



A STUDY ON IMPORTANCE OF ANGANWADI CENTERS IN THE FIRST YEARS OF A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme is among the biggest and most progressive of its kind anywhere in the world. It is a flagship scheme of the Government of India. Preschool education is responsible for preparing children for elementary school and beyond. It's crucial for kids' emotional and mental growth, thus it has to be acknowledged as such. The early years of life are characterised by rapid development, making it crucial to provide an environment that supports healthy growth. Preschool instruction is the main focus of the ICDS Program. It examines a child's growth and development up to the age of six. This research aimed to evaluate the Integrated Child Development Scheme's (ICDS) anganwadicenters, which provide preschool programmes. This research focuses on three individual blocks in the Bareilly district.

Keywords: Integrated; Development Scheme; Anganwadi Centres; Pre-School Education; Child.

I. INTRODUCTION

An infant's first year of life is a formative one. The foundations for learning and healthy growth are laid at this time, and the child's chances of survival and success in later life are influenced. In early childhood, children lay the foundation for their future success by acquiring the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional skills they'll need. Even though the mother is the first educator of her kid, the idea of a structured institution outside the home providing a pre-primary education is not novel. The early years of a child's life have a profound impact on that child's potential for future academic, personal, and national achievement. What is done to children has a significant

impact on the adult population and, by extension, on the nation's progress. Therefore, it is crucial that we focus on the development and happiness of children.

India's first prime minister, Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, said it thus way. Preschool instruction is the main focus of the ICDS Program. It examines a child's growth and development up to the age of six. Children from three to six may attend one of the many Anganwadis spread around the country. The most enjoyable daily activity is the three hours of non-formal pre-school instruction that is evident every day. Although it can not replace formal education, it may help youngsters develop healthy perspectives, morals, and routines. Children's cognitive skills, school performance, and classroom conduct all benefit from preschool education.

II. PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN AWC

AWCs have been set up in every city and town in the United States. This is also the most fun thing to do every day on the playground. Programs at the Anganwadi are designed to provide children between the ages of three and six the best possible start in life by providing them with the resources they need to thrive. The ICDS's focus on early education is crucial to building a child's capacity for lifelong learning and development. Giving children the necessary preparation for primary school and offering alternative care for younger siblings, especially females, helps to the universalization of primary education. The purpose of preschool is to prepare children for kindergarten by fostering the growth of their bodies, muscles, and fundamental motor abilities.

- Inspiring a child's natural desire to learn more about the world around him by encouraging him to take risks, make investments, and try new things.
- People develop emotional maturity when they are taught to identify, name, accept, and manage their emotions.
- Truthfulness, obedience, and respect for authority are essential moral and cultural traits.
- Self-respect and self-control.
- Ability to articulate one's ideas and emotions effectively and fluently in spoken language.
- Individual growth by exposure to new experiences and perspectives.
- Manage your natural tendencies towards aggression and destruction by adopting a cooperative mindset, learning to work in a group, and learning to share.
- Learn how to use the restroom, dress, eat, and clean properly, among other life-improving abilities.
- adjustment, toilet training, clothing, eating, cleaning, and other good habits and skills

III. METHODOLOGY

Preschool education under the ICDS framework was the subject of the present research. Children in the Bareilly District who get ICDS services and are between the ages of three and six make up the study's population. All three Bareilly District ICDS programmes were analysed in this report. ICDS initiatives in Bareilly, Rampur, and Moradabad. Ten Anganwadis were selected at random from the Bareilly ICDS project, ten from the Rampur ICDS project, and ten from the Moradabad

ICDS project. Thirty workers from Anganwadis were selected for the research. (one from each Anganwadi Centre).

Primary sources were used extensively for this investigation. Primary data was collected via interviews with the chosen sample after they completed the Schedule, which included both open-ended and closed-ended items. The responder schedules were written in English for their ease of use. The Bareilly neighbourhood is home to many English speakers. Visits to AWCs were also employed for observational purposes. Facts for the study were also gathered from secondary sources such books, journals, newspaper clippings, research journal articles, websites, and reports. A sample of 30 Anganwadi workers was used to alter the data. We evaluated and summarised the data meticulously.

