



Strengthening
Early Childhood Education (ECE)
in Chhattisgarh

An Evaluation of Udaan

A REPORT



CHETNA

For Children Young people Women

Centre for Health Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness

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September 2013



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Foreword

Initiated in the year 1975 as an innovative experiment, the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) has emerged as the world's largest and most unique early childhood care, education and development program. The components of non-formal pre-school education, supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check-up, referral services, health and nutrition education for children and pregnant and nursing mothers are an integral part of package of services offered by ICDS. One of the most interesting features of the programme is the capacity building of care givers of children below six years of age through providing stimulation and quality early childhood care and education, thereby addressing the basic rights of children for survival, growth, protection and development and active participation in environment where they live, grow and develop.

While ICDS has been in existence since 1975 in united Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh has ICDS right from inception as a separate state in 2000. ICDS was piloted in Tokapal block of Bastar district with other 32 blocks. The ICDS has been growing in terms of project expansion and the target groups. There are 27 districts in Chhattisgarh and ICDS is operational in all 220 development blocks (or 146 Blocks/Janpads); 84 rural blocks, 15 Urban and 121 tribal blocks.

The Non-formal Preschool Education (PSE) or Early Childhood Education (ECE) is an important component of the package of services envisaged under the ICDS. It aims at school readiness and development of positive attitudes towards education.

Towards strengthening ECE in Chhattisgarh, the State has made some concrete efforts. A policy for Early Childhood Care and Education has been developed, which mainly focuses and ensures the key interventions for holistic development of children from six months to six years. A preschool curriculum as well as a comprehensive package of learning material called *Udaan* for use by the Anganwadi Worker (AWW) for facilitating ECE activities has been developed in collaboration with the Department of Education; State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT). The piloting and implementation was imbedded within the ICDS and since 2010, Udaan is being used in about 30,000 Anganwadi Centres (AWC) across the state.

The present evaluation was commissioned aiming to assess the ground realities with respect to ECE in the ICDS and based on the findings; determine the steps that need to be taken both in policy and implementation to strengthen ICDS with specific reference to ECE to keep pace with the development at the national level.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development of the **Government of India has approved the National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy on September 20, 2013**. The main focus of the policy is to improve the provision and quality of ECE services in the country for children below the age of six years. Several actions have already been initiated to strengthen services related to ECE within the ICDS in particular and those provided by private and voluntary sectors. All states of the country have been given a mandate to prepare a state specific ECE Policy and an Action Plan. Within the restructuring of ICDS, the ministry has already initiated making changes to bring quality improvements in the programme. In the proposed scheme, ECE component of ICDS has been given priority. The strategies for this comprises, expansion of services for universalized access, strengthening curriculum, enhancing skills of service providers, improved infrastructural facilities and availability of age and culturally appropriate learning materials and play equipment at the AWCs.

In the above backdrop, the findings of the present evaluation are of great relevance and significant both for making changes in the policy and action related to ECE in the state of Chhattisgarh. The evaluation has brought forth innumerable findings to substantiate the fact that ICDS programme has been able to make a positive impact on the lives of underprivileged groups, especially young children of the society; reflecting sincere efforts by the functionaries throughout the state. However, the study also provides evidence based information on gaps in implementation of the ECE component and suggests measure to improve the quality by making specific recommendations.

I am confident that the conclusions of this evaluation will help to further strengthen the implementation of ECE to ensure that all the children graduating from ICDS are absolutely ready for the school.

Secretary, Department of Women and Child Development
Government of Chhattisgarh,

September 2013.



PREFACE

India has a tradition of valuing the early years of a child's life with a rich heritage of rituals and ceremonies. These practices were transmitted from one generation to another. In the past few decades, India has witnessed an increase in non-familial Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) services. ECCE has increasingly become an integral part of the national development plans of the country. There have been Constitutional provisions, legislative measures, policies and action plans for children below six years of age which have evolved over a period of time. The largest initiative on ECCE in India has been the initiation of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme.

Early Childhood Education is an important component of the package of services envisaged under ICDS, aiming for school readiness. Strengthening of pre-school education also supplements the effort in achieving the national goal of universal primary education. Investing in early years is crucial to ensure an enabling environment for every child, and thereby a sound foundation for life, which is not only the right of every child but which will also impact, in the long term, the quality of human capital available to a country. The Government of Chhattisgarh's efforts in Pre-School Education derives its importance from this rationale.

The Government of Chhattisgarh has developed an ECCE policy and a Preschool Education (PSE) curriculum to strengthen the Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the state. The Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), under the leadership of State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT), developed *Udaan*; a comprehensive package of learning material for use by the Anganwadi Worker (AWW) for facilitating ECE activities. Since 2010, the use of Udaan package has been up-scaled through Anganwadi Centres (AWC) across the state.

In order to sustain the momentum generated through a joint effort of several stakeholders and institutionalize the programme towards strengthening ECE in Chhattisgarh, SCERT and DWCD commissioned a statewide evaluation which aimed to assess ground realities with respect to ECE in the ICDS and based on the findings, determine the steps that need to be taken both in policy and implementation to strengthen ICDS with specific reference to ECE.

Centre for Health Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness (CHETNA), a Non Government Support Organisation was entrusted with the responsibility of undertaking the evaluation. The design and execution of the evaluation was guided by a state level Core Committee comprising representatives from the Department of Education; SCERT, Rajiv Gandhi Shiksha Mission/Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, DWCD, UNICEF-CG, CARE India-CG and European Commission.

The evaluation focused in particular to assess the usefulness of already existing *Udaan* initiative and feasibility of its integration within ICDS. It has offered rich data and information both, in content and magnitude. The results have given considerable understanding about the core principles and assumptions regarding ECE in the *Udaan* approach and the way these were used as basis for the development of *Udaan* materials; package/module and training strategies to do capacity building of workers to use the material effectively. All the crucial aspects, which were in accordance with the scope and objectives of the study, have been analyzed, especially the approach of ECE, challenges and outcome of the Udaan package in terms of enhancing capacity of the ICDS functionaries in implementing the ECE component and the policy environment in the state.

The findings have offered valuable insights and lessons that can be used for carving a strategic path for improved ECE at both policy and practice levels. The evaluation has been able to generate disaggregated data at Zonal and District levels on status of ECE/PSE in the context of implementation of *Udaan* within ICDS, is extremely valuable empirical evidence that could be used for taking area specific actions related to policy and implementation and put it to optimum use.

I congratulate CHETNA and the entire team, who were associated with the assessment for a wonderful job by completing the statewide study within the stipulated time, involving all the key stakeholders. I am also grateful to the members of the State Core Committee for guiding the evaluation process and sharing their views during interviews regarding the status, concerns and challenges and the need for strengthening ECE in Chhattisgarh.

Director
State Council for Educational Research and Training, Government of Chhattisgarh September 2013.



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¹ Udaan – A package/module for Early Childhood Education/learning, meant for use by the Angwanwadi worker.

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September 2013

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Abbreviations

APIP:	Annual Programme Implementation Plan
AWC:	Anganwadi Centre
AWW:	Anganwadi Worker
BRC:	Block Resource Centre
CDPO:	Child Development Project Officer
CG:	Chhattisgarh
DIET:	District Institute of Education and Training
DPO:	District Programme Officer
DRC:	District Resource Centre
DWCD:	Department of Women and Child Development
ECE:	Early Childhood Education
ECCE:	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECCD:	Early Childhood Care and Development
GOI:	Government of India
ICDS:	Integrated Child Development Services
MGML:	Multi Grade Multi Learning
NIPCCD:	National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development
PRI:	Panchayati Raj Institution
PSE:	Pre-School Education
RGSM:	Rajiv Gandhi Shiksha Mission
RI:	Research Investigator
SCERT:	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SRI:	School Readiness Instrument
SRG:	State Resource Group
SSA:	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
TOR:	Terms of Reference
WCD:	Women and Child Development
WHO:	World Health Organisation

Note: Though various terminologies are being used to describe early childhood care and education, early childhood care, education and development, pre-school education, non-formal pre- school education. For this study, throughout the report, we have used ECE.



Executive Summary

In poverty stricken societies, where families struggle to survive, children more often than not are neglected. Worst hit among them are the youngest, who raise their tender arms for care, but seldom receive it timely or adequately. India, and most specifically Chhattisgarh state, the location of this evaluation are making special efforts to reach out to a large number of underserved beneficiaries under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), a Government of India (GoI) Flagship Programme, aiming to provide comprehensive nutrition, health and early childhood education (ECE)/pre-school education services to children between conception (in the form of maternal nutrition and health services) and up to the time they complete six years of age. Through the Udaan package for implementing goals of the ECE, 80 blocks across the state have been receiving programmatic benefits since the past three years. However, onsite implementation by functionaries who are the points of direct contact with the community in providing Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) services, are by and large found to be overburdened and poorly trained in most cases. This poses serious problems in achieving desired results from initiatives for ensuring adequate care in early childhood, especially in interior tribal and rural areas. This evaluation therefore, probes deeper into the underlying principles of ECE reflected in the Udaan approach, its policy environment and implementation in the state of Chhattisgarh.

Research in the field of neuroscience emphasizes that adequate care in the first eight years of a child's life, favourably impacts every aspect of growth, behaviour and capabilities in the later years. Therefore, this is the stage of incubation for inculcating social and personal habits and values in an individual who will eventually represent the society. Research studies have also shown that ECCE enhances literacy skills and the child's ability to learn, communicate ideas and feelings and to get along well with others. Children who receive quality ECCE are more likely to succeed in school and later on, lead successful personal and professional lives. Governments all over the world now prioritise ECCE as effective pre-school education that increases cognitive abilities, enhances school achievement and establishes positive class room behavior. Furthermore, it has been observed to decrease grade repetition among children and encourage them to pursue higher education and other fruitful activities.

A number of studies have identified ECE, the pre-school component for promoting psychosocial development in young children, as the weakest component of the ICDS. Inadequate ECCE services have been attributed to lack of emphasis on ECE component within the larger ICDS programme, administrative load of Anganwadi workers (AWWs) and weak monitoring and supervision.

In Chhattisgarh state, special efforts have been undertaken since 2008 to strengthen ECE. A series of workshops in this pursuit led to specific curriculum for two stages – birth to three years where the focus is on parenting (and hence working with parents and caregivers), and the pre-school stage – three to six years which focuses on a more holistic curriculum across different domains of development. These curricula, activities and age appropriate materials developed by representatives from Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) and State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) were packaged under an initiative called *Udaan* to be used by the AWW. A monitoring module was also developed for ICDS supervisors. It was planned to train all ICDS functionaries for implementation of the initiative. Post February 2010, the Udaan package was introduced in about 30,000 Anganwadi centres (AWCs) across the state.

An Udaan Yatra was organised to mobilize the community and spread awareness. In 2010, ECE through Udaan became part of the WCD Department through UNICEF, WCD, SCERT and Rajiv Gandhi Shiksha Mission (RGSM), all played a critical role in its launch in the state.

After more than three years of implementation, UNICEF, WCD, SCERT and RGSM felt that there was a need to assess the impact of this intervention. Understanding the ground realities and experiences so far is now considered as critical in planning the way forward.

Centre for Health Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness (CHETNA), a Non Government Support Organisation with experience in action research related to child development was entrusted with the responsibility of undertaking the evaluation. CHETNA undertook the evaluation from January to June 2013 with an aim to understand ground realities vis-à-vis ECE and build clear evidence and strong arguments for strengthening ECE in order to contribute to holistic development of young children and promote school readiness. This report summarises CHETNA's assessment of Udaan programme in Chhattisgarh.

The evaluation looked at the underlying **philosophy, approach**; the core principles and assumptions regarding ECE in the Udaan approach and the way these have been reflected in the development of materials and training, **implementation**; the processes, challenges and constraints in the process of development and pre-testing of the Udaan package, supply/distribution of materials to school, training and follow up of Anganwadi workers, supervisors and others, and development of mechanisms for instituting ECE as an integral part of the ICDS programme and the **policy environment**; vis-à-vis ECE in terms of conception, planning and allocation of resources on ECE as part of overall ICDS strategy at the state and district levels; inter-departmental convergence; existing capacities within government. It studied the supervision and monitoring of activities undertaken and the outcome in terms of children's school preparedness.

The design and execution of the evaluation was guided by a state level Core Committee comprising experts and representatives from the Department of Education; SCERT, RGSM/Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, DWCD, UNICEF-CG, CARE India-CG and European Commission.

Since the Udaan programme is being implemented through ICDS, 150 Anganwadis across nine districts in North, Central and South Zones of CG were selected for the evaluation. Specially developed interview schedules and guidelines were used to collect information from Anganwadi workers, supervisors, CDPOs, DPOs and other district and State level officials. Observation method using a set of guidelines and a School Readiness Instrument (World Bank) was administered to collect information on functioning of AWC and assess children for school readiness. Three Zonal Workshops were organized to facilitate dialogue with all levels of functionaries.

Sample selection was undertaken in consultation with SCERT and DWCD keeping distribution of *Udaan* kit with equal zonal representation (i.e. 50 AWCs from three districts each of North, Central and South zone). Based on that, purposive sampling method was used to select 150 AWCs. Of the total 150 AWCs, through random sampling 50 AWCs were selected for observation and from list of 50 AWCs observed, five AWCs were randomly selected in each zone and from each AWC four children were assessed to gain data on their knowledge on different aspects. The respondents for the study included AWWs (150), Supervisors (18), CDPOs (09), DPOs (08), PRI members (60) and 60 children of 4-6 years from the sample AWCs.

The data collection was undertaken by a team of 11 specially trained local Field Investigators (FI). One FI each for nine districts and one field coordinator were appointed. Apart from this, two senior research oriented Project Coordinators were also involved for the same. The data was computerized and analysed using (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) SPSS. The findings of the study on various aspects of the ECE status within ICDS and their roles and possibilities of integration with the Udaan approach as well as Policy environment have been collated. These findings could be used to improve the ECE component in Chhattisgarh in general and within ICDS in particular.

Accordingly, the lessons learnt from state-wide multi-level interactions with various stakeholders to gather empirical evidence and qualitative data have been used to arrive at some major recommendations that could be considered by the nodal departments of ECE (WCD and Education) and its structures for making a roadmap to change ECE scenario within the state.

The disaggregated data at Zonal and District levels on status of ECE/PSE in the context of implementation of Udaan within ICDS investigates the ground realities that emerge through this evaluation and provides insights that can prove helpful in strengthening policies, practices and approaches in ECE.

The findings and conclusions of this study are presented along with recommendations in this report.

Major Findings

APPROACH

i. Perception of functionaries about the relevance of ECE

The data revealed that almost all the AWWs (93%) and supervisors (100%) were aware of importance of Early Childhood Education. Majority (76%) of the AWWs, PRI (80%) and all DPOs who were interviewed believe that ECE is important for physical development, whereas most of the supervisors felt that ECE was the first step to prepare young children for school readiness. Adding to this understanding, the CDPOs also believed that in addition to ECE being critical for overall development of children, it also led to inculcation of good habits amongst children who were exposed to it.

ii. Perception about effectiveness of Udaan Kit

The Udaan kit consisted of a reference book (user's guide) and 250 cards around 50 themes catering to stimulative learning for children. Most of the respondents, particularly the State level trainers perceived Udaan kit as colourful and attractive material. Despite believing that use of the Udaan material had a positive effect on children's learning, they could not provide any concrete responses on how Udaan supports effective facilitation of ECE.

However, 60 Children who were interviewed using the School Readiness Instrument (WHO) did not perform well on several indicators, such as classification of all birds and animals and cognitive skills. This emphasizes the need for conducting creative and cognitive activities as an integral part of ECE.

IMPLEMENTATION

i. Availability and use of ECE material

Various charts, materials and games have been provided by the DWCD for effective implementation of the ECE at the AWCs. The availability and usable condition of charts, games and play material was assessed through interviews of AWWs and observation at the AWCs. Most of the material supplied was found to be in usable condition. Charts related to animals, birds, shapes and colors were displayed. Seasons' chart was available and in usable condition in five out of nine AWCs which were visited while monitoring of data collection. Charts to enable children identify numbers, alphabets, shapes, colors, animals and birds were available and in usable condition in more than three fourth of the AWCs. Picture and story books were available in half of the AWCs and were in usable condition in 79% of these AWCs. Attendance chart is expected to be maintained at each AWC to enable AWWs to follow-up children. This chart was available in less than one fourth of the AWCs. An evaluation chart is provided which enables AWWs to identify and take corrective action to overcome the weaknesses of the child and improve his/her pre-school performance. This chart was available and in usable condition in few (12%) AWCs.

ii. Availability and usage of Udaan material

A wide range of themes designed in the Udaan kit to help children to develop their cognitive, physical, linguistic, creative and social abilities. While material was available, they have not been used by AWWs optimally for various reasons; availability of complete set of material, fear of losing or damage to it by children, as there is no budget for purchase/replace the missing or damaged material, non-familiarity and lack of competency of the AWWs in appropriate use of the Udaan material.

