preschool years were very high. The expected levels of learning for 3-4 and 4-5+ years old children were as follows:

- 92.7 per cent schools taught alphabet recognition in English
- 61.5 per cent schools taught alphabet writing in English
- 7 per cent school had dictation and grammar
- 50 per cent schools taught alphabet recognition in Hindi
- 41.5 per cent school taught writing of Hindi alphabets
- 25 per cent schools taught counting and writing of numbers up to 20
- 25 per cent schools taught numbers up to 50
- 50 per cent schools taught counting and writing up to 100

For 4-5+ year olds, the level of expectation was much higher. All schools expected reading and writing of alphabets in English. More than half of the schools surveyed taught reading and writing of sentences and dictation. 5 per cent schools also taught question-answers and opposites. In Hindi, writing words with and without matras and dictation in more than 50 per cent schools, essay writing and grammar in 5 per cent schools was done. In mathematics, counting up to hundred was taught almost in all schools. However, 40 per cent to 55 per cent schools also taught counting backwards and addition and subtraction. In 5-10 per cent schools tables, multiplication, division and place value were also



included in the curriculum. It is obvious that some of the contents included in preschool education relate to Class II curriculum.

The question is whether formal instructions should be imposed on preschoolers? Is it right to do so? Teachers justify teaching of 3 Rs because in a large class it will be useful. This cannot be the sufficient reason to adhere to formal instruction. If we visualise a formal class in action as expected in these schools a child should have the following competencies. The child:

- Should be able to understand instructions in a group of 30-40 children.
- Should have sufficient fine muscle and eye hand co-ordination to be able to write and hold pencil correctly.
- Should have an attention span of 30-40 minutes.
- Should have the capacity for abstract thinking.
- Should be able to sit for long stretches in one position.

The expectations are at variance with the developmental characteristics of preschool age children. Moreover, evidence does not support that an early start of formal instructions, leads to permanent gains. On the contrary, research evidence shows that early stress of formal schooling may have detrimental consequences. The consequences are motivational as well as intellectual and social. A beginning made with boredom and disinterest may lead the child to hate the school forever. Formal instruction at this stage deprives a child of the happiness and joy of the childhood. The need for such joy as is advocated in the writing of educators like Tagore and Sri Aurobindo.

3.5.4 Homework

Homework at preschool stage is also prevalent alike primary grades. The survey (Kaul V, 1993-94) indicated that 85 per cent schools prescribed homework. Among these 75 per cent gave homework of formal reading and writing 60 per cent schools were practicing formal methods of pupil evaluation.

The issue of homework is related to the issue of introduction of 3 Rs at an early age. It adds to the burden and robs a child of his freedom at home. The pressure comes because a child is subjected to rote learning against his/her will and contradicts developmental needs of the child. The pressure is also transferred to parents. Homework given to a child has to be completed by parents. Ironically most parents demand homework for their children. If children



don't get homework, they complain to school authorities. The need is to make parents aware of the adverse effects of homework on a child. Even at the primary stage of schooling homework should be discouraged. This recommendation has been further reiterated in NCF 2005.

3.5.5 Formal Evaluation

With the introduction of 3 Rs in preschools, formal evaluation has also been introduced. This involves giving marks to children in different subjects. The essence of preschools education is therefore lost and it becomes a primary school in advance. This practice is largely evident in private schools/lead schools. On the other hand monitoring and evaluation of early childhood education component in anganwadis, which serves a large population of early childhood education children, is altogether missing.

Evaluating children's progress should be through observing children in various group games/activities and recording impressions from these observations. Observations should be evaluated against norms of child-development for different age groups in different developmental objectives. The indicators for monitoring children's progress are available to help teachers/parents. While evaluation should be comprehensive and continuous, its sole purpose has to encourage a child to progress, to develop a positive self-concept and also to develop a positive attitude towards learning. Early detection of special needs children depends upon evaluation procedures adopted at early childhood stage.

3.5.6 Curriculum Load

The issue of the load of curriculum on preschool and primary school children has been a serious concern with the policy planners. The government has addressed this issue by appointing a committee under the chairmanship of Professor Yashpal to suggest ways to reduce the academic burden. The Yashpal committee report 1993, highlighted the physical load of school bag as seen in metropolitan cities more particularly in the case of children studying in private schools even at the preschool stage. The load of school bag is not forbidding one in rural areas and villages. The committee, however, discussed the issue of load at a more elevated plane by observing that "a lot is taught but little is learnt or understood". It



has therefore been inferred that real load is that of non-learning or non-comprehension.

NCERT's study (Upadhyay et.al 2000), on curriculum load revealed that the problem presents a mixed picture. The problem of physical load of the school bag may be real in certain areas and schools, but not so in large majority of cases, especially in rural areas. However, the pressure on ECCE children is not the only one that is exerted from the weight of books. The real load generates from the level and quantum of curricular content and methods by which children are made to learn. In many cases, parental aspirations or other factors subject children of two to three years of age to a task which should appropriately be that for six or seven years' age old child. Along with this a child is expected to do homework for long hours, which is not warranted by developmental and maturity level of a child. Imagine a group of preschool children who are subjected to reading and writing for which they are not ready yet! Can children take any interest in it? A harsh compulsion becomes the basis of learning. This results in restlessness, non-attention and non-learning. Other variables like distances and timings also subject children to undue pressure and inconvenience. Children have to travel long distances to reach a preschool, more so in big cities. The child has to go through the anxiety and fatigue of travelling in a crowded bus or auto rickshaws. The school timings indirectly impose heavy burden on children, as children are forcibly made to rise very early in the morning. These and other factors may give rise to many other behavioural and health problems. A study conducted by Gulati, 1992 on 'Impact of early schooling on the health of children", with a sample of 250 parents where children were attending preparatory school found that 20 per cent children had recurrent respiratory tract infections; 18 per cent children suffered from recurrent fever; 14.7 per cent children had pain and aches in hands, back and shoulders resulting from heavy bags and excessive homework; 23 per cent children had loss of appetite; 16.3 per cent children stopped gaining weight; 82.5 per cent children had no time to go to toilet in the morning; 5 per cent children were chronically constipated.

The load of content and compulsive learning that is practised is geared to one objective that of success in examinations. There is little concern for important aspects of personality. The sole emphasis in today's kindergarten schools is placed on pumping more and



more information into child's head. We are teaching children that nothing except success in examinations will make them as valued human beings. If information, education and other activities are not appropriate to the age and developmental stage of a person their value is of little significance.

The curriculum load is more visible in private/public schools, which act as lead schools. In these schools children have more exercise books/workbooks than in the case for government schools. The study on curriculum load conducted by NCERT, found that the prescribed books for nursery classes in public schools varied from 4 to 11. The books for KG Classes were more or less similar in number, but with increased difficulty level.

3.5.7 Worker-Child Ratio

The desirable worker child ratio is 1:25. For younger children the ratio could even be less. However, ground realities are very different. In practice one worker has to cater to the needs of 40 plus children. Maintaining the adult child ratio is very important to maintain quality. It is all the more important because at early childhood stage child demands more attention from adults. The quality of a preschool programme can only be maintained when there is greater interaction between the child and the adult. The opportunity for interaction each child gets has a bearing on his/her learning. A child, who has limited opportunity for a quality interaction at home and does not get proper attention and guidance from the worker at the ECCE centre, remains at a disadvantage. In such a case the ECCE does nothing worthwhile except providing a custodial service for children. This situation exists in a large majority of anganwadis, where one worker has to attend to not only a large number of children but also deal with other service components of the ICDS package. The adult child ratio, in private school has implications for the quality of early childhood care and education of altogether different nature. As incharge of a large sized class a teacher cannot pay much attention to each child. He/She, therefore, resorts to teach through formal methods without realising that it has no real value for children's learning and comprehension.

3.5.8 Cultural Context of Early Childhood Care and Education

The socio-cultural context in which a child lives has significant bearing on his/her growth, learning and development. A child



learns through the processes of socialisation and enculturation, the rules and behaviours of social living, social and cultural values and gradually establish his/her place and identity in society. He/she also establishes and strengthens the bonds with the family and culture of the community. Every society likes to preserve its cultural heritage and age old values-moral and spiritual and pass them on to the new generation. ECCE years are every impressionable and important in laying a foundation for inculcation of values — social and moral. With urbanisation and globalisation, traditional ways of child rearing are undergoing substantial change. With nuclearisation of families and compulsion for both parents to work, custodial care and promotion of values are becoming increasingly the responsibility of educational institutions. ECCE programmes need to focus on culture specificity and contextuality. One of the ways to do this is to promote the use of local specific material in ECCE programmes.

Availability of suitable learning/play material for different age groups and meeting developmental needs of children is a serious concern, since there is dearth of such material in existing ECCE centres. The supply of materials from government departments provides a partial solution. To mobilise the local resources through community participation would perhaps be the most viable strategy to address this problem. The focus of material preparation has to be on the use of local specific resources including local games, plays, toys, songs, stories etc. India has a rich heritage of folk dances, dramas, toys, games, songs and stories. Developing low cost/no cost contextual material should be a strong component of teacher preparation. This is totally lacking in the system at present.

Availability of play equipment like swings, merry go round, slides balancing bars etc., which are necessary for children's outdoor play are also inadequate. Locally improvised equipment can replace costly items. The need is to explore various possibilities in the environment of the children.

An exercise to document play material available for young children in different regions and states was carried out by the NCERT in 1980s. Play material manuals were prepared after conducting surveys in different states involving state level institutions. Large varieties of games for infant and children were found in every state. These are traditionally played in families but are slowly dying



Cultural Context of ECCE

Child's community and the local environment form the primary context in which learning takes place and in which knowledge acquires its significance. It is in interaction with environment that the child constructs knowledge and derives meaning..... Often children have an idea arising from their every day experiences or because of their exposure to mass media, but they are not quite ready to articulate in ways a teacher might appreciate. It is in this zone between what you know and what you almost know that new knowledge is constructed..... Thinking, knowledge and doing things are intimately intertwined. This is the process that starts during infancy and develops through independent and mediated activities. -NCF 2005 Page 30

out. These were found to be in tune with developmental objectives for each sub-stage of early childhood care and education. Promoting use of these play materials in ECCE centre will not only help enrich ECCE programme but will also provide a cultural context for learning.

3.5.9 Introducing English at ECCE Stage

Though mother tongue has been scientifically proved as most appropriate way of working with early childhood stage children, English medium ECCE classes are seen as quality programmes. Due to increased urbanisation and privatisation, the child's

learning in English medium schools has emerged as a legitimate desire even in rural parts of the country. The committee appointed by GOI on ECCE (2004) also substantiated it by stating that these days socially and economically upward mobile families are often fleeing from public initiatives towards locally available private alternatives in search of so called English medium early childhood education. Some pedagogic/curriculum experts favour the introduction of second language from very early stage. However, in our case, keeping in view the socio-political realities, the early childhood care and education needs to be done in mother tongue only; with options of oral introduction of a second language, may be English. The Position Paper on ECCE, Focus Group Report, NCF 2005 dwelling on the issue of language in the classroom states that the language of interaction in ECCE setting would normally be the child's first language, or home language. In most cases this may be the regional language or the school language, which will be the medium of instruction from Class I. However, if there are children in the group who come from different language backgrounds, then



these years are the best time to help children learn to understand or use more than one language, and at the same time to adjust themselves gradually to the language that will be the medium of instruction in Class I. That can be done by providing rich linguistic environment. Belonging to different language groups and knowing multiple languages should be a matter of pride and joy rather than a cause for isolation or low self-esteem. It further states that spoken English can be introduced even at this stage if teacher is confident and well prepared to handle it. English has not only been perceived as quality input by parents but it is also an issue of equity for them and also for planners. It is natural if poorest of the poor also demand English medium nursery education like their rich counterparts. They have the right to demand education of equitable standard. There is already a move in states to introduce English on the popular demand of parents at ECCE stage. Tamil Nadu had upgraded thousands of anganwadis into English medium anganwadis in 2005. Other states may also take similar steps on popular demand.

EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007: Strong Foundations Focusing on ECCE highlights that there are great advantages of multilingual ECCE setting. The exposure to languages determines the language development and reading success. The direct experience with print has been found contributing to reading success in primary grades. Children acquire languages quickly during early childhood and ECCE programmes can offer them the opportunities to develop self-esteem while using mother tongue to acquire a second or even third language.

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Planning and Managing ECCE Programmes

Model preschool programmes for varied age groups were discussed in the previous chapter. But there is wide gap between what is expected and what is being practiced at present. Issues related to curriculum and its' transaction have been discussed above. In this chapter we shall focus our discussions on planning and managing the ECCE programmes.

4.1 PRINCIPLES OF PROGRAMME PLANNING

A balanced, developmentally appropriate programme for 3-4 year olds and 5 year olds should be planned for a whole year (i.e. long term planning), keeping in view developmental and learning goals. These goals need to be explicitly stated. To the extent possible an effort should be made to detail out specific activities for specific objectives, although it needs to be recognise that a specific activity might lead to the realisation of more than one objective. A whole year's programme may be divided into three-four terms, which is called short-term planning or term planning. Further weekly planning and daily planning is done to ensure that programme is appropriate for children and supported by appropriate materials.

It is also important that the programme at each level is balanced from the point of view of children's developmental needs. In the beginning more of free activities may be useful, but later more structured activities for school readiness would be necessary. The programme should ensure a careful balance between:

- Individual and group activities
- Free and guided activities
- Active and quiet play
- Indoor and outdoor games/play
- Small group and large group activities

- Child-initiated activities and teacher initiated activities.
- Child guided activities and teacher guided activities.
- Concrete and abstract

In planning the programme the socio-cultural context of children should provide the basic framework. This is particularly important in the case of children belonging to deprived households where, because of less stimulating environment children might be suffering from cognitive, language and other deficiencies. The programme would have to adequately address children's needs. The programme should also address the issue of experience— gap between children when they come to preschool centre, as there may be many children who had the exposure of nurturing and stimulating environment at home in comparison to those who come from a deprived environment.

In the absence of a long-term, short-term and daily planning, activities tend to become less effective and monotonous. If teacher is not aware of and prepared for organising a story telling session and what should be the sitting arrangement, the impact of story-telling is likely be partial, since many children may not be attentive. Similarly, to organise a puppetry show, a teacher needs to prepare in advance and set the stage.

Activities which interest children most i.e. puppetry, dramatisation, nature walk etc. are rarely organised. If organised at all, these are more repetitive than having newness in them. Similarly, creative activities like painting, drawing, collage work, music and movements are more or less neglected in a large number of preschools. Even where organised these activities are not reinforced and continued at primary stage.

In addition to catering to the needs of children in general, preschool programme is expected to address issues of individual differences and of children with special needs. It is an important objective of preschool education to plan activities for different ability groups and cater to their needs in an inclusive environment.

For designing a balanced and development oriented preschool programme, a number of aspects need attention: planning programme for different age groups, adoption of play and activity



based approach, identification and development of learning materials, selection of qualified and trained teachers, data base on children and families, socio-economic and cultural context aspiration of parents etc. It is important for parents and teachers to realise that for effective learning, child's emotional state, physical and health status play crucial role.

4.2 MANAGING ECCE PROGRAMME

Management of ECCE programmes entails ensuring proper space both indoor and outdoor for children's play and learning, employing good quality teachers and helpers for the centre, ensuring basic facilities like drinking water, play material, encouraging parents participation, monitoring children's progress, ensuring support from the community and participation of children in the programmes etc.

4.2.1 Minimum Basic Facilities

Availability of a variety of play-materials, equipment, adequate indoor and outdoor space, safe drinking water, trained personnel, child friendly monitoring and evaluation are some essential conditions for ECCE programme. In the absence of sufficient play materials and equipment, use of play way and activity based approach is restricted. A brief account of minimum play materials (Muralidharan et. al 1968) equipment and other facilities needed is given below:

Indoor Play Materials

Doll's corner: Four to five dolls, cooking materials and equipment, doctor's set, tea set, costumes etc. These items can be collected with parent's cooperation. The doll's corner may be partitioned to give privacy to players.

Building blocks: Various blocks, squares, rectangles, triangles, cylinders, semicircles, etc.

Threading beads: Large number of beads and plastic threads

Painting, drawing and clay work: Crayons, brushes, colours, plasticine or clay.



Collage work: Paper and other material for collage work

Tearing/pasting activity: Materials for tearing and pasting.

Music and movements: Flute, mouth organ, small drum, manjiras, etc.

Science equipment: Magnifying glass, magnets, material collected from environment like nests, feathers, etc.

Puppetry: Puppets of various sizes and variety.

Dramatisation: Masks, costumes etc.

Indoor space of 30-40 square feet and outdoor space of 80-100 square feet per child is necessary.

Outdoor play Equipment: Various equipment necessary for



outdoor activities included: jungle gym, swings, tricycle, bicycle, rubber balls of different sizes, watering cans (sieved) and water tub, old tyres, large pipes for creeping, nesting frame, slides, pull and push carts, etc.

The provision of this materials and equipment does not necessarily involve large expenditure. Much of this could be available through local improvisation and community participation. For instance, one need not have expensive dolls

sold in the market but those made out of rags by local women. Preschool centres, especially in rural areas can be equipped with materials prepared by the teacher and the parents. In fact, preschools themselves could fabricate many of



the items. Although somewhat crude, such “fabrication” would provide learning experiences of immense value.

To utilise environmental material like leaves, seeds, pebbles, feathers etc. in enriching the programme quality, teachers’ motivation and innovativeness are important. Teacher training and community participation, therefore, are significant to enhance the quality of programmes of preschool education.

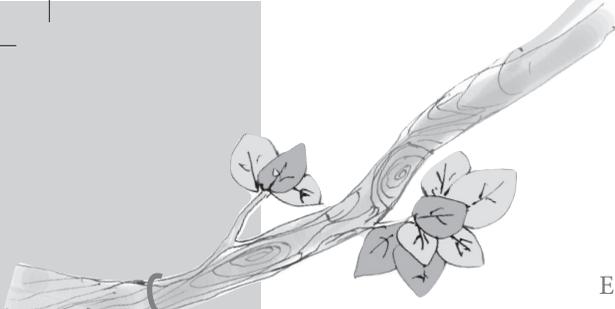
4.2.2 Selection of Staff: Personnel Qualities

Selection of staff is very important aspect for the success of an ECCE programme.

What qualities should a preschool teacher possess and what are the skills necessary for organising a quality preschool programme are important aspects to be considered. It is generally believed that women are better teachers for young children as they provide a mother-figure and are in a better position to understand and protect the interests and needs of children. Men are also associated in ECCE programmes and the thought to involve male workers more is growing in advanced countries. There are differing views as to who is an effective teacher. However, certain qualities and characteristic which are associated with teacher’s effectiveness have been truthfulness, sensitivity to individual needs, curiosity, respect and love for children, patience, capacity to reflect, sincerity, kindness etc.

A preschool teacher/worker should be pleasant, energetic and innovative and should have interest in and concern for children. The ability to interact and communicate meaningfully at the level of children is a necessary pre-requisite. Skills in creative and performing arts would be additional asset, which stand the preschool teacher in good stead.

The qualification of the preschool teacher as per NCTE is 12th grade or equivalent, or 12 years of schooling, by whatever name known with two years training in preschool education from NCTE approved nursery teacher training institutes. In private nursery schools untrained or teachers with B.Ed. are often recruited. In anganwadis, which caters to the largest number of preschool age children in the country, the workers/helpers are generally under qualified and untrained.



These qualifications are generally not taken into consideration at the time of selection of teachers for preschool stage. In anganwadis, which is a centrally regulated scheme; workers are appointed from among the available educated women in the community. In some cases, particularly in deprived areas even higher secondary pass girls are not available and primary or less than primary educated are employed as workers without any training in preschool area.

4.2.3 Teacher Preparation

As discussed above the most neglected aspect of preschooling is the preparation and selection of good teachers/workers. The privately managed institutions employ teacher who have B.Ed. and M.Ed. qualifications. Since they have not specialised in early childhood care and education, they might not be suitable for preschools. These teachers having been trained for teaching in higher classes tend to use formal methods and content. In many cases untrained teachers are also employed, as there is no control to regulate the functioning of privately managed preschools. A major reason for non-availability of adequately trained preschool teachers/workers is the non-availability of training institutions. The training of workers/helpers under the ICDS scheme is quite inadequate for implementing a programme of quality early childhood care and education. In the 26 day job-training for these workers, only one-fifth time is devoted to preschool education component.

Another issue in this context is the parity and equivalence of the programmes being implemented at present. The training programmes are of varying durations with different entry level requirement in the case of government institutions. The programmes being offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University and the National Institute of Open Schooling also vary in content and entry-level qualifications. The expectations from the products are the same irrespective of the duration of their training. A number of training institutions, especially in private sector, with inadequate standards have come into existence. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has drawn up specification for awarding recognition to private institutions. But there is plethora of training institutions running without any recognition from NCTE and there is no mechanism to stop or regulate such institutions at present.



The privately managed institutions have no compulsion to recruit qualified teachers. There is, therefore, a need for well-planned and regulated programmes of training both in-service and pre-service for ECCE teachers working in different context. In-service training should be periodic in nature and should focus on developing in a worker an understanding of child's developmental needs and the skills to conduct activities, use of contextual material and the ability to work with parents. All DIETs should take up the pre-service nursery teacher training programmes of varying duration and suitable to functionaries working in different contexts like ICDS, private, government school system.

Because of employment opportunities, early childhood care and education training courses started recently by Indira Gandhi National Open University and National Institute of Open Schooling are in great demand. To meet the needs of the states it would be necessary that states take initiative to address the problem of pre-service and in-service training of ECCE teachers.

For training ICDS functionaries in different components of ICDS package including preschool education, GOI has constituted the National Training Task Force and State Training Task Forces. An action plan for training ICDS functionaries called 'UDISHA', which meant first rays of the new dawn were implemented for a decade in the past. Such efforts would require linkages with NCERT, SCERTs, and DIETs to strengthening training in early childhood care and education.

An interesting phenomenon that exists is the demand for preschool teachers who are fluent in English. The demand of preschool teachers who have proficiency in the use of regional languages is not substantial, particularly in towns, cities and metropolitan areas where parents expect their children to use English. The demand for English medium preschool is a question of equity and equality of educational opportunity. This need to be addressed with reference to the popular demand vis-a-vis multilingual and multicultural context of Indian education.

4.2.4 Community Participation

Participation of parents and community in their children's pre-schooling is important not only for quality improvement but also for



managing the centre, mobilising resources and monitoring progress of children. The quality of programme suffers when there is a wide gap between the perceptions of parents and preschool workers about the quality, methods and contents of preschool education. For instance, parents might view play differently from preschool teachers. Convincing parents about the significance of play in preschool, which focuses on development and experiential learning rather than on memorisation and drilling, is important. Many parents assert, “We don’t send our children to play as they spoil clothes”. Therefore, there is a need that these parents understand the objectives behind each activity being organised. Teachers should be able to give satisfactory answers to the queries of parents.

Parents’ involvement is necessary to reduce the academic load and tyranny of teaching 3 Rs at this stage. This is only possible when they are convinced that undue pressure of teaching of 3 Rs on children is harming them in more ways than doing any good. Many parents still ask: “if the child is not taught 3 Rs what else is taught or learnt by children” in the preschool centre? Parents, therefore, should be regularly informed of the progress child is making towards (i) readiness for formal schooling (ii) developing positive cognitive attitudes, (iii) preparing for future life and learning. Parents must know that the preschool centre has contributed to the learning of the child in many ways such as:

- Waiting for his turn
- Good habits of social behaviour and adjustment
- Concepts which facilitate later learning
- Taking initiative
- Independence
- Pre-reading, pre-writing skills and pre-number concepts
- Ability to express thoughts
- Body control etc.

Display of children’s material at the centre has immense value. Parents should be invited to see the work of their children and they must be helped in clearing their misconceptions. Parents’ participation is also valuable for resource mobilisation and enriching the programme quality by ensuring availability of:



- Old tyres, swings, slides etc.
- Folk toys, songs and other items like clay etc.
- Outdoor/indoor space, drinking water and toilet facility etc.

In the absence of worker/helper parents taking charge of the centre as teachers is an effective strategy to get to know the real intent of the programme. Parents and community also have the role and responsibility to ensure every child's participation and to monitor programme quality.

The situation with regards to parents and community participation is at present not very satisfactory. As the school community relationship is important at primary stage, closer links are needed at preschool stage. Teacher working closely with parents can indeed make a substantial change in this direction. ECCE programmes are basically a community-based. The involvement of parents and community based institutions like mahila-mandals, village education committee etc. are of profound significance to enhance the quality of all the ECCE programmes. The quality of the programme can be achieved through establishing a partnership between community and ECCE centres and taking over the ownership by the community for the successful running of the ECCE centre.

The lack of involvement and participation of parents in the functioning of preschool centres is mainly because of their illiteracy, ignorance and poverty. The participation of parents is important for ensuring the use of resources available in the community for quality improvement. For instance, by providing toys, games and other play material the quality may be enhanced a lot. Aged women telling folk stories, songs and folk tales would add to the value of ECCE. The participation and involvement has to grow to the level of partnership in managing and running the centre. It has to grow further to a stage where the full ownership is taken over by the community. To achieve this, programme of ECCE has to be seen in the perspective of a community education and community empowerment through suitably integrating components of parents' education into the early childhood care and education programme. The devolution of powers to panchayats must help in speedy implementation of programmes of education.

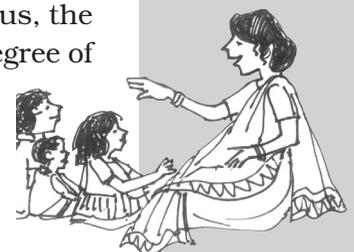




Fig. 6 – Community Participation

Parents and community members are involved in various ways in ECCE activities. The involvements of parents in ECCE activities/programmes will make them aware about activities/programmes and issues of the ECCE vis-a-vis their role in the programme. The level of awareness would help parents to know more and more about the early learning and development of children. And with inputs of Nutrition and Health Education (NHE) the level of community education would raise significantly. The knowledge, skills and information about various child development related aspects would give a sense of empowerment to the community. They would be confident to take appropriate decisions when needed.

If they become convinced about the need and the significance they are sure to own the programme. Community participation, therefore should lead to ownership by the community in long run. Thus, the success of programmes of preschool education lies in the degree of



participation of the community. Although existing programme of ICDS, including early childhood care and education component, has a strong emphasis on community participation but the same seems to be the most neglected. Until community is mobilised for their role in managing the centre it would be difficult to achieve targets. The inadequacy of space, both indoor and outdoor, is hampering the effective implementation of early childhood care and education programmes provided under various schemes, including the ICDS. There is need to find ways and means to ensure the availability of minimum basic facilities through community based interventions. A variety of play and learning material need to be provided for various activities: play, exploration and creative expression. Puppetry corner, science corner, dolls corner, free activity area are all necessary elements of a good preschool education programme. With constraints of resources, which adversely affect both the coverage and quality of programmes, community participation alone can ensure the availability of minimum facilities. Developmental needs of children, including those pertaining to health, nutrition and psycho-social stimulation can get addressed holistically with proper and effective coordination with parents and community members.

Misconceptions among parents about aims and objectives of preschool education are often encountered. They tend to view it as being at par with primary schooling. There is need to present preschool education as a distinct intervention of considerable significance for enhancing enrolment and participation of children in primary schools. Various advocacy measures are needed to address the issue. Development of advocacy material, print and non-print, and their dissemination to the level of community and Panchayat Raj institutions is necessary. With Panchayat Raj institutions being given authority and resources for elementary education their role in managing early childhood care and education of children becomes significant. It is, therefore, necessary to empower them with knowledge and skills, which will help them to plan and execute developmentally appropriate early childhood care and education and responsive parenting. Efforts are needed in particular to correct community perceptions about what pre-schooling aims and what it should consist of and the desirability of adopting play way methods



and a child centered approach. Parents' education and continuous dialogue with parents should form an integral part of the strategy to promote any preschool education programme. Participatory learning approach (PLA), in which parents' involvement is ensured right from planning to implementation to monitoring and supervision of the programme, has the potential to generate awareness and understanding among parents and to motivate them to take keen interest in activities of preschool education. The culture specific play materials, toys, games, songs, stories and developmentally sound child rearing practices can be promoted with community and parental education and participation. PLA approach needs to be promoted in all programmes of early childhood care and education. The sense of community ownership can be realised only when community is involved in all decision making processes. A detailed plan should be drawn at the district level to orient communities on aspects of ECCE including quality.

4.2.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring is watching and overseeing the planning, implementation and impact of developmental programmes. Monitoring is by and large an internal activity and carried out with the objectives of getting feedback on progress, knowing about problems encountered and efficiency of programme. Evaluation is a process of observing, measuring, analysing, interpreting results of a project. Monitoring may ultimately lead to provide valuable information for evaluation. Evaluation may be done through external agencies on a periodic basis. Evaluation may be done at various levels i.e. programme level, child's level, teachers training level etc. Generally monitoring and evaluation is classified at three levels — input, process and outcomes level. The effective monitoring requires identification of indicators, reporting system, assigning roles, collecting information, appraisal of information, identification of shortfalls, building database and reporting. Examples of input indicators are —building, staff, material, other facilities like water, equipment, outdoor space etc. Process indicators are pupil teacher interactions and their quality, relationship, approach and methods of teaching, contents etc. The outcome indicators are health status, abilities developed, skills learned by children etc.