IV. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The research was conducted to evaluate the quality of care at Anganwadi centers, which provide supplementary food and instruction to children before they start school. Results from in-person interviews were quite telling. The results are broken down into many sections below. All tables include Anganwadi workers' replies.

Table 1: Time devoted in a day for Pre School education

Attributes	Responses			Responses of Total AWWs
	Bareilly ICDS Project	Rampur ICDS Project	Moradabad ICDS Project	
Below one hour	05(50)	03(30)	03(30)	11(36.66)
One to two hours	05(50)	07(70)	06(60)	18(60)
Three to four hours	---	---	01(10)	01(03.33)
Above four hours	---	---	---	
Total	10	10	10	30(100)

Table 1 shows that most AWWs in Bareilly District spend between one and two hours per day on pre-school education, while 36.66 percent of the AWWs in the sample spend less than an hour per day on pre-school education, which is less than the time they are required to spend under the rules. Only one AWW reported spending more than two hours per day on such pursuits.

Table 2: Methods adopted for Pre School education activities

Attributes	Responses			Responses of Total AWWs
	Bareilly ICDS Project	Rampur ICDS Project	Moradabad ICDS Project	
Play way	04(40)	06(60)	-----	10(33.33)
Demonstration	06(60)	02(20)	09(90)	17(56.66)
Story telling	--	02(20)	01(10)	03(10.00)
Any other	--	--	--	
Total	10	10	10	30(100)

According to advice provided by the Uttar Pradesh Government's Directorate of Social Security and Women and Child Development, an AWW should be open for four hours daily. Preschool education for kids is very important, and AWWs should devote at least one to two hours a day to it. It seems that almost 40% of AWWs in the Bareilly area did not adhere to the regulations set out by the Uttar Pradesh Government.

Table 2 demonstrates that over half of AWWs that provided pre-school education to children at AWCs employed demonstrative approaches (charts, etc.). Play-way methods including toys, blocks, and other objects were employed by just 10% of AWWs, whereas storytelling was used by 33.3%. It was speculated that using narratives was a more common tactic.

Table 3: Problem faced in organizing Pre School education activities

Attributes	Responses			Responses of Total AWWs
	Bareilly ICDS Project	Rampur ICDS Project	Moradabad ICDS Project	
Lack of time	----	----	02(20)	02(06.66)
Lack of PreSchool material	02(20)	02(20)	----	04(13.33)
Lack of interest among Children & Parents	05(50)	05(50)	02(20)	12(40.00)
No problem	03(30)	03(30)	06(60)	12(40.00)
Total	10	10	10	30(100)

Table 3 shows that only a minority of AWWs (6.66%) believe that a lack of time at AWCs is the main problem when it comes to organising Pre School education activities, while 13.33% believe that a lack of preschool material at AWCs is the main problem. Forty percent of AWWs see a lack of interest on the part of both children and their parents as the main problem. Forty percent of AWWs reported little difficulties in organising Pre-School educational activities. The ICDS approach is based on informal learning experiences for children aged 3-5. Nonetheless, learning that children and parents are becoming disengaged is disheartening.

Table 4: Supervisor helps for organizing Pre-School Education activities at Anganwadi Centres

Attributes	Responses			Responses of Total AWWs
	Bareilly ICDS Project	Rampur ICDS Project	Moradabad ICDS Project	
By demonstrating new activities	02(20)	02(20)	02(20)	06(20.00)
By planning	----	----	04(40)	04(13.33)

the programme				
By helping the preparation of aid materials	01(10)	-----	-----	01(03.33)
No help	07(70)	08(80)	04(40)	19(63.33)
Total	10	10	10	30(100)

Table 4 reveals that 63.33 percent of AWWs in the study reported not receiving any help from the Supervisor in planning preschool educational activities. Only 3.33 percent of AWWs reported receiving assistance from supervisors in preparing pre-school activity aid materials, while 20 percent reported receiving assistance in demonstrating new activities related to preschool education. Another 13.33 percent reported receiving assistance in planning the programme for organising pre-school education activities.