The findings pointed out a very important aspect. It was learnt that Udaan kit was available in 93% (140) AWCs; 64 percent of the AWCs had complete set of cards. In most of these (86%) the cards were in readable and usable condition, whereas about one fourth of the AWCs did not have all cards and themes. Only half had received the reference book (user's guide) along with the kit and out of these only 56% referred to it. Only 37% of the AWWs had knowledge of all Udaan cards and themes. AWWs merely used cards to keep children occupied. Some accidental learning on identifying birds, animals, colour, numbers and alphabets did take place, however with systematic and convergent planning there is tremendous scope for improving the implementation of ECE component in ICDS, using Udaan material.

Number of cards used

While interaction with the AWWs, less than half (40%) of the AWWs were aware about the number of cards being used at the AWC. They stated that out of 250 cards, not more than 30 cards were being used. Among them 14% used merely one card, 11% used 2-3 cards. Around 8% used 4-5 cards and about 9% used 10 cards. Very few (2-3%) AWWs used cards ranging from 12- 30.

Repetition of the cards and themes

Among 40% who mentioned they used the cards, repetition of the cards ranged between once to 12 times. Very few (5.2%) repeated the card 9-12 times, 23% repeated for 5 times, 39% repeated the card four times, 68% of the AWWs repeated the card three times, whereas about half (52%) of them repeated the card 2 times.

The AWW, Children, parents and community are not familiar with many of the objects; fruits, vegetables, plants and animals given in the Udaan kit material, and they are not available in their village, areas. So relating to them is difficult. It is recommended that while a part of the kit material may be standardized, some flexibility in developing/creating and using the learning material will not only enhance use of the material, but also enhance creativity and ownership among the AWW, parents and community towards ECE.

iii. Training of Functionaries

Findings indicate gaps in the duration, frequency and quality of training of functionaries who directly interacted with the community to implement Udaan. As far as infrastructure for ECE implementation was concerned, 92% of the interviewed AWWs mentioned that they had received Udaan related training, about 49% of them before 2010 and 51% between 2011 and 2012. Three fourths of those trained, reported that the training period was 3 to 7 days and the trainings were conducted mostly by Block Resource Coordinators (BRCs). Amongst the interviewed supervisors, 77% had received training on Udaan. Half of them stated that they received this training from SCERT and BRCs. Of the 14 Udaan trainers interviewed, half of each had received training on Udaan for either five days or 21 days respectively. Most (12) of them had received training by SCERT trainers. The trainers said that they monitored the effect of ECE at AWCs. However, during field level interactions with AWWs and supervisors none of them mentioned being monitored by Udaan trainers.

iv. AWW's interaction with parents

Most of the AWWs undertake discussions with the parents regarding nutritional and health status of children and mothers and half of them say that they motivate parents to send their children to AWCs. However, a mere one fourth of the AWWs discussed or emphasized upon ECE and its benefits that have a positive impact on the entire life of an individual.

v. Functioning of AWCs

On an average, AWCs functioned for about four hours every day. As per norms, approximately two hours and 45 minutes must be spent on ECE activities. In reality, 77% of them spent 60 minutes or less on ECE activities, citing a wide range of reasons for doing so. By and large, 50% of AWWs stated that they were busy with other activities such as surveys, census work, polio campaign and work related to sanitation of the village (sprinkling DDT powder).

A detailed review of the implementation of ECE activities showed that more than half of the AWWs developed time table on ECE and almost all AWCs had the timetable painted on a tin board at the centre. However these were not displayed prominently. In many AWCs they were lying unused in a non-usable state; upside down or hidden behind ration bags or somewhere in the corner of the AWC. Of the AWWs who had developed the timetable, more than two thirds were found to follow it. Most of the supervisors said that though time table was available at the AWCs, it was not being followed by some AWWs, as they were overloaded with work assigned by other departments.

vi. Capability of AWWs in implementing ECCE

Though most AWWs had received the Udaan kit, only half had received the reference book along with the kit. It was found that most AWWs did not have a clear understanding about the methodology to use the kit and found it extremely challenging. Upon asking if they could identify a theme by looking at its corresponding symbol, most exhibited difficulty in doing so

and also could neither understand nor remember all the cards and themes given in the kit. It was not surprising that only 37% of the AWWs had knowledge on all Udaan cards and themes. Despite this only 56% referred to the reference book for assistance. About 46% AWWs took less than 60 minutes, while the others (54%) took anywhere between one to 15 days for completion of one theme. Most AWWs just let children play games, chant songs and identify numbers and pictures.

POLICY ENVIRONMENT AND GOVERNANCE

i. Supervision and monitoring of AWCs

Although supervision and monitoring of ECE activities were planned meticulously under the initiative, the outcomes were less than satisfactory. The norms suggest that each supervisor should monitor 25 AWCs during a month. Most of the supervisors said that they could visit about 10-15 AWCs. They stated that they demonstrated the use of Udaan kit in the sector meeting and during the monitoring visit half of them distributed the Udaan kit and trained the AWWs on the use of Udaan.

During the research team's visit to AWC, four supervisors of Jaspur and Durg district stated that quality of the training was poor due to which they were not able to guide the AWWs for effective use of Udaan. Moreover since they were over loaded with the work, they were not able to monitor the use of Udaan. Also due to an overload of documentation activities conducted at AWCs, the frequency of supervision was low as they had extra charge of AWCs. Even during these few, inadequate visits discussion mainly centered around growth monitoring and supplementary nutrition, whereby issues related to ECE and enrollment of children at AWCs were by and large sidelined. A lack of structured format prevented the regular recording and monitoring of specific ECE activities.

ii. Effectiveness of CDPOs and DPOs in monitoring AWCs

Most of the CDPOs and DPOs reported that during their monitoring visits at the AWC, they mostly ended up discussing issues related to honorarium of AWWs, cleanliness of the AWCs, lack of community participation and poor record keeping. ECE was not the primary discussion topic mentioned by any of the supervisory cadre. DPOs visited 4-10 AWCs during a month. Most of them did not have any specific mechanism for monitoring of the AWC activities. Only three of them stated that they supported either actual implementation of activities, record keeping or ensured enrolment of children. They ensured distribution of Udaan kit and training to AWWs on Udaan. However during the monitoring visit at Jashpur and Durg districts, DPOs themselves stated that they were not able to monitor the ECE activities undertaken at the AWCs due to work pressure. Also while interacting with the AWWs during the monitoring visit it was learnt that DPOs hardly visited the AWCs and did not support implementation of ECE activities.

Data revealed that three fourth of the AWWs had a supervisory visit in the two months prior to the evaluation and less than one fourth AWWs stated that supervisors visited their AWCs during the current month. The supervision was neither regular nor consistent. Of those who were visited, majority had been given ECE orientation and inputs on ECE activities. Sixty percent reported receiving assistance in development of material and in organising activities at the community level and seeking community support for ECE activities.

iii. Outreach of PRIs in reviewing AWCs

Role of PRI members is to regularly visit the AWCs and review the services provided at the AWCs and support the AWWs in organisation of various activities. They are supposed to help in provision of play material and organise regular meetings with the parents in order to discuss the progress of the children. Most of the interviewed PRI members stated that they motivated the parents to send their children to AWCs, observed and helped the AWWs in carrying out the ECE activities at AWCs. About half of them stated that they provided support in maintenance of the AWC building.

However, interactions with the AWWs revealed the contrary and it was found that PRI members did not show sufficient interest in implementation of ECE activities due to which they hardly provided any support. Also, in less than one fifth of the AWCs, adolescent girls from the community helped the AWWs in carrying out the ECE activities. In the field, the research team also found very few (about 6) PRI members monitoring activities of the Udaan. They also mentioned being overloaded with the survey activities of the village due to which they were unable to monitor the activities of the AWCs. In Durg, Jaspur and Raipur district, PRI members stated that they were not even aware about the Udaan programme/approach.

iv. Inter departmental integration in implementation

Serious gaps in inter-departmental coordination were revealed during this evaluation, with the lowest penetration at the critical grassroots levels, where it is most needed. The absence of the Education department, one of the nodal agencies for implementation of Udaan was particularly felt through all levels of implementation of the programme. In fact, a few AWWs (9) had not heard about Education department and its role and therefore did not seek help from them. Most AWWs said that they needed adequate physical infrastructure, material, training and support to strengthen ECE. They felt that a simpler content in the kit supported with regular training would increase its usability. Their demands also included logistic support from the Panchayats along with cooperation from their own departments, i.e. ICDS and WCD.

The CDPOs however were better informed. Most (7 out of 8) of the CDPOs discussed the inter-departmental coordination efforts for strengthening ECE and were aware about efforts made by other departments in order to strengthen ECE such as SSA for providing teaching material. They were happy that teachers of primary schools visited AWCs for supporting AWWs in providing ECE to children. Most of them also reported monitoring support being provided by the panchayat members for this initiative. DPOs also said that they received help from SSA followed by RGSM and Health department, especially for distribution of kit and books, training on Udaan and provision of various aids to disabled children.

OUTCOMES

i. Access of ECE Services

Most AWWs (89%) reported that after introduction of Udaan, children had begun to learn with interest. According to the AWWs children showed particular interest in themes/sessions on wild animals, fruits, birds, flowers and family. Half of the AWWs also said that there was significant improvement as compared to pre-Udaan days among parents in sending their children to AWCs. Supervisors of these AWWs reported an increase in the number of children being enrolled in the AWCs. On the contrary, CDPOs and DPOs could not categorically describe the effect of Udaan on children or their enrollment and attendance at the AWC, while two DPOs had no idea about Udaan at all.

ii. Assessment of school readiness among children

The outcome of ECE efforts amongst children was assessed among 60 children from the 50 AWCs which were selected for observation. A School Readiness Test was used to assess the school preparedness amongst children four to six years of age. The test assessed children's knowledge and ability to follow instructions on 10 parameters such as Pre-spatial concept, Number concept, Matching of numbers, Following of instructions, Sentence making, Complete pattern of shape described, Imitation of the objects shown, Matching of sound situations, Classification of bird and animals and Sequential thinking. The data showed that most (86.7%) children performed well on pre-spatial concept. More than half also were familiar with the number concept and 38.3% could follow instructions given. However, a fourth or less could complete pattern of a shape described and imitate objects shown and an even lower percentage could match sound situations, classify all birds and animals or think sequentially.

An attempt was made to score the performance on the indicators chosen for each for these themes. The cumulative score showed that all the four children from Raipur district scored high. The proportion of good performers was marginally higher than that of poor performers in Bilaspur, Bastar, Dhamtari and Jaspur. The number of poor performers was more than good performers in Koriya, Kanker and Durg. While this was the trend based on SRI test of 60 children in 50 AWCs, the fact that the children were of different age groups and there was variable representation of districts in the sample of children assessed precludes any further conclusions from the test results. The trend and ECE effect on learning and internalization of each theme amongst children need substantiation through a study focused on ECE related outcomes amongst the children enrolled at the AWC.

iii. Challenges in ECE and use of Udaan

The main challenge mentioned by AWWs was the poor attendance of children at the AWCs. According to them parents preferred to send their children to private schools or take the children along with them to the farms they worked in. Where children did attend, the AWWs said that children did not stay long enough for them to undertake any meaningful activity, as they left earlier than the stipulated time.

AWWs also reported problems with the infrastructure and budgetary support. Almost one third of them did not have adequate space or the requisite ECE material and activities. About 18% mentioned that they did not have the budget for purchasing ECE material or for replacing lost and damaged material.

Due to vacancies in supervisory cadre; especially the CDPOs, the number of AWCs they had to supervise and report were much higher than the norm. Also, the AWCs were located in remote interior areas with inadequate roads making it difficult for them to reach. Two supervisors in one of the districts were candid enough to state that the primary focus of ICDS was nutrition and health status of enrolled children rather than ECE. They also corroborated lack of community participation and parental support. They blamed the lack of education among parents for not sending their children to AWCs. Though some of them touched upon interdepartmental coordination as an issue that adversely affects implementation of ECE activities, they did not elaborate on these coordination problems.

The CDPOs shared that the major challenge was the irregular functioning of AWCs due to inadequacy and irregularity of honorarium received, that led to a lack of motivation among the AWWs. As a result, these centres were poorly managed, attracted poor attendance and suffered from poor management, educational and teaching materials. This affected the

maintenance of regular and proper recording of ECE. Adding to this, the DPOs believed that most of the problems were a result of poor monitoring, mainly due to overload of different tasks assigned by different departments that were supposed to be executed by a single functionary at each different level. Citing their own example, they revealed their own inability to monitor AWC activities due to additional charge, administrative workload and sudden unplanned meetings in the district or state.

Based on these findings, an attempt is made here to draw some recommendations for follow up action at the state and district levels.

Way Forward-Recommendations

i. Key Policy Implications

This evaluation has clearly shown the need for several policy level steps:

ECE should become the state priority, with DWCD taking a leadership by implementing the ECCE policy through ICDS. An ECE Cell/Unit within DWCD, like the one in the Ministry of Women and Child Development should be established. An external State Technical Support Agency may be appointed for a period of minimum three years which can work with and support concerned departments for system reforms and developing convergent institutional mechanism for ECE.

The existing State Core Committee or the Udaan Resource Group, comprising members from DWCD, Department of Education; SCERT/RGSM/SSA, UNICEF and European Commission should continue for facilitating state level strategic planning, work with DWCD and Education Departments for ensuring quality of the training, learning resource material and facilitate joint planning and review of implementation, develop monitoring mechanism, evaluation and research and facilitate coordination/convergence, in the state. This unit can be supported by the Technical Support Agency.

As a nodal department for ECE, the DWCD needs to have appropriate strategies in place. In view of the existing capacity and infrastructure it is very important to enhance the readiness and competencies of the various levels of functionaries.

Interface with the Department of Education will be a crucial step to mobilize technical resources of SCERT and its long withstanding experience with ECE and Udaan in particular. The convergence and coordination can go a long way in strengthening ECE in the state. To clarify the role of various stakeholders in ECE, role directory of all partner departments could be developed and regularly reviewed.

Mechanisms for regular dialogue; joint planning and review of ECE/PSE activities among all the concerned departments (DWCD/Education/Panchayat) should be developed at all levels.

The positive image and impact of ICDS on health and nutrition of children and women can be leveraged for education; ECE.

ii. Approach

Udaan Initiative in the Context of ECE in Chhattisgarh: Looking at the encouraging impact of Udaan, the state may consider integrating it across all AWCs of the state. However the following measures are strongly recommended as a future strategy.

The findings of the study gave clear evidence for **decentralization** of the development of learning material, including Udaan with active involvement of AWWs and parents/community.

Also since majority of the AWCs are functioning in tribal and rural areas, where the possibilities of learning through material available in abundance from the nature (trees, fruits, vegetables, birds and animals etc.), the AWWs should be trained and encouraged to be innovative and use the locally available material creatively rather than centrally produced material.

Restructuring and simplification of the Udaan kit material: Udaan kit is primarily developed through a comprehensive process to facilitate preschool activities with children and creating awareness among adolescents and parents. The material is rich in content and appropriate for ECE, however needs to be restructured to improve the practicality.

There should be clarity on its use; in collage cards, there should be specific guidelines for facilitating activities. Clear instructions should be provided on how to use the cards; for which age and multiple use/innovation of cards to ensure that the learning takes place from simple to complex concepts. Though efforts are made to give reference of cards of Udaan kit but it is difficult to relate. No strong linkages/guideline for use of Udaan kit was found in the manual.

Packaging can be made user friendly. The kit is heavy and difficult to carry around and manage once it is unpacked for use. The cards need to be coded and re-packaged using a metal clip (used in files) and made simpler for an AWW. Total number of themes, cards, stories can be mentioned on the kit so that the missing cards can be traced.

The pictures and images need to be clear and contextual such as Hamara sharier (our body). In communication cards, metal elements might be difficult for the tribal/rural children to identify/understand.

The material should be gender sensitive; pictures, games and text should highlight equality among boys and girls, men and women. Use or a mention of a commercial product such as Parle G should be avoided. Rather local traditional foods should be promoted. The information and content should be up to date, in the card ORS solution is mentioned which is not followed currently.

The number of cards and themes in the Udaan kit should be reduced or repackaged as per the level of anganwadi workers and the material could be further simplified to enable the AWW to use it effectively. Further, the development of the material should be decentralized providing scope to use the locally available material.

It is recommended that the Udaan material is restructured and revised keeping the local socio-cultural (material useful in Raipur may be different than the need in Baster) context in a gender equality perspective with involvement of the users, especially the AWW to enhance ownership and use.

All the users should be thoroughly oriented and trained for optimum use of the material. With appropriate training and skill building the AWWs will be able to use the material effectively.

There is an assumption that for enhancing optimum use of the material, there should be an arrangement for replacement if any part of the kit material is lost, torn or damaged. However much of the fruits, vegetables, plants, birds and animals given in the kit can be the AWW should be trained and equipped to made aware about the same and supported to receive the missing material or replacement of the kit. This will encourage them to use the material extensively without fear of losing it.

Improve Availability and Use of Udaan kit and other learning material: There is scope for improving the implementation of ECE component, using Udaan material as additional resource. Efforts are needed to provide a minimum set of appropriate educational aids and material, including Udaan Kit at every AWC.