We need to devise quality indicators for various programmes. The indicators for ICDS programme could be devised in terms of various indicators related to input, process and output. The need is to lay greater focus on child related outcomes than the features of the programmes i.e. standards or expectations of children's performance (learning standards in various domains), which are based on direct observation of children. These standards, however, need to be seen in context of local specificity and objectives formulated. Some tools for assessing programme quality being used (EFA: Global Monitoring Report 2007 page 179) nationally and internationally are -

Environment rating scale—uses aspects of staff, language learning, reasoning, activities, interactions, parents, space etc.

Assessment scale by Save the Children UK—various dimensions included in the tools are — professional practice, caregivers, health and nutrition, resources and administration.

International Step by Step Association, programme and teacher standards includes—family participation, planning a child centered programme, health, learning environment, teacher child interaction under programme and professional development, planning and assessment and learning environment etc. under the teacher standards.

4.2.6 Evaluating Children's Progress

National Curriculum Framework 2005 focuses on the child-friendly assessment. It highlights that the purpose of assessment is providing feedback on the extent to which we have been able to provide child friendly environment for stimulation, growth, development and learning. Crucial areas like yoga, art, craft, music, work cannot be tested for marks.

The purpose of evaluation at the preschool stage is not to label a child as pass or fail so the use of standardised tests or formal testing may lead to misuse of unnecessarily testing and pressurising children. There should be no test written or oral test at this stage. Assessment should focus on qualitative judgment on children's activities on various domains along with health and nutritional status. Evaluation should provide direction for learning new skills. It should focus on child's strengths rather than weakness. Appropriate



techniques of assessing children include observation, record keeping and compiling of childrens work, progress and difficulty levels. The qualitative and narrative notes are useful to provide information on thinking process of the child, how a child handles frustration, solves problem and relates to others. (“Study your children for assuredly you don’t know them” wrote J.J. Rousseau in 1762.)

The progress of children should be recorded for each aspect of development on a continuous basis. Children who are not progressing in particular skills would need to be helped through planning suitable activities. Norms of children’s development are established, against which the level of development of child is assessed.

Parents and teachers need to monitor progress of children and evaluate on quarterly, half yearly and annual basis the progress that a child is making. Broad indicators are required for this purpose. The use of such indicators of progress might not need intensive training. Some examples in each area for monitoring by teacher or parents themselves are as follows:

✧ **Motor Development**

- Can the child throw a ball in a given direction?
- Can the child catch the ball with his hands?
- Can the child balance his body well while walking?
- Can the child copy a given pattern?

✧ **Language Development**

(a) Listening skills

- Is the child attentive while listening to stories?
- Does the child understand and follow instructions?

(b) Speaking skills

- Can the child describe things in a picture?
- Can the child narrate an incident or a story?
- Does the child speak in full sentences?

(c) Reading readiness

- Can the child distinguish between different forms and shapes?
- Can the child discriminate the beginning sounds of words?
- Can the child discriminate end sounds of words?



✧ **Cognitive Development**

(a) Sensory development:

- Can the child discriminate between rough and smooth textures?
- Can the child discriminate between pleasant and unpleasant smell?
- Can the child make visual discrimination?
- Can the child make sound discrimination?

(b) Concept formation

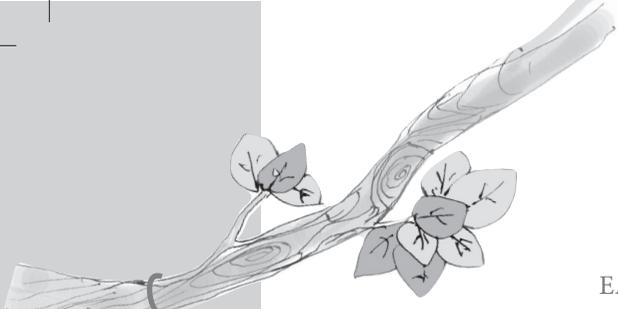
- Does the child recognise basic colours?
- Can the child arrange objects of a colour from light to dark?
- Is the child able to differentiate between a 'big' object and a 'small' one and use these words appropriately? (Similarly other concepts can be evaluated)
- Can the child arrange objects from the biggest to the smallest, heaviest to the lightest?
- Can the child describe events in a correct sequence?
- Can the child complete a given pattern?
- Can the child complete a two/three piece puzzle?

✧ **Social Development**

- Does the child like to join other children in-group activities?
- Does the child share things easily?
- Does the child wait for his turn?
- Does the child enjoy coming to the preschool centres?
- Does the child talk with other children?

These indicators are illustrative. A more detailed observation of child's progress may be necessarily done right from the beginning, to plan for meeting individual child's special needs. Parents should be made aware of importance of monitoring child's progress in terms of developmental milestones and readiness for schooling at the end of two years of pre-schooling. At present monitoring children's progress either by teachers or by parents, is the weakest link in preschool education programmes. Parents in both urban and rural areas need awareness of what they should look for and monitor as far as children of preschool years are concerned.

One of the important functions of evaluation at preschool stage is early identification of children with special needs. This is a key



to helping a child overcome the handicaps. This may require close monitoring and well-planned activities so as to enable children to make steady progress towards mastering of required skills. Development assessment of children can be right from the birth for injuries or conditions, congenital abnormalities sensory defects, etc. Child's close monitoring during first three years is important for ascertaining development in different developmental areas like language, motor etc. Children with special needs may constitute emotionally disturbed children, mentally retarded, visually impaired, learning disabled, speech handicapped, physically handicapped, gifted children etc. Principles of development apply to all children equally and the developmental path is the same for all children. The difference may be only that some develop faster than others. All children have to pass through the stages and the pattern of development and the sequence of development is the same for all. Development is patterned but also unique in each case, as there are individual differences. Children are being assessed for school readiness in areas for language, cognition, motor development and socio emotional maturity. Two major techniques of assessing children are being used (i) standardised tests and (ii) observation technique.

Some Standardised tests used are:

- Denver Development Screening Test (DDST)—for detection of developmental disabilities
- Bayle's Scale of Infant Development—Indian adaptation by Pathak 1977
- McCarthy Screening Test (MST)—On verbal memory, right-left orientation, draw a man test
- Minnesota Preschool Inventory (MPT)
- Vineland Social Maturity Scale (VSMS)—list personal social skills
- Gesell's Development Schedule (GDS)
- The work related to development of norms has also been done in NCERT and NIPCCD, New Delhi and
- Developmental screening test at National Institute of Mental Handicapped Hyderabad and various other institutions.



The most preferred way to assess children's development is through observation and developmental profiling over a period of time by using rating scales, check list, anecdotes, dairy and children's work without adhering to rigorous testing.

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5

Establishing Linkages between ECCE and Primary Education

In this section we would analyse why it is important to establish linkages between ECCE and primary education. Various dimensions of linkages and strategies for establishing the linkages will be discussed. In our country, large numbers of children do not get the opportunities to go through any ECCE programme and take admission in primary school directly. Some children go through preschool education programme and a few also go through a crèche or child care programme before going to pre-primary and/or primary school. All these programmes need to have elements which support smooth transition of children from one stage to another and ensure development and learning continuity. The linkage may be needed between home and crèche or a preschool, between preschool and primary especially when located apart, between home and school for children going directly to school without any ECCE experience as shown in figure 7.

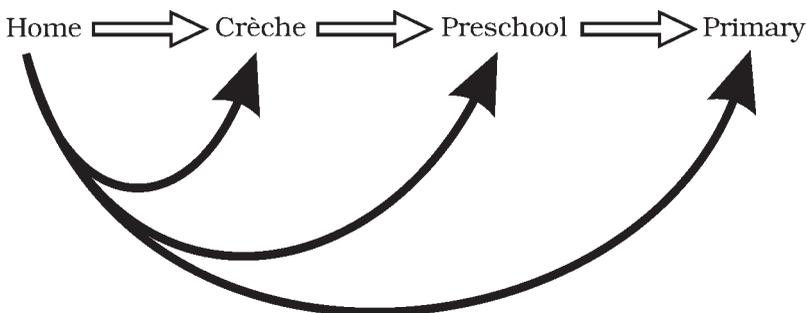


Fig. 7

5.1 ESTABLISHING LINKAGES BETWEEN CHILD CARE AND ECCE

Integrating childcare services with early childhood care and education is significant from the point of view of providing needed stimulation

and care, which are vital for learning and development. Promoting different models of child care is necessary for UEE. Crèche facilities for working mothers at work sites and premises of establishments where women are employed as work force would be necessary, in both organised and unorganised sectors. Presently, child care is most neglected component of ECCE. Under the ICDS, converting anganwadis into anganwadi cum crèches as envisaged in the Program of Action, National policy on Education 1986 (modified in 1992) needs to be implemented throughout the country. There is need to monitor the privately run child care centres for their quality control.

5.2 PRESCHOOL AND PRIMARY SCHOOL LINKAGES

A large majority of primary schools and early childhood/preschool education centres (anganwadis) function in isolation from each other. Primary school teachers seem to know little about functioning, objectives and activities of the anganwadis or preschools. Evaluation study of ECCE in DPEP (1998) revealed encouraging results in respect of impact of ECCE centres opened within the premises of primary schools on girl's enrolment. However, locating early childhood care and education centre or anganwadis in primary schools, may not always be feasible in view of the fact that in some villages population is substantially dispersed. The effort to synchronise timings of early childhood care and education with primary school has encountered certain problems: long hours' stay for smaller children, damage to material meant for children of early childhood care and education by older primary school children, lack of co-operation and lack of co-ordination between early childhood education worker and primary school teacher. The location of early childhood care and education centre in primary school premises has generally led to increase participation of school going age children in the community in primary school. The linkage between a preschool and a primary school is not merely physical proximity, it has implications for smooth transition of children from preschool to primary grades, linkage in terms of curriculum, extension of play-way, activity based and joyful methods to early primary grades etc. Early childhood care and education methods having linkage with primary would help in promoting child centered



approach at primary school stage. Class I curriculum could be planned by taking into consideration the experiences of children in early childhood years. This is referred to as programmatic linkage. If quality preschool programme is implemented and it has programmatic linkage with the primary school (Class I) programme the problem of downward extension of primary curriculum may get resolved to a great extent. A requirement for establishing linkage between early childhood educations and primary schools would be to promote among preschool and primary school teachers a common and shared perception of objectives, content and method of preschool and early primary school. This can be promoted through joint training programmes for early childhood care and education and primary school teachers. Another dimension of the linkage is ensuring that preschool children eligible for entry to Class I get admission in school. At present, due to lack of training of primary teachers in play way and activity based teaching, the programmatic linkage is absent.

In large number of communities parents perceive preschool at par with primary schooling and send overage children especially girls to early childhood care and education centres. Placement of these girls in primary school with necessary readiness is an issue which needs considerations in the context of achieving universal enrolment in primary schools. Likewise, preschools also attract a large number of children below 3 years of age, particularly in anganwadis. To cater to the needs of under-three children a variety of materials and strategies would be required. For underage children we need specific infant stimulation activities and suitable materials, which are not available in preschool centres. It is also not possible for preschool workers to deal with young children single-handed. Integrating child care services with preschool education is important for quality pre-schooling. It also frees older siblings from the care of younger ones, thus enabling them to attend primary schools. Linkages between preschool and primary school, in terms of continuity of curriculum and extending play way methodology to primary school grades have proved fruitful for higher retention and achievement levels of children. For linkages, it is necessary to take into consideration the nature and continuum of learning of children and also promote an understanding of how children learn during



early years. For achieving these linkages close coordination between preschool centre and primary school is a necessary condition. The joint training of preschool and primary school teachers, availability of graded learning and play materials, joint planning of curriculum from early childhood care and education to primary school grades, sharing of resources in most effective manner, joint monitoring and supervision of children and placement of all eligible children from preschool to primary school are significant dimensions of these linkages and should be emphasised.

Linkage, at the one hand, focuses on the care and early childhood education for developing an active learning capacity and readiness for school among children, on the other, it focuses on the changes that are needed in primary school set-up for making school environment attractive for children to help them take interest in and enjoy school activities. Thus, linkage between early childhood care and education and primary education may be defined in terms of relating early childhood care and education experiences to primary education and focusing on early childhood care and education and primary education as the two points in a continuum of development and learning of young children. It can also be defined in terms of reciprocity between early childhood care and education centre and primary school, aimed at achieving the optimal development of child, as primary education has to draw a great deal from early childhood care and education and early childhood care and education has to strengthen and support the primary education for achieving the goals of universal elementary education. The National Policy on Education 1986 (modified in 1992) has categorically emphasised this aspect by stating that: *“A full integration of child care and pre-primary education will be brought about, both as a feeder and strengthening factor for primary education and for human resource development in general. In continuation with this stage, the school health programme will be strengthened.”*

For an effective linkage between early childhood care and education and primary education, the need is not only to improve the quality and coverage of existing ECCE but also of the quality of primary schooling. Most of the primary schools adopt a formal approach to learning, which is graded and subject based. Rote



learning methods and emphasis on memorisation are the prevailing practices with them. They provide little scope for individualised instruction, individual differences, interest and abilities and special needs of children. The methods of exploration, experimentation and joyful learning are almost non-existent. Thus, approaches and methods vary from early childhood care and education to primary schools to a great extent and there is no linkage between the two on these aspects. As a result when the child goes to primary school s/he gets it difficult to adjust in the new environment of rigidity and regimentation. The continuity in terms of play-way and child centered methods from early childhood care and education to primary school is important for the adjustment of the children in primary school. A study conducted on the impact of early childhood care and education on retention of children at primary stage in 1993 revealed that retention of children was better in primary schools where play-way method was adopted in early primary grades.

The supplementary nutrition provided to children under early childhood care and education programme and the mid-day meal scheme in primary schools have different managements. There is plenty of scope for integration and efficiency in this area of service. Similarly, the linkages in terms of health services provided to children in early childhood education and primary school set ups have potential for providing improved and extended services, if effective linkages could be established.

5.3 IMPORTANCE OF LINKAGE BETWEEN ECCE AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Establishing linkage between pre-primary and primary education is therefore significant for achieving the following quantity and quality related measures:

- Higher participation of children
- Smooth transition from pre-primary to primary school
- Regular attendance of children
- Higher retention rates
- Better quality of learning
- Effective utilisation and management of resources
- Children's readiness for schooling
- Universal elementary education



The operational linkage in terms of timing and functioning would also help in relieving older sibling especially girls from the burden of sibling care to participate in primary education. This would enhance the rate of enrolment of girls in primary schools. The overall participation of children would go up due to proximity in location between early childhood care and education and primary school.

Attendance of children in both the early childhood care and education and primary school will improve significantly as younger children would be facilitated to reach the centre with older sibling and peer groups with safety and emotional security. Parents will also be motivated to send their children together to school when there is better interaction and convergence in approach to learning between the early childhood care and education and primary school.

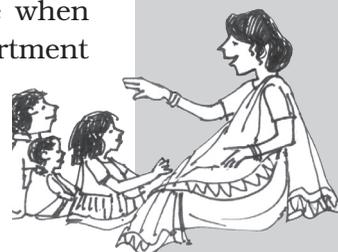
The repetition rates in primary grades are alarming due to under age enrolment in grade I or poor readiness levels of children at the time of entering grade I. The wastage in terms of repetition and high dropout rates could be checked if children are admitted in grade I at the right age with adequate readiness levels. Thus, efficiency of the primary school system could be improved provided that all children enter primary school with required level of readiness and primary education is geared towards addressing individual differences and developmental and learning needs of children. Research studies have shown that children who participated in early childhood care and education programme are less likely to repeat the grade or be placed in remedial classes. Thus, quality early childhood care and education programme and its linkage with primary have the potential to prevent school failure to a great extent. Due to absence of linkage between early childhood care and education and primary education even a good quality early childhood education programme has been ineffective because a joyful and play based early childhood education environment was suddenly replaced by a dull, drab and monotonous early primary school programme. A negative relationship was achieved between a good early childhood education and existing primary school programme in Mandla block of MP (NCERT study 1993). The study also indicated that the dropout rate at primary stage of education is very high and the maximum dropout is noticed during the first two grades i.e. grade



I and II. Nearly one third of children dropped out during the first two years of primary schooling. The reasons for such a high dropout rate are many. But the most argued and convincing answer to it has been the dull and repelling environment of primary schools. To overcome this high dropout problem in early primary grades, the answer is to make the learning of children in primary schools an extension of joyful, activities based and play oriented early childhood education methods.

There are concerns about the poor quality of teaching learning and achievement of children during the primary grades. Large majority of children in primary grades are found to be lagging behind in attaining the essential levels of learning prescribed at primary stage. The reasons are obvious. The poor foundation of children at the beginning of school and poor transaction during primary grades jointly contribute to this sad state of affairs. One can argue about the need for improving the quality of some of the existing early childhood care and education programmes. However, the benefits of even comparatively good quality early childhood care and education of children have not been translated into the desired levels of achievement at the end of primary education because of negation by primary school of what has been achieved during the pre-primary stage. If there is continuity in terms of learning experiences and methods adopted it is expected that children would be more interested in regularly attending the school and staying in the system. This may provide a basis to a better learning achievement.

One of the benefits of early childhood care and education and primary school operating in the same premises is the reciprocal relationship they develop. The worker of early childhood care and education gets support from the primary school and primary school teachers get to know about children they have to deal in ensuing years. There is greater degree of monitoring by the supervisory staff and the community in general when both early childhood care and education and primary school have a linkage operationally and programmatically. In the ICDS context it is possible when the supervisory staff of both the ICDS and education department



bring about convergence in their efforts in planning, implementing and monitoring of early childhood care and education and primary education with shared goals and attitudes.

Linkage between Early childhood care and education and primary school also attracts enhanced community participation. The visible progress could be expected in mobilising the parents and community in getting their support for their children's education when parents are made aware of the benefits of linkage in terms of enrolment, retention and achievement of children in primary grades. One of the advantages of operational linkage would be the aspect of cost effectiveness. Resources could be pooled together for ensuring adequate infrastructure facilities including indoor/outdoor space, drinking water etc. Utilisation of play and learning material, space etc could be used cost effectively. This is important when there is severe resource crunch in programme implementation.

The achievement of children at primary stage largely depends on the readiness of children at the time of entry to formal schooling. One of the significant aspects of it would be the quality of early stimulation and care. The early stimulation a child receives in her/his home environment prior to formal schooling is also a preschool experience and will be an important consideration while discussing linkage between early childhood care and education and primary education. It will specifically focus on how family environment could be made stimulating and responsive to children. However, families and parents who live in poor conditions and have socio-economic and educational disadvantages are ill-equipped to provide necessary stimulation, adequate health and nutritional care to young children. Children of these families may lag behind in preparedness for schooling and taking benefits of school education. As far as primary school system is concerned early childhood care and education has not been a priority under the education sector. The child care facilities are almost non-existent and the responsibility lies with the parents or elder siblings. Thus, early stimulation for 0-3 age group children, which is critical for developing active learning capacity, is a neglected area. Children who enter primary school without required level of stimulation at home and without any early childhood care and education experience, face difficulties in



primary school. Though National Curriculum Framework envisages early childhood care and education as an integral part of school education, but implementation of the same has been limited and a vast majority of primary schools do not have the provision for early childhood care and education. Large numbers of children, therefore, don't get opportunities to go through an organised and institutionalised early childhood care and education programme and enter primary school directly from home (Figure-7). In case of these children a school readiness programme would be essential to establish a linkage with primary education.

5.4 ORGANISING SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAMME

School readiness programme at the beginning of Class I, for at least two months duration, would provide the minimum essential readiness levels for adjustment in primary school. For organising school readiness activities for these direct entry children, Class I teacher would need training in various theory and practical aspects of school readiness. A school readiness programme could be defined as the condensed and shortened version of early childhood care and education programme using play-way and activity-based approaches focusing on preparing the children for school. At early childhood care and education stage language development is achieved through play/learning activities like story telling, listening to stories, conversation, puppetry, dramatisation, language games etc. Listening speaking, pre-reading and pre-writing skills are developed among children through these activities. Similarly, cognitive skills of classifying, comparing, observing, matching, exploring, sequential thinking, reasoning, problem solving, etc. are developed through suitably planned activities. In two weeks schedule children are gradually prepared for reading, writing and number work. In all the three main areas of academic readiness i.e. reading readiness, writing readiness and number readiness, the beginning is made from free activities to gradually switching over to guided activities. In addition to academic readiness children are also provided experiences for socio-emotional readiness and creative expression. The experience during first two months of stay of children in school through readiness programme helps children to adjust better in



school environment. If the approach of joyful learning is extended further in early primary grades then it is most likely that there is a smooth transition of children from early childhood care and education (or home) to primary school and they stay in the system till they complete their primary schooling. Smooth transition of children from early childhood care and education to primary stage largely depends upon the extent to which primary schools are ready to receive these children and provide learning opportunities in a stimulating environment. In the absence of changes in the primary school environment it is less likely that alone early childhood care and education will be able to generate desired results. It would be the quality of linkage between them that would determine the outcomes during primary stage.

5.5 STRATEGIES OF LINKAGE

The linkage between early childhood care and education and primary education has following components:

- Location
- Programmatic linkage or curricular linkage
- Management

5.5.1 Location

The physical proximity between early childhood care and education centre and primary school is one of the most visible indicators of linkage. Due to nearness between early childhood care and education centre and primary school, the advantages could be:

- The interaction between the two (early childhood care and education centre and primary school) is promoted. They could develop an understanding about the functioning, issues and concerns of each other and identify the areas of cooperation.
- Common perception will be developed about learning and developmental goals of children through years 3-8.
- The location of early childhood care and education centre in primary school premises would facilitate children's participation, both in early childhood care and education centre and primary school because children of early childhood care and education centre will be able to accompany their elder siblings studying in primary school.



- Parents also get a sense of satisfaction and security when younger children are in the company of other older children to the same premises. It, in turn, may provide impetus to regular attendance of children and stay in the system.
- The location being the same for early childhood education and primary school, there would be greater scope to enhance the facilities of space for early childhood education children through effective management of space. In most of the anganwadis at present availability of adequate space for children's indoor and outdoor play activities is a problem. There will be equal access to facilities of drinking water and sanitation etc. for early childhood education children, if resources of primary schools are shared.

Above all, the location of early childhood education in primary school helps in monitoring the functioning of early childhood care and education centre. It has been found that anganwadis, when functioning in isolation of primary school, do not function regularly as far as early childhood care and education or Preschool component is concerned, or open for a short duration during the day to complete the distribution of Supplementary Nutrition (SNP) to children.

The proximity in location between early childhood care and education centre and primary school exercises an indirect control to open the early childhood care and education centre regularly and for a longer duration. However, shifting early childhood care and education centre (anganwadi) to primary school campus is not feasible everywhere. In such cases it would be desirable that linkage may be strengthened by opening a new early childhood care and education centre near the primary school, establishing linkage in terms of curriculum, methods and operational aspects and also ensuring regular interaction between the two.

5.5.2 Programmatic linkage

Programmatic or curricular linkage has various dimensions to it, such as:

- Synchronisation of timings
- Extending play-way method to early primary grades
- Linkage between early childhood care and education programme and Class I curriculum
- Joint planning of programmes
- Availability of play and learning materials



- Training of teachers and early childhood care and education workers on linkage aspects
- Joint monitoring and supervision
- Preparing children for school or readiness activities
- Readiness of primary school to accept change.

Synchronisation of timings of early childhood education centres and primary schools has been considered important from the point of view of linkage. However, long stay of preschool children for the full duration of 5-6 hours a day has been found difficult. While there is need for synchronisation of timings in terms of opening time of both preschool and primary school, there is need to have flexibility in terms of closing time of preschool centre. The advantage of having the same timings of opening of both preschool and primary school is that during morning time primary school children can start from homes with their younger siblings and they can attend preschool/primary school together regularly. Parents may find it easy when their burden of accompanying younger child to a preschool centre has been reduced. There should be flexibility for young children of early childhood education age to leave the school and go home when there is interval. Care facilities in the school for children who cannot be looked after by parents after the half time may be provided. It may demand additional provision of supplementary nutrition and the facilities for providing rest to children staying for the full duration of primary school.

Extending play-way method to early primary grades is a key for establishing linkage between the two stages. This is particularly important because primary schools have been criticised for not implementing a play-way method in early primary grades and instruction being highly teacher centered. For establishing this methodological linkage the essential condition would be to implement play-way method, child centered approach in its right spirit at preschool stage, then extending the same to early primary grades. Presently, the situation is just the reverse of it. In most of the privately run preschool centres, anganwadis and other nursery schools, one notices the downward extension of primary curriculum in terms of teaching of three Rs and formal instruction from an early age. For extending play-way method to early primary grades there



is need to train primary schoolteachers and headmasters about the significance of play in learning of young children. Simultaneously, there would be a need to provide play material and resources to schools to implement play way method. There is resistance from the parents about the play in early childhood education and early primary grades as they are more concerned about the teaching of three Rs to their ward. They also need to be sensitised about the significance of play in learning and success of children in school. Children like activities of dramatisation, puppetry and story-telling. These methods are not given much significance. The methods of learning by doing are also not promoted in most of the schools. Explaining and convincing parents and teachers about what involves learning and how play helps in learning would be of immense significance in implementing play-way approach and extending it to early primary grades.

Linkage between early childhood care and education programme and Class I curriculum is crucial, like extending play-way method to early primary grades, for smooth transition and adjustment of children in primary school. The significance lies in relating experiences children have gained during early childhood education stage to the learning and curricular demands of grade I. This is possible when teacher of grade I knows about the experiential and maturational levels of children. For example children are expected to have gained adequate vocabulary to understand the instruction in Class I. If children had home language other than standard language that is used as medium of instruction in school then they may need inputs to switchover to standard language. Children who have not developed readiness skills in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing may need readiness in these areas. For example, for developing readiness for reading in children they are provided with the skills of sound discrimination, visual discrimination, audio-visual association and directionality during early childhood stage. These skills help children in Class I in identification of letters (symbols), appropriate sounds, relating sound with the symbols for readiness to read. Children need to develop enough muscular coordination and fine muscle development for writing readiness. Similarly through pre-number concept



development during early childhood education stage children are prepared for number work and mathematic learning in grade I. Children who have been given exposure to environmental concepts related to social, cultural, biological and physical environment at early childhood education stage might not have much difficulty in understanding the contents of Class I environment studies. Children are expected to learn good manners; social, spiritual, scientific and human values; habits of cleanliness, sanitation, health and hygiene; respect for manual work; skills of creative expression and appreciation etc. These activities are part of any good early childhood care and education programme. Children's learning in these areas at primary stage needs to be linked with the experiences children have undergone at early childhood stage.

Joint Planning of ECCE programme is vital for establishing linkages

Curricular linkage could be established by planning the programme for children jointly by the early childhood education worker and Class I teacher. While developing Instructional material for Class I children, aspects of curricular linkage in all the areas must be taken into consideration. Guidelines for Class I teacher for forging such a linkage with the early childhood education experiences is of utmost significance. Planning activities jointly would help in establishing linkage in terms of methods and curriculum. This is possible when there is greater coordination and interaction between the two.

Availability of play and learning material is one of the primary conditions for implementing joyful learning approach, both at early childhood and early primary stage. Primary schools are, by and large, deficient in developing and procuring these materials and their replenishment to ensure their regular use. The same is true to a lesser extent for early childhood care and education centers. Durable and cost effective materials for play and learning of children that are essential should be made available. These play material should have natural progression from preschool to early primary grades. For example puzzles of less difficulty could be used at early childhood stage and with slightly higher level difficulty could be



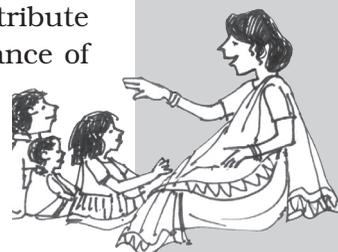
useful for grade I children. Likewise, simpler to higher level language games could be planned from early childhood to early primary stage. However, many a joyful learning activities can also be undertaken with little or no material support. Early childhood care and education worker and primary teacher need to develop an outlook to promote and use these activities.

Training of Primary Teachers/early childhood care and education workers is an important area for establishing a functional linkage between early childhood care and education and primary education. The component of linkage in training of teachers and the early childhood care and education workers provides the necessary understanding about the nature and processes of learning among young children. Until the teachers of primary school lend their support to implement play way and activity based approach to learning and relate primary school experiences with early childhood care and education there is little hope that the situation will change. The commonality in terms of aims, means and methods of education of children in tune with principles of child development in early years 3-11 is necessary for an integrated outlook towards linkage.