The regulations state that one supervisor is responsible for monitoring the activities of twenty Anganwadi workers. Concerningly, just 36.67 percent of AWWs reported receiving supervisory guidance for preparing early childhood education activities. It seems to be tied to many other things, such as uninterested or overburdened managers, a lack of available transportation, and so on. **Table 5: Average data detail of Pre-School education beneficiaries children**

	Total No. of Eligible	Total No. of enrolled	Attended activities zero days	Attended 1-14 days	Attended 15-24 days	Attended 25 days & above
Children from 3 to 6 years of age in Bareilly ICDS Project	378	170	16	15	18	121
Children from 3 to 6 years of age in Rampur ICDS Project	384	163	47	8	7	101
Children from 3 to 6 years of age in Moradabad ICDS Project	341	168	19	5	3	141
Total	1103	501 (45.42)	82 (16.36)	28 (5.58)	28 (5.58)	363 (72.45)

According to Table 5, there were a total of 1103 preschool-age children enrolled in the 30 AWCs. Surprisingly, only 501 (or 45.42 percent) of the children of recipients were enrolled in AWWs for pre-school instruction. Eighty-two of the kids, or 16.36%, weren't involved in anything related to preschool. Twenty-eight (5.58%) of the recipients' children participated in short-term (1-4 day) pre-school education activities. Again, 28 (5.58%) kids spent 15-24 days at AWCs participating in preschool programs, whereas 363 (72.45%) kids spent 25 days or more involved in AWCs' preschool programmes.

The conclusion is that the ICDS programme does not provide enough coverage for the children of beneficiaries to participate in pre-school education activities.

Table 6: Less than 50% beneficiaries attend Pre-School education activities

Attributes	Responses			Responses of Total AWWs
	Bareilly ICDS Project	Rampur ICDS Project	Moradabad ICDS Project	
Anganwadi centres far off.	01(10)	01(10)	01(10)	03(10.00)
Parent do not understand significance of pre-school Education	01(10)	---	01(10)	02(06.66)
Lack of facilities of water, space, light etc. at Anganwadi centres	01(10)	-----	02(20)	03(10.00)
The primary and private school teachers admit the children up to 4 years of age at their schools	07(70)	09(90)	06(60)	22(73.33)
Total	10	10	10	30(100)

According to Table 6, the primary reason that fewer than half of the beneficiaries participate in pre-school education activities at AWCs is due to the fact that a large majority (73.33 percent) of the AWWs revealed that primary and private school teachers admitted children as young as four years of age to their schools when they were short on students in order to justify their existence. This was done in order to ensure that the schools would not be forced to close. Only ten percent of AWWs were of the opinion that AWCs were located too far away from the houses of

beneficiaries, and only two of them (6.66 percent) were of the opinion that parents didn't understand the need of pre-school education. The remaining 10% of AWWs pointed the finger at a deficiency of water, space, light, and other conveniences available at AWCs as the major culprit.

It illustrates in a hilarious way that children of a certain age group who were intended to attend pre-school in AWCs were unable to do so for a variety of reasons.

V. CONCLUSION

Emerging data from the domains of neuroscience, social science, and psychology indicates that a child's formative years, which are the first five years of their life, have a significant influence on their capacity to learn. According to the findings of recent studies, the environment has a vital role in the growth and development of children. As a consequence of this, it goes without saying that addressing the requirements of children by means of ICDS and making its operation in a more efficient manner should be given the utmost priority. Children's education and growth have the potential to be significantly influenced by the quality of their pre-school experiences, particularly if those experiences are good. It is possible to draw the conclusion that, in order to promote a kid's healthy growth and development, the curriculum should be centred on the child. To create awareness, especially among the rural people, about the long-term advantages of the pre-school education programme offered by the ICDS plan, the government should run aggressive campaigns utilising television, drama, folk music, theater, and other media. These efforts should be designed to generate as much awareness as possible.

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