Non-availability of quality material for play and joyful learning is one of the major constraints. As a result AWWs are not able to effectively conduct ECE activities. The State Government may like to take appropriate measures to streamline supplies for bringing ECE on a priority at the AWC. Decentralized System should be developed for need identification, procurement and supply of teaching-learning and play material and replacement. Education material needs to be adequate and of good quality. Budget line be added for ECE/PSE material and it should be ensured that material is available for PSE activities at every AWC. Some amount of flexible/untied fund should be allocated to AWCs for purchasing and maintenance of the education material locally.

The AWW should be trained to plan a balance of ECE activities on a daily, weekly and monthly basis using the material as a guide and plan and conduct a mix of activities; indoor and outdoor which can facilitate various developmental aspects of a child. The theme cards can be used very effectively for facilitating nutrition, health, personal hygiene and environmental sanitation and desirable civic sense lessons.

Further, though helper was available in 92% of the AWCs, few (20%) mobilized the children for undertaking creative activities at AWCs. Of these, most of them let children play games and chant songs.

Distribution of Udaan Package: After robust piloting, Udaan package was introduced in 30,000 AWCs across all districts in 2010. The key stakeholders including SECRT, DWCD, SSA/RGSM since then have been distributing the package at scale. European Commission has supported the mass printing of the packages. However the findings indicated that out of 150 AWCs under the evaluation, Udaan was available in 140 (93%) of the AWCs. The AWWs stated that they did not have the complete set of cards along with the Guide book. In some of the villages where more than one AWCs existed, the kit was divided, so they did not have complete set of Udaan kit material/cards.

There is no point having a kit without the guidebook and training on how to implement and use the kit. WCD if decides to use the kit, mechanisms must be set up for distribution and training and follow up as well as monitoring for its use. The future strategy for distribution should be based on the feedback of the present study. The crucial issue is completeness of the kit along with guide book and appropriate packaging for storage.

Despite availability, Udaan kit material was being used only in about half (55%) of the AWCs. It was stated by the workers that if items are lost or torn there was no way to get the items replaced or written off. As a result, it was observed that AWWs keep the kit in the cupboard most of the time and cards were not given to children to avoid its wear and tear.

Some clear instructions need to be given to this aspect and it is ensured that the kit is used as frequently as possible and is made part of the curriculums well as daily time table of activities by the WCD department.

iii. Human Resource and Capacity Building

Training of AWWs is crucial for ensuring effective ECE

During observation at the AWCs and through interaction with the AWWs, it was noted that the AWWs were overwhelmed with the Udaan kit material and did not feel confident, especially those who were not oriented in using the kit and all items as given in the Guide book. Without appropriate training and skill building they were unable to use the material effectively. For optimal utilization of Udaan kit, all the AWWs need to be reoriented and trained. Training should be provided to AWWs and supervisors at regular intervals by ECE experts; demonstration of the Udaan kit should be done with enough time devoted to hands on experience. It is suggested that supervisors should be given the responsibility to hold/demonstrate formal ECE/PSE sessions regularly in AWCs. Rigorous monitoring by CDPOs and active participation of Education functionaries can further improve implementation of this component.

AWWs should be provided with a standardized and qualitative training followed by regular mentoring; perspective building on ECE and Udaan in context to ECE, building knowledge on importance of ECE and areas of child development, skills on planning and implementing ECE activities, use of Udaan material. In addition, regular (monthly meetings can be used as forum) refresher trainings, demonstration on themes should be organised.

Technical institutes such as SCERT should be linked to ensure quality of the training. A cadre of Qualified/capable trainers identified from training institutes/DIET should be developed who can later organise refresher trainings on a regular interval.

The **staff position** in accordance with the ICDS needs to be reviewed and essential action for filling up the vacant posts (It was found that only 42% of CDPOs were in position) and creating new positions (if required) should be done on priority basis.

Selection processes of the AWWs need to be reviewed and streamlined. Entrance/Aptitude test can be taken to understand her interest specifically working with children and as indicated in the scheme a local worker be only taken to ensure effective functioning.

Training of Block and District Level Officers: All the Supervisors and CDPOs should be trained as trainers for providing continuous training and mentoring and supportive supervision to improve skills, interest and confidence of the AWWs. Perspective and skills building training should focus on their specific role in ECE. Following this, minimum of one refresher training a year should be organised for Supervisors/CDPOs/DPOs. Exchange and exposure visits to ECE programmes and AWCs in their own and other blocks/districts/states should be organised to facilitate new learning. Joint trainings of concerned departments should be organised.

Appropriate orientation, training and refresher training at regular intervals with continuous mentoring on Udaan and joyful learning will help in improving the ECE. While DWCD is a nodal department, involvement of SCERT/Collaboration with the Dept of Education for optimum use of expertise and experience of SCERT for continuous technical support can be solicited. Incentives be given to supervisors and CDPOs to make use of Diploma courses on

ECE/PSE available in the state or of IGNOU to be professionally better equipped for implementing ECE within ICDS.

Need for State level Technical Resource Cell was strongly expressed, who could work with both DWCD and Education department towards strengthening ECE in the state.

iv. Strengthening Monitoring and Supportive Supervision of ECE Activities

The evaluation revealed that generally there is a lack of monitoring; especially no mechanism/tool to assess the progress of the children in ECE age wise. A need was identified for strong monitoring and mentoring in order to strengthen ECE institutionalizing optimum utilization of Udaan. Monitoring and mentoring should be an integral part of all trainings. A system for centre wise review and grading should be developed.

From the data on time spent for ECE, it is evident that time spent is too short a duration for ECE and achieve any meaningful results. Out of all the services available under ICDS, ECE, one of the most important components was given least priority. It was observed that only 10-15 minutes of time of the AWC is spared for it. In addition the activities are not conducted according to the age of children; only 16% stated that they conduct age wise activities.

The reasons for giving low priority to the ECE activities were manifold; the AWWs' competency for ECE is low. The time given for ECE by AWW is very less due to her own departmental work load, other time to time duties/work allotted to her. AWW should be made responsible for AWC activity only. She should not be given work of other departments. Forums for expressing her views/challenges should be created. Hand holding and mentoring support should be provided at regular intervals on preschool.

A reward system for regular motivation/ appreciation/certificate on progressive achievement and good work should be developed and implemented at all levels.

Training centre/DIET/Academic institutions should adopt the weak centres and provide required support in facilitating ECE specifically to the centres.

Supervision should be strengthened through appropriate measures. A supervisor should not have more than 20 AWCs under her charge. A double or additional charge is detrimental for the effective supportive role. There is need therefore, to create a post of a substitute supervisor in every project.

v. Community Involvement

It is imperative that community representatives, especially PRI members, parents play a critical role in AWC activities.

In Chhattisgarh, an effort towards community mobilization called the *Udaan Yatra* was made to generate awareness on the importance of parenting as well as the criticality of ECE as part of the ICDS. An extremely positive response was received however the momentum needs to be sustained. There is a need to institutionalize community participation efforts rather than sporadic events and change the image of **AWC as a centre for comprehensive development of young children** through informing and involving the community.

Interaction with 60 PRI members revealed that while they were sporadically involved in AWC activities, their involvement remained confined to AWC building and infrastructural related activities, but not in monitoring or supporting ECE/PSE activities.

Some of the DPOs/CDPOs reported that it was difficult for them to avoid the pressure imposed by local politicians. Some discretion should be exercised in the involvement of individuals/agencies with political alliances. Effective ways of augmenting participation needs to be evolved. AWWs apparently do not have the requisite skills for promoting participation. CDPOs and Supervisors should take appropriate initiative in this regard.

For effective management of the AWC it is essential to involve the Panchayats. At the village level **AWC Management Committee** can be formed involving parents/PRIs which can be involved in procurement, monitoring and supporting AWW for effective implementation. The feasibility of involving adolescent girls and boys in ICDS; ECE activities received some support from observation during the study. Grand parents may also be encouraged and motivated to interact with children, story telling etc.

Parents and Panchayat members should be regularly oriented towards importance of ECE for increasing community participation, especially monitoring of AWCs.

For group formation and collecting parents at the AWC for ECE awareness, locally popular social/recreational events may be organised. Utilization of folk media such as street plays, puppet shows, Yatras etc. need to be included in the training curricula of functionaries to strengthen their skills in community awareness and mobilization effectively.

Communication strategy for mass awareness about importance of ECE in Child development should be developed and regularly implemented.

Introduction

Importance of early years and Early Childhood Education (ECE):

The first six to eight years of a child's life are globally acknowledged to be the most critical formative years of life-long development since the pace of development in these years is extremely rapid. In these years, several cognitive, socio-emotional and psychomotor competencies develop, which contribute significantly to later successes in life. A child that has benefited from basic **nutrition, healthcare and enjoyed early learning** through play has a better chance of doing well at school, which can later lead to improved livelihood opportunities.



Opportunities for interaction, attachment, stimulation, learning through exploration and discovery are of equal importance to a child, in terms of cognitive, social, language and emotional development. Research in the field of neuroscience has provided convincing evidence that experience based brain development in the early years sets neurological and biological pathways that affect health, learning and behaviour throughout life (Mustard 2007:40). If these critical periods are not supported by or embedded in a stimulating and enriching physical and psychological environment, the chances of child's brain development to its fullest potential are considerably and often irreversibly reduced.

This stage is also important as a foundation for the inculcation of social and personal habits and values that are known to last a lifetime. Good quality pre-school education has been observed resulting in positive outcomes such as enhanced cognitive abilities, school achievement, improved class room behaviour/adjustment and decreased grade repetition among children.

Rationale for ECCE

The significance of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) as a critical phase in human development has been globally acknowledged and endorsed through several declarations and ratifications. The period from birth to six years lays the foundation for all future growth and development. Critical brain development happens before the age of seven, specifically in the first three years of life, when important neural connections take place or do not take place depending upon the context of the developing child (UNESCO, 2010, pg 2). The immediate context of young child's life thus creates the foundation for all consequent learning and personality development.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, General Comment 7 "*interprets the right to education during early childhood as beginning at birth and closely linked to young children's right to maximum development*" (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2006, Page 13 Para, 28). Similarly, the World Declaration on *Education for All* held at Jomtein, Thailand 1990 affirms that "**learning begins at birth**". Complying with this fact, World Education Forum in

Dakar (2000) adopted the framework for action to achieve Education for All (EFA) goals by 2015 of which Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) is the first goal that further forms the foundation for all in the EFA agenda. It aims to expand and improve comprehensive ECCE, especially for disadvantaged and vulnerable children (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2011). These pioneering legal and political commitments recognize every child's right to have their learning needs met through approaches that promote their development holistically.

Early Childhood Care and Education in the Indian Context

India has a tradition of valuing the early years of a child's life with a rich heritage of rituals and ceremonies. In the past few decades, India has witnessed an increase in non-familial Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) services. ECCE has increasingly become an integral part of the national development plans of the country.

There have been constitutional provisions, legislative measures, policies and action plans for children below six years of age which have evolved over a period of time. The largest initiative on ECCE in India has been the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) which emerged out of the National Policy for Children (1974) to provide holistic services including supplementary nutrition, immunization, health checkup, referral services and preschool education, a noteworthy effort in this direction. The National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy **approved by the Cabinet on September 20, 2013** further reaffirms the commitment of the Government of India (GoI) to provide integrated services for holistic development of all children, along the continuum, from prenatal period to six years of age. The policy provides a comprehensive approach towards ensuring a sound foundation, with focus on early learning, for every Indian child (WCD, GOI, 2012).

Integrated Child Development Services and Early Childhood Education

Recognising the pivotal position of young children's holistic development to ensure human resource development for national progress, the GoI has accorded the highest priority to strengthen early childhood care, education and development. ICDS, that aims at enhancing survival and development of children from the vulnerable sections of the society provides comprehensive nutrition, health and pre-school education services to children between conception (in the form of maternal nutrition and health services) to six years of age. These services are provided through a network of Anganwadis (a courtyard child care and play centre). The frontline worker is called Anganwadi Worker (AWW).

The Non-formal Pre-school Education (PSE) or Early Childhood Education (ECE) component is the backbone of the ICDS. ECE also contributes to the universalisation of primary education, by providing to the child the necessary preparation for primary schooling and offering substitute care to younger siblings, thus freeing the older ones – especially girls – to attend school. (International Indexed & Referred Research Journal, March, 2012.)

AWW is expected to conduct multifarious ECE tasks. These include not only organisation of ECE activities for three hours a day, but also attending various peripheral activities like preparation of ECE aids using indigenous material with the help of local artisans, establishing functional links with primary school teachers, maintaining records and registers concerning attendance of children in ECCE sessions, programme planning in contextualized way and creating awareness in the community.

Status of Early Childhood Education in Chhattisgarh

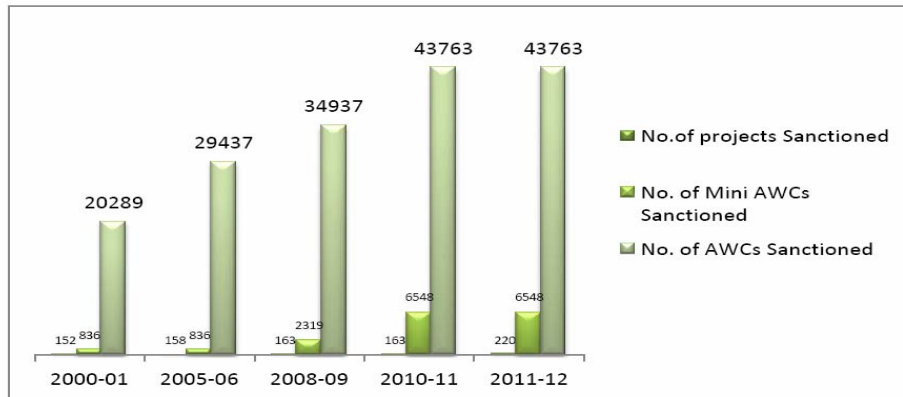
As per 2011 Census children between 0-6 years constitute 14 per cent of the total population; there are 3584028 children between the age of 0-6 years (1824987 girls and 1759041 boys). There are 27 districts in Chhattisgarh and ICDS is operational in 220 development blocks or 146 Blocks/Janpads. Out of these 84 are in rural blocks, 15 in Urban and 121 in tribal blocks. Literacy rate 71.04; male literacy 81.45 and female literacy is 60.59.

ICDS is operational since 1975. Chhattisgarh is associated with ICDS since its inception as a separate state in 2000. Tokapal block of Bastar district was selected for the piloting the ICDS scheme with other 32 blocks. Since its inception as a state in 2000, the ICDS is growing in terms of project expansion. The number of AWCs has more than doubled and at the same time the targeted beneficiaries have increased by 53 per cent (Chhattisgarh APIP 2012-13 Department of Women and Child Development).

Towards strengthening the ECE in the state, the Government of CG has made extensive efforts, however ECE, one of the key services in ICDS is weak in the state. Status of operational blocks and centers is reflected in the figure.

Figure: 1 Expansion of ICDS in Chhattisgarh

EXPANSION OF ICDS IN CHHATTISGARH:



Udaan – an innovative approach to ECE: A Historical Perspective

Towards strengthening ECE in Chhattisgarh, in the beginning of 2008, the state initiated pedagogical reform efforts in the primary grades and introduced the Multi Grade Multi Learning (MGML) methodology in the primary schools. To coincide with these, explicit efforts were made to strengthen pre-school/ECE component within ICDS.

The Department of Education with the leadership from State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) developed a comprehensive approach and material which can be used by the Anganwadi Worker for facilitating the ECE activities. The highlights of this initiative taken in this direction are described below:

Between June–July 2008, a state Level Visioning workshop on ECE was organised followed by the exposure visits of a state level resource group consisting of representatives from WCD, SCERT and RGSM to Maharashtra and Chennai. This resulted in a series of workshops on curriculum development which was focused on two stages – birth to three

years, and the pre-school stage – three to six years. For the birth to three years stage, the focus was on good parenting (and hence working with parents and caregivers) and for the pre-school years, a holistic curriculum along with materials and activities across different domains of development was developed. All these ideas and the laying out of the curriculum, activities and age appropriate materials were a part of the package/module named Udaan, meant for use by the AWW.

Thereafter material development for Udaan was undertaken by the state level resource group comprising representatives from Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) and SCERT. Piloting of Udaan was done in 40 AWCs of five districts. After revising the material it was up-scaled to 8000 AWCs across all the districts. Training for ICDS functionaries, including supervisors, as well as education department functionaries was undertaken. In February 2010 onwards – The Udaan package was introduced in an additional 22000 centres across the state. Thus currently the Udaan approach is being implemented in 30,000 centres across the state. For community mobilization and to generate community awareness on the importance of parenting as well as the criticality of ECE as a part of the ICDS, **UdaanYatra** was organised.

Special efforts were made at the Secretary level for facilitating convergence between Education and Women and Child Development (WCD) departments for ECE. The State Government in close collaboration with SCERT and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) developed a draft policy for Early Childhood Care and Education.

The above efforts capture the essence of the developments so far in Chhattisgarh which are aimed at improving quality of ECE in the ICDS programme.