Joint monitoring of early childhood care and education and primary education by all the stakeholders, i.e. parents, primary teachers and headmasters and ICDS functionaries is also an essential component of linkage between. Some of the basic areas where monitoring is necessary is:

- Whether the school opens regularly or not?
- Whether the early childhood care and education centre opens regularly or not?
- Does the centre remain open daily for the full duration?
- Is programme of early childhood care and education child friendly?
- Is Primary school programme interesting?
- Are children happy to come to centre/school?
- Do children participate regularly etc.?

The local body including parents and VECs may also contribute a lot provided they are aware about the meaning, significance of linkage.



Readiness of primary school to accept change is the real stumbling block to implement child centered and activity based approaches because of inherent resistance of the system to accept change. Changes are required to make school environment attractive and conducive to learning by providing personal touch to children, making play material available, giving variety in experiences and adopting methods of learning by doing and exploration. Understanding and promoting the process of children's learning based on the principle that child constructs his/her own knowledge. The evaluation scheme has to be promotional to learning efforts rather than rejecting children's efforts. Punctuality and maximising learning time of children is important for good results. Participation of community and mobilising resources and bridging the gap between school and home are also important for desirable results. The leadership role of head teacher and accountability on the part of teachers are essential inputs for all round development. The boundary wall, space and equipments for outdoor-play; games and other play and learning material for indoor activities and extracurricular activities play an important part in strengthening the learning outcomes of children.

5.5.3 Management

How early childhood care and education centres and primary schools are managed bears a lot of significance for promoting linkage between them. Some significant aspects are-

- Effective Utilisation of Resources
- Mobilising community resources
- Joint planning/monitoring/supervision
- Strategies for promoting close interaction between early childhood education and primary school
- Community Participation

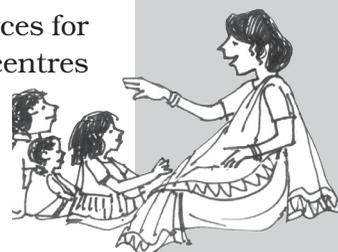
A positive linkage between early childhood care and education and primary education envisages cost effective utilisation of resources, both physical and human, available in anganwadis and primary schools.

These involve visit by primary school teachers to Anganwadi centres for ensuring admission of all eligible children in Grade I



and preparing children for primary school is the responsibility of Anganwadi worker. The resources in terms of space for outdoor activities, indoor activities can be more effectively utilised, if there is better coordination among the two. At present it is seen that in vast majority of preschool centres and anganwadis space is a problem. Children sit in a small room where there is hardly any space for movements, which affects the quality of the early childhood care and education programme. If these centres are located in primary school, this problem can be overcome to a great extent within the available resources. Children need a lot of play materials for play and learning in early childhood care and education as well as early primary classes. These materials (toys, games, picture books, story books and other equipments) can be effectively shared. If there is a linkage between preschool and primary education, play material can be developed collaboratively by early childhood and primary school teachers. In addition, primary school teachers can look after the early childhood education classes in the absence of early childhood teachers and early childhood teachers can look after Class I in the absence of Class I teacher. This helps in regular opening ECCE centre and participation of children in early childhood education centre and early primary grades. The SNP/mid-day meal scheme is in operation at early childhood care and education and primary stage respectively. But their management is different. There is a need to establish a linkage between the mid-day meal scheme for the two groups of children. It has been found that in schools where nursery sections are attached with primary schools under the department of education, the mid-day meal provision is not available for preschool children while mid-day meal is provide to all the primary grade children. Along with this discrepancy in provision of mid-day meal, the quality of mid-day meal also varies at two levels. It has been found in many places that ready to eat meal provided to early childhood care and education children was contaminated/adulterated/unhygienic. If the management is integrated there is possibility that children at both the stages may get good quality mid-day meal. This will also avoid double enrolment for getting mid-day meal.

Parental participation and mobilising community resources for effective running of early childhood care and education centres



and primary schools is one of the main dimensions of quality improvement. The local content available for learning of children in terms of folk songs, folklores, local play materials and games and support from the artisan could be best mobilised if there is holistic programming for early childhood education and primary school. This will also help in making variety of play material available for children at both the levels and also their periodic replenishment.

Early childhood care and education also covers children of “Under Three” age. For any effective early childhood care and education programme it is essential to target children of this age group for providing needed care and stimulation. This is equally important for freeing older girls from the sibling care to attend school. With the help of community and support from parents, care facilities to these children i.e. “Under Three” may be provided in the primary school or near the primary school.

Knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes of workers/teachers of early childhood care and education and primary school are important for relating preschool education to primary education. Developing common perception, visualising the common goals and bring about convergence are the key areas of teacher training for establishing linkage. Joint training programmes of early childhood care and education workers and primary teachers with focus on health, nutrition care, and education for developing active learning capacity among children is important. Planning primary school curriculum based on the learning needs and developmental needs of children at the time to entry to Grade I is also a significant aspect of teacher training. Presently, these aspects are ignored altogether. The role of parents and community in promoting linkage between early childhood care and education and primary education being crucial, teacher-training programme is required to introduce inputs how to mobilise community and parents for their full cooperation. These aspects are important both in pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes. For direct entry, children at Grade I, school readiness programme has been found necessary. Teachers of Grade I are required to undergo a training in organising school readiness programme in the beginning of Class I, so that children



entering directly from home can get the benefit of school readiness programme and have their adjustment in primary school. One of the major issues of teacher training is curriculum linkage between early childhood care and education and Class I. Teachers need to be prepared for this curricular continuity in terms of various activities, play and games for children, joyful and attractive Class I as an extension of early childhood care and education. In addition to curricular linkage, teachers of early childhood care and education centre and Grade I need training in implementing play-way method and how it could be extended from preschool to early primary grades. One of the major significant aspects of teacher training that relates to establish linkage between early childhood care and education and primary education is the need for supplementary nutrition at both the levels. Teacher needs to understand needs of children in terms of their nutritional requirements. Likewise, there is ample scope to establish a linkage between the two stages in terms of provision for health care of children. At early childhood care and education stage especially in anganwadis immunisation and health check-up are essential components of the integrated service package. However, in primary school, health care is not given much importance.

5.6 INITIATIVES TAKEN SO FAR

After the launch of District Primary Education Programme in 1995 and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in 2000 there have been efforts to establish the linkage between the early childhood care and education and the primary education by taking following measures:

- Shifting anganwadis in primary school premises, wherever possible.
- Providing play material to early childhood care and education children.
- Synchronisation of timings between early childhood care and education and primary school.
- Providing additional honorarium to anganwadi worker for extended work.
- Opening new centres where there is no coverage of ICDS.
- Training of workers in early childhood care and education.



- Orientation of primary teachers and headmasters in early childhood care and education.
- Visit to early childhood care and education centre periodically by primary teacher/headmaster where the centre is located at a distance from the primary school and inviting anganwadi worker and children to primary school functions occasionally.

The above provisions for promoting linkage between the pre-primary and primary education have been implemented by states in varying degrees. Some of the conclusions and observations drawn from the study conducted by the NCERT in 2003 on linkage, titled as “Study of Processes and Effectiveness of Linkages between Early Childhood Education and Primary Education in the context of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan”, are:

- Preschool age children staying in schools for long hours need facilities for rest and sleep. These facilities can be provided with VEC’s intervention and support from authorities.
- The linkage can be solidified to the extent there is convergence and linkage between ICDS and education department. It is therefore imperative to provide for more opportunities for interaction between the two at various levels.
- There is need to cover all children up to primary stage under the services of health, nutrition and stimulating learning environment, with upward not the downward extension of methods.
- It is necessary to have safe storage space for Play and Learning Material (PLM) and worker should be trained in its effective use. The provision should be made for TLM/PLM for Classes I and II children so that there could be greater sharing of play material.
- There is need to have a joint monitoring mechanism for monitoring child’s all round development.
- Shifting of anganwadi in primary school should not be forced and mechanical. Before shifting, proper space for preschool children, the potential to facilitate children’s participation, safety aspects need to be considered.
- There could be equally good linkage established if the anganwadi is nearer to school, if not within school, and both have close interaction and cooperation and there is no isolation in functional terms.



- There is need to promote aspects of school readiness at the beginning of Class I.
- There is desirability to have regular orientation of a day or two at cluster or centre level focusing on various aspects of linkage. Participation of parents in these programmes would help further in implementing the ideas before us.

Not only the quality of early childhood care and education programmes, characterised by the downward extension of primary education, need to be improved but also the quality of primary education in terms methods and teaching learning material. These improvements would be necessary for reversing the trend of downward extension of primary curriculum to upward linkage from early childhood care and education to primary education of children. This will reduce the burden on children on account of early introduction of Three Rs at the early childhood stage. A study conducted by the NCERT in 2002 on curriculum load on children at early childhood education and primary school stage indicated that one of the factors contributing to the load at early childhood stage is the downward extension of primary grades curriculum and adherence to formal methods of teaching at early childhood stage. The Yashpal committee report (1993) gave many a recommendations on reducing the curriculum load on children. Significant among them are: decentralisation of curriculum process and textbook preparation; administrative and legislative measures to regulate the opening of early childhood care and education; emphasis on cooperative learning rather than competitions; change in the nature and character of homework at primary stage; review of mathematics curriculum and reorientation of language and science curriculum towards understanding, application and experimentation. The committee found that “a lot is taught, but little is learnt by children”. It was perceived that the real load is that of non-comprehension and physical load of bag. These recommendations reflect on the relationship between preschool and primary school and have implication for not only for the content and methods of education at primary but also for early childhood care and education stage and linkage between early childhood care and education and primary education.



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6

Early Childhood Teacher Education

Teacher preparation is one of the prime concerns for implementing good quality ECCE programmes. In this chapter we shall try to analyse the status of teacher training in ECCE, both pre-service and in-service with reference to facilities available, curriculum and its transaction in variety of ECCE contexts.

6.1 TEACHER EDUCATION COURSES FOR ECCE

The main teacher education programmes for ECCE stage recognised by NCTE are: One Year Preschool Teacher Training and Two years' Integrated Nursery Teacher Training. The entry qualification for Preschool Teacher training is Class X and for two years integrated Nursery Teacher Training is XII, with 45 per cent marks. As per NCTE report 2005 the recognised training institutions of pre-primary and nursery teacher training were only about 104, with an intake capacity of 5104 students in the country. These institutions are functioning in 15 states only. In rest of the 20 state /UTs there is not a single recognised ECCE teacher education institute. Among the 15 states where these institutes are functioning the distribution is also unequal. 84 training institutes out of 104 are in seven states and remaining 20 are in other eight states. There is not a single Pre- service teacher training course in whole of the North East region. Alone Delhi and Kerala have 40 per cent of these institutions. Out of 104 recognised institutions 62 are under non-government bodies and only 42 are under government sector. There are very few other recognised courses, like B.Ed. nursery conducted by Jamia Millia Islamia. It is clear that government has not given much attention to ECCE teacher education programme in the country. In comparison to these recognised courses private sector training institutions, not recognised by NCTE, cater to the needs of large number of trainees needed by the fast growing private sector ECCE provisions. The quality of these privately run teacher training courses is often below standard.

6.2 IN-SERVICE TRAINING

In-service training in ECCE has remained underdeveloped in our country. In ICDS there is some provision for refresher training of anganwadi workers; otherwise there is hardly any institutionalised mechanism for training in ECCE in government and private sectors. SCERTs and DIETs have not been given the role and responsibility for taking up the ECCE pre-service or even in-service training. Both pre-service and in-service training of teachers' has remained grossly neglected in all the three sectors—private, government and NGO. The nature of neglect varies. In private sector there may be teachers trained for the higher stage of education working with preschool children. If ECCE trained teachers are there in private sector the training they have received is found to be of doubtful quality due to unrecognised and unregulated training in private sector. In government sector the training facilities are negligible and inadequate. The ICDS is the largest outreach programme of early childhood care and education. In the induction training of anganwadi workers, as per the ICDS curriculum, the time available for preschool education is only one fifth of the total 26 days total training; this is highly inadequate considering the low educational level of workers. Generally, only primary/middle school educated women are selected from the community to function as ICDS workers. Since the existing workers will continue to function, the need and demand for in service training is very high. The feasible strategy to meet the demand of regular orientation of workers and supervisory staff would be to strengthen DIETs in different aspects of early childhood care and education component. At present about 10 lakh anganwadi centres are operational and the number is likely to increase by two times in case universal coverage is achieved. The responsibility to provide in-service training in early childhood care and education should rest with the SCERTs/DIETs in the states. At block level the office of the block education officer/CDPO has to be strengthened and developed in to a resource centre in ECCE as was envisaged in the programme of action of National Policy on Education 1992. Cluster level resource centres should be strengthened for in-service training in early childhood care and education. It would be desirable to define the role of SCERTs and DIETs, Block Resource



Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) for in-service and pre-service education and, monitoring and evaluation of early childhood care and education. There is also need to build capacity of SCERTs for preparing a cadre of resource persons in early childhood care and education in the states for research, training and curriculum development in ECCE. The DIETs in the respective state should be developed as district resource centres in early childhood care and education to design and develop district specific materials; undertake experiments, projects and testing of various strategies and models; ensure proper monitoring and supervision of early childhood care and education. BRCs and CRCs should be developed to disseminate information about the early childhood care and education methodologies to the grassroots level and should be able to provide supervision and support in terms of material preparation for children and conducting developmentally appropriate activities at the centres.

The methodology being used in in-service training programmes is by and large confined to lecture method with little or no emphasis on hands-on-experiences. The cascade method used in training programmes usually result in training losses at the next level. There is a need to address the issues of effectiveness of on the job training /orientation programmes. It would necessitate conducting process evaluation of in-service training programmes of early childhood care and education and try innovative modalities of training. Orientation of anganwadi workers and preschool teachers through the distance mode, particularly teleconferencing has been attempted and found effective. To meet the demands of the system, orientation through teleconferencing should be strengthened. NCERT/SCERTs should assume responsibility for preparing and distributing both print and non-print materials for use by early childhood care and education personnel.

Pre-service Training

As already discussed above, in most states the government managed pre-primary training institutions are insignificant in number and the number of trainees who passout from these institutions is also insufficient. At the same time they find it difficult to get proper employment since government run pre-primary institutions are almost non-existent in whole of the North East region and big states like UP, Rajasthan, MP, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu



and Kashmir among others. For strengthening pre-service training component, the feasible alternative would be to open nursery teacher training institutions and regulate private run institutions. From the point of view of raising the quality these measures are important. Since the provision of quality education is an obligation for the state and society, appointment of nursery-trained teachers should be made mandatory for privately managed institutions. The regulatory mechanism suggested earlier would facilitate this. The training needs of anganwadi functionaries, especially anganwadi workers and supervisors should be addressed by government institutions.

The initiatives taken by IGNOU and the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) for organising certificates/diploma courses in the area of Early Childhood Care and Education have generally proven useful and very well received. Similar courses by other organisations need to be initiated so that the supply of personnel, competent to handle preschool education, could be augmented.

There is a wide variation in the course contents, duration and entry-level qualifications in pre-service programmes offered by different institutions, there is, therefore, a need to establish parity among these training courses. Two years' integrated training course designed by the committee appointed by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) is being used by some state governments like Delhi and Haryana. The two years training prepares a teacher for organising the child's learning from preschool to Classes I and II in an integrated and progressive manner. Passouts from these courses should also be considered for appointment as primary school teachers. There is also a need to incorporate preschool teacher education component in the entire primary school teacher training programmes in order to integrating early childhood care and education with primary schooling.

We find there is a wide spectrum of training provisions, including provisions outside NCTE recognised courses, with marked variations in content and approach, which reduce the scope for any standardisation or quality control of ECCE training initiatives. While minimum educational eligibility criteria ranges from no bar (as in case of ICDS community workers) to primary standard (as in case of crèche workers) to high school pass (as in case of NTT) to Class XII (as in case of IGNOU and Integrated Pre-primary and Primary Teachers Training), there exists marked variation in

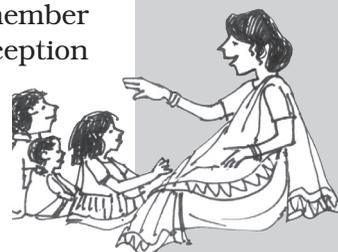


duration of training too. Further, taking advantage of absence of minimum accepted guidelines for teacher preparation curriculum of ECCE, most of these institutions have adopted different curriculum from their own point of view. (NFG report 2006)

Due to lack of employment opportunities of the products of ECCE teacher training, the system of ECCE teacher education has not grown. The employment opportunity for ECCE trained teacher is only available in private sector, where in most of the cases service conditions are often deplorable. The numbers of available posts of trained nursery teachers in the government sector in almost all the states are negligible except in Delhi and Kerala. Further, as there has been no demand for trained staff in ECCE, no state government has laid down any norms for staff qualifications or remuneration, or any guidelines for recognition of ECCE staff as teacher (NCTE, 2005). This under developed teacher training system of ECCE can be easily seen from the dichotomy between the ECCE teacher training and secondary/elementary teacher training system. Thus state governments are required to take corrective measures in the matter.

Though Programme of Action (POA) 1992 and NCTE draft approach paper, 2004 had recommended for different courses of ECCE at certificate, diploma and postgraduate diploma level, the certification at various levels is based on the assumption that while postgraduate diploma holders may take up the job of teacher educators, the certificate holders may be engaged in running the ECCE centres. Yet existing programmes have not accommodated these needs. It might be due to the fact that ECCE is not introduced as a subject in any of the social science faculties in Indian Universities. Thus, there seems an urgent need to bring up the Universities, Institutes and other centres of higher learning in teacher education within the realm of ECCE also.

There is a popular perception that special training is not necessary for teachers of pre-primary and nursery schools as their job simply involves engaging children for some time (i.e. teaching of alphabets, numbers etc., and taking care of young children). It is felt that any person who has passed higher secondary or senior secondary examination can easily handle the job of a nursery teacher. Even any person who has caring temperament towards children, or who herself is mother, will be a good staff member in early childhood programmes. It is because of this perception



untrained teachers are posted in a majority of nursery schools in the unrecognised private sector. Nearly over three-quarters of teachers engaged in ECCE have not received any type of pedagogical training. There exist tendencies to recruit untrained or poorly qualified teachers, which often have serious consequences for early childhood education quality (NCTE, 2005). Needless to say, these assumptions are professionally not sound.

A glance at the structure of privately managed early childhood care and education teacher training programmes shows that it lacks both academic rigour and professionalism. So far as academic rigorousness is concerned, scarcely any attempt is made to achieve the necessary skills, strategies, methods, knowledge and understanding required for desirable learning outcomes. From the point of view of professionalism, it is noticed that these ECCE courses are not only of shorter duration but also lack the opportunity of transforming the classroom based learning experiences into real context. The ultimate result is that most of the ECCE teachers are unable to use their training capabilities. Further, privately managed teacher training institutions have not yet developed a professional work culture that may enable them towards quality improvement.

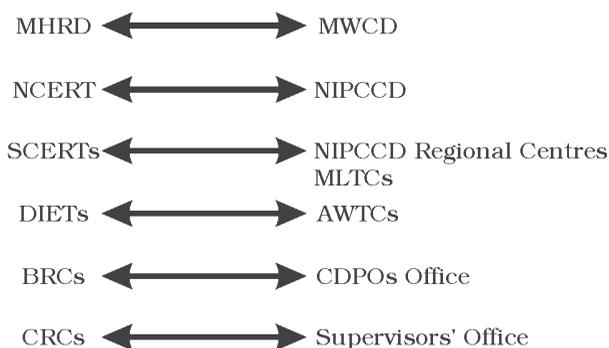
Though the country has well defined system of ICDS training but often it is observed that system is confronting organisational problems in terms of standardised training package, fragmented and centrally designed curriculum and of low financial norms. Further, considering the large number of ICDS training centres across the country, the monitoring of the training programme has been posing serious problems. In the absence of any well-defined monitoring mechanism of training programmes being organised by these training centres, some of the parameters of training such as trainers' strengths and their academic background, organisation of programme for prescribed number of days, full coverage of syllabus, sequencing and delivery of contents etc. are not being observed properly. Further, most of the institutions imparting training to workers and helpers in ICDS conduct courses in haste through deployment of contingency measures such as course based release of funds, short tenability of ICDS training centres, inadequate increase in honorarium of trainers, contractual time bound appointment of faculty etc. (NIPCCD, 1996)



At the initial phase of implementation of ICDS, the duration of Job Training Course (JTC) for ICDS functionaries was 72 days. However, it was subsequently reduced to 52 working days and finally to 26 working days. The suppression of duration has drastically reduced the opportunities for hands-on-experiences of Preschool Education (PSE) skills in the field situation. Currently, the ECCE component under JTC of various ICDS functionaries only figures for four days. This aspect needs to be looked into.

The curriculum content of the existing ECCE teacher education programmes by and large, lacks relevance and context specificity. In most of the cases, it is modelled on the pattern of elementary teacher education programme and lacks training methodology incorporating elements of cultural and local specificity. In this connection, it is recommended that state specific courses need to be devised within the broader framework provided by NCTE. There is also a need to initiate dialogue with NCTE on evolving a need based, practice oriented and flexible curriculum. In order to have need-based state specific training of ECCE functionaries, it may be suggested that SCERTs and DIETs need to be strengthened in a sustained manner with regular guidance of lead institutions at the national level. In addition to these, decentralised training capability for ECCE has to be nurtured in Block and Cluster Resource Centers. The linkages between education and women and child development departments would be of critical significance.

Documentation of case studies of best practices in training should be done for wide dissemination as well as to feed into the training process itself.



There has been an unplanned and unmapped distribution of ECCE teacher training courses. Though POA, 1992 had committed the adequate training facilities for this sector through 2 year vocational course at +2 levels and creating a system of accreditation of institutions dealing with ECCE training. NCTE has till date recognised only about 104 courses at the pre-primary level. The state wise distribution of these courses presents a very grim picture as already explained above. There is, therefore, a need for creating workforce requirement in a more systematic way. Further, due to the uneven geographical distribution of training centres, majority of ECCE providers are forced to undergo training not only at distant places, but also almost in decontextualised way with lack of responsiveness to local needs. Thus, NCTE may come out with more simplified norms of accrediting training institutes and courses. Further, a well-established accreditation system recognised by the government for monitoring ECCE training institutes needs to be set up.

6.3 ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES, SCERTs AND DIETs IN ECCE TRAINING

Significant changes have taken place during 1990s across the globe in staff training and development of ECCE programme. The training task of teachers and teacher educators of kindergarten and early childhood care and education centres has now become the responsibility of colleges and university system in most of the countries like China, Australia, Finland, Japan etc. However, the same is not true with India despite the fact that we have more than 50 Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASE) and about 450 District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs) across the country. Besides this more than 100 education departments in various universities are also in operation. The scope of these Institutes/Centres needs to be widened so that they not only take up the training task of teachers from early childhood to secondary stage through diverse ways of different certification level but also discharge their responsibilities in research and extension dimensions too. NIPCCD may provide a torch-bearing role in this regard by adopting cascade model and by imparting training to trainers of these institutions. The launching of Degree, Diploma



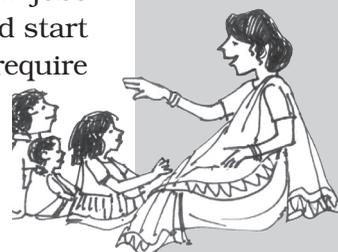
and Certificate level course in the field of early childhood care and education by IGNOU and Jamia Millia Islamia Universities, National Institute of Open Schooling and by State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) in Delhi, Haryana and other states may be seen as a lead role model in this direction. Other universities, which are implementing self-financing courses, may also be encouraged to opt for same model.

6.4 USING DISTANCE MODE

One of the strong alternate of getting manpower trained through distance mode needs to be put on the priority agenda of discussion among trainers' fraternity. ECCE has found a specific and explicit mention for the first time under Directive Principles of State Policy. Traditional way of institutionalised training is certainly unequipped to cater emerging demands of imparting training on several counts, the distance mode of training by its innate potentiality of quick delivery mechanism, boundary less operation, taking care of contextual sensitive pedagogies and cost effective way may be viewed as an alternate to surpass these contemporary training weaknesses. Since training through distance mode requires moving in altogether different paths in contrast to contemporary practices, the proposal needs to be thoroughly debated. Here, it has to be mentioned that NIPCCD had already taken a lead by facilitating the states to get the ECCE functionaries enrolled in IGNOU run distance learning ECCE programme. NIPCCD has also discussed with NIOS to tie-up with NIOS run distance mode ECCE programme. The committee appointed by Government of India for contemporary look into the training aspects of ECCE services has also recommended designing courses of shorter duration using distance mode. State open universities (SOUs) may also take up these courses so as to take into consideration the contextual responsiveness of the programme.

On-line Courses

There is growing need for online courses of ECCE to suit the needs and working hours of variety of clientele that may find the courses of ECCE beneficial. There is vast potential for new jobs and opportunities in this sector. National institutions should start online courses in ECCE for wider coverage. ICDS system may require



such provisions for professional development of functionaries at various levels.

6.5 IMPROVING WORKING CONDITIONS OF ECCE TEACHERS/CHILD CARE WORKERS

Upgrading the ECCE work force has implication for quality. The remuneration, training and working conditions of ECCE staff needs a fresh look. Currently, under public initiative of ICDS, nearly eight lakh AWWs and an equal number of helpers totaling about more than one and a half million women, have been engaged in imparting center based ECCE to 23 million of children. Most of the time, these workers are subjected to treatment at par with other regular government employees (i.e. structured training inputs, sometimes transferred from one place to other, subjecting to disciplinary actions like other regular employees), however, they are having poor working/service conditions due to the honorary status of their work. The situation gets further compounded due to absence of the term child care workers/nursery school teacher in 27th schedule of the minimum wages act, the minimum wages and working conditions of these workers are not subject to the regulation of any law in the country. The similar situation is true with private sector and NGOs run ECCE initiatives also, where they are victims of exploitatively low wages with no security of service.

The basic reason behind poor working conditions of ECCE teachers/child care workers is that they have not yet been recognised as skilled workers, though ECCE involves a set of highly skilled task of nurturing, educating young children. The proclaimed lack of financial requirements and the non-availability of trained manpower of ECCE in scattered and inaccessible areas also contribute to this grim reality. This situation needs to be properly corrected while designing the ECCE inputs under various programmes

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7

Advocacy and Communication for ECCE

7.1 MEANING AND SCOPE

Advocacy in ECCE means raising the voice in demand for the means of alleviating the plight of young children between the 0-6 years of age. We have millions of children who are ill fed, malnourished and lack caring and healthy environment for their all-round development. Advocacy for ECCE involves making people aware about the need for quality health and nutritional care services and providing stimulating environment for learning and development during early childhood stage. The scope of the advocacy and communication to bring awareness among masses for survival, growth and development of children and the impact it would have in nation building is immense. The need for large-scale advocacy measures arises because parents in all walks of life and at all levels i.e. the public in general has little knowledge about the need and significance of ECCE, the role it plays in national development and human development and how to promote development. The unified vision of ECCE that address the comprehensive needs of children and families forms the core of the advocacy. Joan Lombardi 1992 suggests that like confluence of three rivers, ECCE programmes should respond to the needs for:

1. Developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant services for all children
2. Parent's involvement and family support
3. Attention to the health needs of both children and families

7.2 NEED FOR ADVOCACY

In Indian context, like elsewhere, large numbers of programmes take fragmented approach to ECCE. Too often one component is taken and others are neglected. Large numbers of private nursery

school have early childhood care and education as main component neglecting nutritional and health aspects. Parent's programmes are taken up in isolation of the programmes for children. The synergy that is required to be brought about between early childhood care and education, nutritional support, health care since infancy through early primary grades and focusing on families and children together need a concerted effort on the part of teachers, planners, communities and parents to promote comprehensive and quality ECCE programmes. The need to have advocacy for good quality preschool education also arise from the fact that increasing number of parents are being made to feel the importance of "early start" for later educational achievement. The only model available, is the formal early childhood care and education which merely tries to teach from an early age, as early as two years, basics of Three Rs in a mechanical way which ends in mere memorisation. Parents and community at large need to be made aware about the purpose and significance of preschool education in its right perspective. The early start and its harms on children is one aspect of advocacy. There are large number of issues which need to be taken up for general awareness of masses and policy planners.

7.3 AREAS OF ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION

Various aspects of ECCE programme that need wide advocacy campaign relate to the key areas like:

- Maternal and child health
- Safe Motherhood
- Care of new born baby
- Breast feeding
- Child growth
- Immunisation
- Diarrhea
- Cough and colds
- Hygiene
- Malaria
- Child development
- Preschool education



- Burden on preschool children
- Improving services in Anganwadi
- Enhanced community participation
- Advocacy with planners/administrators and parliamentarians
- Early stimulation
- Age of marriage and first pregnancy
- Women and child nutrition
- Early identification of disabilities
- Reducing severe and under malnutrition
- Adherence to complete immunisation schedule
- Micronutrients deficiencies
- Hygiene and sanitation
- Improved delivery of supplementary nutrition
- Positive child rearing practices
- Quality preschool education i.e. Learning without burden
- School readiness
- Transition from home to school
- Convergence and coordination between various service departments
- Significance of community participation and role of village level institutions
- Linkage between pre-primary and primary education
- Advocacy based on rights of children as per UNCRC namely—right to survival, right to development, right to protection and right to participation
- Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
- Advocacy for policy development
- Protection of child's rights
- Quality issues in ECCE
- Special needs children
- Children at risk etc.

