

ROLE OF ANGANWADI CENTERS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Lakshmi Vandana Vishwakarma¹, Dr. Manju Kumari²

¹Research Scholar, OPJS University, Churu Rajasthan

²Assistant Professor, OPJS University, Churu Rajasthan

ABSTRACT

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme is one of the Government of India's flagship programmes, and it is one of the world's largest and most innovative early childhood care and development programmes. Children's readiness to enter formal learning is the responsibility of pre-school education. It must be recognised as a requirement for children's healthy mental and emotional development. Rapid growth throughout the early stages of childhood necessitates the creation of an environment conducive to optimal development. The ICDS Program's primary activity is pre-school education. This focuses on a child's overall development up to the age of six. The purpose of this study was to assess the pre-school education provided by the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) through anganwadi facilities. Three blocks of Jammu district are selected for the purpose of this study.

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

I. INTRODUCTION

The first year of a child's existence is extremely important. These years affect a child's chances of surviving and prospering in life, as well as laying the groundwork for learning and holistic development. Children develop the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional abilities they need to succeed in life during their early years. Though the mother provides the child's first education, the concept of pre-primary education provided by an organised institution other than the child's household is not new. Children's future success at school, in their lives, and in the nation as a whole is shaped by their early years. "The development of a nation is dependent on the development of men and women, and the development of men and women is heavily influenced by what is done to children. It is, therefore, of considerable importance that we pay attention to the well-being and progress of children." Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, said as much.

The ICDS Program's primary activity is pre-school education. This focuses on a child's overall development up to the age of six. Anganwadis, which are set up in each community, provide non-formal pre-school education to children aged 3-6 years. Non-formal pre-school education is the most pleasurable daily activity, visible for three hours every day. It does not provide formal education, but it does foster positive attitudes, values, and behaviour patterns in children, as well as provide environmental stimulation. Preschool

education improves children's cognitive abilities, academic achievement, and classroom behaviour.

II. PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN AWC

In every community across the country, AWCs have been established. This is also the most enjoyable play-way activity on a daily basis. Its programme for children aged three to six in the Anganwadi focuses on providing and assuring a natural, pleasant, and stimulating environment, with an emphasis on the necessary inputs for optimal growth and development. The ICDS's early learning component is a critical component in laying a solid foundation for lifetime learning and development. It also contributes to the universalization of primary education by giving children the essential preparation for primary school and providing alternative care for younger siblings, allowing older siblings – particularly girls – to attend school. The goal of pre-school education is to help children develop a healthy physique, muscle coordination, and basic motor skills.

- Developing a child's intellectual curiosity so that he can explore, invest, experiment, and learn about his world.
- Emotional maturity is achieved by encouraging people to express, comprehend, accept, and control their feelings and emotions.

- Moral and cultural values in order to be truthful, obedient, and respectful to elders.
- Self-assurance and self-discipline.
- Ability to speak fluently, correctly, and clearly in order to express thoughts and feelings.
- Personality development through a variety of learning opportunities.
- Live and play with others while controlling inherent aggressiveness and destructiveness with a social attitude, group manners, and sharing things with others.
- Personal adjustment, toilet training, clothing, eating, cleaning, and other good habits and skills

III. METHODOLOGY

In order to meet the objectives, the current study focused on ICDS pre-school education. The study's universe is made up of ICDS beneficiaries aged 3 to 6 years old in the Jammu District of Punjab. The study included all three ICDS projects in Jammu District: Jammu ICDS project, Samba ICDS project, and Vijaypur ICDS project. Random sampling was used to pick 10 Anganwadis from the Jammu ICDS project, 10

Anganwadis from the Samba ICDS project, and 10 Anganwadis from the Vijaypur ICDS project. A total of 30 Anganwadi staff were chosen for the study (one from each Anganwadi Centre).

The current research relies heavily on primary sources of data. Responses were gathered from the selected sample using open and closed ended questions in the Schedule, followed by personal interviews, for primary data. The schedules were created in English and then translated into Punjabi for the respondents' convenience. Punjabi is a widely spoken language in the Jammu district. Observation was used during personal visits to AWCs as well. In addition, secondary sources of information such as books, articles, and newspaper clippings, research journal articles, websites, and reports were used to gather factual data for the study. The data was modified from a total sample of 30 Anganwadi staff. The information gathered was carefully analysed and summarised.

IV. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to assess the quality of pre-school education and extra nutrition provided to children in Anganwadi centres. Personal interviews yielded significant results. The findings are described in detail below. The responses of Anganwadi employees are represented in all tables.

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

Attributes	Responses			Responses of Total AWWs
	Jammu ICDS Project	Samba ICDS Project	Vijaypur 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)

According to Table 1, a majority (60 percent) of AWWs in Jammu District reported devoting one to two hours per day to pre-school education activities, while 36.66 percent of the AWWs in the selected sample reported devoting less than an hour per day to pre-

school education, which was less than the time they were supposed to spend for pre-school activities under the rules. Only one AWW stated that she spent three to four hours a day on pre-school activities.

Table 2: Methods adopted for Pre School education activities

Attributes	Responses			Responses of Total AWWs
	Jammu ICDS Project	Samba ICDS Project	Vijaypur 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)

An AWW should operate for four hours every day, according to recommendations given by the Punjab Government's Directorate of Social Security and Women and Child Development. It is also critical for AWWs to commit one to two hours per day to providing children with pre-school education. It suggests that around 40% of AWWs in Jammu district did not follow the Punjab Government's rules, which is not good.