UdaanYatra

The Evaluation of Udaan

Rationale

Udaan is being implemented in Chhattisgarh since 2009 as a joint effort of several stakeholders, including UNICEF, European Commission, SSA, Rajiv Gandhi Shiksha Mission (RGSM), DWCD and SCERT. SCERT has provided technical input in terms of developing the ECE learning materials-the Udaan kit and training by implementing it in 80 blocks across 16 districts. SCERT distributed 2000 kits and trained 78 master trainers through a five days training workshops. SSA distributed Udaan kit in 33,000 AWCs and aimed to reach up to 46,000 AWCs and 2500 Mini AWCs across Chhattisgarh.



However it was observed that the implementation was not up to the mark and needed to be strengthened.

In view of this situation as well as maintaining the momentum created through Udaan approach, a strong need was felt to strengthen ECE component in the state. Towards strengthening ECE in the state, the Government of Chhattisgarh; DWCD, SCERT and UNICEF proposed to undertake an evaluation of the ECE component in ICDS, with special focus on Udaan involving an external agency. The evaluation aimed to identify the limitations and suggest the way forward, especially monitoring and strengthening interface between the Department of Women and Child Development and Education. The evaluation also aimed to review the Udaan as an approach, the kit material, its usefulness and challenges in implementation and suggest a future road map to up-scale the same.

In order to identify a competent agency to undertake the evaluation, the process of inviting proposals was initiated. The proposals for evaluation were invited in July 2012 through an open bid from all over the country. Based on the criteria for selection, the shortlisted agencies were invited to make a presentation on September 6, 2012 at SCERT, Raipur, Chhattisgarh. Based on the technical and financial criteria, Centre for Health Education Training and Nutrition Awareness (CHETNA), Ahmedabad was entrusted with the responsibility to undertake the Evaluation of ECE in relation to Udaan in the state of Chhattisgarh. The scope of the study was delineated in the Terms of Reference (TOR) provided by SCERT. (Please refer Annexure 1 for Terms of Reference)

CHETNA conducted the present evaluation during January-June 2013.

Goal

To suggest strategies for policy and programme implementation for strengthening ECE in Chhattisgarh state with special focus on ICDS

Objectives

1. To assess the status of ECE in the state and review the policy environment and approach of implementation of ECE
2. To identify gaps in ECE provisions and suggest ways to bridge the same
3. To review the processes, challenges and outcome of the *Udaan* approach/package in terms of enhancing capacity of the ICDS functionaries in implementing the ECE programme
4. To ascertain the effectiveness of Udaan approach for strengthening ECE component and feasibility of its integration within ICDS
5. To suggest strategies of using Udaan approach/package for strengthening ECE in CG
6. To identify modalities of interdepartmental convergence required for effective ECE in the state

The Processes

CHETNA adopted a participatory and consultative approach to plan and execute the evaluation. An attempt was made to involve all the stakeholders at the state, district, block and village/community levels. CHETNA undertook multifarious activities to design and implement the evaluation from the initial stages.

I. Preparatory phase

- Review of documents and material
- Planning meeting
- Constituting State level Core Committee
- Field exposure and visit to Anganwadis

II. Designing Phase

- Sampling: selection of Districts, Blocks, AWCs, observation of AWCs, Children for assessing impact of ECE and preparing lists of respondents for interviews for qualitative data PRI, Supervisors, CDPOs, DPOs, state level officials and key stakeholders; RGSM/SSA, European Union, CARE and UNICEF
- Tools development: Drafting, review, field testing, finalization in Hindi language
- Identification of field investigators
- Orientation and training of investigators

III. Implementation Phase

- Main study-Data collection
- Data entry, cleaning, generating reports
- Analysis
- Report

I. Preparatory Phase comprised planning and designing of the study, tool formation and identification and training/orientation of field investigators towards execution of the design as per the TOR. The main activities undertaken were:

- **Review Of Documents and Material:** ECCE Policy draft, Udaan Kit, ECE evaluation report-2011 and documents/presentations regarding evaluation, development, phases of implementation/ up-scaling of Udaan in CG
- **Planning Meeting:** On award of the contract in January 2013, a planning meeting at SCERT, Raipur was organised to understand the *Udaan* project and its implementation in the state and role of various stakeholders/departments.
- **Constituting State Level Core Committee:** A State level Core Committee for evaluation was constituted, with representation of all key stakeholders; Women and Child Development Department, SCERT/Dept. of Education, SSA, RGSM/UNICEF and European Commission. Micro planning for the assessment, especially identification of nine districts and 150 AWCs for the assessment was jointly done.
- **Field Exposure/Visit:** During January 2013, the team visited five urban and rural AWCs in and around Raipur. The team also interacted with ICDS officials, trainers of Anganwadi Training Centres, Panchayati Raj Institution Members and Community members.



The Chronology of Events

Activity	Time line
Submission of project proposal	July 20, 2012
Presentation at Raipur	September 6, 2012
Approval of the project	January 3, 2013
Preparatory phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning meeting, constituting state core group(SCERT/Dept. of Education, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA), WCD, RGSM/UNICEF, and European Commission) • Drafting of the tools • Appointment of the field research team • Sharing revised design and tools with core group and received • Sample selection for the study (selection of districts and AWCs) • Review of the secondary data, Udaan Kit 	January 3-5, 2013 January- February 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of Field research team and pre testing of the tools • Seeking permission/support from the DWCD for data collection from the AWCs and ICDS functionaries • Data collection and interviews of the PRIs/ Supervisors/CDPO/ DPOs/ observation of the AWC 	March 2013 April-May , 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three regional workshops: 6/4/13: Kanker, 8/4/13: Ambikapur, 10/4/13: Raipur • Participation at the State Level workshop for interaction and dialogue with CDPOs/DPOs of Chhattisgarh on 6/4/13 • Interviews of the state level officers: 5-10/4/13 • Monitoring of data collection: 5-12/4/13 	April-May 2013
Data entry	May-June 2013
Data analysis and draft report of findings	June 2013
Draft Study Report	June 15-21, 2013

The Methodology

Sampling

Sampling was done in consultation with the State Core group members. Out of 27 districts of CG, Udaan has been implemented in 16 districts in a phased manner. Considering these districts as a universe, nine districts representing North, Central and South Zones were purposively selected on the basis of implementation period under Udaan Project in operation. The selection of 150 Anganwadi Centres (AWC) from these selected nine districts was done for the study. Out of 150 AWCs, 50 were proportionately selected from nine districts for in depth observation.

Criteria for selection of AWCs were: primarily the length of the implementation of the Udaan project, accessibility of the AWC, Infrastructure, and willingness to be a part of the study.

The respondents for the study included concerned AWWs, Supervisors, CDPOs, DPOs, PRI members from the 150 AWCs.

In order to assess the impact of ECE on school readiness a sample of 60 children of 4-6 years of age were identified from 15 AWCs, where detailed observations were carried out.



Table 1: Districts selected for the Study

Description of Study Sample										
Sr. No	Name of district	Name of block	Blocks	Villages	AW Cs	PRI	AWC Observation	Super visors	CDP Os	District official s
1	Jaspur	Jaspur	1	14	15	6	8	2	1	2
2	Sarguja	Ambikapur	1	7	7	3	2	2	1	2
3	Koriya	Baikunthpur	1	26	27	11	6	2	1	2
4	Bilaspur	Belha, Gaurilla -1 & 2, Kota, Marwahi	5	20	20	6	9	2	1	2
5	Durg	Durg	1	15	15	8	4	2	1	2
6	Raipur	Abhanpur	1	12	15	6	4	2	1	2
7	Kanker	Kanker	1	12	17	8	6	2	1	2
8	Bastar	Bastar	1	16	18	6	5	2	1	2
9	Dhamtari	Kurud	1	12	16	6	5	2	1	2
	Total	9	13	134	150	60	50	18	9	18

Development of Tools

Keeping in view the aims and objectives of the assessment, the structured and qualitative tools and observation checklists were developed in Hindi language for each group of the informants. Draft tools were shared with the state core committee members and after receiving their feedback, incorporating the state specific norms of ICDS, the tools were field tested in five Anganwadi Centres namely Shukravari bazaars, Kudaravada II, Kundarapara, Mangal Bazar, Gudiyaari – Raipur, Chhattisgarh. Each team consisting of two field investigators visited one Anganwadi. SCERT representative facilitated identification of Anganwadis and field testing process. After incorporating the feedback, the tools were finalised.

Eight schedules and interview guidelines were developed in order to obtain perspectives of all the stakeholders. **(Please refer Annexure 2 for the tools)**

In addition, a specific School Readiness Instrument² (WHO) was administered to assess the impact of Pre-Primary Informal Education provided at anganwadi centers on the children. **Please refer Annexure-4 for SRI.**

1. Interview Schedule for AWWs was developed to seek information on services available under ICDS, especially to assess whether AWWs were aware about the importance of ECE in ICDS, to also assess the utilisation of Udaan kit and challenges faced by them in its use.



2. Observation Checklist of Activities Undertaken at AWC was developed to authenticate the responses of AWWs in facilitating ECE activities. Observation checklist helped in understanding time and activity pattern of AWWs at AWCs especially in understating time spent by AWWs in ECE activities, type of ECE activities undertaken, material available at AWCs and use of Udaan kit and its maintenance. It also enabled to know children's participation in the learning

3. Interview Schedule for PRI Members In accordance with PRI members' role in improving communities' participation in strengthening ECE, this tool was developed to collect information about whether the PRI members are aware about the importance of ECE and role played by them in strengthening ECE

4. Interview Schedule for the Supervisors helped to understand perspective on ECE and whether supervisors are able to monitor ECE activities, use of Udaan, challenges faced by them and seeking suggestions to strengthening ECE activities at AWCs

5. Interview Schedule for CDPOs and DPOs was developed with special focus on assessing the status of ECE in their blocks and districts, understand their perspective about need for ECE, status of ECE in CG and role of Udaan in strengthening ECE in the state

² SRI is a standardized instrument developed by World Bank, consisting of range of activities related to identifying of the pictures, alphabets and numbers. There is a score sheet in which the child is rated according to her/his performance. It is mainly used for the children above three years of age.

6. Guidelines for Interview with State Level Officials were developed for seeking their views and suggestions for understanding of the policy environment vis-à-vis ECE—in terms of conception/planning and allocation of resources on ECE as part of overall ICDS strategy at the state and district levels; inter-departmental convergence; existing capacities and competencies within government, especially DWCD, keeping the shift of ECE component from the Education Department

7. Interview Schedule of Udaan Trainers to elicit information on training provided by them on effective use of Udaan kit to AWWs and Supervisors

8. Standardised School Readiness Instrument was acquired and administered for assessing the impact of ECE on children 4-5 years of age attending AWW

- **Orientation and Training of Research Investigators**

A total of 11; 09 Research Investigators (RI) and two supervisors/coordinators were identified at the local level. They were graduate/post graduates and had minimum 3-5 years of experience for various surveys and data collection. They were well-versed with the local dialect.



Research Investigators' Training

Three days Orientation training was organised for enhancing the knowledge of RIs on concept of Integrated Child Development Service Scheme (ICDS), importance of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for children, Udaan approach and the kit and research methodology. The demonstration on use of Udaan kit material was appreciated and found very useful by the RIs.

Pre-Post test of the research investigators was undertaken in order to ensure that they have thoroughly acquired knowledge on the above mentioned topics.

The RIs went through each of the questionnaires/tools developed and provided their suggestions especially for the language/dialect. This helped in making them familiarized with the terms used in the questionnaires. They also participated in field testing and finalization of tools.

Data collection in selected 150 AWCs, observation of AWWs/observation of the activities, assessing impact of ECE on children using school readiness tool, interview of supervisors/CDPOs/DPOs and state level officials was done during April-May 2013.

Main study (Implementation Phase)

Data Collection; the research/CHETNA team interacted with the following key informants for data and information

- 150 Anganwadi workers (AWWs) and helpers, parents/community members during observation of 50 AWCs
- 60 Panchayati Raj Institute (PRI) members
- Eight District Programme Officers (DPO), 09 Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs) and 18 Supervisors
- Principals and Instructors of DIETs, District Resource Centres (DRCs), Block Resource Centres (BRCs)/Anganwadi Training Centers
- 159 representatives during **three Zonal Workshops** organised by CHETNA during April 6-10, 2013 at Kanker -37, Ambikapur- 42 and Raipur- 80.
- About 30 DPOs, CDPOs, and state level officials from the DWCD at a state level workshop on April 6, 2013 at Raipur
- 11 State level officers from DWCD, RGSM/SSA, SCERT, UNICEF and European Commission

In addition, of the 150 AWCs surveyed from nine districts, 50 AWCs were observed using a specific tool that was developed for observation. The team also interacted with 60 children in the age group of 4-5 years to assess their knowledge based on the impact of ECE using the World Bank School Readiness Instrument. In all 15 children in the age range of 4-5 years were selected from each district for assessing the impact of ECE activities undertaken at the AWCs.

Ensuring Data Quality

CHETNA representatives monitored data collection process and supported the field investigators in nine AWCs in Raipur, Sarguja, Durg and Dhamtari districts. They witnessed observation of AWCs, administration of school readiness instrument with children, interviews of supervisors and Panchayat (Local Self governance) members to ensure quality of data collection. In addition, filled in forms were reviewed and feedback was shared with the investigators to seek in-depth perceptions of various stakeholders regarding ECE component in ICDS. Also the group coordinator of RIs reviewed all the forms and ensured that accurate and complete information is being filled in all the forms, thereafter the forms were cross verified by the SoCH organisation.

Zonal Workshops

In order to seek the data, information and suggestions from the districts which were not covered in the assessment study, three workshops were organised in three sites in districts covering north, central and south zones.

The objectives were to understand the efforts and initiatives of the Government of Chhattisgarh for implementation of ECE/PSE, understand the constraints and challenges faced in effective implementation of PSE and seek suggestions of various stakeholders for strengthening the implementation of ECE/PSE activities in Chhattisgarh.



A total of 159 participants; 37 at Kanker covering districts in south zone, 42 at Ambikapur covering northern districts and 80 participants at Raipur covering Central districts of CG in three Zonal Workshops comprised representatives from DWCD; (AWWs, Supervisors, CDPOs, DPOs, AW Training Centres and Middle Level Training Centre Principals and Instructors and Education Department – Block Resource Centre (BRC)Coordinator, District Resource Centre (DRC), Coordinator State Resource Group (SRG), Coordinator DIET principals and ECE coordinators, Representatives from SCERT, District Programme Coordinators of Rajiv Gandhi Shiksha Mission (RGSM) and CARE Chhattisgarh.

Discussion and dialogue was facilitated with key stakeholders regarding the status of ECE, use and effectiveness of Udaan, constraints and challenges as well as suggestions to improve the ECE component within ICDS. Workshop design focused on understanding perspective, processes, challenges, need of the learning resource material, training and recommendations for the policy and programmes. The members of State Core Committee were invited as resource persons.

The zonal workshops provided an opportunity to interact and dialogue with key stakeholders representing various departments; WCD, Education; SSA, UNICEF and CARE India to come to a common platform and discuss their issues on implementation of ECE activities and collectively find ways to address them. It also helped in understanding the importance and ways of enhancing intra-departmental coordination for ECE. Interaction and dialogue with various stakeholders helped in seeking their suggestions for effective implementation of ECE activities. Use of participatory methods such as group discussion, presentation and panel discussion proved effective for optimizing the interaction and dialogue.

(Please refer Annexure 3 for report of Zonal workshops)

State level Workshop

CHETNA representative took the opportunity to interact with block, district and state level officials by participating in a State level Workshop on Restructured ICDS organised by DWCD at Raipur on April 6, 2013 wherein about 30 CDPOs/DPOs of all the districts of CG were present. A special session was devoted for discussion on the ECE Assessment carried out by CHETNA. Interaction and dialogue regarding current status of ECE in CG and their suggestions for strengthening ECE component in ICDS were collected through a questionnaire.



Computerisation and Analysis

Data was entered and analyzed using statistical package for social sciences- SPSS. In addition, since some of the questions were open-ended, these responses were analyzed and summarized according to major themes. Comparisons of these themes were made by creating matrices of the themes within-group. Data manager entered the data, which was cross checked by the supervisor and study coordinator.

Challenges

It was challenging to conduct an evaluation study in recently formulated large state with tremendous diversity; geographical, socio-economic and cultural.

Data collection got delayed due to the administrative procedures and local festivals and the harvesting season. Investigators faced difficulty in seeking the date/appointment of DPOs for their interviews, follow-up was done by CHETNA to fix the date with WCD for interview of DPOs.

We did not receive the data from the Anganwadi Training Centre Principals and Instructors. We had sent the questionnaires to all the seventeen Anganwadi Training Centres. We also followed –up with them to avail the filled up forms but we could not receive the filled in forms. We however managed to receive the information from those principals and instructors who participated in the zonal workshops.