7.4 PRIME MESSAGES

There are prime messages which every household should know. The real communication challenge is how to reach out to every



household and convince them about the need for practicing those key messages. Some selected messages from the “Facts of Life” UNESCO 1997 are given below as examples:

- The health of both women and children can be significantly improved by spacing births at least two years apart and limiting pregnancies to two and avoiding pregnancies before 18 years.
- All pregnant women should go to health care worker for prenatal care and all births should be assisted by trained persons.
- Children in the first month of their life are extremely vulnerable and die. Protecting children from infections is important. Full vaccination of all children is necessary.
- Breast milk alone is the best possible food and drink for about first six months. No other food or drink is needed.
- Immunisation is urgent. All immunisations should be completed in the first year of the child’s life.
- Babies begin to learn rapidly from the moment they are born. For mental growth the child’s greatest need is love and attention.
- Play is important to a child’s development. By playing a child exercises body and mind and absorbs basic lessons about the world. Parents can help a child to play.
- All parents and children should tell their children how HIV/ AIDS spreads.

The above messages along with supporting information need to be communicated to convince parents and other stake holder. There is a need and scope to devise ways and means to take these and many other messages to communities and people in a most effective manner, using multipronged strategies.

7.5 ADVOCACY STRATEGIES

For advocacy of quality issues of early childhood care and education, early stimulation, nutritional and health services and other elements of comprehensive ECCE, the need would be to prepare specific, culturally relevant material in the form of print and non print (multimedia) and devise communication and social marketing strategies to reach to stakeholders at various levels. Improving knowledge, skills, attitude and practice of front line worker would be necessary to reach-out to parents and communities in a project



mode like ICDS. Use of folk media could be an effective strategy. Creating pressure groups and networking would be important dimensions of effective advocacy programme. The state level and district level institutions will have to step up to evolve local strategies integrating folk media, electronic media, print media and other ways and means of information and communication to serve the needs of various stakeholders. The meeting of VECs/PTAs and PRIs may focus upon the issues of child development in a continuous manner using folk media, print media (chart/posters/pamphlets) audio/video media. Use of television, mobile, internet, teleconferencing and other available technologies would help in addressing the issues of quality of ECCE. There is need to design multipronged strategies to informing various stakeholders about the need significance and quality dimensions of ECCE. For addressing the issue of curriculum load on young preschool children NCERT organised a National Seminar and various regional seminars form 1997 to 1998. The recommendation of the seminar includes preparing an agenda for advocacy interventions. The agenda includes:

- Convincing, empowering and involving parents
- Convincing and influencing School Managements
- Convincing, empowering, motivating teachers and workers
- Influencing Policy Makers and Administrators
- Influencing and orienting toy manufacturers and publishers

There is therefore a need to prepare the relevant communication material for advocacy of preschool education component of ECCE for the above groups by the Education Departments. Similarly, MWCD and MOHFW need to develop, and use already developed advocacy and communication material for parents, functionaries and other stakeholders.

7.6 ADVOCACY AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL

At village or preschool centre/anganwadi centre there is need to draw an advocacy plan to inform parents about the value and various issues of ECCE. The awareness about the rights of children is important to move ahead with suitable programmes for children and demand the services which are lacking. Women/community groups



to advocate for rights of children can be formed and networked with district and state level groups working for child's rights. The health, nutrition, hygiene, early learning and development related messages need to be developed in local contexts in collaboration with community and disseminated in the community using the popular media including print, electronic and folk media. The important aspect of advocacy would be to develop material for communication and its dissemination to district sub district levels for use. At DIET/SCERT levels material for communication can be developed in all areas of child survival, child development, child protection and child participation. The software developed for advocacy and communication at state and national level should be made available to all communities to transfer it in local context and bring awareness and changes in attitude and practice among front line workers and parents. If parents are convinced about the objectives and value of ECCE the quality would certainly enhance.

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8

Information Communication Technology in ECCE

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Advancement in the field of information and communication technology has revolutionised the life in all spheres of human activity. Learning in early stages can also feel its impact. Use of ICT may have its advantages and disadvantages but it would be difficult to keep the aspects of care and education untouched from its impact. ICT could prove to be boon for advocacy in ECCE. Use of ICT can influence the quality and delivery of whole range of programmes of ECCE i.e. early stimulation— home based or centre based crèche day care programmes, preschool education in private, government sectors and the programmes related to linkages with primary education. Teacher education programmes, advocacy for parents and other stakeholders would be benefited immensely from the ICT and its effective use. It has also the potential to enhance the effectiveness of services under the ICDS.

ICT stands for information and communication technologies. It replaces the old term IT (information technologies) by emphasising on the communication dimension as well. In ECCE the term ICT could be used to include the following:

- Computers
- Digital cameras
- Communication software
- Internet
- Videos cameras
- Television
- Telephones, Mobile phones, Tape recorders
- Computer games
- Simulated environments
- Teleconferencing
- Multi-media
- Interactive/online-communication technologies, etc.

8.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF ICT IN ECCE

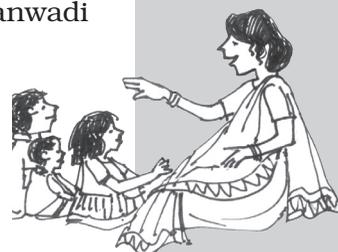
ICT can enhance the effectiveness of the delivery of services for child's survival, growth and development. In ICDS context in India services related to young child's immunisation, health, nutrition, preschool education, referral and other services can be improved to a great extent with efficient information and communication network using appropriate ICT. Similarly, ICT can help in improving the quality of early stimulation and early childhood learning environments. ICT can add the value to young children's learning environments with enhanced understanding about the appropriate use of ICT in children's learning, development, and play. Early childhood teachers and educators including crèche-workers, anganwadi-workers, supervisors and administrators can use ICT to support a range of practices they believe to support children's learning and development. These include: using ICT to document and assess children's learning and activities; using ICT to reflect on children's and educators' interactions in the early childhood education setting; using ICT to build curricula for different age group based on children's interests, ideas, and experiences; and using ICT to strengthen and support family involvement in children's learning. One of the most common uses of ICT in early childhood care and education settings could be for the documentation of children's learning. Digital cameras could be used to make profile of child's learning and development, for assessment purposes, and to share information with children and their families. But such a practice is almost non-existent in general in the government sector. ICT can be promoted as a tool for enriching the learning environment in early childhood care and education settings in the areas of cognitive development, language development, belongingness, emotional development and inclusive learning. Similarly, there is vast scope to use ICT for advocacy of ECCE in its different aspects and service components. The information needed to parents and community for nutrition and health education (NHE), which is one of the week components of ICDS at present may get strengthened by using ICT effectively. Various issues related to child's survival, growth and education also can be effectively tackled with the use



of ICT. Right from the conception, knowledge and skills needed for parenting could be enhanced. Significance of breast feeding, feeding colostrums to newly born babies, diarrhea management, immunisation, stimulation, and overall care of child can be enhanced.

ICT may help in professional development of staff working in ECCE in a big way through in-service, pre-service, distant and online training modes. It may be a potent tool in promoting teachers' own aspirations, skills, knowledge, and understanding into the learning context. It provides opportunities for teachers to learn and explore new ways of working in their own early childhood care and education setting, and stimulates practitioners to reflect on their views and ideas about children's learning and development, and to analyse and question how things are done in early childhood care and education. Effective professional development by sharing knowledge and learning experiences with one another using ICT would be highly advantageous to the system. How do early childhood care and education educators make the transition from non-use or uncertain use of ICT to use of ICT to enrich the early childhood learning environment and what kind of support is needed for this process are the areas of concerns for planners and implementers.

The ICT is likely to be used in planning, administration and information management at national state and sub state levels. It presents opportunities for sharing and exchange of information between different services and agencies involved in children's care and education. Computerisation of systems and creating data base on children for managing and sharing information about children under the ICDS, private crèches and day care centres and under the state and central government's schemes can play an important role in expanding and improving the ECCE service. The use of ICT in learning and play situations of young children may be restricted to a few private ECCE centres at present because of resource crunch. Use of ICT in government run ECCE programmes is yet to pick up in a significant manner. In general, private kindergartens/preparatory schools seem to be better-equipped and resourced than anganwadi centres for using ICT.



8.3 USING ICT IN CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND PLAYS

There could be differing opinions about the use of ICT in learning and play in a preschool setup. One opinion is that ICT use, especially the use of computers, by young children is harmful. It encourages children to be passive recipients, that it is isolating, or that young children cannot learn effectively through these kinds of experiences. Use of ICT may have negative consequences, if implemented without an educational purpose and a proper planning. The main concerns generally expressed are: harmful physical effects, negative impact on social behaviour, danger of exposing to unsuitable contents, computer may displace learning and play activities, violence in computer games may encourage aggression etc. The another opinion makes a point that the reality is that children of today live in communication rich environment using digital and electronic methods of communication. Children will have to use computers in later life in schools and colleges. ECCE being preparation to life, use of ICT which is developmentally appropriate needs to be promoted at ECCE level.

Play is considered an important dimension of early childhood care and education, as part of children's social, emotional, cognitive learning, and motor development. The literature supports several different ideas about the role and potential value of ICT in terms of children's play. Developmentally appropriate technologies may include for young children the exposure to and use of technologies like Karaoke concert, CD player, amplifier, video camera, softwares containing stories in children's cultural contexts, role-plays, computer games etc. supporting different aspects of child's learning. One of the concerns has been whether computer games help in development? Are such game match the characteristics of play, as play has to be spontaneous, imaginative, refreshing releasing energies, reducing anxiety, developing motor skills, releasing pent up emotions, providing joy etc. Do computer games possess such potentials? The answer to these concerns is that ICT has great potential to add to the value of play and learning at ECCE stage and not to be seen as a replacement of existing play and learning activities. How this value could be added depends largely upon the knowledge and skills



of care givers and teachers. For language development ICT use may include “talking” word processor. Children may use printer and the print rich environment. Similarly, children thinking and problem solving skills can be promoted allowing children to create interact and play with ideas through a suitably designed software. Specific software for various learning areas like pre-number concepts, number concepts, patterns, shapes, colours and mixing of colours etc. may help children enrich their learning. One of the advantages of use of ICT in children’s learning at preschool stage could be to implement and support the theme-based approach. The theme of “Weather” could be taken up through software having children’s participation. ICT similarly may help children in experimenting, exploring and using their creative potentials.

However, there is need to be aware of health and safety issues around children’s use of ICT and these to be part of early childhood education ICT policies and practices. This includes: attention to children’s safety; being mindful against children’s exposure to inappropriate content (e.g. games or Internet-based material of a violent or sexual nature, or containing undesirable gender or cultural stereotypes). Practitioners must be conscious of the kinds of learning interactions they would like to occur in the context of ICT use (including between adults and children, or between children), and adopt pedagogical strategies to support these. ICT can be used to support aspects of learning including language development and mathematical thinking.

8.4 ICT CAN HELP IN LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

ICT offers support to learners with a diverse range of special needs or characteristics, children identified as having learning disabilities, learners with physical or cognitive impairments, and children identified as gifted and talented. Technologies can be divided to support diverse learners into two broad categories: adaptive and learning support. Adaptive technologies make something physically accessible that would otherwise be inaccessible (for example, screen magnifiers, voice-recognition software, and modified mice or keyboards), while learning support technologies can assist



learners through remediation, compensation, or extension, one special benefit of technology is the many ways in which it can “level the playing field for kids with special learning needs by supporting their efforts to communicate, explore, play independently, or cooperate with a peer”. There are studies in which preschool children and toddlers with disabilities showed more active engagement, enjoyment, and social play during computer activities involving peers and adults than during similarly structured activities away from the computer.

ICT for Special Needs Children

ICT can be a valuable tool for supporting children with a range of individual learning needs. For example, assist children who were experiencing literacy difficulties by engaging them in highly focused activities on the computer using a “talking book”. The interactive features of the book allowed child to predict which words on the screen might rhyme, and then to check his prediction by clicking the mouse.

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8.5 USE OF ICT FOR ADVOCACY

ICT can be used very effectively to mobilise communities and deliver the right information to them in the areas of PSE, health and nutrition. Some of the key aspects of advocacy in ECCE are given above in the chapter on advocacy.

The potential use of ICT for advocacy needs to be tapped fully. Video conferencing, video spots, multimedia packages, online net work, e-mails, mobiles can be used to further strengthen the advocacy efforts, along with the use of traditional media and folk media.

8.6 ICT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

There is great potential of ICT for use in professional development of ECCE staff. The orientation of teachers/anganwadi workers in the use of digital devices and computers need to be build in the training programmes both pre-service and in-service. There is use of ICT at elementary stage and there is some attention given to teachers’ orientation in ICT at the elementary stage i.e. computer added learning to be precise. However, at ECCE stage the use of ICT is very limited to some urban ECCE centres.



In the absence of good guidance about how best to use computers and ICT with young children, staff may lack in taking decisions about the nature and extent of the involvement of technology-supported learning. These decisions are influenced by such factors as teachers' own exposure with computers, and their beliefs about learning and teaching in the early childhood years. There is a need to develop guidelines for use of ICT and digital resources as part of developmentally appropriate curriculum and relating them to specific learning and developmental goals at ECCE stage. Digital resources need to be judiciously moved around and integrated within the play areas/learning centres of the environment and need to support children's self-directed learning experiences where they need to be able to investigate their own interests. Literature about ICT use in early childhood education settings and studies of teachers and teacher trainees to use ICT, highlight these key findings about effective professional development for early childhood educators:

- Effective professional development supports teachers to develop understandings of ICT that connect with their existing early childhood education philosophy and pedagogical views.
- Effective ICT professional development incorporates teachers' own aspirations, skills, knowledge, and understanding into the learning context. It provides opportunities for teachers to learn and explore new ways of working in their own early childhood education setting.
- Effective ICT professional development stimulates practitioners to reflect on their views and ideas about children's learning and development, and to analyse and question how things are done in early childhood education.
- Effective professional development emphasises sharing learning experiences with ICT with one another. It provides support networks to help practitioners to be active researchers in their own early childhood education setting, and to access current research and expertise in ICT.

8.7 ROLE OF ICT IN NETWORKING OF INSTITUTIONS

Using ICT to build or strengthen networks between early childhood education centres as well as providing tools for learning, reflection, and communication within an early childhood care and education setting, ICT creates opportunities for building or strengthening



networks among the wider early childhood care and education community. These can include both face-to-face networks and networks that use ICT to support communication and sharing of information (for example, using email or videoconferencing technology). Web cams can be used to study, for example, weather in different parts of the world. Over time the children would be able to see that weather was different in other places. Children can use videoconferencing to exchange weather reports with one another, to ask each other questions, and get to know children at the other location. They can share many stories, answer many questions about each other, and even share portions of special programmes they would be preparing. The video conferencing and other Internet technologies provided an excellent opportunity for the children to construct new understandings of weather in ways not available to them without the technology.

8.8 ICT TO SUPPORT PLANNING, ADMINISTRATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN ECCE

ICT provides two major advantages for administration and information management. First, it provides a way to create and maintain electronic records and databases which are easy to update, amend, and transfer into many different formats. Second, networked and internet technologies enable the electronic transfer of information between different locations. A few examples in the literature show how these capacities have been used in early childhood care and education settings. Although computers and ICT are likely to be used in planning, administration, and information management in many early childhood care and education settings, there is little research which specifically investigates this aspect of ICT use in early childhood care and education.

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9

Early Childhood Care and Education : A Way Forward

A planned strategy would be required for providing access to a good quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to all children including those with special needs, belonging to deprived and disadvantaged sections of society and living in remote isolated habitations. The broad based strategies would include:

9.1 RECOGNISING THE VALUE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

We have seen in Chapter I that education is an important component of any long-term strategy for national development characterised by social equity, economic growth, poverty alleviation, a vibrant democracy and equitable distribution of benefits. Research across the globe indicates that, in developing countries, early childhood care and education has been instrumental in higher enrolment and retention of children in primary grades, promoting girls' education, particularly if combined with the provision of childcare services, health and nutrition components. Early childhood care and education is viewed as having potential to create a just and equitable social order and to remedy various social evils like — discrimination on various grounds (sex, colour, religion and caste etc.); crimes; violence; terrorism; diseases and deprivations. But this all depends on the quality of ECCE programmes. Early childhood care and education is all about healthy, active and joyful childhood, strengthening primary and elementary education, empowering parents (women) and leading a path from child development to national development (human development). Early childhood care and education programmes lay the foundation during early childhood for a healthy youth, increase productivity by strengthening basic education of girls and boys, reduce tension and violence in societies by inculcating socially desirable values right from the

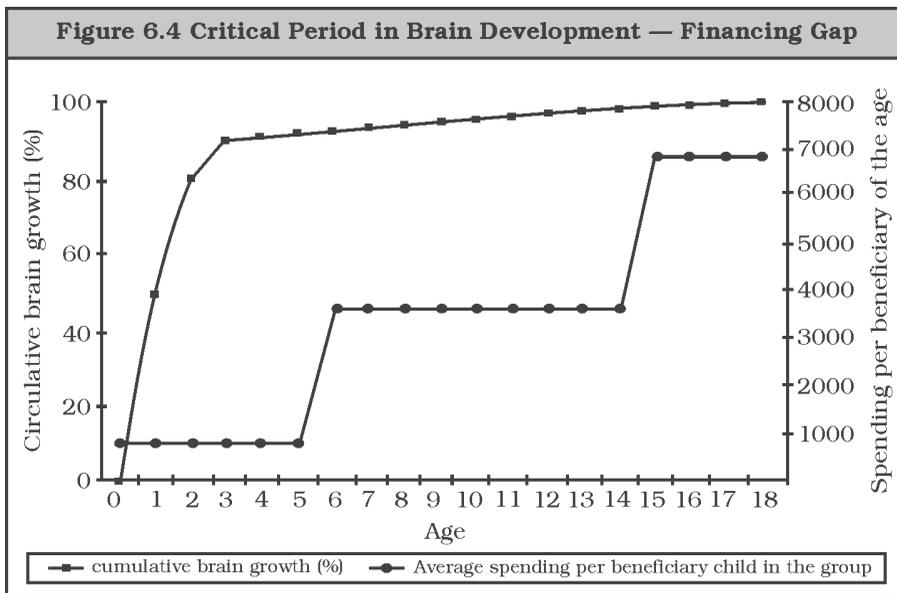
early childhood stage and empowering women among others. It is beyond doubt that early childhood experiences lay the foundation for future society and humanity as a whole. However, the attention and priority early childhood care and education deserves has not been accorded to it. The need, therefore, is that comprehensive early childhood care and education should find priority in planning and funding by the government agencies. State government should find means to support and prioritise the early childhood care and education of good quality for all children. To achieve this it would be desirable to take stock of existing policies and programmes and bring about necessary shifts in policies keeping child and families at the centre stage. Most of the state governments have not given due attention to programmes of early childhood care and education. National Curriculum Frameworks have placed early childhood care and education as an integral part of the school education structure since long. National Curriculum Framework 2005 has laid a great deal of significance on early childhood experiences. It articulates that the revision of primary school textbooks and syllabi needs to be undertaken in the light of the well-known principles of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). We know children learn through concrete experiences. They construct their own knowledge. Children love to play and learn through play. Each child is unique and there are individual differences. The development is holistic and follows a pattern. Encouragement and positive reinforcement helps children to perform better. Children learn by imitation hence adult behaviour is important. Below are some important considerations for planning experiences for young children from ECCE stage to primary school stage.

9.2 INCREASING INVESTMENT IN ECCE

Studies both nationally and internationally provide convincing answers in support of increasing investment in young children. The Global Monitoring Report 2007 having ECCE as the theme of the year provides sound reasons why investment on ECCE is must. There are references of longitudinal studies conducted in USA (Schweinhart et. al. 2005) and other countries indicating the high economic



returns of ECCE programmes in long term. The other scientific proof to invest on ECCE comes from the fact that mental development takes place at a fast pace during first three years.



Source : *Reaching Out to the Child*, HDS, World Bank, 2004.

The above graph shows that the pace of growth and development of brain is very fast during the first three years of life. About 80-90 per cent brain’s growth takes place in this period. This fact appears to be ignored while investing on young children, as the spending per beneficiary remains bottom low till child attends the age of six years. This obviously strongly suggests to investing more on children during early childhood for optimal growth and development. This is particularly important for children belonging to disadvantaged and vulnerable section of society. Until funding is increased for ECCE it would be difficult to realise the rights of children.

9.3 ECCE POLICY

There was a need to evolve a clear cut policy for ECCE and its implementation. There are various policy formulations for different components of ECCE from different Ministries with varying



approaches and strategies. Recently developed National ECCE Policy has been boon in the area of ECCE but its implementation has to be ensured. Some concerns w.r.t. policy are as follows:

1. The main vehicle for ECCE is ICDS and implementation rests with MWCD. The preschool education component which was with the MHRD has now been transferred to MWCD. But the structure for training and curriculum development in preschool education still remains with MHRD controlled institutions like NCERT, SCERTs and DIETs.
2. Similarly, there is some ambiguity with regard to duration of preschool education. National Curriculum Framework 2000 envisages two years' preschool education before formal schooling starts. However, in Delhi it has been made of one-year duration only, as the admission to pre primary is done at 4+ and admission in class one is done at 5+age. In anganwadis children are getting preschool education of two-three years duration. In most of the states preschool education of two years' is considered. The entry age of Class I being 6 years in some states there is variation across states in duration of preschool education, ranging from one to three years and also variation in entry age. The RTE Act 2009 provides ECCE provision for 3-6 year age group children. This creates difficulties in monitoring programme quality and implementing standards. There is need to have clear cut policy on these aspects.
3. The need was also to develop curriculum for preschool education component of ECCE at national and state levels defining broad curricular guidelines, implementation and assessment strategies. In the absence of such clear cut guidelines states and private players were free to extend primary curriculum downward to this stage. National ECCE curriculum developed by MCWC in the year 2013 is recent development in the area of ECCE. The policy framework is also needed for governance, quality, access and financing ECCE programmes. After the approval of National Policy on ECCE 2013 states are developing their own ECCE curriculum. Large numbers of countries refer to ECCE as the first stage of the education structure. Some have one year compulsory preschool education.



4. Another crucial aspect of ECCE to be addressed in Indian context is the holistic nature of ECCE programmes. Large number of programmes are fragmented in approach and do not have components of nutrition and health. It has to be taken at the policy level that all programmes of ECCE must attain to holistic approach. This should be applicable to programmes run by government departments of education, NGOs or private sector. This is important because many state governments have nursery sections opened in primary school without provisioning for basic infrastructure and human resource requirements. There is no nutrition provision for children in nursery section going to primary school.
5. In the Directive Principles of State Policy, Constitution of India had a specific provision for free, compulsory and universal education of children up to 14 years' of age, an obligation on the part of the State. The NPE 1986/92 reiterated that free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality should be provided to all children up to the age of 14 years before we enter the 21st century. The Supreme Court in its judgment on UnniKrishnan versus state of Andhra Pradesh (AIR 1993 S.C. 2178) has held that the children of this country have a fundamental right to free education until the age of 14 years. However, the Committee of Education Ministers which was set up to examine the implications of making compulsory education as a fundamental right have recommended that the Constitution be amended to make the right to free and compulsory education for children from 6 to 14 years of age. This was done through the 86th Constitution Amendment Act 2001. This leaves out children of 0-6 years of age. In this regard there have been many views expressed to include ECCE within the rights domain, what was also recommended by the Acharya Ram Murthy. However, the futuristic vision in this regard demands that if not from 0-6 at least 4-6 age children be made part of the right to early childhood education. The justification for this would be that two years' preschool is part of education structure as suggested by the National Curriculum Framework 2000.

This is also practiced in advanced countries like UK where foundation stage curriculum is part of school curriculum and covered under the compulsory education provision.



6. There are no regulatory mechanisms for ensuring quality of early childhood education. In the absence of such a mechanism a mushroom growth of preschools in the name of English medium nursery/kindergarten/preparatory schools in cities and towns has taken place. Even in rural areas a large number of preschools are being established by private agencies. Preschool centres are run without ensuring the basic minimum requirements. No mechanism exists to get these institutions registered, adhere to prescribe standards and regulate their functioning. The Government has though detailed out specific requirements, which preschools centres must fulfill but there is no mechanism to enforce them. This is also true for nursery teacher training institutions. Although the demand for preschools and preschool teachers has grown, there is no increase in government established few teacher-training institutions. Consequently, a number of private nursery teacher training institutions have come into existence. These institutions, as already stated do not conform to minimum standards. They use a curriculum of their own; teachers are mostly unqualified and untrained for the job and charge high tuition fees. For regulating the quality, before training institutions are established, a team of experts should ensure that institutions have facilities and resources required for establishing and maintaining an institution. The norms regarding staff position, their qualification and training, course content, procedure for evaluation of trainees etc. should be specified and strictly enforced. The NCTE has already laid down norms, which institutions have to fulfill before they can organise training in preschool education. NCERT has developed "Minimum Specifications for Preschools". The enforcement of these specifications and standards is lacking.
7. Reforming training institutions and expanding training provisions would be essential for promoting quality of ECCE programmes. The training institutions under ICDS need to be revamped and AWTCs and MLTCs need to be made vibrant by ensuring adequate resources and professional development of staff working in them. Similarly, there is need to redefine the role and functions of DIETs and SCERTs in conducting pre-service and in-service training programmes in ECCE at state and district levels. It would be desirable that state governments



take steps to start integrated nursery teacher training of two years duration for appointment of qualified nursery teachers to take nursery and early primary classes. One year nursery can also be started for nursery sections as per the guidelines of NCTE. If there is a policy decision at the highest level to start these programmes, even if every second DIET in the country starts the pre-service training courses, the manpower need for nursery education will get addressed to a great extent. These institutions also need to gear-up themselves for the in-service training needs of ICDS staff, government and private sector's personnel in preschool education component.

8. One of the foremost and regular features of any programme has to be the aspect of advocacy and communication strategy. This is equally true for ECCE. For success of programmes of ECCE formulating advocacy plans and use of information and communication technology would be essential aspects of policy formulation at different levels of programme implementation. Use of folk media and other advanced technologies like teleconferencing to reach to parents needs to be promoted. The key issues of academic burden on children and practice of rote learning during ECCE stage need to be addressed through strong advocacy and communication networking.

The policy development and implementation strategies may also clearly address the following aspects:

- Universal access-targets for expansion
- Targeting the disadvantaged
- Provision for quality regulation
- Standards regarding staff child ratio
- Learning and development outcomes
- Inspection or accreditation based quality assurance
- Pedagogic approach
- Strategies for linkages between ECCE and primary school
- Public and private funding
- Target for the share of ECCE within total funding
- Inclusive pre-schooling policy
- Mechanism for monitoring and assessment



9.4 CREATING DATABASE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

There is need for a decentralised planning process to meet the needs of all children covering all geographical areas including urban slums, remote and sparsely populated tribal, rural pockets. The planning process from habitation level planning to district and state level would need detailed information and extensive database on children of 0-6 years. At present the necessary database on young children is wanting. There is no survey conducted to assess the needs of young children and families. The Global Monitoring Report had provided two major indicators among others to monitor the progress of early childhood education. The first one relates to the number of children participating in early childhood education programmes i.e. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). The second indicator is number of children attending Class I having early childhood education experience. On both account there is insufficient data available. There exists no viable information about operative numbers, infrastructure, manpower and process indicators especially of private early childhood education centres since none of the educational surveys, census and even sample survey has considered this aspect as worthwhile. Further, as registration of these early childhood education centres has not been made compulsory due to which, there seems to be a general agreement that majority of these centres either lack basic requirements and/or practice pedagogically inappropriate practices. Thus, a comprehensive survey needs to be undertaken to address these issues pertaining not only to quality control but also to universal provision of early childhood education. In the absence of such database, currently, it is difficult to monitor the EFA goal 1 concerning ECCE, i.e. "expanding and improving comprehensive ECCE, especially for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children". States need to prepare state specific and district specific profiles on early childhood education for 3-5 years and child care facilities especially for children under the age of three years. While developing the state specific profiles on early childhood education, the data on specific indicators like state specific policy and governance framework, target setting, policies and directives, stakeholders



participation, involvement of national and international development partners, monitoring and evaluation mechanism, assessment of the effectiveness of early childhood education intervention, strategies being adopted, implementing agencies, resource inputs in terms of financial, infrastructure, material, programmes/services, delivered curricula and learning outcomes etc., needs to be collected and collated. The strategies for creating a database on Preschool and “Under Three” children on the lines of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan would be crucial. The creation of database may be part of the house hold surveys done under SSA and should also be reflected in Education Surveys and DISE data. Analytical studies are required to be carried out by national organisations on lines similar to those of primary and elementary schools.