Table 2 shows that 56.66 percent of AWWs used demonstrative methods (charts, etc.) to provide pre-school instruction to children at AWCs. Only 10% of AWWs said they used the play-way approach with toys, blocks, and other materials, while 33.33 percent said they used the storytelling method. The approach of telling stories was thought to have been employed more frequently.

Table 3: Problem faced in organizing Pre School education activities

Attributes	Responses			Responses of Total AWWs
	Jammu ICDS Project	Samba ICDS Project	Vijaypur ICDS Project	
Lack of time	----	----	02(20)	02(6.66)
Lack of Pre School 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)

According to Table 3, the main problem faced by Anganwadi Workers in organising Pre School education activities at Anganwadi Centres is that a few (6.66 percent) of AWWs believe that a lack of time at AWCs is the main problem, while 13.33 percent of AWWs believe that a lack of preschool material at AWCs is the main problem. The primary

issue, according to 40% of AWWs, is a lack of enthusiasm among children and parents. The remaining 40% of AWWs stated that planning Pre-School education events was not a difficulty for them. The ICDS programme is built on the foundation of non-formal pre-school education. However, it is disappointing to discover that a lack of engagement among

children and parents is becoming a serious issue.

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

Attributes	Responses			Responses of Total AWWs			
	Jammu Project	ICDS	Samba Project		ICDS	Vijaypur Project	ICDS
By demonstrating new activities	02(20)		02(20)		02(20)		06(20.00)
By planning the programme	-----		-----		04(40)		04(13.33)
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 shows that the majority of the AWWs in the sample (63.33 percent) believed they did not receive any assistance from the Supervisor in organising pre-school education activities. Only 03.33 percent of AWWs said they received help from supervisor in the preparation of pre-school activity aid materials, while 20% said they received help from supervisor in the demonstration of new activities related to preschool education, 13.33 percent said they received help from supervisor in planning the programme for organising pre-school education activities, and

20% said they received help from supervisor in the demonstration of new activities related to preschool education.

According to the rules, one supervisor is in charge of supervising the work of 20 Anganwadi staff. However, it is alarming to learn that just 36.67 percent of AWWs received supervisory advice for planning pre-school education activities, while the bulk of AWWs did not. It appears to be related to a variety of factors, including bosses' lack of enthusiasm, their excessive workload, the absence of 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 Jammu ICDS Project	378	170	16	15	18	121
Children from 3 to 6 years of age in Samba ICDS Project	384	163	47	8	7	101
Children from 3 to 6 years of age in Vijaypur	341	168	19	5	3	141

ICDS Project						
Total	1103	501 (45.42)	82 (16.36)	28 (5.58)	28 (5.58)	363 (72.45)

Table 5 shows that all 30 AWCs had a total of 1103 eligible children for pre-school education. Only 501 (45.42 percent) of the beneficiaries' children were registered in the AWWs for pre-school education, which was startling. 82 (16.36 percent) of the children did not participate in any pre-school activities. 28 (05.58 percent) of the beneficiaries' children attended pre-school education programmes for

1 to 4 days. Again, 28 (05.58 percent) children attended pre-school education activities at AWCs for 15-24 days, whereas 363 (72.45 percent) children attended preschool education activities for 25 days or more.

It can be concluded that the ICDS scheme's coverage of beneficiaries' children for pre-school education activities is insufficient.

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

Attributes	Responses			Responses of Total AWWs
	Jammu ICDS Project	Samba ICDS Project	Vijaypur 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 main reason for less than half of the beneficiaries attending pre-school education activities at AWCs is 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. Only 10% of AWWs thought AWCs were too far away from beneficiaries' homes, and only two (06.66 percent) thought parents didn't grasp the need of pre-school education. The remaining 10% of AWWs cited a lack of water, space, light, and other amenities at AWCs as the primary cause.

It demonstrates humorously that children of a certain age group who were supposed to attend pre-school in AWCs were unable to do so.

V. CONCLUSION

The first five years of a child's life play a crucial impact in their learning, according to emerging evidence from the fields of neuroscience, social science, and psychology. According to new research, the environment has a significant impact on children's development." As a result, it goes without saying that addressing the needs of children through ICDS and its

more effective execution should be given top importance. A positive pre-school experience has the potential to have a significant impact on children's learning and development. It may be inferred that for a child's healthy growth and development, the focus should be on child-centered curriculum. The government should conduct aggressive campaigns using television, drama, folk music, theatre, and other media to raise awareness, particularly among the rural population, about the long-term benefits of the ICDS scheme's pre-school education programme.

REFERENCES: -

1. Draft, pre-school curriculum, National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi, 2018
2. Kular S., A study on Pre-school Education Programme for children under ICDS scheme in Rural Punjab. The International Journal of Social Science and Humanities invention. Vol.-2, issue 04/2015
3. Aggarwal, J. C & Gupta, S. (2014). Early Childhood Care and Education. Delhi: Shirpa Publications.
4. Manisha Jain (2013), Strengthening and Restructuring of ICDS Scheme, Yojana, 57 (1): 64-65.
5. Gupta, A., Gupta, S.K. and Nongkynn, B. (2013). Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme: A Journey of 37 years. Indian Journal of Community Health, 25(1): 77-81.
6. Annual Report (2012-13). Child development, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, New Delhi: 223.
7. Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. (2012). Draft National Policy Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy. Retrieved from <http://wcd.nic.in/schemes/ECCE/National%20ECCE%20Policy%20draft%20>
8. V.MohanRao (2009), ICDS Taking Care of Nutritional Needs of Children, Kurukshetra, 58 (4): 9-12.
9. Fouzia Qudiri and Sarika Manhas(2009), "Prenatal Perception towards preschool Education Imparted at Early Childhood Education Centers", Stu. Home Comm.