Ethical Considerations

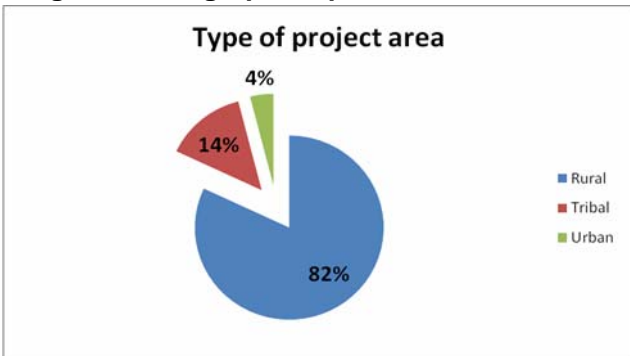
The following measures were taken in consideration of assessment/evaluation participant protections and other ethical considerations

- State and district permissions were sought from SCERT, WCD and UNICEF for facilitating assessment/evaluation study in selected AWCs in Chhattisgarh State
- Participants were made aware of the purpose of the assessment
- Confidentiality was assured to all participants. Consent form was developed in order to receive their permission for the interview.

Results and Discussion

Background of the Anganwadi Centres

Figure 2: Geographic Spread of AWCs



Of the total 150 AWCs covered under the study, majority (82%) belonged to rural, 14% to tribal and 4 % to urban project from an ICDS perspective.

Physical infrastructure: All the AWCs observed were operating in pucca buildings. While adequate indoor space was available, most of the AWCs did not have appropriate (size and safe place) space for conducting outdoor pre-school and play activities. During monitoring

visit, a few (3) of the AWCs, which were adjoining the primary school, children were found to be enjoying outdoor activities and play. A mid-day meal was ongoing in the schools. However, the surroundings of some of the AWCs visited were not safe and clean for children. There were dumps of garbage, dirty water puddles and open drainage hindering children to play and enjoy outdoor activities. In tribal areas of Jashpur, in three villages, the AWCs were located at a far distance on the outskirts of the villages, which made them inaccessible for young children.

Figure 3: Staff in position

As stated by the District Programme Officers (DPO) of the nine districts, Most of the positions of staff were filled-up except CDPOs. Less than half posts were filled-up. This showed that the quality of supervision and mentoring support to AWWs for the AWC activities, particularly the PSE/ECE activities were affected due to lack of supervisory staff.

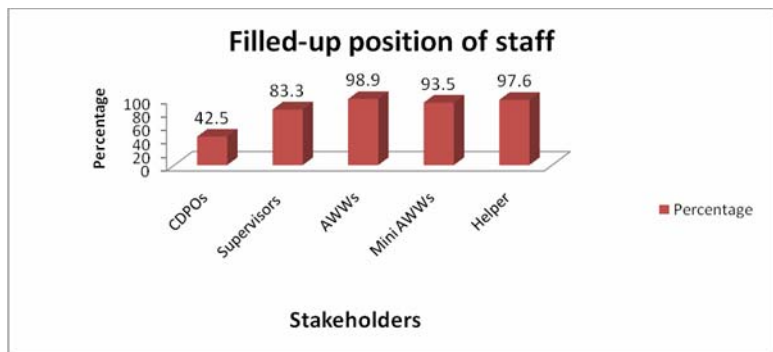
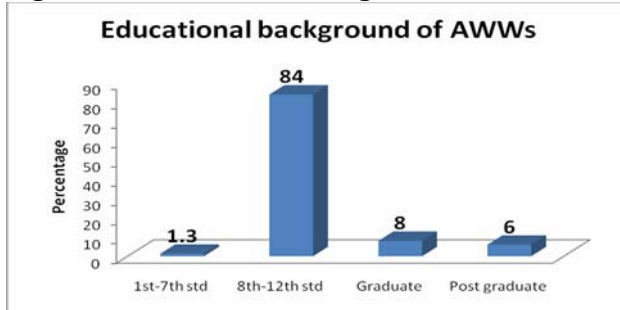
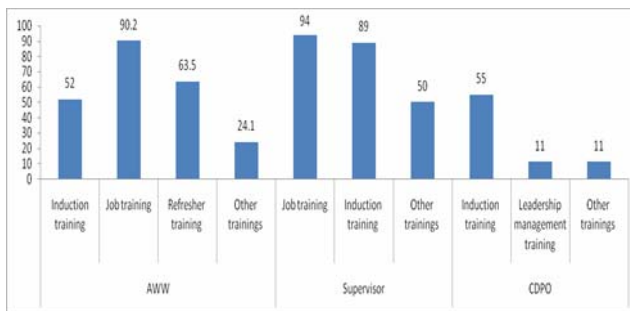


Figure 4: Educational background



As per the norms set by the Govt. of CG, the AWWs' qualification is minimum 12 standard pass. In the present evaluation it emerged that the range of 8-12th pass AWWs is 84%. However, during interaction with participating AWWs in the Zonal Workshops, it was learnt that many of them were below 7th standard. Most (5) of the CDPOs mentioned that lower literacy affects facilitation of ECE, growth monitoring etc.

Figure 5: Training and capacity building:

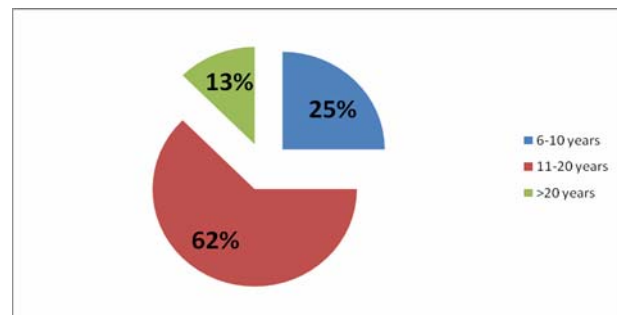


Training is an inbuilt component of ICDS. After recruitment and appointment, all the functionaries of ICDS are deputed by the respective State Govt. to receive Job training in the identified training centre. However merely 64 per cent AWWs received refresher training, particularly on ECE due to which, they were not confident about conducting ECE. Though there is a provision of refresher training,

the topics covered were health and nutrition component of ICDS, there is a need to include sessions on importance of ECE.

Figure 6: Work Experience of ICDS functionaries

Of the 150 AWWs interviewed, the work experience of AWWs ranged from 1 year to 28 years. More than half of the AWWs had an experience of 11-20 years. As expected, the experienced AWWs' performance was better; they were able to interact with children and the parents, facilitate the AWC, especially the ECE/PSE activities effectively and delegated the tasks of leading some activities such as chanting rhymes, numerical/tables to elder children.



Supervisors, CDPOs and DPOs had on an average experience of more than 5-6 years. It was observed that on job support to AWW is very weak on ECE/PSE. It may be due to lack of interest and competency of supervisors. Supervisor focuses on other points except ECE/PSE during her supervisory visit to AWCs, which results in distracting AWW from ECE and builds their attitude that the ECE is not her priority; what is monitored is done on a priority basis- it is record of supplementary nutrition or other work. Monitoring and mentoring need to be strengthened in two ways; ensuring that all the supervisors and CDPOs as per the posts sanctioned are in place and trained specially for ECE

Status of Early Childhood Education in the state of Chhattisgarh

Responses of various ICDS functionaries on implementation of ECE was assessed through interview and direct observation method.

Perception about ECE and child development

The above table indicates that most (76%) of the AWWs, PRI (80%) and all DPOs perceive that ECE is important for physical development. Most of the supervisors perceive that ECE is important for school readiness. All the CDPOs perceive ECE as useful for overall development of children, for inculcating good habits and for school readiness. Though the stakeholders find ECE useful, they need to be sensitized further on importance of a variety of play way learning opportunities to ensure different types of development (social, creative, cognitive, linguistic development) and school readiness.

Table 2: Perception of functionaries on importance of ECE for child development

Types of development	AWWs (N=150)		PRI (N=60)		Supervisors (N=18)	CDPOs (N=9)	DPOs (N=8)
	F	%	F	%	F	F	F
Physical development	115	76.6	48	80.0	7	9	5
Cognitive development	89	59.3	48	80.0	7	9	5
Linguistic development	75	50	39	65.0	7	9	5
Inculcating good habits in children	84	56	17	28.3	0	9	5
School readiness	79	52.6	34	56.6	11	9	4



Approach and implementation of ECE
Table 3: Responses of the AWWs on ECE activities

N=150		
Implementation of ECE activities at AWCs	F	%
1) Training received on ECE	43	28.6
2) Time table developed on ECE	77	51.3
1.1) If yes then, activities are being carried out as per the time table (N=77)	53	68.8
3) Time spent for ECE activities		
a) 10-30 minutes	59	39.3
b) 30-60 minutes	56	37.3
c) >60 minutes	34	22.6
4) Availability of the budget for ECE	16	10.6
5) Support by supervisors during her visit to AWCs		
a) Orientation of ECE activities	135	90.0
b) Development of games and education material	89	59.3
C) In preparation of time table	82	54.6
d) In organization of ECE meeting at community level	90	60.0
6) Last visit by Supervisors		
a). Current month	36	24.0
b). <1 month	50	33.3
c). <2 months	26	17.3
d). < 3months	8	5.3
e). <4 months and above	25	16.6
7) Community support in organization of ECE activities	25	16.6
a) Adolescent girls' support in organising activities i.e. poem recitation, counting of numbers and alphabets		

Training on ECE

In terms of training on ECE, less than half of the AWWs stated of receiving training on ECE. There is a need for sensitization of all the AWWs on importance of ECE

Availability of time table and its use

The above table indicates that more than half of the AWWs developed time table on ECE and also stated following it. A detailed look into the implementation of ECE activities showed that almost all AWCs had the timetable painted on a tin board at the centre. However these were not displayed prominently and used. In many AWCs they were lying in not-usable state; upside down or hidden behind ration bags or somewhere in the corner of the AWC.



Duration of AWCs and time spent on ECE

Norms suggests that approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes to be spent for ECE activities in contrast to this about half (40%) of the AWWs stated of spending 10-30 and 30-40 minutes respectively for ECE activities which concludes that activities are not being carried out as per the time table.

Reasons for spending less time on ECE activities

About 50% AWWs stated that they were busy with other activities such as surveys, census work, polio campaign and work related to sanitation of the village (sprinkling DDT powder). From the data on time spent for PSE/ECE it is evident that time spent is too short a duration for ECE and achieve any meaningful results.

Availability of the budget

Budget is required for replacing the lost or torn cards/material. Most (89.4%) of the AWWs stated, not having budget for ECE activities. It affects the ECE activities, AWWs do not provide the material or Udaan cards to the children in fear of getting it spoiled or damaged.

Support by supervisors

It was revealed that on job support to AWW is very weak on ECE. It may be due to lack of interest and competency of supervisors. Supervisor focuses on other points except ECE during her supervisory visit to AWCs, which results on distracting AWW from ECE and builds her attitude that the ECE is not her priority rather it is record of supplementary nutrition or other work.

Most of the AWWs stated that supervisors orient them on ECE activities; about half of them stated receiving help on development of material and organising the meeting at community level. However when asked about last visit made by supervisors at the AWCs, less than one fourth AWWs stated that supervisors visited their AWCs during the current month, about one fourth of them stated that supervisors visited the AWCs before one month. The norms suggest that supervisors should monitor 25 AWCs during a month. It can be concluded that though supportive supervision is being carried out by the supervisors but it not on the regular basis which affects the ECE activities.

Community support in organisation of ECE activities

Adolescent girls help the AWWs in conducting the ECE activities, especially when the AWWs are busy with other work. Panchayat members' role is to regularly visit the AWCs and review the services provided at the AWCs and support the AWWs in organisation of various activities. With regard to ECE, PRI members are supposed to help in provision of educational and play material at the AWCs. However majority of AWWs stated that PRI members hardly visit and whenever they do come, they focus on stock of ration and other aspects and do not show interest in ECE activities.

Training of Supervisors

Out of 18 interviewed, 11 supervisors had yet to receive training on ECE.

Monitoring of the AWCs

All the supervisors stated that their major role is to monitor the AWCs and support them in organisation of various activities at the AWC and during home visits; related to ECE, supplementary nutrition-demonstration of activities, support in preparing timetable of AWC, discussion with parents about importance of ECE. However supervisors' responses were similar to that of AWWs. In a month most (10) of them visited 10-15 AWCs in contrast to the norms which suggests supervisors to visit 25 AWCs in a month. Reasons stated was that they have extra charge of AWCs, overloaded with documentation work of the activities being carried out at AWCs due to which they were not able to visit the AWCs as the suggested norms.

The table below indicates perception of supervisors on ECE. All the supervisors were aware of importance of Early Childhood Education.

Table 4: Responses of supervisors on ECE activities**(N=18)**

Indicators	F
1. Training on ECE	11
2. Role of supervisor	
a) Support/guidance/training of AWW	10
b) Monitoring of AWC	5
c) Motivating community/parents for sending their children to AWCs	3
3. Monitoring of number of AWCs in the last month	
a) 10-15 AWCs	10
b) 15-20 AWCs	4
c) 20-25 AWCs	4
4. Discussion of issues related to ECE in Review meeting	16
a) Other issues of AWC	10
Children's attendance	6
5. Work done during AWC visit	
a) Supervision of activities related to ECE	18
b) Demonstration of activities	18
c) Support in preparing timetable of AWC	16
d) Discussion during home visits about importance of ECE	18
6. Record of ECE	8
7. Availability of Timetable at AWCs	17
7.1 Time table followed	12
8. Availability and usable condition of ECE material	
a). Udaan kit	18
b). Indoor and outdoor games	16
c). Story books	12
d) Picture books	11
e). Supportive material	10
f). Seasons chart	8
g) Other charts	7

Issues discussed during supervisory visit

Most of the supervisors discussed about the other issues at the AWCs related to growth monitoring and supplementary nutrition, however issues related to ECE were not stated, also very few supervisors discussed about the issue of enrollment of children at AWCs, which is crucial issue for effective implementation of ECE.

Record keeping

There is no structured format for recording the ECE activities carried out at the AWCs. Most (10) of the supervisors stated that either no record is maintained or they do not know about the records to be maintained on ECE activities.

Availability of time table at the AWCs

Most of the supervisors stated that time table available at the AWCs; however it was not being followed by some AWWs as they are overloaded with work of other department.

Availability and Usability of the ECE Material

Above table indicates that all the supervisors stated that Udaan kit is available at the AWCs and also being used. Other materials such as story book, seasons chart and picture books are not available in all the AWCs. All the supervisors stated that budget is not available for ECE due to which they were not able to purchase the missing or torn out material. It was also shared that the ECE kit is not sufficient and the quality of material is not good and not long lasting.



Responses of CDPOs on ECE activities and Efforts to strengthen ECE

The table below indicates the responses of CDPOs when asked about their role and the work done at the AWCs. Most of them stated that monitoring of the ECE activities is important, however they mainly focus on general administrative and tangible issues related to honorarium of AWWs, cleanliness of the AWCs, lack of community participation, poor record keeping etc. Specific issues of ECE were not highlighted during the visit and meeting with AWWs. Efforts are being made to strengthen ECE. However in reality the CDPOs are not providing adequate mentoring and supportive monitoring to the AWWs. The main reasons are the large number of posts is vacant, ECE is not perceived as the top priority and no appropriate recording/reporting system for ECE activities. As per the norms, CDPOs' role is to monitor that ECE activities are implemented as per the monthly plan, ensure availability of various ECE material at the AWCs, ensure interaction between AWCs and the primary schools and facilitate coordination with Education department/SSA seeking their support for effective implementation of ECE.

Table 5: Responses of CDPOs on ECE activities (N=9)

Indicators	F
1. Work done during visit to AWC by CDPO	
a) Discuss AWW's problems	9
b) Monitor and guidance on ECE activities	8
c) Meeting community members	9
2. Availability of Timetable at AWC	8
a) If no, reason-lack of interest by AWW	1
3. Regular discussion with AWW/Supervisor on ECE in review meeting	
Problems:	2
a) Low attendance of children	1
b) AWCs not opening on time	2
c) Lack of Charts & posters	1
d) Poor record keeping	2
e) lack of community support	1
f) Cleanliness of AWCs	1
g) Training material	1
h) Less honorarium paid	1
i) Lack of activities	
4. Efforts made for effective implementation of ECE in AWCs	
a) Support/guidance/motivation to AWWs	4
b) Motivation to parents/community	2
c) Monitoring and quality assurance	2
d) Others	1

Table 6: Responses of DPOs on ECE activities**(N=8)**

Indicators	F
1). AWCs visited in last month	3
a). 4-5 AWCs	2
b). 10-12 AWCs	2
c). >15 AWCs	1
d). does not visit the AWCs	
2). System developed for monitoring of ECE	3
3). Monitoring on ECE	
a) observation of ECE activities every month	1
b). Ensured record keeping on ECE	1
c) Ensured complete enrollment of children at AWCs	1
4). Efforts undertaken to strengthen to ECE	7
5) Types of efforts to strengthen ECE	
a) Ensured distribution of kit	3
b) Ensured training of AWWs on Udaan	3
C) Provided material for AWCs (plastic material for AWCs)	1

Above table indicates the perception of DPOs on Early Childhood Education component of ICDS. DPOs' role is to ensure the timely activities at the AWCs.

Monitoring of ECE activities

Most of them have not developed any mechanism for monitoring of the AWCs. One of the DPOs stated that they ensure implementation of ECE activities, its record keeping and enrolment of children respectively.

Efforts to strengthen ECE activities

Three DPOs stated that they ensured distribution of Udaan kit and training to AWWs on Udaan.