The database should cover all kinds of centres i.e. – (private centres and home based interventions), NGOs (aided and unaided), public initiatives as well as statutory crèches. This national and state specific data and statistical indicators so collected would also smoothen the way in developing proper national/state specific action plans concerning early childhood care and education and other programmes of day care and early stimulation. Decentralised planning process need to be initiated once the database is created taking needs assessment exercise at community/habitation level and outlining broad areas of interventions both for young children (0-6) and families. Every district/block should have a plan in terms of requirement of crèches, day care centres after school daycare centres, preschool centres etc. One of the major initiatives taken by the government recently for expanding ECCE facilities is provision made for child care under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA). Panchayat Raj Institutions can be activated to get the most out of the provision made under the act to expand the ECCE facilities to remote rural and tribal pockets and scarcely populated regions.

9.5 PLANNING FOR UNIVERSAL ACCESS

Large numbers of children in 3-6 age groups are unable to take benefit of pre-schooling due to various reasons. The reasons may be



either lack of preschool close to home, inability to participate in the programme due to socio-cultural and economic factors and lack of adequate awareness of providing to a growing child a stimulating environment. The participation of 'under-three' children in any organised ECCE programme is far less than children of preschool stage.

Table 7: Coverage of ECCE under Various Initiative

Programmes	No. of Centres	Coverage
ICDS	1370718*	34.6 million
Rajiv Gandhi National Scheme of Creches for the Children of Working Mothers	22038**	0.55 million
***Pre-Primary School	38,533	(1,94,000) approximately 0.02 million
NGO Services for ECCE		Varying from 3-20 million****
Private Initiatives		10 million approximately (2005)****

*Ministry of Women and Child Development (as on September 2012)

** Ministry of Women and Child Development -Website. (www.wcd.nic.in)

***Early Childhood Care and Education – An Overview (Ministry of HRD, 2003)

**** Report of the National Focus Group on ECE appointed by NCERT under initiative of National Curriculum Framework Review, 2005.

@ The figure has been arrived assuming 25 children per crèche centre.

As per 2011 census there are 158 million children in 0-6 age group. Early childhood education services will have to be provided to 70 million children by the end of 2011 and 73 million of children by 2016.

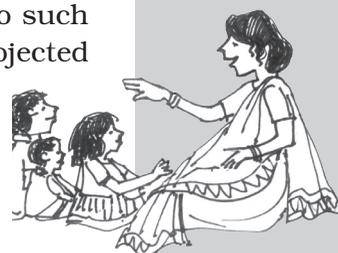
The number of children going to preschools in ICDS and other government institutions is slightly more than 35 million, which comes about 50 per cent of the total (approx.68 million) preschool age children. The number of anganwadi centres have increased to neary 14 lakhs in 2012 but corresponding increase in number of children is not visible. The coverage in private sector is not properly estimated so far. It is therefore, difficult to know exactly the private sector coverage. However, in view of the proliferation of preschool centres even in small towns it can be assumed that the private sector



covers substantial number of children and exerts an influence on the government sector in methods and content of preschool education because of its orientation towards formal schooling. There is still a vast gap in terms of coverage. Nearly half of preschool age children need to be covered. These uncovered children are from poorest of the poor stratum of population and reside in remote inaccessible and disadvantage areas.

There are a large number of hamlets which have an average population of less than 100. Most of them scattered in far flung areas and consist of a few households. These hamlets are difficult to approach. In the ICDS sector a beginning has been made for opening mini anganwadis. In Jhabua district of MP for instance, there are thousands of poriwadis (mini anganwadis) as they are called. In small habitations a combined school consisting of preschool age children in 3-6 age group with early primary grade children of Classes I and II may be a viable option for greater access of children in ECE. For universal access, the Panchayat Raj Institutions could be mobilised to help in increasing the coverage of and support to early childhood education.

The gap between the numbers of children entitled for early childhood education and the available early childhood education services seems to be very large. The uncovered and unreached children under early childhood education programmes are found in both rural and urban areas. While in rural areas, they are located in isolated and remote hamlets, settlements of seasonal migrants, roadside workers, construction and quarry workers, fishing hamlets. In urban areas, they may be broadly identified as living in unauthorised settlements, slums and children of construction workers, temporary/seasonal workers, rural migrants, itinerants etc. Children living in difficult circumstances like children of long term patients, children with special needs and children of sex workers, women prisoners, riot and disaster affected refugees and displaced children in orphanage homes and militancy affected may also be identified as uncovered and unreached for ECCE. In order to extend the benefits of early childhood education to such large number of presently uncovered, unreached and projected



population of 3-6 years age children for the next one decade, it is urgently needed to come out with contextually suited, locally relevant innovative strategies and also strengthening of resources to fill this huge gap. Multiplicity of approaches and models would need to be employed for better access and participation of children. Day care centres, crèches, mini anganwadis, integrated model (preschool and early primary grades together), home based model etc. would help in achieving the target. In order to do so, setting of one ECCE centre for a group of about 25 children within accessible distance from the home of the child needs to be considered. Further, these strategies ought to be linked with primary schooling system by way of locating preschool centres in proximity to local primary school for establishing curricular linkages. The preschool provision is also needed to address to rural/urban slums disparities. As per the findings of the study conducted by National Institute of Urban Affairs, though the share of urban population in the country is approximately 27.78 per cent, corresponding provision of ECCE facilities in these areas are insufficient. Urban slums are under-represented in ICDS also, as majority of these projects are located in rural areas. The greater access to ECCE in urban settlement also needs to be provided. For this, rules pertaining to area/town planning may be amended so as to provide the space for neighbourhood ECCE centre.

ECCE has vast regional variations. According to NSS 55th round survey (2000) the proportion of 3-6 attending pre-primary ranges from 12-36 per cent. The lowest participation was found in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, MP, Odisha, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and West Bengal. The most-needy groups seem to be left out, both in slums and remote rural, tribal pockets. Similarly, special need children are not being integrated with the existing schemes to a large extent. In terms of coverage of population in villages and habitations large numbers of habitations are not covered under the services.

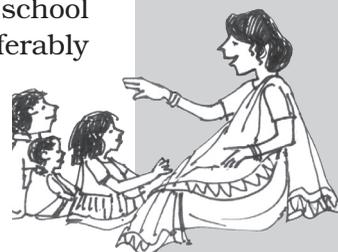
Both, the National Policy on Education, 1986 and subsequently the Programme of Action (1992), which was designed to implement the recommendations of NPE, categorically stated that day care



centres should be established to provide support services not only for universalisation of primary education and enabling the girls to attend primary schools by way of discharging them from taking care of siblings but also as a supportive role to working women belonging to poorer sections. POA, 1992 had also recommended the conversion of AWCs into Anganwadi cum crèches in a phased manner. This was initiated under National Crèche Fund (NCF), which was designed partly with a corpus fund made available out of the social safety net adjustment credit from the World Bank. But with the merger of NCF with Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme, this initiative of converting the AWCs into AWCs-cum-crèches has come to an end. Thus, the policy recommendations of NPE, 1986 and POA, 1992 largely remain unimplemented. Provisions to fulfill these aspects need priority in right earnest.

The other major dimension of early childhood education is to ensure universal participation of children. The trend in ICDS shows that participation rate in preschool education of ICDS is less than 40 per cent of the total eligible children. This is due to a number of reasons i.e. socio-economic reasons, family related factors and the poor quality of existing programmes. In a recent evaluation “Thirty Years of ICDS”, it was found that the participation rate has further gone down to 21 per cent. We need to make anganwadis preschool education competitive enough to retain children in the anganwadis. The quality enhancement of anganwadis’ ECCE component is important for its acceptance among masses. Modernisation of anganwadis can also be pursued, as in Tamil Nadu, keeping in view the popular demands of parents. The perception that it is free of cost and it is for poor children makes it less favourite. The introduction of English as in private ECCE centres has the potential to retain children in the centres. Other quality dimensions of ECCE also need to be given due attention.

There are nearly 50 per cent children who take admission in grade I without any preschool experience. These children may experience difficulty in adjusting in school and get benefited from the instruction. To help these children we need to organise a school readiness programme of about six weeks to two months, preferably



at the beginning of Class-I. This programme would, to some extent compensate the lack of preschool education, or even supplement it further and thus provide the necessary readiness for primary schooling. Some of the states like MP implemented school readiness programme in a big way. The programme of readiness consists of reading readiness, writing readiness, number readiness and personal social readiness. The contents of readiness programme are briefly given in earlier section. The significance of school readiness programme is immense because it has been found that a large number of children who come to primary school directly from home, do not possess required readiness levels to meet the demands of Class I curriculum. A study conducted by NCERT (Upadhyay et. al 1996) under the DPEP (District Primary Education Program) found the average reading readiness score of children to be 47 per cent with marked deficiency in components of reading-readiness i.e., identifying initial sound, sound discrimination and audio-visual matching tasks. In number readiness tasks 60.8 per cent performed below 75 per cent level indicating the need for some intervention. School readiness of children was found significantly associated with the mother's educational level and the maturity level of the child. In the wake of EFA (Education for All) the number of first generation learner has increased, who have the least stimulation and provisions for play and learning. The programme of school readiness would benefit these children and help them to adjust in school better.

9.6 PLANNING FOR ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Various quality related issues of early childhood education, including preschool education component of the ICDS, privately run early childhood education centres, which need to be addressed are:

- Poor infrastructure facilities
- Lack of qualified and trained manpower
- Lack of community or parental participation
- Poor monitoring and supervision
- Undue emphasis on formal teaching of three R's
- Lack of play materials



- Lack of use of local resources/local wisdom
- Poor coordination and convergence at grass root level
- Inadequate emphasis on innovations
- Absence of regulatory mechanism
- Absence of networking among institutions
- Poor advocacy and communication

Improvement in infrastructure facilities to ensure minimum essential condition for good quality ECCE programmes should be the priority. This may include physical space enough for outdoor and indoor activities, provision of swings and slides, building blocks, toys and games, material for art and craft activities etc. The provision of space and other facilities should be made as per the guidelines given in the NCERT's document "minimum specifications for preschools". There is urgent need to provide training facilities for ECCE by opening pre-service and in-service courses at national and state/district level. SCERT should be equipped to take up the task of preservice and in-service training of teachers in ECCE. The monitoring and evaluation aspect, which is weak, is also need to be institutionalised empowering the DIETs and SCERTs

Apart from the above factors there are no mechanisms for regulating their functioning. Low paid personnel in ICDS, high fees, formal teaching etc. in private sector are some constraints and malpractices characteristics of these programmes. The programmes that they offer are of low quality and would not qualify to be called quality ECCE programmes.

It is, therefore, necessary to plan for enhancing the quality of ECCE programmes. The plans at district level should reflect the priority areas for out of reach target groups, i.e., the number of new centres to be opened annually within the next five years. The requirements of space, material inputs in terms of toys and games and other play and learning material, recruitment of qualified staff, provision for their regular orientation in preschool education and early learning of children in a broader perspective (of learning continuum from 0-8 years, i.e. up to Class II) would need to be visualised. Village/hamlet level plans should be developed in close



cooperation of community. For quality enhancement, appropriate curriculum and methods of early childhood education, training and refresher courses for staff and materials preparation workshops would need to be organised on continuous basis. These would be required at cluster, block and district level. Parents' education and awareness and community mobilisation programmes would form the integral part of the annual plan. In addition, a systematic plan for advocacy and preparation of advocacy material would be necessary. The plan for early childhood education should form part of elementary education plan. The UNICEF assisted project in Early Childhood Education in operation till 2000, in twelve states viz. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh for two decades (1980-2000) had provided necessary opportunities to develop expertise in these states. The work done in the areas of curriculum, training, research, advocacy including innovation and experimentation has immensely helped states in achieving the goals of child development and UEE. Over the years some states like UP, MP, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and others have been able to establish Early Childhood Education cells and develop a cadre of experts in ECCE. The expertise developed has been very useful in the implementation of DPEP and other UEE programmes. This expertise needs to be strengthened. The UNICEF assisted project would need to be restarted and extended to cover the remaining states to strengthen institutional base for early childhood education programmes.

9.7 STRENGTHENING PRESCHOOL EDUCATION COMPONENT OF ICDS

ICDS is at present the major delivery system for early childhood education and poised to promote universal coverage of children. Strengthening ICDS and enhancing the quality of early childhood education component of the ICDS would therefore be one of the main strategies to enhance quality and coverage of early childhood education in the country. It is found from the recent study 'Thirty years of ICDS' by the NIPCCD that the participation of children in PSE



Early Childhood Care and Education under ICDS

Currently the pre school education component of ICDS is very weak. Early Childhood Education (ECE) should be placed under the SSA. The ICDS centres then will concentrate on inculcating good health and hygienic practices among the children. For this it will be essential that these centres have toilets and drinking water. The elders of the community could be asked to visit the children on a weekly basis to narrate folk tales, poetry etc. which are often missing from school curriculum. This will serve the dual purpose of enriching the child and making the elderly feel part of education process.

(11th plan chapter 4, page 56 box No.6)

- Training of workers and helpers
- Improving infrastructure facilities
- Strengthening community participation
- Strengthening Training Institutions
- Focus on children at risk
- Culturally relevant and developmentally appropriate programme

9.7.1 Convergence and Coordination

ECCE as has been indicated earlier is being provided through various programmes, some under government sector and others managed by private bodies. While only a few have provision for holistic services, most of them have preschool education as the main focus. ICDS is the only programme where services for children are holistic in nature, which include health, nutrition and pre schooling and addresses Urban Affairs and Development, Ministry

of anganwadi has further decreased from 34 per cent to 21 per cent. It is evident from the study that quality of preschool education component of ICDS is poor. It would be necessary to plan complementary strategies for more effective implementation and monitoring of preschool education and ensuring that participation of all the eligible children is achieved as speedily as possible. Some of the complementary strategies would include:

- Education of care-givers through home visits, parental education
- Promoting home based models



of Labour, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ministry of Social Justice and Women Empowerment among others. Due to lack of coordination and convergence among the functionaries of MWCD, MOHFW, MHRD and other ministries like Ministry of Social Justice, Rural Development at the grassroots level, the impact of programmes and services has been less than desirable. Programmes providing preschool education should also cater to other basic needs of a child, including nutrition and health care. This is not only necessary at preschool stage but also at primary level. This may require bringing all schemes and programmes related to child in convergence mode. At present the level of convergence of efforts is inadequate. The education department deals with education component, health department looks after health and social welfare deals with nutrition. In implementing ECCE programmes effectively, convergence between these departments at various levels is necessary. This convergence is needed right from planning to implementation and monitoring stages. Joint planning, joint training programmes for functionaries of different departments at grassroots and other levels would seem necessary to have a common perception and strategy.

Convergence of services and efforts is the key for the successful and effective implementation of programmes of child development and education as they reinforce each other and consequently enhance their impact. Services are provided to young children by various government departments, NGOs and private institutions with sector specific and institutional approach with varying quality, coverage and inputs. In the absence of convergence most of these programmes remain fragmented, isolated and eluding comprehensiveness in approach and the quality. For example, preschool education under the ICDS administered by the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) does not receive adequate attention from education sector. Education sector should assume responsibility of early childhood education component as an indispensable first step in total educational continuum, and the starting point for intervention aimed at achieving Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). The DPEP experience has indicated that preschool age children tend to be more benefited in school when preschool educational component is provided as a part of primary



school education. Even if early childhood education continues to be administered by the DWCD, convergence in matters related to training, monitoring etc. would avoid duplication and enhance the quality of programmes. This requires building of a partnership between Department of Education and DWCD at different levels of administration, planning and implementation. It is also a must that all children of ECCE stage receive adequate health and nutrition care along with early childhood education. While delivery of services may be a shared responsibility at the administrative level there is need to carry a out holistic planning for ECCE. Although the provision for nutrition supplement to young children is available in ICDS for children of 0-6 year age group and to school age children of 6-11 years under the education sector, a large number of children do not get the benefit. The situation is similar in the delivery of services provided under health component to children. These components are important for all children and there is a strong need to bring coordination and convergence among these services provided by different departments, from top administrative level to the grass root level. These components also need to be integrated with the programmes being implemented by voluntary organisations and in the private sector. Most early childhood education programmes, except ICDS lack an integrated approach.

Effective convergence and coordination has been identified as one of the objective of ICDS and the same has also been envisaged in various policy documents for effective run of centre based ECCE initiatives, yet several commissioned studies (World Bank, 2005, NIPCCD, 1992, NCERT, 2003, NCAER, 2001, NIPCCD, 2006) have come out with the recommendation of further strengthening of this aspect. In order to accomplish this task, a well designed and well thought institutional monitoring system concerning ECCE for all sectors (public, private, NGOs) has to be established in every State/ UT. This will not only facilitate the convergence and coordination mechanism across various players of ECCE but would also ensure the flow of data right from grass root to GOI level. The preschool education related aspects could well be converged



with SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan). This would be important when preschool education is taken as integral part of primary school system. The Global Monitoring Report 2007 (page 170) focusing on ECCE suggests that “aligning ECCE policies with other national and sectoral development policies is a strategic means of leveraging resources for early childhood and promoting more holistic and intersectoral approach”. It would be, therefore, highly desirable that :

- Base line survey to identify the gaps and need for ECCE provisions should be done along with SSA under SSA.
- Village Education Register (VER) maintained under SSA at village level/school level should contain data on ECCE for planning in collaboration with ICDS.
- Plans for health, Nutrition needs in association with SSA should be developed.
- ASHA worker, anganwadi worker, ANM together pooling data for perspective plan should be put in to practice.
- DISE data should also have coverage on ECCE in all possible details
- NCERT’s educational surveys providing greater details on ECCE would be helpful
- Monitoring quality in terms of inputs and school readiness outcomes

The action that is worth initiating would be to constitute coordination and convergence committees at state, district and sub district levels and monitor their regular meeting to approaching communities in a convergence mode rather than in isolation. The impact could be assessed for its benefits.

9.7.2 Strengthening Community Participation

Community participation is the key element of ICDS implementation. The success of programme depends on the degree and quality of participation of community. Community involvement being not satisfactory there is a need to make them responsible for their children’s preschool education and elementary education. The steps for their active participation would be:



- Advocacy with them and making them aware about the real intent of ECCE.
- Use of folk media in advocacy on a regular basis.
- In the absence of worker/helper, parents taking charge of the centre as teachers is an effective strategy to get to know the real intent of the programme and enhance community participation.
- Parents and community also have the role and responsibility to ensure every child's participation and to monitor programme quality.
- Community based institutions like mahila-mandals, village education committee etc. are of profound significance to enhance the quality of all the ECCE programmes. By providing toys, games and other play material the quality may be enhanced a lot.
- Regular meetings of VECs/PTAs/SDMCs etc. with clear agenda and monitoring of the outcomes of programme on a regular basis
- Making parents and Communities aware for the rights of every child including special needs and mobilising them to demand for child protection, survival and care related community needs along with preschool education.

The target should be ultimately the community ownership right from target setting to planning and implementation, monitoring to outcomes assessment.

9.8 Strengthening Preschool Education in Private Sector

There is an urgent need to intervene to enhance quality of pre schooling in private sector. The need is to restore the joy of childhood which has been continuously eroded in the name of preschool education. Regulating the ECCE in private sector would be the answer to control the quality. Enforcing standards of teacher education—their qualification and training, ensuring the minimum facilities for preschool education, ensuring adherence to curriculum guidelines, monitoring of programmes, parental participation are necessary.



9.9 STRENGTHENING PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION UNDER STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS

One of the important sectors that need attention is the preschool sections run under the education departments. Some states have provision for pre-primary of two years, before primary education, like in Nagaland. Children are admitted in nursery and spend two years in pre-primary and kindergarten classes before moving to grade I. In many other states nursery sections have been opened to provide children preschool experience for one year. However, these programmes are implemented without employing nursery trained teachers and without the provision of infrastructure facilities. The need is therefore to step up action to build training facilities and other infrastructure facilities. The policy regarding ECCE at state level would be a welcome step to strengthen the ECCE as a whole.

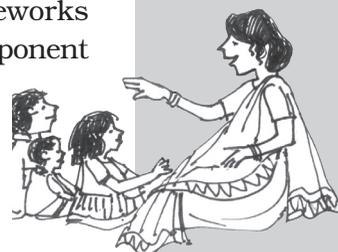
Some of the strategies for early childhood education that have been tested and found effective in realising the goals of UEE include:

- Expansion of early childhood education by attaching preschool sections to primary schools
- Enhancing coverage of early childhood education under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)
- Provision of mini-anganwadis in hamlets with scattered and sparse population
- Upgrading preschool up to Classes I and II in areas where children have difficulty in reaching primary school because of distance.
- Expanding preschool education through Non-Government organisations (NGOs)
- Linkages between ICDS anganwadi and primary school
- School readiness programme for children who have come to primary school without attending preschool so as to give every child a fair start for schooling
- As suggested in Programme of Action 1992, SCERTs and DIETs must adopt 15-20 anganwadis nearby and develop them into model ECCE centres. The ECCE centres should be regularly supervised and monitored by these institutions. The states are yet to take up the suggestion for implementation in order to participate in ICDS in a significant way.



9.10 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF ECCE

Monitoring and evaluation is one of the most important dimensions for quality management of ECCE. However, it is also the one of the weakest link in the whole process. The system of monitoring is fraught with many drawbacks. One of the handicaps for monitoring ECCE is that whom to monitor? The whole private sector in particular, in the absence of a regulation and enforcing agency, is out of reach. As far as ICDS is concerned there is monitoring system in operation since the inception of the programme but there are also certain drawbacks as preschool education remains neglected largely. The monthly monitoring formats and quarterly monitoring formats provide very little to address the quality issues, except the immunisation status and extent of nutrition distribution. The private sector remains unmonitored and under three and preschool age children in private sector are all together out of the purview of monitoring. The pre-primary education in education sector and NGO sector is not taken into consideration in the scheme of monitoring under the ICDS. The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007 has high lighted the difficulties in monitoring ECCE specially the programmes for the “under three” children. There is need to have a unified system of monitoring the ECCE by looking at the three groups i.e. children of under three years age, preschool children (between three and primary school age) and vulnerable and disadvantaged children by expanding the number and type of indicators used to monitor progress in each category of children and paying greater attention to care component of early childhood provision, which is lacking at present. Similarly age specific enrolment and participation of children raises many problems. This is mainly due to the fact that there is not much understanding as to what constitutes ECCE and also reported data may undercount or overestimate the participation of children in private sector and NGO sector. The other difficulty is that the duration of pre-primary education varies from state to state as there is variation in age required for admission to Class I. The nature and quality of provision of ECCE are less standardised than education and lack disaggregated age data. Reporting frameworks exclude information on parental education. The education component



of ECCE remain uneven and non comparable. The indicators on quality and coverage are by and large lacking. However, there is an urgent need to develop tools for monitoring and evaluation of various provision of ECCE i.e. crèches, pre-primary centres of government, NGOs and private sectors. There is also a need to develop tools for evaluation of programmes of children, teachers and parents. State level organisations are required to take steps to develop these resources. The question associated with development of tools is that who is going to monitor? A system of monitoring the quality of ECCE, therefore, needs to be developed at the national level and other levels. Should it be with ICDS independent of SSA or should it be with SSA needs consideration. As far as preschool education component of ECCE is concerned it should be SSA.

9.11 PROMOTING INCLUSIVE ECCE

Children with disabilities, who are physically or mentally challenged, who have special needs, have a right to high quality health and nutrition care and participate in high quality preschool programmes that are developmentally suitable. An inclusive curriculum that addresses issues of content and methods of learning of special needs children has to provide for the context of social and positive interactions, collaborative learning and problem solving. There are ways to address these issues of inclusive curriculum and methodology.

The inclusive curriculum concept has gained grounds with the advancement in understanding of the processes of how children learn. It is based on vygotskian approach of social constructivism which maintains that children learn best in social and cultural context. This is equally true for differently abled children. Inclusive curriculum refers to a programme that is adapted for special needs children in an inclusive classroom.

The degree of curriculum modification to meet the needs of these children will be relatively minimal as (i) material for young children are usually applicable to a wide range of development abilities, (ii) the discrepancy in ability between children with disabilities and their non-disabled peers is narrower when children are in preschool years, (iii) a majority of children diagnosed with disability have mild



to modest disability and (iv) children with or without disabilities generally follow the same developmental path. It is, therefore, of high significance that a variety of materials suitable for different age and ability children is made available. It is also important that these children are closely monitored and guided while playing or doing project work.

For identification of special needs children, ECCE programmes provide strong basis. In rural areas many parents, especially mothers, hesitate to reveal the problems they have identified. Sometime it becomes too late to identify disability and also difficult to intervene. Early identification is the key to intervention and integration strategies.

For bringing about the successful integration of special need children and cater to their individual needs, appropriate planning and preparation of teachers for various roles is of immense importance. The orientation of workers and other functionaries in ICDS set up is must. There is also a need to employ resource teachers for different disability areas at cluster and block levels. At present very little is done to identify special needs children at ECCE stage and integrate them in normal ECCE classes. Similarly the courses for teacher preparation at ECCE stage do not reflect the need for adequate knowledge and skills to deal with special needs children and their integration. The inclusive preschool programme and practices have yet to get into the larger system. The ICDS being the largest ECCE system in the country is expected to provide early identification and referral services for special needs children. However in actual field situations, very little is done. For planning and implementing an inclusive programme in anganwadis and other ECCE programmes, training of workers and teachers will be an essential condition. Inclusion of special needs children in normal ECCE class would go a long way to promote an inclusive society. There are millions of children with special needs who would be benefited if provided opportunities to be part of mainstream ECCE. Good quality ECCE programmes have provision for early identification and remediation of disabilities and mainstreaming in school. There is a need to sensitise functionaries to inclusive approach to ECCE both in ICDS and private sector. Inclusive ECCE



programmes are important for laying the foundations for an inclusive primary and elementary education. For inclusive ECCE set up the efforts to mobilise communities, parents and teachers or care providers is of immense value. The extent of inclusion of special need children does not appear adequate even in anganwadis. The tools and techniques required to identify children with different special needs, strategies employed for their adjustment and inclusion with other children are still not given much weightage. This may be due to many reasons. It could be due to low educational and working status of worker and also unavailability of simple tools for screening children with disabilities. The sensitiveness that is needed to handle children with special needs (which are physically, mentally challenged and socially and culturally deprived) has to be build in to the system at all levels.

9.12 PROMOTING RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT SYSTEM

Promoting research and development in the area of early childhood care and education is of vital significance for formulating relevant programmes and policies and affecting changes. There are a number of research areas where virtually no work has so far been done. For example, research in the area of social development (social relationships, values development etc.) of children, families and communities continues to remain insignificant. Although there are number of research findings available covering physical aspects of children, families and communities and academic aspects of children and to some extent of families, few or negligible research studies are available in areas of mental health of communities and families. The area of early childhood education and development is multidisciplinary as it includes nutrition, and health care along with psychosocial stimulation. While each area is important in itself, links between these components are of greater significance. NCERT initiated some research studies in the past in the area of early childhood education. It continues to perform a leadership role in prioritising research agenda and helping states in designing the format of studies. While there has been a large number of impact studies, and evaluation studies, very few studies are available on

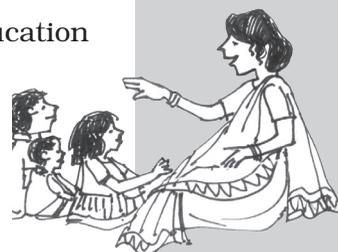


the analysis of learning processes. Similarly, little work has been done to determine long-term effects of early childhood education. One of the major concerns in the past has been the dissemination of research findings and of networking institutions. They need to be addressed. Some broad areas of research could be:

- Early childhood Education and Poverty Alleviation
- Early Childhood Education and Equality of Educational Opportunity
- Studies on Child Survival Growth and Development
- Child Rearing Practices and their Relationship with Children's Growth and Development
- Early Childhood Education and Women's Empowerment
- Early Childhood Education and UEE
- Studies on Early Childhood Education Curriculum
- Studies on Convergence and Linkages
- Research in Training Modalities
- Early Childhood Education and Values Development
- Studies on Effectiveness of Methods and Material of Early Childhood Education
- Play and Activity Based Approach and Learning Out Comes
- Cultural Context Of Learning and Decentralisation
- Parental Expectations and Early Childhood Education Programmes
- Studies in Community Participation
- Studies on Transition Behaviour of Children from Home to Preschool.
- Evaluating Children's Progress and Developing Indicators for Measuring Children's Progress
- Integration of Special Needs Children
- Long Term Gains of ECCE
- ECCE and Peace Education

Some specific topics, for examples, are given below:

- Case Study of Private Nursery Teacher Training Institutes
- Child Development in the Environment of Freedom and Creativity
- Study of Curriculum and Methodology in Preschool Education Programme of Aganwadis



- Comparative Study of Anganwadis' Preschool Programme and Private Nursery Education
- Status Study of ECCE Centres under DPEP/SSA
- Procedures Adopted for Nursery Admission in Private/Public Schools
- Study of Curriculum Load at Pre-Primary Stage
- Linkages Between Pre-Primary and Primary Education and their Effectiveness in Different Settings
- Study of Preschool Education Component and its Perception and Extent of Utilisation by the Community.
- Study of Children with Preschool Experience and without Preschool in Grade I in Terms of their Learning and Adjustment
- Study of Curricular Linkage between KG and Grade I
- Study of Supplementary Nutrition Programme of Anganwadis and its perception and Utilisation by the Parents and Children
- Study of Extent of Utilisation of Health Services (Immunisation, Referral Services) by Children and Communities
- Study of the Roles and Functions of the Supervisory Staff of ICDS
- The Extent of Convergence between ICDS, Health and Education Sectors
- Case Study of a Child with Special Needs (mentally challenged, emotionally disturbed, physically challenged, hearing and visually impaired, learning disabled, etc.)
- Perception of authorities about the need and significance of ECCE
- Study of pre primary education-content and methods of minority institutions/private and government institutions
- Evaluation procedures at pre primary stage and perception of teachers and parents about it.
- Play-way approach and the extent of its use and facilities available to implement the approach.
- Assessing need for day care centres in rural areas.
- Case study of ECCE needs of disadvantaged children/children with HIV/AIDS.
- Study of physical facilities and play equipments in ECCE centres.