However during the monitoring visit at Jashpur and Durg, DPOs themselves stated that they were not able to monitor the ECE activities undertaken at the AWCs due to work pressure. Also while interacting with the AWWs during the monitoring visit it came out that DPOs hardly visits the AWCs and support in implementation of ECE activities



Table 7: Responses of PRI members on ECE activities (N=60)

Indicators	F	%
Visit to AWCs	20	33.0
Last visit at AWCs a) Previous month	50	83.3
Work done during the visit at AWCs during last month a). Observation of facilities available at AWCs b). Observation of ECE activities at AWCs c). Discussion on issues of AWCs d). Planning of Udaan yatra	41 33 42 6	82.0 66.0 84.0 12.0
Activities organized at AWC a). Chanting of songs b). Story telling c). Games d). Learning of numbers and alphabets e). Drawing of pictures f). Taking children for field visit g). Distribution of supplementary foods	49 42 51 40 18 7 7	81.6 70.0 85.0 66.6 30.0 11.6 11.6
Role in smooth functioning of activities a). Availability of building b). Availability of toilet facilities c). Availability of water facilities d) Repairing of AWCs e). Encouraging parents to send their children to AWCs d). Support in providing play material to the AWCs e). Ensuring cleanliness of the AWCs	29 31 44 27 50 16 22	48.3 51.3 73.3 45.0 83.3 26.6 36.6

From the above table, it is learnt that more than half of the PRI members do not visit the AWCs however about 83% of the PRI members visited the AWCs during previous month. Most of them stated that they observe the ECE activities undertaken at the AWCs. Most (70-80%) helped the AWWs in carrying out the ECE activities such as chanting of songs, story telling, counting of numbers and alphabets.

PRI's Role in smooth functioning of the ECE activities

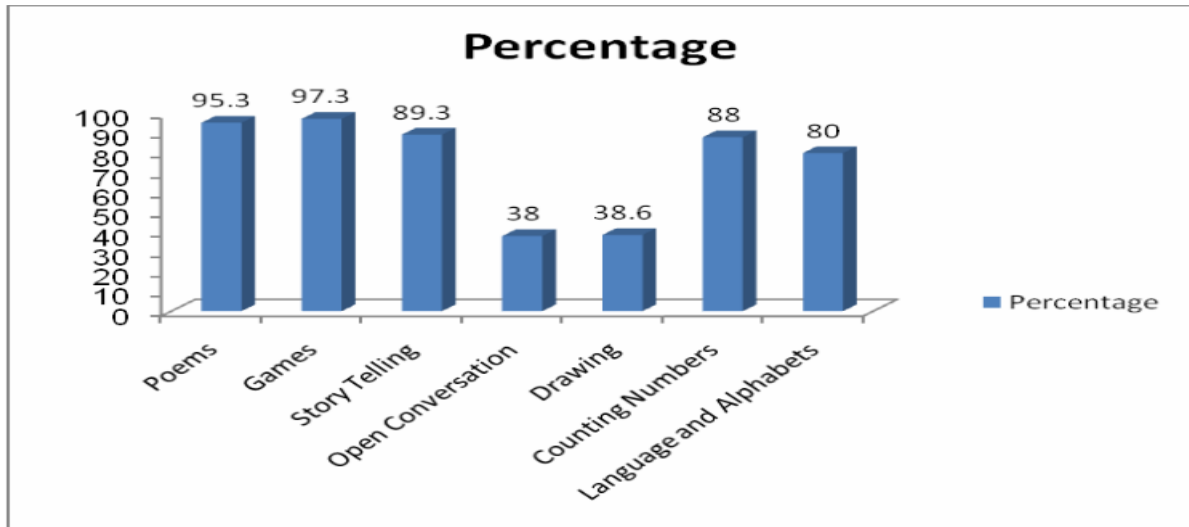
Role of PRI members is to regularly visit the AWCs and review the services provided at the AWCs and support the AWWs in organisation of various activities, in context to ECE, PRI members are supposed to help in provision of educational and play material at the AWCs. During the evaluation, most (83%) of members stated that they motivated the parents to send their children to AWCs, ensured availability of water. About half of them stated that they support in maintenance of the anganwadi building, some (36%) stated ensuring cleanliness of the AWCs.

However during the monitoring visits, while interaction with the AWWs it was found out that PRI members lack interest in implementation of ECE activities due to which they hardly provides any support.

Observation of the AWCs N=50

Observation of 50 AWCs was undertaken in order to assess the ECE activities carried out at AWCs

Figure 7: Types of ECE activities carried-out at AWCs



Stating about the types of activities carried out at the AWCs, almost all the AWCs (85-95 %) mentioned about games, poems and story telling, learning about numerical, language and alphabets. About 40% shared about drawing and conversation as the activities carried out at the AWCs.

While questioned about whether they conduct the activities according to the age of children, only 16% stated that they conduct age appropriate activities. However while describing the activities specifically related to the age group 3-4, 4-5 and 5-6 years no differentiation was found as all of them reported standard activities.



Observation Vs Responses of the AWWs

Responses of the AWWs were compared with actual observation of the ECE activities being carried out at the AWCs

Figure 8: Types of material available at the AWCs

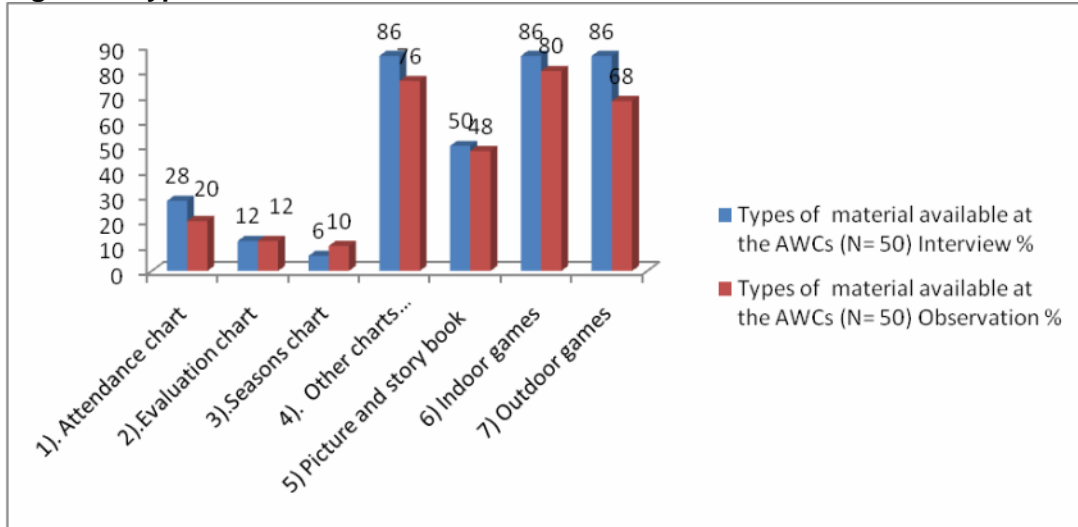
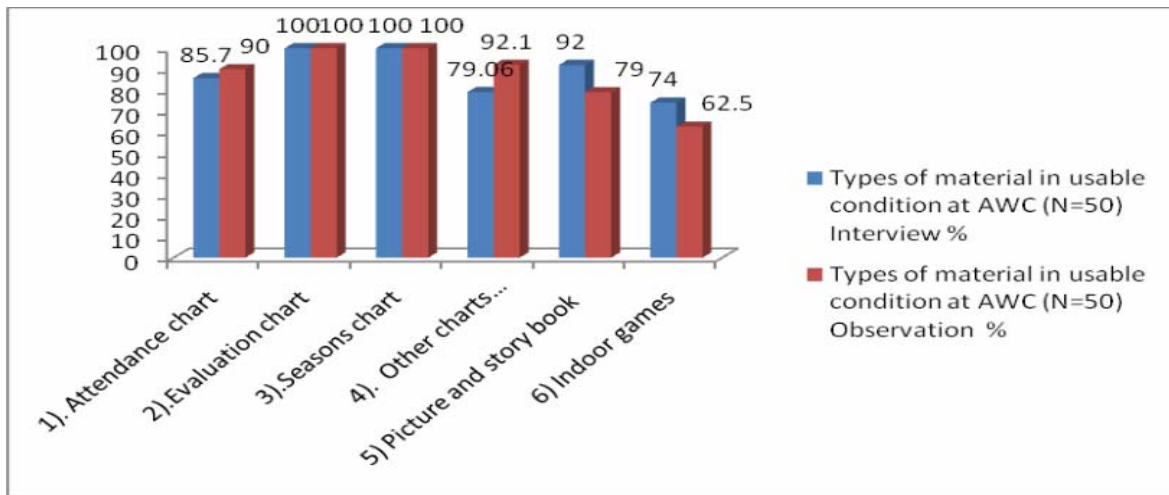


Figure 9: Types of material in usable condition



There are various charts, materials and games provided by government for effective implementation of the Early Childhood Education at the AWCs

Above figure indicates the difference between availability and usable condition of charts, games and play material as stated by AWWs against direct observation. Major difference between the response of the AWWs and actual observation was not found. Material was in usable condition. However some of the charts were neither being displayed nor being used. For evidence, during the monitoring visits of nine AWCs, it was observed that Attendance chart, Evaluation and Seasons charts were not being displayed at the AWCs. They were hardly being used.

Other charts related to animals, birds, shapes and colors were displayed and were also being used for ECE purpose.

Availability and Usability of Attendance chart

Attendance chart is for improving attendance of the children at the AWCs. This chart enables AWWs to follow-up with that particular child in order to mobilize him/her to the AWC. During the interview and observation, it was noticed that Attendance chart was available in less than one fourth of the AWCs. They were in usable condition in most of the AWCs, however not being used in any of the AWCs.

Availability and Usability of Evaluation chart

Under Early Childhood Care and Education, a system is being developed for evaluating the performance of 0- 3 years old children, which enables parents and teachers of the primary schools to know specific weaknesses, capabilities and achievements of the children. This chart enables AWWs to overcome the weaknesses of the child and improve his/her pre-school performance.



Observation and response of the AWWs were similar. Evaluation chart was available and in usable condition in few (12%) of the AWCs, however not being used in any of the AWCs

Availability and Usability of Seasons chart

Seasons chart enables the children to identify various seasons of the year. Availability of the seasons chart was observed in five AWCs and it was in usable condition in all the five AWCs. However not being actually used in any of the AWCs

Availability and Usability of Other charts

Other charts enable the children to identify numbers, alphabets, shapes, colors, animals and birds. These charts were available in three fourth of the AWCs. About 80% AWWs stated that charts were in usable condition in contrast to that through actual observation it was found to be usable in most (90%) of the AWCs

Availability and usability of Picture and story book

Above table indicates that picture and story books were available in on an average half of the AWCs. Most (96%) of the AWWs stated that it is usable condition, however through observation it was in usable condition in 79% of the AWCs

Availability and Usability of Indoor and outdoor games

Indoor games

Indoor games were found in most (80%) of the AWCs however when observed, it was in usable condition in half of the AWCs. Quality of the toys is poor and it is not durable for longer duration

Outdoor games

Outdoor games are available in more than half (68%) of the AWCs, however usable in merely some (36%) of the AWCs as quality of the outdoor games such as bicycle, ladder, ring is poor and in more than half of the AWCs (68%) it was found in the broken condition



Status of Udaan in Chhattisgarh

Approach to and process of implementation

Responses of various functionaries was received in order to assess their the awareness and process of using Udaan kit

Table 9: Perception of AWWs on Udaan **N=150**

Indicators	F	%
Heard of Udaan	140	93
Awareness on Udaan		
a) For comprehensive development	82	54.6
b) For strengthening ECE	34	22.6
Training received on Udaan	138	92
If yes, when was the training received		
a). 2007	3	2.0
b). 2008	5	3.3
c). 2009	22	14.0
d). 2010	32	19.3
e). 2011	31	14.0
f). 2012	39	26.0

Indicators	F	%
Duration of the training		
a). 1-2 days	20	14.4
b). 3-4 days	48	34.7
c). 4-5 days	37	26.8
d). 6-7 days	28	20.2
d). >7days	5	2.8
Who provided the training		
a). Block Recourse Coordinators	60	43.7
b). Block Training Institute	12	8.6
c). Sarva Shikhsa Abhiyan	11	7.9
d). WCD	1	0.3
f). SCERT	2	1.4
Availability of the Udaan kit	140	93
Availability of the reference book	107	77
Reference book referred by AWWs	84	56
Knowledge on all Udaan cards and themes	56	37.30
Time spent in completion of one theme		
a). 5 minutes	10	7.1
b) 25-30 minutes	25	17.8
c) 45 -60 minutes	29	20.7
d). 1-2 days	8	5.3
e). 3-4 days	6	4.2
d). 5-6 days	7	5.0
f). 7-8 days	35	23.3
h). 14-15 days	4	2.6
Availability of helper at the AWCs	139	92.6
Support of helper in organising ECE activities		
a) Mobilising children to play	132	88.0
b) Chanting of songs	113	75.3
c) Counting of numbers and alphabets	95	63.3
d) Story telling	105	70.0
e) Mobilising children for creative activities	32	21.3
Discussion with parents on child development	148	98.7
If yes, topics discussed with parents on child development (N=148)		
a) Children's and pregnant mothers health & Immunisation	120	81.1
b) Sending children to AWC	71	47.9
c) Cleanliness of child	68	45.9
d) About informal Education	37	25

Most (93%) of the AWWs have heard of Udaan, however merely half of them were aware about the Udaan and its role in Early Childhood Education. It is challenging for the AWWs to gain knowledge on use of Udaan kit. There are 250 cards and 50 themes catering to holistic development of children. Every theme has a symbol, it is difficult for the AWWs to remember and understand all the cards and themes. Less than half (37%) of the AWWs had knowledge on all Udaan cards and themes.

Training on Udaan

AWWs received training ranging from 3-7 days. About half (60%) of the AWWs stated receiving training from Block Resource Group. However it was stated that there was a large time gap between two trainings of AWWs. Similarly the supervisors do not get the regular training on ECE, Udaan, hence they lack efficiency and interest in ECE.

Availability of kit and reference book

Majority of the AWWs stated receiving Udaan kit at the AWCs, however only half of them stated receiving reference book.

Time taken to complete one theme

In terms of time taken to complete one theme, varied responses were stated by AWWs. Some (20%) of them took on an average 45-60 minutes whereas some (23%) spent 7-8 days for completion of one theme.

However during monitoring visit of the AWCs, it was observed that longer time taken to complete one theme does not fulfill the purpose of using Udaan kit, its purpose is to enable children learn according to the various themes catering to all types of development of children (cognitive, physical, linguistic, creative and social development). AWWs merely used cards to enable children to identify birds, animals, colour, numbers and alphabets.

Number of cards used

While interaction with the AWWs, less than half (40%) of the AWWs were aware about the number of cards being used at the AWC. They stated that out of 250 cards, not more than 30 cards were being used. Among them 14% used merely one card, 11% used 2-3 cards. Around 8% used 4-5 cards and about 9% used 10 cards. Very few (2-3%) AWWs used cards ranging from 12- 30.

Repetition of the cards and themes

Among 40% who mentioned they used the cards, repetition of the cards ranged between once to 12 times. Very few (5.2%) repeated the card 9-12 times, 23% repeated for 5 times, 39% repeated the card four times, 68% of the AWWs repeated the card three times, whereas about half (52%) of them repeated the card 2 times.

Availability and use of locally available items

Of total AWCs covered under study, in 48% AWCs local items were available and in 43% AWCs, these were used. As observed in some of the AWCs they make use of rubber tyres as a play material. They also made use of beads, dry leaves for making the objects.

Support from the helper

Helper is available in most (92%) of the AWCs, most of the helpers were involved in cooking supplementary food, fetching water. They seldom help and involve children in meaningful ECE activities; very few (20%) mobilise the children for undertaking creative activities at AWCs.



Discussion with parents on child development

Most of the AWWs undertake discussion with the parents regarding child development however topics discussed were restricted on nutritional and health status of children and mothers, half of them motivated parents to send their children to AWCs, merely one fourth of the AWWs discussed early childhood education.

Table 10: Maintenance of Udaan kit

Maintenance of Udaan kit was observed in all 150 AWCs

Maintenance of cards	Numbers	Percentage
Availability of 250 cards and 50 themes	97	64
Proper grouping of cards	69	46
Cards in Readable condition	130	86
Cards kept in box/polythene/cupboard	87	58

It was found out that more than half (64%) of the AWCs had complete set of cards. In less than half (46%) of the AWCs they grouped the cards appropriately. In most (86%) of the AWCs cards were in readable conditions. However the findings pointed out a very important aspect; the kit material was in very good condition, pointing out the fact that the material were not being used! The kit was available but was being used by about half (54.6%) of the AWWs. Reasons being maintaining it and avoid damage. It was also observed that AWWs kept the kit in the cupboard most of the time and they feared giving it to the children to avoid its wear and tear. It was however heartening to observe a very creative way of keeping the Udaan cards in Jagtakanpa and Laudaa AWCs in Patharia block, Bilaspur district.



Table 11: Perception of supervisors on Udaan**(N=18)**

Indicators		F
1	1.1 Heard of Udaan	18
	1.2 Availed Udaan training	14
	1.3 When	
	a) 2008	1
	b) 2009	4
	c) 2010	1
	d) 2011	4
	e) 2012	3
	f) Don't know	1
	1.4 Duration	2
	a) 1 day	7
	b) 3 days	4
	c) 5 days	1
	d) 6 days	
1.5 By whom		
a) SCERT	6	
b) BRC	5	
c) Rajiv Gandhi Siksha Mission	1	
d) SSA	1	
e) Trainer (Raipur)	1	
2	2.1 Availability of Udaan kit	14
	2.2 Efforts made to use Udaan kit	
	a) Discussion and demonstration in sector meeting	15
	b) Discussion on Udaan during monitoring visit	15
	c) Distribution of Udaan kit	10
	d) Training on Udaan kit	11
	e) Support for developing assistive material	6
3	3.1 Training on Udaan by AWW	18
	3.2 Duration of training	
	a) 1 Day	2
	b) 3 Days	8
	c) 5 Days	2
	d) 6 Days	2
	e) 7 Days	1
	f) Others	3
3.3 Training organised by		
f) BRC	9	
g) Education Department	1	
h) Rajiv Gandhi Siksha Mission	1	
i) SSA	2	
j) WCD	2	
k) Others (Don't know)	3	
4.	Use of Udaan kit by AWW	13

All the supervisors had known of the Udaan, 77% of them had received training on Udaan. Half of them stated receiving training by SCERT and Block Resource Coordinator. Supervisors were aware about whether AWWs had received training on Udaan. All the supervisors stated that AWWs received training on Udaan. Half of the supervisors stated that AWWs received training for three days and training was provided by Block Resource

Coordinators (BRCs). About three fourth of them stated that Udaan is available in their respective AWCs. Most of the supervisors stated that Udaan is being used by the AWWs of their respective areas.

Efforts made to ensure use of Udaan kit

Most of the supervisors stated that they demonstrated the use of Udaan kit in the sector meeting and during the monitoring visit; half of them distributed the Udaan kit and trained the AWWs on the use of Udaan. However during the monitoring visit, while interacting with the four supervisors of Jaspur and Durg district, they stated that they had received training on Udaan, however the quality of the training was poor due to which they are not able to guide the AWWs for effective use of Udaan. Moreover they are over loaded with the work so they are not able to monitor the use of Udaan.

Perception of CDPOs and DPOs on Udaan

CDPOs and DPOs stated that they distributed Udaan kits, however they were not aware regarding number of AWCs, Udaan kit was distributed. Most of the CDPOs and DPOs stated that they review Udaan kit during sector meetings and monitoring visits at AWCs.

Table 12: Perception of Udaan trainers on Udaan

(N=15)

Indicators		F
1	Associated with Udaan	14
	If Yes, Efforts undertaken	
	a) Associated in preparation of Udaan kit	2
	b) Associated in organising training of Udaan	12
2	No. of days of Udaan training received	
	a) 5 days	6
	b) 21 days	7
	c) 28 days	1
3	By whom the training was provided	
	a) SCERT	12
	b) State resource Group, Raipur	2
4	4.1 Training conducted for AWWs	6
	4.2 Training conducted for Supervisors	10
	4.3 Training conducted for others	4
5	Specific characteristics of Udaan kit	
	a) Colorful and attractive	8
	b) Useful for ECE	4
	c) Useful for Child development and motivation	3
6	Efforts to know effect of training	
	a) Monitoring/observation/review	12
	b) Others	3
7	Opinion on role of Udaan in effective facilitation of ECE	
	a) Useful in child development	4
	b) Most useful for ECE	8
	c) Others	3

Majority of the Udaan trainers stated that they were associated with the Udaan, most of them had organised training on Udaan, and half of each of them stated receiving training on Udaan for either 5 days or 21 days respectively. Most (12) of them stated receiving training by SCERT. Thereafter they organised training of various functionaries. Most (10) of them stated providing training to supervisors.

When asked about specific characteristics of Udaan, most of them perceived Udaan kit as colorful and attractive. They also stated that they monitor the effect of training at AWCs. However, while interaction with nine AWWs and four supervisors none of them stated post training follow up, mentoring support or monitoring the effect of training by Udaan trainers.

Outcome of the Udaan as perceived by functionaries

Responses of the various functionaries was undertaken in order to find out the outcome after using the Udaan kit.

Table 13: Perception of functionaries on outcome of Udaan

Indicators	AWWs (N=150)		Supervisors (N=18)
	F	%	F
Themes related answers given by children	83	55.3	0
Started using locally available items (beads, pebbles, leaves) for creative development	64	88.8	0
Interest of the children has been increased in learning	134	89.3	16
Children stay for longer duration of time	70	46.6	16
Parents have started sending children to AWCs	76	50.6	11

Above table indicates the perception of various functionaries. About half of the AWWs were aware about usefulness of cards in terms of children giving answers related to themes and had started using locally available items for creative development of children. However supervisors were not aware about it as they did not monitor the ECE activities at the AWCs. They had a brief idea on children’s and parents’ increased interest at the AWCs after the introduction of the Udaan.

When asked to CDPOs and DPOs about the outcome of the Udaan they were not aware about it. While interaction with the DPO during monitoring visit at the AWCs, one of them said that he had not heard of Udaan.

Measuring impact on Children

The outcome amongst children was assessed among 60 children from the 50 AWCs which were selected for observation. A School Readiness Test was used to assess the school preparedness amongst children 3 to 6 years of age. The test assessed children’s knowledge and ability to follow instructions on 10 parameters mentioned in the table below.

School Readiness instrument (SRI) is a standardized instrument consisting of range of activities related to identifying of the pictures, alphabets and numbers. There is a score sheet in which the child is rated according to his/her performance. It is mainly used for the children above 3 years of age.

This instrument was used in order to assess the impact of Pre-Primary Informal Education provided at AWCs to the children. In the present study 60 children above the age group of three were selected for assessing the impact of ECE. Some of the findings are mentioned below-

Table 14: Impact of ECE on children N=60

		Aware/knowledgeable/can follow instructions	%
		F	
1	Pre-spatial concept	52	86.7
2	Number concept	31	51.7
3	Matching of numbers	26	43.3
4	Following of instructions	23	38.3
5	Sentence making	22	36.7
6	Complete pattern of shape described	15	25.0
7	Imitation of the objects shown	12	20.0
8	Matching of sound situations	8	13.3
9	Classification of bird and animals	4	6.7
10	Sequential thinking	2	3.3

The data revealed that majority (86.7%) of the children performed well on pre-spatial concept. More than half also were familiar with the number concept and 38.3% could follow instructions given. However, a fourth or less could complete pattern of a shape described and imitate objects shown and even lower percentage could match sound situations, classify all birds and animals or think sequentially.

An attempt was made to score the performance on the indicators chosen for each for these themes. The cumulative score showed that all the four children from Raipur district scored higher. The proportion of good performers was marginally higher than that of poor performers in Bilaspur, Bastar, Dhamtari and Jaspur. The number of poor performers was more than good performers in Koriya, Kanker and Durg. While this was the trend based on SRI test of 60 children in 50 AWCs, the fact that the children were of different age groups and there was variable representation of districts in the sample of children assessed precludes any further conclusions from the test results. The trend and ECE effect on learning and internalization of each theme amongst children need substantiation through a study focused on ECE related outcomes amongst the children enrolled at the AWC.

Effectiveness of Udaan in facilitation of ECE

Table: 15 Perception of functionaries on effectiveness of ECE

Indicators	AWWs (N=150)		Supervisor s (N=18)	CDPO s (N=9)	DPOs (N=8)	PRI (N=60)
	F	%				
Increased interest of children in learning	134	89.3	16	3	1	0
Increased number of children at AWCs/ children stay for longer time at AWCs	16	10.6	11	2	1	0
Parents started sending their children to AWCs	76	50.6	14	1	1	0
Started making action plan on Udaan	0	0	0	0	0	6

Above table indicates that AWWs and supervisors were aware about effectiveness of Udaan on ECE. Most of the AWWs and supervisors stated that Udaan helped to increase interest of children in learning, whereas some of the AWWs and supervisors stated that parents had started sending their children to AWCs. Most of CDPOs and DPOs were not aware about the effectiveness of Udaan on ECE.

Some of them stated that Udaan is effective for child development, however no concrete responses were received as how Udaan supports in effective facilitation of ECE.

Perception of PRI members

Role of PRI members is to regularly visit the AWCs and review the services provided at the AWCs and support the AWWs in organisation of various activities. They are supposed to help in provision of play material and organise regular meetings with the parents in order to discuss the progress of the children. Most of the interviewed PRI members stated that they motivated the parents to send their children to AWCs, observed the ECE activities undertaken at the AWCs and helped the AWWs in carrying out activities. About half of them stated that they provided support in maintenance of the AWC building.

However, interactions with the AWWs revealed the contrary and it was found that PRI members did not show sufficient interest in implementation of ECE activities due to which they hardly provided any support. Also, in less than one fifth of the AWCs, adolescent girls from the community helped the AWWs in carrying out the ECE activities.

In an interaction with the PRI the field, the research team also found very few (about 6) PRI members monitored ECE activities and use of Udaan material. Few of them stated organising Udaanyatra in their respective villages. They mentioned being overloaded with the survey activities of the village due to which they were unable to monitor the activities of the AWCs. In Durg, Jaspur and Raipur district, PRI members stated that they were not even aware about the Udaan programme/approach. They were overloaded with the survey activities of the village hence they were not able to monitor the ECE activities undertaken at the AWCs.

Table 16: Perception of functionaries on Inter-Departmental Co-ordination

Indicators	AWWs (N=150)	Supervis ors (N=18)	CDPOs (N=09)	DPOs (N=08)
Availability of material – teaching/equipments/ from SCERT	140	15	5	3
Coordination efforts made				
SSA provided training on ECE	140	17	3	3
Community participation – PRI members monitoring and provision of infrastructure	0	2	2	0
Visit by teachers for monitoring ECE activities	0	0	3	0
Coordination support required				
Regular training on ECE and Udaan from education department	54	12	5	3
Regular monitoring by education department on ECE	5	6	6	0
Effective teaching material required	3	6	5	0
Effective teaching material required	116	4	5	0

Awareness about the role and efforts made by various departments in strengthening ECE

AWWs and supervisors stated that training was being organised by education department; however most of them were not aware about the role of PRI, school teachers in order to strengthen the ECE activities.

Coordination required

AWWs felt a need of regular training and availability of effective material on ECE at the AWCs however most of them did not feel the need of involving other stakeholders such as PRI, community members and school teachers in strengthening ECE, apart from the training and teaching material, supervisors and most of the CDPOs felt a need of involving other local stakeholders such as PRI and school teachers to strengthen ECE. DPOs did not state about support required from other department except training.

Challenges faced in implementation of ECE and Udaan

Table 17: Challenges faced by Functionaries in effective implementation of ECE and Udaan

Indicators		F
1	AWWs (N=150)	
a	Children don't come to AWCs	87
b	Children don't stay whole time at AWCs	76
c	Lack of educational Material	49
d	Lack of space	49
e	Lack of Budget	27
f	Lack of time table	26
2	Supervisors (N=18)	
a)	Following of roaster	8
b)	Reasons for not follow-up of roaster	
	- Work load	8
	- AWCs situated in distant areas	5
	- More number of AWCs	3
	- Lack of transportation facilities	5
C)	Gaps in implementation of Udaan	
	- Udaan kit difficult use and understand	4
	- Lack of enough teaching, educational and play material	1
	- Lack of regular training	2
3	CDPOs (N=9)	
	-Lack of training on Udaan and ECE	5
	-Lack of budget for organizing Udaan activities	6
4	DPOs (N=8)	
	-Lack of Interest of the AWW in ECE activities	5
	-Lack of Monitoring of the AWCs and could not follow the roaster	8
	-Additional work burden of other departments	7
5	PRI Members (N=60)	
	- Lack of knowledge on ECE and Udaan	40
6	Udaan trainers (N=15)	
	- Supervisors and AWWs do not come for training	13

The above table indicates the challenges faced by the various functionaries in effective implementation of Udaan.

Half of the AWWs stated that children did not stay at the AWCs for entire duration of time which affected planning and organising ECE activities. Also there was lack of teaching material and lack of budget for maintenance and wear and tear of the material. As regards providing supportive supervision, the supervisory staff shared with the research team that they do develop the roster for AWC visits, but they are not able to follow it due to work pressure and other administrative work.

All the three supervisory cadre functionaries also perceived that the training was a weak component due to which it becomes difficult for effective implementation of ECE, especially Udaan. Regular orientation and training was not being organised, moreover quality of the training was also poor due to which they forgot the topics covered in the training.

Supervisors felt that cards in the Udaan are complicated to use and need to be simplified. During field visit, while interaction with two supervisors at Jaspur, they stated that ECE was a neglected component in ICDS as major focus lied on improving the health and nutrition status of children, moreover there is over-burden of generating reports.

Half (5) of the supervisors perceived that due to lack of community participation and lack of education among parents, they do not send their children to AWCs. Other issues such as interdepartmental coordination which affects ECE implementation, however they did not mention about the types of coordination problems among the departments CDPOs did not perceive Udaan challenging to use as they were not aware about.

Challenges faced by DPOs



Training and skill of AWWs

Educational level of AWWs, lack of skills and hence the interest of AWW affects ECE activities. In addition, lack of regular and quality training hinders vibrant ECE at the AWCs.

Lack of monitoring The DPOs stated that they were not able to follow the roaster and monitor the activities of the AWCs due to additional charge, more of administrative work and also due to unplanned meetings.

Lack of budget

There is a lack of budget with ICDS for ECE due to which it was difficult to purchase teaching or educational material or replace the damaged cards, toys or material.

Challenges faced by PRI

PRI members did not state any concrete challenge as they did not perceive Udaan as an

important component of ECE.

Challenges faced by Udaan Trainers

On asking Udaan trainers they stated that AWWs and supervisors did not come for training and even if they came they did not stay at the AWCs for entire duration thereafter they complained of not getting regular training.

The evaluation team reviewed the Udaan kit material

Some observations on the Udaan kit

Udaan kit is primarily developed through a comprehensive process to facilitate preschool activities with children and creating awareness among adolescents and parents. It contains variety of 50 themes and tools such as cards/story/plays/puzzles etc. With regards to the content of Udaan kit, there are 250 cards around 50 themes, such as fruits, vegetables, animals, vehicles etc. Aiming to foster the overall development (physical, cognitive, social, creativity and language) of young children, it is an interesting; informative and good source for systematically facilitating the preschool activities. Presentation is child friendly and cards

are colorful. The picture stories and rhymes and poems related to the theme cards are useful for making learning interesting.

The curriculum focuses on play way method of learning and lays out activities for children in different age groups.

Reference Book is informative and provides specific information about child development and guidance to the AWW. However, the text is too much and language is difficult to understand for AWWs with low educational background. Though efforts are made to give reference of cards of Udaan kit but it was difficult to relate. No strong linkages/guideline for use of Udaan kit was found in the manual.

Packaging and maintenance: The entire material is packaged in a box, which is very heavy and difficult to carry and store in an AWC, where space is a constraint. Maintenance of variety of cards and classification and rearranging after one use is difficult. Cards are sticky and not easy to take out. The cards are tied theme wise with a rubber band and difficult to club together once they are opened for use. Also they can be easily torn or damaged by children, reusing over the time can lead to affect the readability. They need to be coded and packaged using a metal clip (used in files) and made simpler for an AWW.