- The training needs of anganwadi workers and understanding of needs of ECCE children.
- The status of growth monitoring of children and addressing malnutrition among children.
- The extent of early identification of special needs of children and level of skills and knowledge of worker to realise these goals.
- Child rearing Practices in your area.
- Collection of childhood stories, songs and lullabies and their significance in ECCE.
- Policies and programmes of state government for ECCE.
- Quality and coverage of ECCE programmes in the states/districts.
- Relating school readiness and school success.
- Relating community participation and children's participation.

Studies in early childhood care and education at national level need strengthening. For which a core consultative group could be reconstituted. University departments may be encouraged and supported to undertake research in specified areas. Ph.D and Masters Degree level dissertations in early childhood education may be supported in university departments of child development and education through more effective networking. NCERT has conducted studies in collaboration with SCERTs and university departments in the area of early childhood education under UNICEF assisted ECCE project. This process needs further expansion and strengthening.

The academic support system in ICDS can be augmented with the support of DIETs and SCERT in states. This can be implemented when there is close collaboration between the two departments. Academic support can be strengthened along with monitoring and evaluation aspects taken up by the DIETs in the districts. The formation of state resource group, district resource group, block resource group and cluster resource group would be useful for providing academic support and guidance at different levels.

Various NGOs have experimented with new innovative models of and approaches to child care and education, albeit on a small scale. Their efforts need to be strengthened and supported to evolve community based cost effective models.



In addition to above points the concerns of ECCE curriculum, Teacher Training advocacy, use of ICT discussed in previous chapters are of crucial significance

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10

Action Plan

In the previous chapters we have tried to understand various aspects of ECCE and assessed the status with regard to coverage and quality. We have also tried to chalk out the path for future in the previous chapter – A Way Forward. The action points are suggested as follows:

1. ECCE programme is holistic and comprehensive in nature so it should take into account health, nutrition and educational needs of children.
2. ECCE made part of Fundamental Right to Education, at least from 4+.
3. An integrated approach to programme planning and delivery of ECCE that institutionalises effective structures for coordination, convergence and accountability between various departments needs to be promoted.
4. Concerted, cross-sectoral efforts have to be made to create an environment that protects nurtures and ensures early learning.
5. Provisions concerning ECCE made in the National Policy on Education, 1986 and POA, 1992 should be implemented in right earnest. National Policy on ECCE approved in 2013 would also need its effective implementation.
6. There emerges a pressing need to come out with national data and statistical indicators (GER, NER, gender parity, regional disparities) concerning various aspects of ECCE. This may be done by gathering the requisite information/statistical data on various indicators of ECCE through (a) educational surveys, (b) National census, (c) National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), (d) District Information System on School Education (DISE) and (e) SSA district education plans.
7. Besides developing the national data base on identified statistical indicators of ECCE, state profiles also need to

be developed so as to facilitate corrective measures. While developing the state specific ECCE profiles, the data on specific indicators like state specific policy and governance framework, target setting, policies and directives, stakeholders' participation, national and international development partners, monitoring and evaluation mechanism, assessing the effectiveness of ECCE intervention, strategies being adopted, implementing agencies, resource inputs in terms of financial, infrastructure and material, programmes/services, delivered curricula and learning outcomes etc., also need to be collected. The database, as envisaged should cover all kinds of centres — private and home-based ECCE interventions, NGOs both aided and unaided and public initiatives including statutory crèches. The national and state specific ECCE data and statistical indicators thus collected and collated would also pave the way for developing proper national/state specific action plans on ECCE and in designing mid-decade/term end progress assessment report of EFA goal 1.

8. Setting up one ECCE centre for a group of 25 children in 3-6 years age group within easily reachable distance from the home of the child.
9. Resources of SCERTs, District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs), Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) should be strengthened. MLTCs, AWICS and other ICDS structures need strengthening in pre-school education component.
10. All ECCE approaches and strategies need to be linked with primary schooling system either by way of locating ECCE centre in proximity to local primary school or close to peripheral feeder school so as to address the issue of transition from ECCE to primary schooling.
11. Since access to ECCE in urban slums seems to be very low, it is recommended that the rules pertaining to area/town planning may be amended so as to provide the space for neighbourhood ECCE centre. The schedule for urban local bodies needs to be strengthened to ensure the responsibility for allocation of space for AWCs, crèches, etc.
12. Under ICDS one additional worker exclusively for imparting pre-schooling should be engaged at least in high burdened districts and the existing worker be assigned the job of



attending child care issues, which includes supplementation, health and well being as well as care of the children in the 0-3 age group in the crèche. Additional resources for ECCE component under ICDS have to be made available for this purpose.

13. Keeping in view the importance of the Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme, it is recommended that the scheme be expanded comprehensively throughout the country. Not only this, the crèche workers are required to be professionally trained on early childhood care and education. The utilisation of the provision made under the National Rural employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) may be ensured through mobilising Panchayat Raj Institutions, Women's Self Help Groups and the communities at large.
14. A comprehensive survey needs to be undertaken in order to arrive at operative numbers, infrastructure, manpower requirements, and to assess the process/pedagogical inputs especially of private and NGO initiatives.
15. In order to sensitise the public on various aspects of ECCE – pedagogical and language concerns, danger of neglect, significance and true meaning of ECCE etc.— mass public awareness and advocacy programmes need to be undertaken involving different forms of print, electronic and folk media. Experts and experienced practitioners need to be engaged in this task. Use of ICT to be promoted in all aspects of ECCE. Policy formulation in this regard would be essential.
16. Universities' role in ECCE resource development has to go up. The scope of education and Child Development departments located in universities and other institutes of higher learning need to be widened so that they not only take up the task of training of teachers for ECCE to secondary stage through different certification levels (certificate, diploma, bachelor and master degree) but also discharge their responsibilities in research and extension dimension of ECCE. They need to assist in widening the conceptual base for ECCE courses so that the continuum of childhood development is strengthened. NIPCCD and NCERT may provide a torch-bearing role in this regard by adopting cascade model and by imparting training to trainers of these institutes. The universities, which are implementing self-financing courses, may also be encouraged to opt for this model.



17. One of the stronger alternate of getting them trained through distance mode needs to be put on the priority. Adequate financial provisions for expanding the distance mode of training to the ECCE workers be made.
18. NCTE ought to be suitably strengthened to develop appropriate accreditation system of training institutions. For this purpose, existing norms and standards should be simplified with variations for each type of institutions and ECCE programmes and made applicable to all sectors of government, private bodies and NGOs.
19. State specific courses need to be devised within the broader framework provided by NCTE. There is also a need to initiate dialogue with NCTE on evolving a need based, practical oriented and flexible curriculum.
20. In order to address state specific needs in training of ECCE functionaries, it is suggested that SCERTs and DIETs be strengthened in a sustained manner with regular guidance of lead institutions like NCERT and NIPCCD. These institutions should work as State Resource Centres (SRCs) and District Resource Centres (DRCs) respectively. In addition to these, decentralised training capability for ECCE has to be nurtured in Block and Cluster Resource Centres. Necessary financial resources are required to be earmarked for this purpose. The trainers of MLTCs, AWTCs, DIETs, BRCs, CRCs are required to be professionally trained by national level institutions, so that they may impart training for contextually suited innovative models like home-based model, crèches with flexi time, etc.
21. Documentation and case studies of best practices in training needs to be done for wider dissemination as well as to feed into the training process itself. Lead institutions like NCERT and NIPCCD also need to be strengthened by developing a suitable resource pool at the national level so as to work as a clearing house in all matters concerning ECCE. There is need to establish a separate department of preschool education and a national resource centre in ECCE. Similarly, working on pedagogical aspects of ECCE, responsibility of continuing training, research and preparation of resource material for children and educators and care givers at different sub stages of ECCE are significant.



22. Preschool education as an integral part of schooling be mooted and implemented through out the country with suitable provisions made for infra-structure facilities and human resources.
23. Two years integrated pre-service, nursery teacher training should be started at least in every second DIET all over the country.
24. Departments of Education in Universities may take the initiative to start professional programmes in ECCE for supervisory and management level functionaries.
25. Keeping in view the poor working conditions of ECCE teachers/workers in all the three main sectors of public, private and NGOs, qualified and trained ECCE workers /teachers may be categorised as skilled workers. They should be given fair and decent wages.

10.1 SUGGESTED PLAN OF ACTION FOR SCERTs/ DIETs

The various action points given above are for each state/Union territory to act upon in order to promote ECCE in the state. SCERT, in addition to above, are expected to draw a plan for ECCE on the basis of following points:

- Preparing state specific policy on ECCE (as attempted by SCERT Chhattisgarh) covering aspects of crèches, preschool education implementation, managing and financing of ECCE programmes.
- Detailing out policy regarding linkage between ECCE and primary schools.
- Establishing and implementing mechanism for coordination and convergence between different departments, especially ICDS anganwadis.
- Preparing ECCE Curriculum (guidelines) for different sub-stages of ECCE (as being attempted SCERT Mizoram).
- Institutionalising regulatory mechanism for quality control in ECCE at the State level both in government and private sectors.
- Creating a data base and developing state/district profile on ECCE.
- Preparing a plan for expansion of ECCE facilities in the state.



- Developing a monitoring and evaluation system for pre-primary education in collaboration with SSA and/or ICDS.
- Developing standards and norms for ECCE centres, training institutions, appointment, service conditions, professional development of teachers.
- Preparing advocacy plan to orient parents/ PRI and communities in ECCE.
- Establishing state ECCE resource centre in SCERTs.
- Developing pre-service and in-service training courses in ECCE.
- Establishing district resource centre in ECCE in all the DIETs.
- Close coordination between CDPOs office and DIET.
- Taking up refresher training courses for anganwadi workers, supervisors and CDPOs under ICDS.
- Taking up research studies, action research and evaluation studies in ICDS, private and NGO sectors.

10.2 A NINE POINT AGENDA OF UNESCO

EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007, titled “Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education” has outlined a nine point agenda for meeting the EFA goals on time, including that of ECCE. These in Indian Context are:

1. Returning to the comprehensive approach of Dakar— taking full responsibility for adult literacy and ECCE as these two most important elements have not been given the required seriousness by many states.
2. Acting with urgency— for achieving the goal of ‘all children in schools’ it is important that all disadvantaged and vulnerable children are enrolled in ECCE as they have the most to gain.
3. Emphasising equity and inclusion— despite progress, most disadvantaged children do not benefit from ECCE and far too many primary school age children are still out of school. It will be more challenging and difficult to compensate for disadvantage, as children get older. For effective inclusion mother tongue should be promoted as the initial language of instruction.



ACTION PLAN

4. Increased public spending and focusing it better — the need to spend more on ECCE, especially on increasing the supply of trained teachers and implementing policies of inclusion and expanding ECCE in ICDS and education sector.
5. Allocating funding where it is most needed— disadvantaged, vulnerable and poor communities need to be focused.
6. Moving ECCE up domestic agenda— ECCE requires a high level political support. Given ECCE's complexity, and its unique role in providing the individual child with strong foundations for life and learning, it is important to (a) develop a national policy framework with goals, regulations, monitoring of quality and funding commitments that span the full range of ECCE provisions for children from birth to 8 years (b) designate one ministry that works with all related sectors, encompassing programmes for under three children , preschool children and parents support, along with child's health, nutrition, care and education inputs. The private sector plays an important role in delivery of ECCE, the public sector must therefore regulate it and develop partnership with it to safe guard inequities in access and quality.
7. Increase public finance for ECCE and targeting it— public resources first be targeted to vulnerable and disadvantaged children. It is important to include ECCE in key documents of public resource allocation.
8. Upgrading the ECCE workforce— All evidences demonstrate that the quality of staff child interaction is the single most critical element in determining the quality of ECCE, upgrading qualifications, training and working conditions of staff is very important. Quality standards are needed for all the different type of ECCE personnel. Standards in terms of child staff ratio, group size and adequacy of materials are also equally important.
9. Improving the monitoring of ECCE— it is not easy to monitor the progress towards ECCE goals, specially for under three children. There is need to improve data collection for under three children. Data are unavailable for crèches, day care centres, nurseries as well as health and nutrition oriented programmes.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Plan of Action for Children 1992

The Government of India acceded to the UN convention on the rights of child on 12 November 1992. India is also the signatory to the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of children. In pursuance to the commitment to world body the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) formulated the National Plan of Action for children. The priority areas were health, nutrition, education, water and sanitation and environment. The plan gave special consideration to children in difficult circumstances and provided a framework of goals and objectives for actualisation of convention's aims. Central government asked states to prepare plan of action for children. Objectives of the National plan of action 1992 in areas of health, nutrition, sanitation, education, Early Childhood Education, girl child, children in difficult circumstances and related to environment were as follows:

HEALTH

Child Health

- Eradication of poliomyelitis by the year 2000.
- Elimination of neonatal tetanus by 1995.
- Reduction by 95 per cent in measles deaths and reduction by 90 per cent of measles cases compared to pre-immunisation levels by 1995.
- Achievement and maintenance of high level of immunisation coverage at level of 100 per cent of infants and against tetanus for women of child bearing age.
- Reduction by 50 per cent in deaths due to diarrhoea in children under the age of five years and 25 per cent of diarrhoea in incidence rate.
- Reduction in mortality rates due to ARI among children under five by 40 per cent by 2000 A.D. from the present level.

Maternal Health

- Special attention to health and nutrition of the female child and to pregnant and lactating women.
- Access by all couples to information and services to prevent pregnancies that are too early, too closely spaced, too late or too many.

- Access by all pregnant women to prenatal care, trained attendants during child birth and referral facilities for high risk pregnancies and obstetric emergencies.
- Universal access to primary education with special emphasis for girls and accelerated literacy programmes for women.

NUTRITION

- Reduction in severe as well as moderate malnutrition among under-five children by half of 1990 levels.
- Reduction in incidence of low birth weight (2.5 kg or less) babies.
- Reduction of iron deficiency anemia in women.
- Control of iodine deficiency disorders.
- Control of vitamin A deficiency and its consequences, including blindness.
- Empowerment of all women to breastfeed their children exclusively for four to six months and to continue breastfeeding with complementary food, well into the second year.
- Growth promotion and its regular monitoring to be institutionalised by the end of the 1990s.
- Dissemination of knowledge and supporting services to increase food production to ensure household food security.
- Water and Sanitation
- To provide the entire rural population with potable water supplies
- To cover 10 per cent population with sanitary facilities by the year 1997.
- To eradicate guinea worm disease by 1995.
- To provide safe water with fluoride content within tolerable limits by the year 2000 A.D.

EDUCATION

- Universal enrolment of all children including girls, using both full time formal schools and part time non-formal arrangements.
- Reduction of dropout rate between class I to V and I to VIII from the existing 45 per cent and 60 percent to per cent 20 per cent and per cent respectively.
- Achievement of minimum levels of learning by approximately all children at the primary level and introduction of this concept at the upper primary state on large scale.



- Reduction in disparities by emphasis on girls' education and special measures for children belonging to Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes.
- Universalisation of effective access to schooling.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- Expansion of early childhood development activities including appropriate low cost family and community-based interventions.
- Children in especially difficult circumstances.
- Provision of protection of children in especially difficult circumstances and tackle the root cause leading to such situations.

GIRL CHILD

- To remove the gender bias and to improve the status of the girl child in society, so as to provide her with equal opportunities for her survival and development to her full potential.

ADOLESCENT GIRLS

- Programme for the adolescent girls should embrace a whole range of activities, such as nutrition, health, education, health and nutrition education, recreation, upgradation of home-based skills and promotion of her decision making capability as adolescent girls who are one of the most critical human resource, particularly at the village level.

CHILDREN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- To conserve and protect environment so that it is conducive to the health and well-being.



APPENDIX II

National Nutrition Policy 1993

National Policy on Nutrition recognises that children below six years are nutritionally vulnerable and constitutes one of the high risk groups and accordingly gives highest priority to them through interventions and policy articulation.

The National Nutrition Policy was adopted in 1993 under the aegis of Department of Women and Child Development. The Policy recognised the multifaceted problem of malnutrition and advocated a multi-sectoral approach for controlling the same. A series of actions were identified in various spheres like food production and distribution, health and family welfare, agriculture, horticulture and rural development. In pursuance of this Policy, the Food and Nutrition Board was transferred to this Department on 1st April 1993. A National Nutrition Mission launched in 180 selected nutritionally backward districts of the country to further carry forward the goals of National Nutrition Policy. Nutritional literacy programmes have been planned through massive advocacy measures.

A set of 27 short films on Nutrition titled ***poshan aur rastriya nirman*** have been developed and produced in the North East Regional languages, Bengali, Hindi and English. These films have been converted into a set of 7 CDs and have been provided to all State Secretaries incharge of WCD, H&FW, Education, Training Institutions, NIPCCD and its regional centres, MLTC etc for field publicity.

- A 30 episode Radio programme on “***Poshan aur Swasthya***” in 20 languages was re-broadcast with effect from August 2006.
- Nine audio jingles on infant, young child and adolescent nutrition in regional languages were broadcasted through primary channels during August-September 2004 and 2005.
- Eight video spots on nutrition were telecasted during February-March 2005.
- Films on ***poshan Bagiya***, infant feeding etc.
- FNB sponsored a programme on ***Khel Khel Mein Badlo Duniya*** giving Nutrition messages was telecast from 1st to 15 January 2006 through National Channel of Doordarshan.

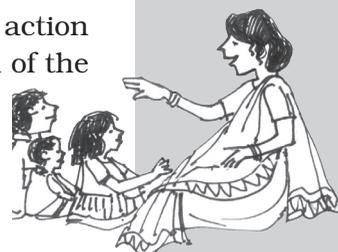
- Video spots on Infant and Young Child Feeding telecast during January-February 2006 on DD1 at prime time.
- Three video and audio spots on deficiencies of Vitamin A, Iodine and Iron in the country have been produced in Hindi, English and 12 regional languages and are being broadcast/telecast w.e.f. 14th November 2006.

INFANT AND YOUNG CHILD NUTRITION

Infant and Young Child Nutrition which is of utmost importance in the lives of human beings has been focused through intensified information, education and communication and protecting the norms for breastfeeding and complementary feeding at international fora.

A land mark decision to protect, promote and support breastfeeding was taken in 54th World Health Assembly in 2001 giving rise to a Global Public Health recommendation for exclusive breastfeeding for first six months of life, complementary feeding with home based safe and nutritious foods to start at six months of age and continued breastfeeding upto the age two years and beyond. This Global Public Health recommendation has honoured India's traditional wisdom of breastfeeding for first six months and complementary feeding starting thereafter through a ceremony called *annaprashan* and continuing breastfeeding for more than two years.

The 55th World Health Assembly adopted a Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Nutrition recognising the importance of nutrition of women through out their lifecycle for ensuring optimum nutrition of the child. The inter-generational cycle of malnutrition perpetuated by the poor nutritional status of the girl child was also recognised. The Food and Nutrition Board had developed **National Guidelines on Infant and Young Child Feeding**. The Guidelines in Hindi and English have been distributed to various concerned partners like Health and Family Welfare, Medical and Home Science Colleges, Training Institutions for Nutrition and Health, State Departments of WCD and Health, and field infrastructure of FNB and ICDS. The states have been requested to draw up action plans and mobilise the State Machinery for implementation of the



Guidelines. The Guidelines are translated into Regional languages to reach the same to remote corners of the country.

Follow Up Action on National Nutrition Policy

- **Intersectoral Coordination** with key partners was intensified with.
- **Health and Family Welfare** for re-imposing ban on sale of non-iodised salt.
- Food and Public Distribution for including iodised salt under TPDS, fortifying wheat flour with iron and folic acid and distribution through PDS.
- **Elementary Education and Literacy** for provision of a Nutritionist at the district level for Mid Day Meal programme, use of iodised salt only in the Mid Day Meal Programme.
- **ICMR, MOHFW** for expediting action on double fortified salt.
- **Expert Consultations** on important issues like IYCF, Micronutrient malnutrition, nutrition monitoring and surveillance, vitamin etc. organised and the decisions communicated to State Secretaries.



APPENDIX III

National Charter for Children, 2003

The Government of India have had for consideration the question of adopting a National Charter for Children to reiterate its commitment to the cause of the children in order to see that no child remains hungry, illiterate or sick. After the consideration, it was decided to adopt the National Charter for Children enunciated below:

The Constitution of India enshrines both the cause and the best interest of children, in so far that:

The State can make special provisions for children, [Article 15 (3)]

The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years, [Article 21 A]

No child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in a factory, mine or any other hazardous employment, (Art. 24)

The tender age of children is not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength (Art. 39 e), and that

Children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment (Art. 39 f),

The State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years, (Art. 45)

It is a Fundamental Duty of a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or ward between the age of six and fourteen year. (Art. 51A)

Through the National Policy for Children, (1974), we are committed to providing for adequate services to children, both before and after birth and throughout the period of growth, to ensure their full physical, mental and social development.

We affirm that the best interest of children must be protected through combined action of the State, civil society, communities and families in their obligations in fulfilling children's basic needs.

We also affirm that while State, Society, Community and Family have obligations towards children, these must be viewed in the context of intrinsic and attendant duties of children and inculcating in children a sound sense of values directed towards preserving and strengthening the Family, Society and the Nation.

In accordance with our pledge in the National Agenda of Governance, the following National Charter for Children, 2003 is announced.

Underlying this Charter is our intent to secure for every child its inherent right to be a child and enjoy a healthy and happy childhood, to address the root causes that negate the healthy growth and development of children, and to awaken the conscience of the community in the wider societal context to protect children from all forms of abuse, while strengthening the family, society and the Nation.

SURVIVAL, LIFE AND LIBERTY

- 1.a. The State and community shall undertake all possible measures to ensure and protect the survival, life and liberty of all children.
- b. In particular, the State and community will undertake all appropriate measures to address the problems of infanticide and foeticide, especially of female child and all other emerging manifestations that deprive the girl child of her right to survive with dignity.

PROMOTING HIGH STANDARDS OF HEALTH AND NUTRITION

- 2.a. The State shall take measures to ensure that all children enjoy the highest attainable standards of health, and provide for preventive and curative facilities at all levels especially immunisation and prevention of micronutrient deficiencies for all children.
- b. The State shall take measures to cover, under primary health facilities and specialised care and treatment, all children of families below the poverty line.
- c. The State shall take measures to provide adequate pre-natal and post-natal care for mothers along with immunisation against preventable diseases.



- d. The State shall undertake measures to provide for a national plan that will ensure that the mental health of all children is protected.
 - e. The State shall take steps to ensure protection of children from all practices that are likely to harm the child's physical and mental health.
3. The State shall take steps to provide all children from families below the poverty line with adequate supplementary nutrition and undertake adequate measures for ensuring access to safe drinking water and environmental sanitation and hygiene.

ASSURING BASIC MINIMUM NEEDS AND SECURITY

4. a. The State recognises that the basic minimum needs of every child must be met, that foster full development of the child's faculties.
- b. In order to ensure this, the State shall in partnership with the community provide social security for children, especially for abandoned children and street children.
- c. State and community shall try and remove the fundamental causes which result in abandoned children and children living on streets, and provide infrastructure and material support by way of shelter, education, nutrition and recreation.

PLAY AND LEISURE

5. The State and community shall recognise that all children require adequate play and leisure for their healthy development and must ensure means to provide for recreational facilities and services for children of all ages and social groups.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE FOR SURVIVAL, GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

6. a. The State shall in partnership with the community provide early childhood care for all children and encourage programmes which will stimulate and develop their physical and cognitive capacities.
- b. The State shall in partnership with the community aim at providing a child care centre in every village where infants and children of working mothers can be adequately cared for.



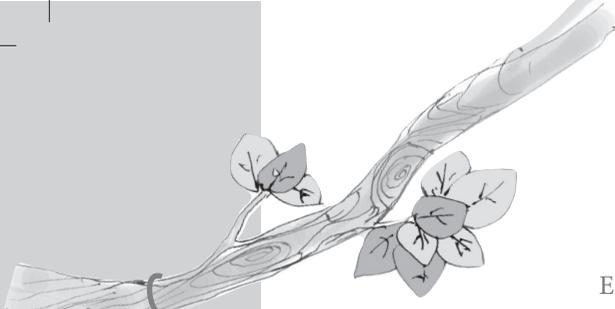
- c. The State will make special efforts to provide these facilities to children from SCs/STs and marginalised sections of society.

FREE AND COMPULSORY PRIMARY EDUCATION

7. a. The State recognises that all children shall have access to free and compulsory education. Education at the elementary level shall be provided free of cost and special incentives should be provided to ensure that children from disadvantaged social groups are enrolled, retained and participate in schooling.
- b. At the secondary level, the State shall provide access to education for all and provide supportive facilities from the disadvantaged groups.
- c. The State shall in partnership with the community ensure that all the educational institutions function efficiently and are able to reach universal enrolment, universal retention, universal participation and universal achievement.
- d. The State and community recognise that a child be educated in its mother tongue.
- e. The State shall ensure that education is child-oriented and meaningful. It shall also take appropriate measures to ensure that education is sensitive to the healthy development of the girl child and to children of varied cultural backgrounds.
- f. The State shall ensure that school discipline and matters related thereto do not result in physical, mental, psychological harm or trauma to the child.
- g. The State shall formulate special programmes to spot, identify, encourage and assist the gifted children for their development in the field of their excellence.

PROTECTION FROM ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION AND ALL FORMS OF ABUSE

- 8.a. The State shall provide protection to children from economic exploitation and from performing tasks that are hazardous to their well-being.
- b. The State shall ensure that there is appropriate regulation of conditions of work in occupations and processes where



children perform work of a non-hazardous nature and that their rights are protected.

- c. The State shall move towards a total ban of all forms of child labour.
9. a. All children have a right to be protected against neglect, maltreatment, injury, trafficking, sexual and physical abuse of all kinds, corporal punishment, torture, exploitation, violence and degrading treatment.
- b. The State shall take legal action against those committing such violations against children even if they be legal guardians of such children.
- c. The State shall in partnership with the community set up mechanisms for identification, reporting, referral, investigation and follow-up of such acts, while respecting the dignity and privacy of the child.
- d. The State shall in partnership with the community take up steps to draw up plans for the identification, care, protection, counselling and rehabilitation of child victims and ensure that they are able to recover, physically, socially and psychologically, and re-integrate into society.
- 10.a. The State shall take strict measures to ensure that children are not used in the conduct of any illegal activity, namely, trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, begging, prostitution, pornography or violence. The State in partnership with the community shall ensure that such children are rescued and immediately placed under appropriate care and protection.
- b. The State and community shall ensure protection of children in distress for their welfare and all round development.
- c. The State and community shall ensure protection of children during the occurrence of natural calamities in their best interest.

PROTECTION OF THE GIRL CHILD

11. a. The State and community shall ensure that crimes and atrocities committed against the girl child, including child marriage, discriminatory practices, forcing girls into prostitution and trafficking are speedily eradicated.



- b. The State shall in partnership with the community undertake measures, including social, educational and legal, to ensure that there is greater respect for the girl child in the family and society.
- c. The State shall take serious measures to ensure that the practice of child marriage is speedily abolished.

EMPOWERING ADOLESCENTS

- 12. The State and community shall take all steps to provide the necessary education and skills to adolescent children so as to equip them to become economically productive citizens. Special programmes will be undertaken to improve the health and nutritional status of the adolescent girl.

EQUALITY, FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, FREEDOM TO SEEK AND RECEIVE INFORMATION, FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY

- 13. The State and community shall ensure that all children are treated equally without discrimination on grounds of the child's or the child's parents' or legal guardian's race, colour, caste, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, disability, birth, political status, or any other consideration.
- 14. All children shall be given every opportunity for all round development of their personality, including expression of creativity.
- 15.
 - a. Every child shall have the freedom to seek and receive information and ideas. The State and community shall provide opportunities for the child to access information that will contribute to the child's development.
 - b. The State and community shall undertake special measures to ensure that the linguistic needs of children are taken care of and encourage the production and dissemination of child-friendly information and material in various forms.
 - c. The State and community shall be responsible for formulating guidelines for the mass media in order to ensure that children are protected from material injuries to their well-being.



16. All children shall enjoy freedom of association and peaceful assembly, subject to reasonable restrictions and in conformity with social and family values.

STRENGTHENING FAMILY

- 17 a. Every child has a right to a family. In case of separation of children from their families, the State shall ensure that priority is given to re-unifying the child with its parents. In cases where the State perceives adverse impact of such a re-unification, the State shall make alternate arrangements immediately, keeping in mind the best interests and the views of the child.
- b. All children have a right to maintain contact with their families, even when they are within the custody of the State for various reasons.
- c. The State shall undertake measures to ensure that children without families are either placed for adoption, preferably intra-country adoption, or foster care or any other family substitute services.
- d. The State shall ensure that appropriate rules with respect to the implementation of such services are drafted in a manner that are in the best interest of the child and that regulatory bodies are set up to ensure the strict enforcement of these rules.
- e. All children shall have the right to meet their parents and other family members who may be in custody.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOTH PARENTS

18. The State recognises the common responsibilities of both parents in rearing their children.

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

19. a. The State and community recognise that all children with disabilities must be helped to lead a full life with dignity and respect. All measures would be undertaken to ensure that children with disabilities are encouraged to be integrated into the mainstream society and actively participate in all walks of life.
- b. State and community shall also provide for their education, training, health care, rehabilitation, recreation in a manner that will contribute to their overall growth and development.



- c. State and community shall launch preventive programmes against disabilities and early detection of disabilities so as to ensure that the families with disabled children receive adequate support and assistance in bringing up their children.
- d. The State shall encourage research and development in the field of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of various forms of disabilities.

CARE, PROTECTION, WELFARE OF CHILDREN OF MARGINALISED AND DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

- 20. The State and community shall provide care, protect and ensure the welfare of children from marginalised and disadvantaged communities, support them in preserving their identity, and encourage them to adopt practises that promote their best interest.
- 21. The State recognises that children from disadvantaged communities and weaker/vulnerable sections of the society are in need of special interventions and support in all matters pertaining to education, health, recreation and supportive services. It shall make adequate provisions for providing such groups with special attention in all its policies and programmes.

ENSURING CHILD FRIENDLY PROCEDURES

- 22. All matters and procedures relating to children, viz. judicial, administrative, educational or social, should be child friendly. All procedures laid down under the juvenile justice system for children in conflict with law and for children in need of special care and protection shall also be child-friendly.



APPENDIX IV

National Health Policy 2002

Although the National Health Policy (NHP) in India was not framed until 1983, India has built up a vast health infrastructure and initiated several national health programmes over last five decades in government, voluntary and private sectors under the guidance and direction of various committees (Bore, Mudaliar, Kartar Singh, Srivastava), the Constitution, the Planning Commission, the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare, and Consultative Committees attached to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The period after 1983 witnessed several major developments in the policies impacting the health sector - adoption of National Health Policy in 1983, 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments in 1992, National Nutrition Policy in 1993, National Health Policy in 2002, National Policy on Indian System of Medicine and Homeopathy in 2002, Drug Policy in 2002, introduction of Universal Health Insurance schemes for the poor in 2003, and inclusion of health in Common Minimum Programme of the Government in 2004.

The first National Health Policy in 1983 aimed to achieve the goal of 'Health for All' by 2000 AD, through the provision of comprehensive primary healthcare services. It stressed the creation of an infrastructure for primary healthcare; close coordination with health related services and activities (like nutrition, drinking water supply and sanitation); the active involvement and participation of voluntary organisations; the provision of essential drugs and vaccines; qualitative improvement in health and family planning services; the provision of adequate training; and medical research aimed at the common health problems of the people.

The main objective of the revised National Health Policy, 2002 is to achieve an acceptable standard of good health among the general population of the country and has set goals to be achieved by the year 2015. The major policy prescriptions are as follows:

- Increase public expenditure from 0.9 per cent to 2 per cent by 2010.
- Increase allocation of public health investment in the order of 55 per cent for the primary health sector; 35 per cent and 10 per cent to secondary and tertiary sectors respectively.

- Gradual convergence of all health programmes, except the ones (such as TB, Malaria, HIV/AIDS, RCH), which need to be continued till moderate levels of prevalence are reached.
- Need to levy user charges for certain secondary and tertiary public health services, for those who can afford to pay.
- Mandatory two year rural posting before awarding the graduate medical degree.
- Decentralising the implementation of health programmes to local self governing bodies by 2005.
- Setting up of Medical Grants Commission for funding new Government Medical and Dental colleges.
- Promoting public health discipline.
- Establishing two-tier urban healthcare system - Primary Health Centre for a population of one lakh and Government General Hospital.
- Increase in Government funded health research to a level of 2 per cent of the total health spending by 2010.
- Appreciation of the role of private sector in health, and enactment of legislation by 2003 for regulating private clinical establishments.
- Formulation of procedures for accreditation of public and private health facilities.
- Co-option of NGOs in national disease control programmes.
- Promotion of tele medicine in tertiary healthcare sector.
- Full operationalisation of National Disease Surveillance Network by 2005.
- Notification of contemporary code of medical ethics by Medical Council of India.
- Encouraging setting up of private insurance instruments to bring secondary and tertiary sectors into its purview.
- Promotion of medical services for overseas users.
- Encouragement and promotion of Indian System of Medicine.
- The first National Health Policy in 1983 aimed to achieve the goal of 'Health for All' by 2000 AD, through the provision of comprehensive primary healthcare services. It stressed the creation of an infrastructure for primary healthcare; close coordination with health related services and activities (like



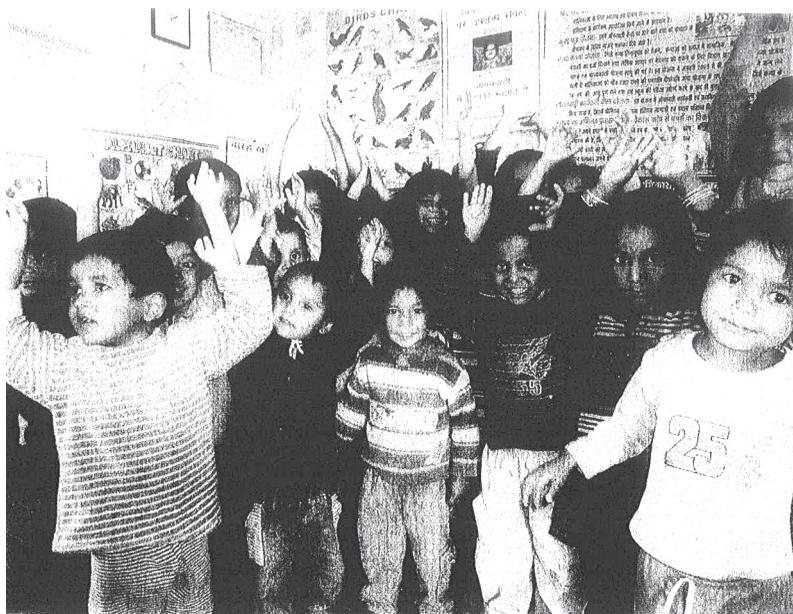
APPENDIX IV

nutrition, drinking water supply and sanitation); active involvement and participation of voluntary organisations; provision of essential drugs and vaccines; qualitative improvement in health and family planning services; provision of adequate training; and medical research aimed at the common health problems of the people.

Through the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts (1992), the local bodies (Municipalities and Panchayat) have been assigned 29 development activities, which have a direct and indirect bearing on health. These include health and sanitation (covering hospitals, PHCs and dispensaries), family welfare, drinking water, women and child development, the public distribution system and poverty alleviation programmes.



APPENDIX V
**NATIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND
EDUCATION (ECCE) POLICY**



**MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

2013



(To be published in the Gazette of India, Part I Section 1)

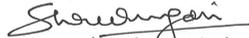
No. 6-3/2009-ECCE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Ministry of Women and Child Development

New Delhi, the 17th September, 2013

RESOLUTION

The Government of India have had under consideration a National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy to reiterate the commitment to promote inclusive, equitable and contextualised opportunities for promoting optimal development and active learning capacity of all children below 6 years of age. After due consideration and approval, National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy is hereby adopted.

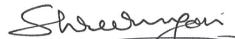

(Dr. Shree Anjan)

Joint Secretary to the Government of India

ORDER

ORDERED that a copy of the resolution be communicated to all Ministries and Departments of the Government of India, all State Governments and Union Territories, the President's Secretariat, the Vice-President's Secretariat, Lok Sabha Secretariat, Rajya Sabha Secretariat, Cabinet Secretariat, Prime Minister's Office and the Planning Commission.

ORDERED also that the resolution be published in the Gazette of India for general information.


(Dr. Shree Anjan)

Joint Secretary to the Government of India

To,
The Manager,
Government of India Press
(Bharat Sarkar Press)
Faridabad (Haryana)



1. Introduction

- 1.1 Early childhood refers to the formative stage of first six years of life, with well-marked sub-stages (conception to birth; birth to three years and three years to six years) having age-specific needs, following the life cycle approach. It is the period of most rapid growth and development and is critical for survival. Growing scientific evidence confirms that there are critical stages in the development of the brain during this period which influence the pathways of physical and mental health, and behaviour throughout the life cycle. Deficits during this stage of life have substantive and cumulative adverse impacts on human development.
- 1.2 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)¹ encompasses the inseparable elements of care, health, nutrition, play and early learning within a protective and enabling environment. It is an indispensable foundation for lifelong development and learning, and has lasting impact on early childhood development. It is imperative to accord priority attention to ECCE and invest in it since it is the most cost effective way to break the intergenerational cycle of multiple disadvantages and remove inequity, leading to long term social and economic benefits.
- 1.3 India has 158.7 million children in the 0-6 years age group (Census 2011) and the challenges of catering to this important segment of population for ensuring the holistic development of children in the country are well acknowledged.
- 1.4 The National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy reaffirms the commitment of the Government of India to provide integrated services for holistic development of all children, along the continuum, from the prenatal period to six years of age. The Policy lays down the way forward for a comprehensive approach towards ensuring a sound foundation for survival, growth and development of child with **focus on care and early learning** for every child. It recognises the synergistic and interdependent relationship

¹ For the purpose of this policy, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) = Early Childhood Education (ECE) = Early Childhood Development (ECD) = Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) = ICD (Integrated Child Development), all promoting holistic development of young child.



between the health, nutrition, psycho-social and emotional needs of the child.

2. Context and Need for the Policy

2.1 Social Context

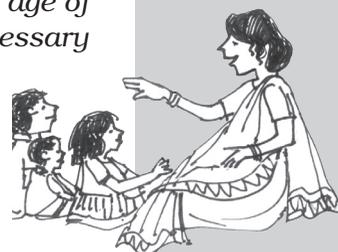
2.1.1 India has a tradition of valuing the early years of a child's life, and a rich heritage of practices for stimulating development and inculcating "*sanskaras*" or basic values and social, skills in children. In the past this was delivered primarily within families, through traditional child caring practices which were commonly shared and passed on from one generation to another. However, there have been changes in the family as well as social context in the last few decades. Besides, there is a globally emerging realisation of the importance of the early years.

2.1.2 Strengthening capabilities of families, communities and services to ensure quality care and education for children in the early years is therefore a priority for India. Discrimination and inequities based on gender, social identity, disability and other exclusionary factors need to be addressed proactively to ensure universal access to integrated services towards fulfillment of right to free, universal pre-primary education. The diversity in social contexts and family structures needs to be appropriately addressed in order to bring balanced parenting, including inputs from fathers, mothers and other caregivers in the family through enabling provisions in programmes.

2.2 Policy Context

2.2.1 The Government of India recognised the significance of ECCE, through the amended Article 45 of Indian Constitution which directs that "*The State shall endeavour to provide ECCE for all children until they complete the age of six years*".

2.2.2 The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) which came into effect from April 1, 2010, has also addressed ECCE under Section 11 of the Act which states, "*with a view to prepare children above the age of three years for elementary education and to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years, the appropriate Government may make necessary*



arrangement for providing free pre-school education for such children”.

2.2.3 ECCE has received attention in the National Policy for Children (1974), consequent to which the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) was initiated on a pilot basis in 1975 with the objective of laying the foundation for holistic and integrated development of child and building capabilities of caregivers. In the 11th Plan period, the ICDS programme has been universalised to cover 14 lakh habitations. Reforms are afoot to ensure that universalisation with quality as well as focus on early childhood development is actualised in subsequent plans.

2.2.4 The National Policy on Education (1986) considers ECCE to be a critical input for human development and recognises the holistic and integrated nature of child development. The National Nutrition Policy (1993) has also recommended interventions for child care and nutrition during early childhood. The National Health Policy (2002) and National Plan of Action for Children (2005) along with Position Paper on ECCE in the National Curriculum Framework (2005) have also been supportive policy initiatives for early childhood. The Five Year Plans have also acknowledged the importance of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) as the stage that lays the foundation for life-long development and the realisation of a child’s full potential. The 12th Five Year Plan emphasises *the need to address areas of systemic reform in ECCE across all channels of services in the public, private and voluntary sectors, going beyond ICDS (AWCs).*

2.2.5 India is also a signatory to both the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989 and Education for All (EFA) 1990 which has postulated ECCE as the very first goal to be achieved for Education For All, since *“learning begins at birth”*. The Dakar Framework for Action (2000) and Moscow Framework for Action (2010) have reaffirmed the commitment to ECCE.

2.3 Programme Context

2.3.1 ECCE services are delivered through public, private and non-governmental service providers.

The public channel is the largest provider of ECCE services, historically through Integrated Child Development Services



(ICDS) which is the world's largest programme mandated to provide ECCE. Today the ICDS programme provides services to nearly 80 million children under six years of age, through a network of 1.4 million approved Anganwadi Centres (AWCs). Programmes for universalising elementary education such as the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) and National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) have also supported setting up of ECCE centres, attached to primary schools in certain districts of the country as a stop gap arrangement till Anganwadi Centres are universalised in the area.

- 2.3.2 Creche services are provided both through public schemes and statutory provisions. The Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for Working Mothers offers care and education services for children below 6 years of age and figures for 2011-2012 indicate that a total of 23,785 creches (MWCD Annual Report 2011-12) are operational across the country. Statutory creche services include creches legally mandated under laws and acts such as (a) The Mines Act (1952) (b) Factories (Amendment) Act, 1987 (c) Plantations Labour Act, (1951), (d) Building and Other Construction Workers' (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 and (e) The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act(2005).²
- 2.3.3 Various other national government programmes that support quality access to basic services for all, such as National Rural Health Mission, Total Sanitation and Drinking Water Campaign, targeted and conditional schemes like the *Janani Suraksha Yojana* and the *Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana* and provisions of maternity benefit that support women's reproductive health and child care needs as also schemes such as the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) are expected to contribute towards an enabling environment for families to care for young children.
- 2.3.4 The unregulated private channel, both organised and unorganised is perhaps the second largest service provider of ECCE, and its outreach is steadily spreading even into the rural areas across the country although with varied

² Exact figures are not available with respect to coverage.



quality. This channel suffers from issues of inequitable access, uneven quality and growing commercialisation.

2.3.5 In the non-governmental channel, there are small scale initiatives which are largely supported by trusts, societies, religious groups or international funding agencies.

2.3.6 There is a need to harmonise the activities of all these service providers, in accordance with service delivery norms, standards and regulations. The primary responsibility for this lies with the Government.

2.3.7 Despite the existence of multiple service providers, there is no reliable data available about the actual number of children attending ECCE provisions and their breakup as per delivery services/type of services. Out of the 158.7 million children in the below six years category (Census 2011), about 76.5 million children i.e. 48.2 per cent are reported to be covered under the ICDS (MWCD, 2011). With emphasis on quality in the strengthened and restructured ICDS, this figure is likely to increase further. Broad estimations indicate that a significant number is also covered by the private service providers, besides some limited coverage by the non-governmental service providers for which no reliable data exists.

2.3.8 The quality and coverage of non-formal preschool/ early childhood care and education imparted through these multiple service providers is uneven, and varies from a minimalist approach to accelerated academic programmes. This is largely an outcome of inadequate understanding of the concept of ECCE and its basic premises, its philosophy and importance among all stakeholders. This, coupled with inadequate institutional capacity in the existing system and an absence of standards, regulatory norms and mechanisms to ensure quality, has aggravated the problem.

2.4 In the above context, there is a need to ensure Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for every child below six years across the country through appropriate reforms, measures and corrective actions enshrined in the Policy.

3. The Policy

3.1 The National ECCE Policy conforms to the vision of holistic and integrated development of the child, with **focus on care**



and early learning at each sub-stage of the developmental continuum, in order to support children's all round and holistic development. This is envisaged to be provided by several care providers such as parents, families, communities, and other institutional mechanisms like public, private and non-governmental service providers.

3.2 The sub stages with their age-specific needs are as follows:

- (i) Conceptions to birth – ante and post natal health and nutritional care of mother, maternal counselling, safe childbirth, maternity entitlements, child protection and non-discrimination.
- (ii) Birth to three years – survival, safety, protective environment, health care, nutrition including infant and young child feeding practices for the first six months, attachment to an adult, opportunity for psycho-social stimulation and early interaction in safe, nurturing and stimulating environments within the home and appropriate child care centres.
- (iii) Three to six years – protection from hazards, health care, nutrition, attachment to an adult, developmentally appropriate play-based preschool education with a structured and planned school readiness component for 5 to 6 year olds.

3.3 These age-specific needs are the basis for providing ECCE services in accordance with appropriate technical norms and standards. The various needs of the children will be taken care of by the National ECCE Policy in convergence with related programmes and policies of other sectors such as health, nutrition, education etc.

3.4 The policy recognises that young children are best cared for in their family environment; however in a country of widespread diversity and stratification, many families need supportive measures for the optimal development of the child. The Policy thus acknowledges multiple models of ECCE service delivery and would be applicable to all ECCE programmes that are offered by public, private and non-governmental service providers in all settings which could go by the nomenclature of AWCs, creches, play groups, play schools, pre-schools, nursery schools, kindergartens, preparatory schools, balwadis, home-based care etc.



4. Vision of the Policy

- 4.1 The vision of the policy is to achieve holistic development and active learning capacity of all children below 6 years of age by promoting free, universal, inclusive, equitable, joyful and contextualised opportunities for laying foundation and attaining full potential.

It envisages to improve pathways for a successful and smooth transition from care and education provided at home to centre based ECCE and thereafter to school-age provision by facilitating an enabling environment through appropriate systems, processes and provisions across the country.

In furtherance of the vision of the policy, the government shall be guided by the following **objectives**:

- (i) Facilitate comprehensive childcare supports, infrastructure and services aimed at holistic well-being of children and responsive to their developmental needs along the continuum of care from conception to age six.
- (ii) Universalise and reinforce ECCE and ensure adaptive strategies for inclusion of all children with specific attention to vulnerable children.
- (iii) Engage capable human resources and build their capacity to enhance and develop quality services for children and their families.
- (iv) Set out the quality standards and curriculum framework for ECCE provisions and ensure their application and practice through advocacy and enforcement through appropriate institutional arrangements.
- (v) Raise awareness and create common understanding about the significance of ECCE and promote strong partnerships with communities and families in order to improve the quality of life of young children through institutional and programmatic means and appropriate use of technology as required.
- (vi) Recognise diversity of contexts, develop and promote culturally appropriate strategies and materials and work within the framework of decentralised governance using participatory and locally responsive approaches.



5. Key Areas of the Policy

The Policy focuses on the following key areas to achieve the objectives:

- a. Access with equity and inclusion in programmes and interventions across service providers
- b. Improving quality (minimum specifications, quality standards, regulation, curriculum, play and learning material, programme assessment and child assessment)
- c. Strengthening Capacity (institutions, personnel, families and communities)
- d. Monitoring and Supervision (MIS, National ECCE Council, etc.)
- e. Research and Documentation
- f. Advocacy and awareness generation
- g. Convergence and Coordination among policies and programmes
- h. Institutional and Implementation Arrangements (ECCE Cell, National ECCE Council, Plans of Action)
- i. Partnerships
- j. Increased investment towards ECCE
- k. Periodic Review

5.1 Universal Access with Equity and Inclusion

The Government shall take the following measures to ensure access to ECCE services:

- 5.1.1 The Government shall provide universal and equitable access to ECCE for all children through a decentralised and contextualised approach.
- 5.1.2 Access to ECCE will be mainly through ICDS and in convergence with other relevant sectors/programmes in public channel as well as through other service providers viz. the private and non-governmental. Special plans will be developed to reach the most marginalised and vulnerable groups and hitherto unreached.
- 5.1.3 The Government shall provide universal access to services for each sub-stage defined in Section 3 that will include health, nutrition, age appropriate care, stimulation and early learning in a protective and enabling environment. Such ECCE centres would be functional as per population norms as prescribed and preferably within 500 meters.



- 5.1.4 The concept of access to neighbourhood ECCE centre, including provision for admission of children belonging to weaker section and disadvantaged group, would be encouraged in private and non-governmental service provision channel also.
- 5.1.5 No child would be subjected to admission test, written or oral, for granting admission to an ECCE centre.
- 5.1.6 The AWC would be repositioned as a “vibrant child friendly ECD Centre” with adequate infrastructure, financial and human resources for ensuring a continuum of ECCE in a life-cycle approach and attaining child development outcomes.
- 5.1.7 AWC-cum-creches with provision of full range of services, including care, planned early stimulation component, health, nutrition and interactive environment for children below 3 years will be developed, piloted and scaled up, if necessary, in response to community needs.
- 5.1.8 Implementation of Creches under schemes such as Rajiv Gandhi National Creches Scheme for the Children of Working Mothers as well as those under statutory laws by respective ministries and sectors (e.g. creches under MGNREGA Act, Building and Other construction Worker’s Act) would also be realigned and improved in accordance with the provisions of this Policy. Other models of creches responding to the diversity of needs would be supported to work in adherence to the quality standards for ECCE with flexibility to meet the needs of the target population.
- 5.1.9 To ensure inclusion of all children, measures will be undertaken for early detection and interventions with appropriate adaptations and referrals where necessary, for children at risk of developmental delays and disabilities. Appropriate linkages with concerned programmes/ sectors would be established to facilitate participation of children with special needs in the ECCE programmes.
- 5.1.10 Family/Community and NGO-based ECCE service delivery model would also be experimented and promoted.
- 5.1.11 An urban strategy will be developed/adopted to address the specific unmet needs of children in urban slums and to expand access to all urban settlements/slums etc. To facilitate this, rules pertaining to area/town planning may be



amended in the 12th Five Year Plan so as to provide space/provision for neighbourhood ECCE/ Child Development Centres.

- 5.1.12 Universal access to integrated child development including ECCE for all young children remains the primary responsibility of the government through ICDS. The government may additionally explore supporting the not-for-profit non-governmental and for-profit service providers by supplementing and complementing their services as may be deemed necessary and feasible.
- 5.1.13 Linkage with primary school system will be streamlined to address the issue of continuum and smooth transition from ECCE to primary schooling through school readiness package.

5.2 Ensuring Quality

The Government shall promote developmentally appropriate practices of ECCE through a multi-pronged approach of laying down norms and quality standards; developing curriculum framework; provision of appropriate and adequate play material; conducting programme assessment and child assessment.

- 5.2.1 To standardise the quality of ECCE available to children, basic Quality Standards and Specifications will be laid down for ECCE which will be enforced across public, private and non-governmental service providers.

The following base standards would be non-negotiable for promoting quality ECCE and shall be made mandatory for all service providers rendering any kind of ECCE service:

- An ECCE programme of 3-4 hours duration
- One classroom measuring atleast 35 square meters for a group of 30 children and availability of adequate (atleast 30 square meters) outdoor space for a group of 30 children
- Adequately trained staff
- Age and developmentally appropriate, child centric curriculum transacted in the mother tongue/local vernacular
- Adequate developmentally appropriate toys and learning materials
- A safe building which is within easy approach. It should be clean and should have surrounding green area
- Adequate and safe drinking water facilities



- Adequate and separate child-friendly toilets and handwash facilities for girls and boys
- Separate space allocated for cooking nutritionally balanced meals and nap time for children
- Immediate health service in terms of First Aid/ Medical Kit available at the centre
- The adult/ caregiver: child ratio of 1:20 for 3-6 year old children and 1:10 for under 3s should be available at the ECCE Centre. Children should not be unattended at any given point of time.

5.2.2 A Regulatory Framework for ECCE to ensure basic quality inputs and outcomes, across all service providers undertaking such services or part thereof, will be developed by the National ECCE Council within one year of its establishment, and shall be implemented by states, with appropriate customisation, within three years of the notification of this Policy. Such implementation may be in a phased manner moving progressively from registration to accreditation and ultimately to regulation of all ECCE service provisions.

The quality standards would relate *inter alia* to building and infrastructure; pupil teacher interaction; learning experiences planned for children; health, nutrition and protection measures; qualification and professional development of staff; parent and community involvement and organisation and management of the ECCE provision.

5.2.3 Age and developmentally appropriate National ECCE Curriculum Framework will be developed within six months of the notification of this Policy. The National ECCE Curriculum Framework will address the interrelated domains of development i.e. physical and motor; language; cognitive; socio-personal; emotional and creative and aesthetic appreciation, through an integrated, play based, experiential and child-friendly curriculum for early education and all round development. It would also lay down the implementation details such as principles of programme planning, role of parents and caregivers/ECCE teachers, essential play materials and assessment procedure etc. An enabling and loving environment devoid of corporal punishment will be ensured.

5.2.4 The mother tongue/home language/local vernacular of the child will be the primary language of interaction in the ECCE



programmes. However, given the young child's ability at this age to learn many languages, exposure to other languages in the region and English, as required, in oral form will be encouraged in a meaningful manner. A multi-lingual strategy will be adopted respecting the children's language and at the same time using the plasticity of the early years to expose the child to many languages.

- 5.2.5 The Government shall ensure provision of safe, child friendly and developmentally appropriate play and learning materials and appropriate play spaces by appropriate instruments and instructions. The Government will promote use of traditional songs, stories, lullabies, folk tales, local toys and games as play and learning material in ECCE settings.
- 5.2.6 Programme evaluation of all ECCE service provisions will be undertaken by National ECCE Council, adopting consistent assessment criteria and methodologies as per quality norms relating *inter alia* to building and infrastructure; pupil-teacher interaction; learning experiences planned for children; health, nutrition and protection measures; qualification and professional development of staff; parent and community involvement and organisation and management of the ECCE provision including fee-related matters.
- 5.2.7 Formative and continuous child assessment will be conducted at the ECCE centre in order to ensure that the ECCE programme is responsive to the developmental needs of the child.
- 5.2.8 Modern technology including ICT potential will be optimally and appropriately harnessed to promote developmental and learning needs of children and also for monitoring, evaluation, capacity building and training.

5.3 Strengthening Capacity

- 5.3.1 In view of the huge gap in the availability of trained human resources, the Government shall develop a proactive plan for strengthening existing training institutes for early childhood development like National Institute for Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), including its Regional Centres and its outreach institutes like Anganwadi Workers



Training Centres (AWTCs), Middle Level Training Centres (MLTCs) and establishing new ones, wherever necessary, within a stipulated timeframe. Similarly, other institutes like National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs), State Institute of Educational Research and Training (SIERTs), District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs), State Institute of Rural Development (SIRDs) and Extension Training Centres, IGNOU, NIOS etc. would be associated to enhance the available trained manpower. The government will develop quality standards and a regulatory framework for accreditation and recognition of all training Institutes.

- 5.3.2 The sector of ECCE will be professionalised at all levels with qualifications, development pathways, clear role definitions and capacity building specified for various ECCE personnel. Capacities of ECCE workers will be strengthened to handle multiage and multilingual context. A comprehensive training and skill development strategy and plan for different levels of ECCE professionals will be pursued by respective service providers for professionalisation in the sector.
- 5.3.3 NIPCCD and its Regional Centres will be the main Child Development Resource Centres to provide continuous support to ECCE personnel (such as helpline; training; counselling centres; capacity development centres; assessment centres and 'advocacy hubs'). In addition, States would be encouraged to open their own Resource Centres at the state and district level.
- 5.3.4 The policy recognises that the young children are best cared for in their family environment and thus strengthening family capabilities to care for and protect the child will receive the highest priority. Parents and family members would be informed and educated about good child care practices related to infant and young child feeding practices, growth monitoring, stimulation, play and early education. Involvement of parents and other community members in the effective functioning of ECCE programmes will be encouraged and ensured.



6. Monitoring and Supportive Supervision

- 6.1 Monitoring and supervision of ECCE programmes will be strengthened, based on a systematic Monitoring Framework with disaggregated, tangible and easy-to-measure input, output and outcome indicators specified for ECCE quality. Appropriate authorities and the National ECCE Council along with National Commission for Protection of Child Rights may make necessary arrangements for such monitoring and supervision. Various means of verification such as Management Information System, independent surveys etc. would be adopted.
- 6.2 A sound system for data collection/generation and information management will be established across the country which will allow for regular collection, compilation and analysis of the data on ECCE. Such data would be generated on processes, inputs, outputs and outcome indicators through standards, regulation framework and appropriate surveys on outcome indicators. Programme monitoring and Management Information System would feed on such data.
- 6.3 Technology will also be used to enable use of comprehensive mother and child cards covering the full spectrum of services under ECCE for regular monitoring and for accountability to all children. Synergy will be established with ICDS/ NRHM/ SSA data to identify and fill the gaps. Special strategies need to be devised for using the information system to reach out to the poorest of the poor.

7. Research, Evaluation and Documentation

- 7.1 Links between policy, research and practice will be strengthened. Funds will be allocated for substantive research in the area of early childhood, including longitudinal studies tracking children from the earliest years.
- 7.2 Concurrent and operational research will be promoted to generate indigenous knowledge and to ensure a more evidence based approach towards planning, implementation and monitoring of ECCE programmes and interventions. Impact evaluation will be made integral to all interventions and action research will be promoted for generating innovative models.



8. Advocacy

- 8.1 A major deterrent to ensuring the right kind of ECCE is the lack of understanding of developmentally appropriate ECCE among the parents and other stakeholders and the widespread belief that child is the responsibility of only the mother. Added to this is the lack of understanding of age-appropriate needs, developmentally-appropriate interventions and implications of neglect.
- 8.2 In order to address the above, extensive use of media and inter-personal communication strategies will be made, including folk, print and electronic media, to reach out to parents, caregivers, professionals, and the larger community particularly the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). Parent and community outreach programmes will be strengthened to enable them to get involved, advocate, plan and monitor ECCE programmes.

9. Convergence and Coordination

- 9.1 Children's needs are multi-sectoral in nature and require policies and programmes across diverse sectors including education, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, labour and finance. The independently stated policies such as National Policy on Education (1986); National Nutrition Policy (1993); National Health Policy (2002); National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001); revised 'National Policy for Children (2013); National Policy on AYUSH (2002) etc., programmes and other such related instruments, having bearing on ECCE, will be realigned and oriented with the current policy.

Regulatory, operational and financial convergence between these related policies, schemes and programmes will be encouraged and achieved over a stipulated period for optimal utilisation of resources.

- 9.2 Coordination and convergence will be achieved at different levels between, policies, programmes and schemes of various sectors through appropriate institutional mechanisms as well as between multiple stakeholders with the active participation of local communities.
- 9.3 Given that currently a significant number of 5 to 6 year olds are in primary schools in many states, and the Right



To Education Act (2010) has the mandate for provision of free and compulsory elementary education from 6-14 years, convergence with Ministry of Human Resource Development and State Departments of Education will be of key importance, particularly for the adoption of child centric and play based approaches and extend the school readiness interventions for children of 5 plus years of age. Mechanisms will be instituted to facilitate this convergence so as to ensure continuity and inter-linkage of centre based ECCE and school-age provisions with specific reference to Section. 11 of the Right to Education Act (2010).

10. Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

- 10.1 The nodal Ministry for overseeing the ECCE programmes and services will be, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) along with its state level counterpart departments. All State Governments/UT Administrations would be advised to make ECCE a subject under Business Allocation Rules of Department of Women and Child Development, as has been made in the Government of India under the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- 10.2 The major interventions to implement the main provisions of this Policy will be initiated within one year of the notification of this Policy.
- 10.3 An ECCE Cell /Division will be established within MWCD for overseeing the implementation of the Plans of Action and act as interface, both at national and state levels, for multi-sectoral and inter-agency coordination. The Cell will include technical experts to ensure that quality norms and benchmarks are followed across states.
- 10.4 A National ECCE Council will be established within three months of notification of this Policy, with corresponding councils at State within eighteen months of notification of this Policy. The National ECCE Council will be the apex body with appropriate professional expertise, autonomy and funded by the MWCD, Government of India, to guide and oversee the implementation of the National ECCE Policy. It would contribute to strengthen the foundation of ECCE programmes in India by establishing a comprehensive



ECCE system and developing an integrated framework facilitating and supporting multimodal and multicomponent interventions such as modalities of training, developing curriculum framework, setting quality standards and related activities; promoting action research among others. The Council will have representatives from all related Departments/Ministries, State Departments/UT Administrations, Academic Resource Institutions, NGOs, civil society organisations, professionals and experts, practitioners, academicians, etc.

- 10.5 The policy will operate within India's framework of decentralisation and will therefore include provision for committees at the community, block, district, state and national levels. These committees will be in appropriate harmonisation with ICDS monitoring and mission committees which have provision for involvement of community members, mother's group, local self-government institutions (PRIs, ULBs).
- 10.6 In recognition of the social and geographical diversity of the country, the policy will allow for flexibility to ensure that services respond to local needs and with locally available resources. The district level administrative units and the *Panchayats* will be strengthened to provide for more decentralised planning and implementation of ECCE programmes. Community-based organisations such as Village Education Committees, Mother's (Parent's) Committees, Village Resource Groups, and PRIs will be directly involved and their capacities strengthened, to participate in and oversee the management of the ECCE centres across different service provisions and ensure accountability for quality functioning of services.
- 10.7 The programme of action for implementing and complementing the National ECCE Policy, National Early Childhood Education Curriculum, and Quality Standards for ECCE will be reflected in the National/State Plan of Actions in SSA, ICDS, Reproductive Child Health (RCH) of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Creche Programme and Annual Implementation Plans of any other similarly situated programme of national/state/local bodies including PRIs,



across the interlinked areas of health, nutrition, pre-school education and water and sanitation.

- 10.8 The Government shall create an enabling environment for providing Integrated services as per the various facets laid down in the policy.
- 10.9 In addition to the Regulatory Framework proposed in Section 5.2.2, the Government shall bring appropriate legislation for promoting integrated and comprehensive child development detailing age appropriate interventions to address various facets of care, education, survival, protection and development of all children under six years of age assuring the right of the child in early childhood to Integrated Child Development.

11. Partnerships

- 11.1 Resource Groups/Voluntary Action Groups of experts and professionals and higher learning institutions will be identified at regional, state, district and sub-district levels and invited to support government efforts in monitoring, supervision and capacity building for ECC in a gradual and effective manner.
- 11.2 To achieve the objectives of the policy and support its own efforts, the Government may enter into partnerships for specific time bound initiatives with multiple stakeholders including community, non-governmental service providers and the private service providers while ensuring adherence to specified guidelines and standards.

12. Increased Investment towards Early Childhood Care and Education

- 12.1 Evidence indicates highest rate of return on investments made to improve child well-being in the early years of childhood.
- 12.2 The Government commits to increase the aggregate spending on quality ECCE interventions.
- 12.3 Early Childhood (from conception to 6 years) and ECCE budgeting would serve as an important dimension to assess investment in early years. The exercise of disaggregated child budgeting for early childhood may be carried out regularly so as to take stock of investments for children and to identify



gaps in resource investment and utilisation. This would also assess child development outcomes.

13. Review

The implementation of the policy will be reviewed every five years. Periodic appraisals will also be made to assess progress of implementation and make mid-course corrections, if and when required.



APPENDIX VI

Weekly Programme Schedule (A Sample)

Week-days	9.00 to 9.30 am	9.30 to 10.00 am	10.00 to 10.30 am	10.30 to 11.00 am	11.00 to 11.30 am	11.30 to 12.00 pm	12.00 pm to 12.30	12.30 pm to 1.00 pm
Monday	Welcome and Prayer	Free conversation	Cognitive Development	Recess	Outdoor Activities	Creative activities	Language Development	Winding up and Departure
Tuesday	Do	Do	Sensory experiences		Swinging/ sliding/ running/ jumping/ climbing etc.	Free Drawing /painting	Developing listening skills Story telling	Do
Wednesday	Do	Do	Colour concept		Do	Clay-work	Developing speaking skills- rhymes Poems/ songs	Do
Thursday	Do	Do	Shape concept		Do	Collage work	Pre-reading skills/ picture reading	Do
Friday	Do	Do	Classification /memory games		Do	Colouring given figure	Pre-writing skills	Do
Saturday	Do	Do	Pre-number Concept Problem solving skill/ thinking skills development		Do	Pattern making/tearing/pasting	Story reading with pictures/ story making Dramatisation/ puppets, riddles	Do

APPENDIX VII

Assessing Child's Progress (A Sample)
(Nursery Section)

Term Report

Name of the Child _____ Section _____

Date of Birth _____ Home Address _____

Date of Admission of the child _____

Physical Development	Weight	Height
----------------------	--------	--------

July	_____	_____
------	-------	-------

September	_____	_____
-----------	-------	-------

Personal cleanliness: Clothes _____ Nails _____ Teeth _____

Eyes _____ Ears _____ Nose _____ Hair _____

Participation in Outdoor Play

- Walking on balancing board _____
- Climbing on the nesting frame _____

Participation in Indoor Play and Activities

- Playing with blocks _____
- Playing with dolls _____
- Interested in picture puzzles _____
- Drawing with crayons _____
- Brush painting _____
- Clay modeling _____
- Listening story _____
- Interested in rhythms & songs _____

Activity Level

Very active _____ Active _____ Not Active _____

Emotional and Social Adjustment

- Cries during school time _____
- Clings to the teacher _____
- Asks for parents _____
- Play on his own _____
- Plays with other children _____

Language Development

- Speaks freely with the teacher _____
- Speaks with other children _____
- Speech defects _____

Intellectual Development

- (a) Recognition of vegetables Potato, Onion, Tomato, Lady Finger
- (b) Recognition of animals Dog, Cat, Cow
- (c) Recognition of colours Red, Yellow, Blue
- (d) Recognition of fruits Pears, Banana, Apple
- (e) Pre-number concept Big-Small, Fat-Thin, More-Less

Attendance

Regular _____ Yes _____ No _____
Punctual _____ Yes _____ No _____

General Remarks

Class Teacher's Signature

Date:

Headmistress _____
Signature

Parent's _____
Signature



APPENDIX VII

i) Visual Discrimination: Good Average Below average

Pre-writing Skills

a) Can colour in enclosed space Very neatly Neatly Not so neatly
 b) Can hold the pencil properly Yes / No

Intellectual Development

a) Concept of colours: Good Average Below average
 (Red, Green, Blue, Yellow)
 b) Concept of shapes: Good Average Below average
 (Square, Circle, Triangles)
 c) Pre-Number Concept Development Good Average Below average
 d) Seriation thinking Good Average Below average
 e) Classification Good Average Below average
 f) Memory Good Average Below average
 g) General Awareness Good Average Below average
 (Animals and Birds, Seasons
 of year, Various insects, festivals)

Emotional and Social Development

a) Sharing of material with Good Average Below average
 other children
 b) Cooperation in group activities Good Average Below average
 c) Aggressive Yes / No
 d) Shy Yes / No
 e) Friendly Yes / No

Habit Formation

a) Personal Cleanliness: Good Average Below average
 Clothes _____ Nails _____ Teeth _____
 Eyes _____ Ears _____ Nose _____ Hair _____
 b) Manners: Good Average Below average
 c) Wishes teacher: Regularly / Not regularly



- d) Uses Polite language: Regularly / Not regularly
- e) Uses Handkerchief: Regularly / Not regularly
- f) Waits for own turn: Regularly / Not regularly

General Remarks

Signatures:

Principal _____ Class teacher _____ Date _____

Parent's signature _____



APPENDIX VIII

Some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How ECCE is related to Human Development Index (HDI)?

Human Development Index aims to represent an aggregate picture of the broader human condition. It captures three dimensions:

- A long and healthy life
- Knowledge
- A decent standard of life

A long and healthy life is measured by life expectancy at birth. This is defined as the number of years a new born would live if prevailing patterns of age specific mortality rates at the time of birth were to stay the same through out the individual's life. This is influenced by the infant mortality rate. High IMR is inversely associated with a long and healthy life. Thus, ECCE is directly related to HDI. As the quality of ECCE improves the HDI will get improved. Similarly the "knowledge" also has correlation with ECCE. With better ECCE provision and quality the likely impact is better retention and achievement of children in primary and elementary education stage, leading to higher level of knowledge. There are evidences to suggest that ECCE has strong influence in improving the standard of life of people by giving many fold economic returns.

What is child centered education?

Child centered education is that education which is planned and imparted based on child's needs, keeping in mind the individual differences and developmental and learning characteristics. The child's perspective is important in child centered education. Child's likes, dislikes, learning style, interests and aptitude, previous learning experiences and physical and mental conditions are taken into account.

Why teaching of 3Rs should not be encouraged at ECCE stage?

The National Policy on Education has categorically stated that teaching of Three Rs should be discouraged at ECCE stage i.e. before

entry in to primary school. National Policy on Education describes ECCE stage from 0-6 years. Many parents believe that teaching of “Three Rs” at preschool stage is needed. Parents in urban and rural areas consider formal teaching learning at preschool stage as natural and important because they believe that it will prepare their children for entering and sustaining in early primary grades. They sometimes come out with the statements like—if children are not taught Three Rs then what for children should go to a nursery? Child psychology and principles of child development do not support the view of introducing Three Rs at the preschool stage because child’s learning is largely perceptual at this stage and children are yet to develop abstract thinking. Children are uncomfortable at this stage to regimentation of adhering to schedules, time tables and sitting for long periods. Teaching of three Rs pressurises children to learn contents in mathematics, language and other subjects suitable for higher grades. This causes harm to children in many ways, not only physically but psychologically and morally.

If children are not taught alphabets then why should we send children to preschool?

Many parents ask this question because they think that preschool is also like a formal school and teaching should be the main concern of preschool education. These parents need to be oriented about the objectives need and significance of preschool education and risk of teaching three Rs. At the same time if they are made aware how pressurising children from such a tender age can kill the spirit of learning forever they would certainly be convinced. Parents, therefore, need to know that children without getting a required level of maturity, which is essential for formal reading and writing, won’t be benefited by early instructions. Parents also need to be made aware that the real value of learning at preschool stage is to provide children an environment which gives them joy through exploration, experimentation, play and group games, art and craft activities etc., so that they get a feel that learning is interesting and receive positive feedback for further schooling.

What are the various services under the Anganwadi Centres?

Anganwadi centre under the ICDS scheme provide comprehensive package of services for holistic child development. Services provide



are-nutrition, preschool education, immunisation of children, nutrition to lactating mothers, nutrition and health education to mothers, referral services for children and mothers having serious ailment and skill based programme for adolescent girls.

Is ICDS a government programme and ICDS functionaries government servants?

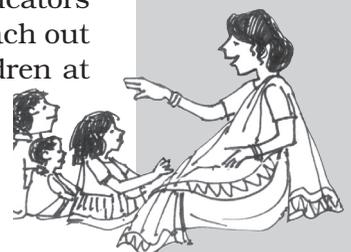
Yes, ICDS is a centrally sponsored programme. The budget is provided by the centre and the states. This is the flagship programme of MWCD and poised for universal coverage. The functionaries are government employee except the anganwadi workers and helpers. The worker and helper who work at the centre are paid honorarium for their services and other staff i.e. Supervisor, Child Development Project Officer are regular staff. However, instructors working in Anganwadi Training Centres (AWTCs) are also contractual staff.

What is Early Stimulation?

Early stimulation refers to stimulation provided to young children below six years (especially, during first three years of life) through quality parent child interactions. It can happen by hugging, holding, massaging, oiling, providing sunshine, ensuring a secure and safe environment, responding to child's needs, feeding child with love and affection and also creating attractive physical environment around child in the form of mobiles, pictures etc. One of the most important aspects of early stimulation is talking to child for language stimulation. Singing lullabies, songs, telling stories and providing things around child to manipulate constitute an environment conducive to early stimulation.

What is Home-Based Approach?

Home-based approach to promote child development is an alternative approach to centre based approach. As there are limited places available for crèche and day care facilities to children under three as well as children of preschool age, it is important that parents are made aware about the learning and developmental needs of children and significance of fulfilling these needs during the early years for realising the full developmental potential of children. This can be done by training parents to take charge as educators of their own children. This require planning strategies to reach out to parents to be a stimulators and educators of their children at



home. Parents should possess skills and knowledge necessary for providing children stimulating environment at home by organising simple stimulation activities for children with the help of local specific easily available natural materials.

What is School Readiness?

School readiness means preparing child for school by ensuring that a child who is eligible to be admitted to grade I in formal school has acquired personal and social skills, emotional maturity, cognitive development, language development and physical motor development necessary for taking on the requirement of formal schooling. It means child should be able to understand the verbal instruction, can withstand separation anxiety, has developed skills of listening attentively and speaking clearly. The areas that need to be promoted for school readiness generally categorised as reading readiness, number readiness, writing readiness and certain level of socio-emotional maturity. This is done through suitably designed school readiness programme for children who are not fortunate to receive preschool education. Children who go through preschool education programme of one, two or three year's duration acquire necessary readiness to school in the due course of time.

What is meant by Inter-sectoral Convergence?

Convergence can be defined in terms of working towards a common goal with mutual cooperation and coordination among various players. We know that ECCE is multi-sectoral programme as it cuts across many departments and ministries for providing various services (nutrition, health, preschool education) to young children. At grassroots level the success of programme is dependent upon the coordination and cooperation among these various departments. When all the departments and functionaries in them at different levels join hand and plan and implement programmes keeping in mind the interest of the child as supreme, to provide the required services we can achieve convergence. When the various departments do not work in tendon there is need for convergence.

What is Holistic Development?

Holistic development refers to development in all areas i.e. physical, mental, language, motor, socio-emotional and moral



etc. Development is always holistic. It is never in isolation of each other. For mental development it is necessary to be physically well. Similarly, emotional development can not occur without being socially and mentally well. For holistic child development it is necessary that all the developmental needs are fulfilled. The health and nutrition needs are primary along with psycho-social needs. The synergic effect of health, nutrition and psycho-social stimulation result in optimal development in children. If one component is weak it may impact on child's overall growth and development.

Has ECCE the potential to bring peace in society?

As Maria Montessori had said, 'all education leads to peace'. This is true and more so in case of ECCE as it lays the foundation for future learning and development. ECCE has the potential to build a peace loving society. This is because ECCE can reduce disparities among groups, reduce gender disparity, promote regional and religious understanding and bring about a just and equitable social order. As we are able to reduce tension and conflicts in societies we shall be able to increase chances to bring peace and harmony in society. The sequence can be illustrated how ECCE can lead to economic and social development by promoting health, education and capacity to work as productive and responsible citizen of the country and the world.

How can ECCE be instrumental in alleviating Poverty?

The cumulative impact of good quality ECCE programmes have the following path to reach to the target of poverty alleviation-

ECCE helps in physical, mental and emotional social development of children. It promotes social and gender equity. Preschool education, nutrition and health components having synergetic effect to develop an active learning capacity in child provides a strong foundation to universal elementary and lifelong education. This in turn may lead to higher productivity and growth. Higher productivity and growth on the one hand and lower dropouts and less burden on account of diseases and crimes (another out comes of good quality ECCE) provide greater chances for equitable distribution of wealth thus reduction on poverty .



What is meant by regularity mechanism?

Maintaining the quality of various ECCE programmes is very important. It is said that it is better not to have any pre-schooling than a bad pre-schooling. How to maintain the quality of programmes of crèches, preschools and other ECCE services is of great significance. The mechanism by which we can regulate the quality of the ECCE programmes is called regulatory mechanism. It may be in terms of standards and norms for programmes and personnel necessary for maintaining the quality. These may be developed and enforced for various programmes —crèches, ECCE centres, play centres, anganwadis, teacher education programmes, private sector programmes etc. The standards could be in terms of manpower qualification, physical infrastructure, staff child ratio, play equipment etc. We have drawn standards/norms for some of the programmes but reinforcing them has not been effective. There are no specifications as to who is qualified to start an ECCE programme. There is no licence required for running an ECCE centre. There is, therefore, dilution in quality and distortions in programmes. Accreditation is one of the ways to regulate quality. One view is that at least registration should be made compulsory for ECCE service providers. At present private sector in India is totally unregulated, that is why there is curriculum load from the very start, which kills the essence of ECCE's real objectives.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse has been defined by World Health Organisation which constitutes all form of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility. Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of an interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust.

Emotional abuse includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment. There may also be acts towards the child that cause or have a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. Acts include:



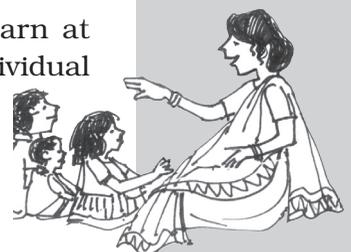
- Restriction of movement, patterns of belittling, denigrating, scapegoating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.
- Neglect of the child in spheres of health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers.
- Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent.
- The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity.
- The exploitative use of child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices.
- The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials, child labour and child prostitution. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, or spiritual, moral or social-emotional development.

What is Child Budgeting?

Child budgeting represents an important policy analysis tool that can help us take stock of our development investment for children and identify gaps in resource investment and utilisation. It also helps in mapping areas which are comparatively neglected. It was first started by an NGO (HAQ : Centre for Child's Rights in Delhi) and then by ICCW Tamil Nadu and afterwards by MWCD government of India. The analysis revealed that out of four sectoral areas i.e. child health, child education, child protection and child development the percentage share of child protection in child budget was the least indicating a low priority given to this area. If child protection area remains neglected then all other rights of children would be at stake. Thus child budgeting is a tool to ensure that investment is not lopsided and children's rights are addressed holistically.

What is Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)?

Children learn in a developmental sequence and they learn at their own pace. Every child is an active learner having individual



differences. The integrated setting should be arranged to stimulate acquisition of competencies in communication, cognition and social skills of all children. Teachers should use knowledge of child development to identify the range of appropriate behaviours, activities and materials for a specific age group. This knowledge is used in conjunction with an understanding of each child in the classroom and his/her unique personalities, backgrounds and abilities to design the most appropriate learning environment. It involves active learning experiences through exploration and enquiry, varied instructional strategies to suit all children, a balance between child initiated and teacher directed activities and integrated curriculum. It connects diverse areas of study by cutting across subject-matter lines and emphasising unifying concepts. It combines many subject areas into a cohesive unit of study that is meaningful to students. An integrated curriculum often relates learning to real life. It also recognises the importance of basic skills and the “inclination to use them” (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1996).

What is Thematic Approach?

Theme based approach is one of the technique for integrating curricula. The central theme becomes the catalyst for developing concepts, generalisations, skills and attitudes. At the stage of early childhood care and education thematic approach which takes into account the links across different subject areas and provide learning through real experiences’ helps children understand the world around them holistically and in a more meaningful way. For example, children working on a theme “water” would learn about sources of water, uses of water, water pollution etc. in an integrated manner.

What is meant by smooth transition?

Transition here means child’s adjustment in new environment of school or preschool setting from a familiar environment of home. For smooth transition language and communication barriers are challenging. These can be overcome and transition eased by sharing information with child and taking into account values, ethnic, cultural, linguistic diversities. Establishing good communication



between parents and schools, providing bilingual preschool and primary school programmes help children's smooth transition. Attractive environment and use of child-friendly approaches strengthen smooth transition.

What is stunting?

Stunting means shortness in height and shorter than ones age and sex. Stunted growth refers to retarded growth and development in children. Its main causes may be malnutrition and multifaceted deprivations before and after birth. Malnutrition results from the interaction between poor diet and disease and leads to most of the anthropometric deficits observed among children. Height-for-age is one of three anthropometric indices commonly used as an indicator for malnutrition. Shortness may reflect either normal variation in growth or a deficit in growth. Stunting refers to shortness that is a deficit, i.e., linear growth that failed to reach genetic potential as a result of sub optimal health or nutrition conditions.

What is wasting?

It is understood in terms of low weight for height or low weight for ones age and sex. It is usually caused by a relatively recent illness or food shortage that induces acute and severe weight loss, although chronic under nutrition or illness can also cause this condition. The prevalence of wasting is much lower than that of stunting.

How to handle a child with temper tantrums?

During a temper tantrum a child starts yelling, rolls his head on ground, hits his head, he may kick or bite his parents, even may hurt himself. In the state of temper tantrum the child is angry and frightened by his own rage and does not know what is happening around him. The anger is generated out of his frustration on account of not getting things as expected. In such a state if child is left alone he gets over his tantrum. He should be soothed and comforted as soon as he is in a mood to accept it. However, if child's tantrums are heeded to, he will use this as a strong weapon every time he wants some thing. If a tantrums occurs in public child should be taken to a quite place to be reassured and calmed down. Understanding the cause of the tantrum is important.



What are the causes of nail biting?

Many children bite their nails because of nervousness or fear or excitement. The cause of child's fear or nervousness may be ascertained to help the child to overcome the habit of nail biting. High expectation, nagging child and over disciplining may result in nail biting.

Why do babies suck their thumbs?

Thumb sucking is a matter of pleasure to a child, which provides child a lot of satisfaction. It seems that thumb sucking satisfies child's natural instincts. Children who are breast fed are less likely to be thumb-suckers than bottle fed babies. During breast feeding if most of the milk has been sucked the child continues sucking as it provides him pleasure. But bottle fed babies discontinue sucking the bottle when the milk is emptied. This leaves child unsatisfied (though his hunger is satisfied), which may prompt to adhere to thumb sucking. Child may also start thumb sucking when hungry, frustrated or tired. The child may stop thumb sucking after a year or so. If the habit continues the child may be politely made to understand that the habit is not good. The child leaves the habit in due course of time with positive feedback.

What is micronutrient deficiency?

Children need many micronutrients in their diet for developing to their full potential. Deficiency of micronutrients may cause serious problems in growth and development. It is, therefore, important that food rich in micronutrient be given to children. In case children suffer from the micronutrients deficiencies these need to be supplemented. The micronutrients supplementation is done mainly for the deficiency of Zinc, Iron, Vitamin A, Calcium, Iodine, by providing tablets.

What is lifecycle approach?

The lifecycle approach is important for designing programmes that support the entire family and achieve cumulative impact over time. When applied to ECCE policy planning, the lifecycle approach usually includes four initial periods: (i) prenatal and perinatal, (ii) birth-3, (iii) 3-6 and (iv) 6-8, as well as parental education and support.



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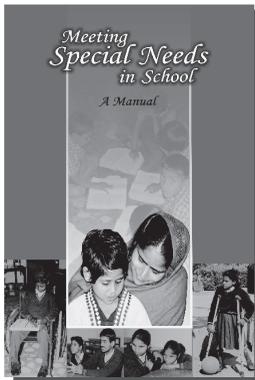
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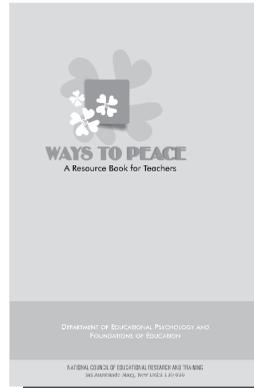
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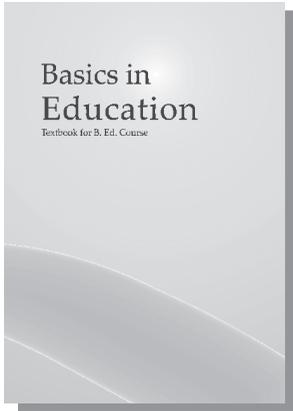
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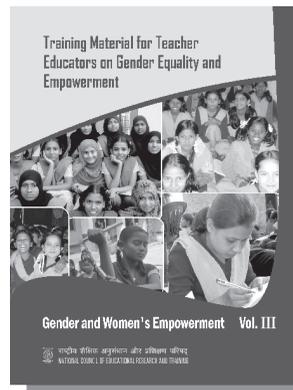
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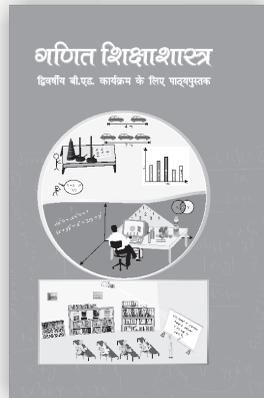
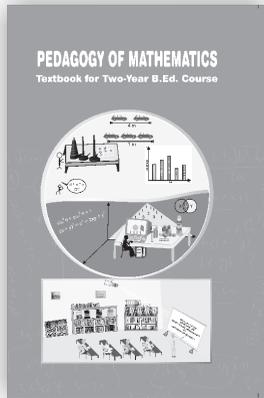
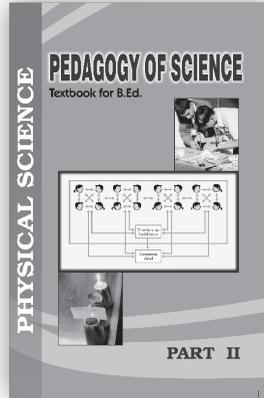
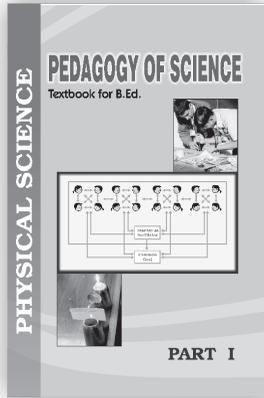
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