- The kit has 250 cards, but it is not very clear, for what purpose and how one can use, is not specified. There are several sets of cards, but there is no specific instruction for which age and multiple use/innovation of cards. Only some cards (mathematic) have some instructions.
- Some images are not very clear and contextual such as Hamara sharier (our body), in communication cards also, parents are Urban, and metal elements might be difficult for the tribal/rural children to identify/understand.
- Gender stereotypes were observed specifically in the traditional plays and in the theme of family (Males are sitting and women are serving).
- In collage cards, there are no specific guidelines for facilitating activities.
- A commercial product such as Parle G is promoted.
- Cards do not contain any specific information on specific age use groups/or if same card can be use for different age groups.
- Every card has some specific symbol (picture) but its purpose is not clear.
- Total number of card is not mentioned on any set.
- There is no replacement tip for user/AWW if any part of the kit material is lost, torn or damaged who, when, how will it be replaced?
- In the card ORS solution is mentioned which is not followed now a days
- Too many themes and a lot of repetition. It is impossible to teach the child so much of the 50 themes
- Too complex for AWW as well as a pre-school child
- Too much information which is difficult for such a small child to comprehend

- Concepts under different themes are illogical
- In festival card - Picture of Lemon, Picture of orange instead of lemon
- Sugar looks like salt. Basically pictures are not clearly serving their purpose
- Portion on HAMARI SANSKRITI LOK-KALAIYAN is a very good innovation but VESH BHUSHA can be a part of it and need not be a separate topic
- In the 50 themes a lot of it can be grouped together
- Primarily only 5 themes should be there
- Everything should be very basic and simple. A child of 6 years cannot comprehend something so complex
- Knowledge of various other themes can be given as and when the child comes across it on incorporated into the above 5 themes like talking about festivals as and when they come.
- Cards on mathematical problems are too complex. A child below six cannot do problem solving. Concentrate more on exercises of classifying, serration, conservation tasks.
- In the snakes and ladder cards, action of crying and being sad has been portrayed negatively, not appropriate as it can be in a positive way as well
- The booklet specifically talks about theme web, but looking at the cards only, it is difficult to group them like that
- The manual is very descriptive but without the cards one will not be able to use them for their specific purpose
- Principles of development are mainly five; Physical, Cooperative, Social, Emotional and Language **Emotional not included**
- If the kit is for 80% rural population a lot of it is irrelevant. Also pictures used are irrelevant in many of the themes. A lot of commercialized objects are used.
- HAMARA SHARIR, What if the child does not use nail cutter or ear bud. There should be culturally relevant objects
- Showing a tub when the child might be having a bath sitting next to a well
- Pictures used, the poem written and the theme name, all three have no co relation
- Methodology used in different cards can be used optimally but it requires a proper understanding by the AWW and also proper training.
- HAMARA MADADGAR has a negative connotation. These are different occupations which a child may take up as an adult but these give a perception that they are there to help us one must not aspire to become one of them
- HAMARI SHALA- Pictures of pen should not be used at all. Picture of children sitting on benches used irrelevant. Most anganwadi children sit on the floor on mats and sometimes on the bare floor itself

- Concept of healthy eating habits can be promoted through the cards
- Ways of preventing or stopping fire (Fire extinguisher) not relevant in a rural context
- Use of kerosene oil for fire should have been mentioned or wood not LPG Cylinder
- The JUNGLE Theme cards should have had more pictures of a forest rather than trees, animals and rivers
- Some pictures should be used for the sole purpose of knowledge. So that children learn about things that they haven't seen or may not see but again keeping it to the basic. The AWW should be well oriented with the purpose of the Udaan kit
- All commercialized, pictures of locally available used toys should be used
- PARYAVARAN SARA KSHAN- Mentioning conservation tasks that is feasible so that a child of such a young age understands and incorporates. Things like not wasting water, not creating a mess, not burning rubbish but making composites, not wasting any resource



Recommendations and Way Forward

The Ministry of Women and Child Development of the **Government of India (GoI)** has **approved the National Policy of ECE on September 20, 2013**. The main focus of the policy is to improve the provision and quality of ECE services in the country for children below the age of six years. Several actions have already been initiated to strengthen services related to ECE within ICDS in particular and the ones provided by private and voluntary sectors. All the states of the country have been given a mandate to prepare a state specific ECE Policy and an Action Plan. Within the restructuring of ICDS, the ministry has already initiated changes to bring quality improvements in the programme. In the proposed scheme, ECE component is given a priority. The strategies for this comprises, expansion of services for universalised access, strengthening curriculum, enhancing skills of service providers, improved infrastructural facilities and availability of age and culturally appropriate learning materials and play equipment at AWCs.

In the above backdrop the findings of the present study are of great relevance and significance both for making changes in the policy and action related to ECE in the state of Chhattisgarh. Nonetheless, the main objective of the present evaluation was to ascertain status of ECE within the state and in ICDS in particular and the use of Udaan in strengthening ECE. Further, it was envisaged that findings will provide evidence based information to bridge the gaps in implementation of ECE and suggest measure to improve the quality by making specific recommendations. Accordingly the lessons learnt from the empirical evidence and qualitative data collected from interaction with varied stakeholders has been used to arrive at some major recommendations that could be considered by the nodal departments of ECE (WCD and Education) and its structures for making a roadmap to change ECE scenario within the state.

Recommendations

Analysis of qualifications of AWWs indicated that more and more educated women are joining this cadre. More than 50 per cent workers were matriculate in the present study. This changing trend suggests that eligibility criteria for recruitment of AWWs may be raised to matriculation with suitable incentives and promotion avenues for integrating them into the ICDS infrastructure.

It was disappointing to note that CDPOs were not able to perform their supportive and mentoring role effectively. They emerged only as inspectors and administrative officials in the study. The training syllabus of CDPOs has gone through a revolutionary change and has elements which equip them with skills to provide continuing education to AWWs. It should be mandatory for the Project Officers to organise frequent training workshops at the project level. The proposal of establishing a resource centre at CDPO's office requires systematic implementation and monitoring by DWCD.

Supervisors in the study were found to have more than 30 AWs under their charge. It is too large a number to provide meaningful guidance and support to the functionaries at the grass

roots level in a participatory way during their visits to AWWs. The double or additional charge is detrimental for the supportive role she is expected to perform. There is a need to create a post of a substitute Supervisor in every project to manage this problem and also strengthen supervision.

Udaan Initiative in the Context of ECE in Chhattisgarh

Anganwadi centre has been accepted as a centre that promotes development of children during early years. Further interaction with all the key stakeholders including AWWs, Supervisors, CDPOs, DPOs and PRI members highlighted their perception about importance of ECE to ensure school readiness of the young child.

The evaluation findings also revealed a positive impact of Udaan on child development; the feedback was a strong base of advocacy as the results (as stated by 89.3% of AWWs and 15 out of 18 supervisors interviewed) showed that, since Udaan was introduced in AWCs, parents had started sending their young children to the AWCs, the learning at the AWCs became interesting and children stayed longer at the AWC.

Looking at these encouraging results of Udaan, it is recommended that the state may consider integrating it across all AWCs of the state. However the following measures are strongly recommended as a future strategy.

1. Restructuring and simplification of the Udaan material

During 2010-11 and onwards, though the Udaan packages were distributed on a large scale, uniform/quality training and monitoring was not institutionalized. More over, the maintenance and replacement/replenishment of the material emerged as a crucial issue and the main reason for the material not being optimally used, reducing the Udaan programme to one of material supply to the ICDS centres. This gave clear evidence of the need for decentralization of the development of learning material with active involvement of AWWs and parents/community.

It is recommended that the Udaan material is restructured and revised in the local socio-cultural (material useful in Raipur may be different than the need in Bastar) context with a gender equality perspective with involvement of the users, especially the AWW to enhance ownership and use.

The evaluation also revealed that AWWs are able to use a maximum number of about 20 themes cards. The kit can be reviewed and restructured; one way is to divide the kit for different age groups, the themes covered progressively from simple to complex as per age of the child, the other way could be to reduce the content to just 10-15 themes and accordingly provide cards along with simple booklet to provide step-by-step guidance to AWWs on using the material. The matter on the cards can also be highlighted in various forms such as posters which can be used for revision and continuous reminder of the theme.

Packaging can be made user friendly.

2. Training and skill building of AWWs

Without appropriate training and skill building the AWWs are unable to use them effectively. The number of cards and themes in the Udaan kit should be reduced or repackaged as per the level of anganwadi workers and the material could be further simplified to enable the AWW to use it effectively. The provision of the material should be decentralized.

3. Improve availability of ECE/PSE material

There is tremendous scope for improving the implementation of ECE/PSE component, using Udaan material. Efforts are needed to provide a minimum set of appropriate educational aids and material, including Udaan Kit at every AWC. The AWW should be trained to plan a ECE/PSE activities on a daily, weekly and monthly basis using the material as a guide and conduct a mix of activities; indoor and outdoor which can facilitate various developmental aspects of a child. The theme cards can be used very effectively for facilitating nutrition, health, personal hygiene and environmental sanitation and desirable civic sense lessons.

Availability of material for play and joyful learning was observed to be one of the major demands of AWWs for being able to conduct ECE/PSE activities effectively. The State Government should take appropriate measures to streamline supplies for bringing ECE/PSE on a priority at the AWC. Decentralized System should be developed for need assessment, procurement and supply of teaching-learning and play material and replacement. Education material needs to be adequate and of good quality. Budget line be added for ECE/PSE material and it should be ensured that material is available for ECE activities at every AWC. Some amount of flexible/untied fund should be allocated to AWCs for purchasing and maintenance of the education material locally.

Distribution of Udaan Package

In the initial phase; during 2009-10, for improving pre-primary education in AWCs, Udaan package was distributed in 80 development blocks of Chhattisgarh. After robust piloting the Udaan package was introduced in 30,000 AWCs across all districts in 2010. The key stakeholders including SECRT, DWCD, SSA/ RGSM since then have been distributing the package at scale. European Commission had supported printing of the packages.

The findings indicate the problems as emerged from the study. Out of the 150 AWCs covered under the evaluation, Udaan was available in 140 (93%) of the AWCs. Out of these about one fourth of the AWCs did not have the complete set of cards along with the Guide book. They were not able to use the material without the guidebook and training on how to use the kit. The crucial issue is completeness of the kit along with guide book and appropriate training.

WCD if decides to use the kit, mechanisms must be set up for uninterrupted distribution and regular training and monitoring for its use.

Despite availability, Udaan kit material was being used only in about half (55%) of the AWCs. It was stated by the workers that if items are lost or torn there was no way to get the items replenished or written off. As a result, it was observed that AWWs kept the kit in the cupboard most of the time and cards were not given to children to avoid its wear and tear.

Some clear instructions need to be given to this aspect and it should be ensured that the kit is used as frequently as possible and is made part of the curriculums as well as daily time table of activities by the WCD department.

4. Human Resource Development and Capacity Building

As a part of the Study 60 Children were interviewed using the School Readiness Instrument (WHO). They did not perform well on several indicators, such as classification of all birds and animals and cognitive skills. This emphasizes the need for conducting creative and cognitive activities as an integral part of PSE/ECE. Training of AWWs is thus crucial for ensuring effective ECE/PSE.

During observation of AWCs and through interaction with the AWWs, it was noted that the AWWs were overwhelmed with the Udaan kit material and did not feel confident, especially those who were not oriented and trained in using the kit and all items as given in the Guide book. More over the daily schedule was so packed that the kit material was used only when some time was available.

Without appropriate training and skill building they were unable to use the material effectively. For optimal utilization of Udaan kit, all the AWWs need to be reoriented and thoroughly trained. Training should be provided to AWWs and supervisors at regular intervals by ECE experts; demonstration of the Udaan kit should be done regularly with enough time devoted to hands on experience. It was suggested that supervisors should be given the responsibility to hold/demonstrate formal ECE/PSE sessions regularly in AWCs. Rigorous monitoring by CDPOs and active participation of Education functionaries can further improve implementation of this component.

Training of AWWs

All the AWWs should be provided with a standardized and qualitative training on Udaan; perspective building on ECE and Udaan, in relation to ECE, building knowledge on importance of ECE and areas of child development, skills on planning and implementing ECE activities, use of Udaan material. In addition, regular (monthly meetings can be used as forum) for refresher trainings, demonstration on themes should be organised. Some specific suggestions for capacity building are given below:

- Minimum one month training on preschool education should be organised for all AWWs. Training should be participatory in nature. Training methods should include audio/visual material, time for gaining hands on experience, field and exposure visits.
- Short duration training on various topics can be organized. Training should be organised in small groups so that attention can be given on individual AWWs.
- Specific capacity building plans should be developed for Semi literate AWWs. Training on regular intervals should be organised. On job support by training institutions should be institutionalized and there should be a scope for further study for AWWs who are semi literate.
- To ensure quality of the training, technical institutes such as SCERT should be linked with the training institutes. DIET should provide ECE related trainings to AWW and Supervisors. A cadre of Qualified/capable trainers identified from training institutes /DIET should be developed who can later organize refresher trainings on a regular interval

The staff position in accordance with the ICDS should be reviewed and essential action for filling up the vacant posts and creating new positions (if required) should be done on priority basis.

Selection processes of the AWWs needs to be reviewed and streamlined. Entrance/Aptitude test can be taken to understand her interest specifically in working with children and as indicated in the scheme, a local worker be only taken to ensure effective functioning.

Training of Block and District level Officers

All the Supervisors and CDPOs should be trained as trainers for providing continuous training and mentoring support to AWW. Perspective and skills building training should focus on their specific role in emphasizing ECE. Following this, minimum of one refresher training a year should be organised for Supervisors/CDPOs/DPOs. Exchange and exposure visits to ECE programmes and AWCs in their own and other blocks/districts/states should be

organized to facilitate new learning. Joint trainings of concerned departments should also be organized.

The Supervisors and CDPOs need to be trained to provide continuous mentoring and supportive supervision to improve skills, interest and confidence of the AWWs. It should be mandatory for the Project Officers to organise frequent training workshops at the project level. The concept of establishing a resource centre at CDPO's office also requires serious consideration and policy decision.

Appropriate orientation, training and refresher training at regular intervals with continuous mentoring on Udaan and joyful learning will help in improving the ECE. While DWCD is a nodal department, involvement of SCERT/Collaboration with the Dept. of Education for optimum use of expertise and experience of SCERT for continuous technical support can be solicited. Incentives should be given to supervisors and CDPOs to make use of Diploma courses on ECE/PSE available in the state or of IGNOU to be professionally better equipped for implementing ECE within ICDS.

Need for State level Technical Resource Cell who could work with both DWCD and Education department towards strengthening ECE in the state was strongly expressed.

5. Strengthening Monitoring and supportive supervision of ECE/PSE activities

Out of all the services available under ICDS, PSE/ECE, one of the most important components of ICDS was given least priority.

The evaluation revealed that generally there was lack of monitoring on implementation of pre-school education activities by ICDS officials as well as lack of competencies among the AWWs. There was no mechanism or tool to assess the progress of the children in ECE/PSE age wise. A need was identified for strong monitoring and mentoring in order to institutionalize optimum utilization of Udaan.

The time given for PSE by Anganwadi worker was very less due to her own departmental work load, other duties allotted to her. AWW should be made responsible for AWC activity only. Forums for expressing her views/challenges should be created. Hand holding and mentoring support should be provided regularly. A reward system for regular motivation/appreciation/certificate on progressive achievement and good work should be developed and implemented at all levels.

Monitoring and mentoring should be an integral part of all trainings. A system for centre wise review and grading should be developed. Training centre/DIET/Academic institutions should adopt the weakest centres and provide required support in facilitating PSE specifically to the centres.

Supervision should be strengthened through appropriate measures. A supervisor should not have more than 20 AWCs under her charge. There is a need therefore, to create a post of a substitute supervisor in every project.

6. Community Involvement

It is imperative that community representatives, especially PRI members, parents play a critical role in AWC activities. PRIs are involved in a number of ways to support ICDS programme activities. For example, AWWs and Anganwadi Helpers (AWHs) were selected by CDPOs on the recommendations of Gram Sabha. Selection of the site for construction of AWC building was also done by Gram Sabha. Involvement of PRI, however, depended to a large extent on the rapport between the AWW/Supervisor of the area and the PRI members

and, therefore, varies from village to village. However, some of the functionaries; DPOs/CDPOs expressed difficulty in avoiding the pressure imposed by local politicians.

Strategic alliances should be created to ensure involvement of individuals/agencies with political alliances.

Looking at the positive impact of UdaanYatra, where approximately Rupees Fourteen lakh were mobilized from local communities for improvements in the centres (repair and maintenance, material purchase etc.) efforts needed to be institutionalized to ensure continued support and involvement of the community for ECE.

For effective management of the AWC a village level AWC Management Committee could be formed involving parents/PRIs etc. which could be involved in procurement, monitoring and supporting AWW for effective implementation. The feasibility of involving adolescent girls and boys in ICDS; ECE/PSE activities received some support from observation during the study. Grand parents may also be invited to interact with children, story telling etc.

Parents and Panchayat members should be regularly oriented towards importance of ECE for increasing community participation, especially monitoring of AWCs.

Locally popular social/recreational events may be organized for group formation and collecting parents at the AWC for ECE awareness. Utilization of folk media such as street plays, puppet shows, Yatras etc. need to be included in the training curricula of functionaries to strengthen their skills in community awareness and mobilization effectively.

Communication strategy for mass awareness about importance of ECE in Child development should be developed and regularly implemented.

7. Policy related

The new National ECCE Policy, approved by the Cabinet, Government of India and the restructured ICDS put a lot of emphasis on making the AWCs as vibrant learning centres for young children. Resources are not a constraint, people also demonstrated increasing awareness and quest for education of their children, which was evident by the growing number of private nurseries and pre-school centres, which were full with children. The data has shown that there are several AWCs, especially in and around urban and semi urban areas which face the low registration of children as they were enrolled in private nurseries. This was observed during evaluation team's monitoring visit to AWCs and while interaction with the DPOs.

While the Government of Chhattisgarh has demonstrated its commitment by drafting a State ECCE Policy and allocation of resources for developing child friendly AWCs, it was crucial that ECE becomes the state priority, with DWCD taking a lead role by implementing it through ICDS.

In the second half of 2010, a decision was taken at the state level that ECE should be part of the WCD Department. This had the effect of SCERT/Education Department becoming 'less active' on ECE since it was seen to be belonging to the WCD.

In accordance with this decision at state level that DWCD is the key Nodal department responsible for implementation of the ECE component in ICDS, therefore it is very important to enhance the readiness and competencies of the various levels of functionaries and the DWCD. Being the nodal department for ECE, DWCD may like to develop appropriate strategies to undertake leadership role and be proactively involved in all issues related to

ECE. However, in view of the existing capacity and infrastructure it is important to appoint a **State level Technical Agency**, for a period of minimum three years which can work with concerned departments for system reforms and support DWCD.

It is recommended that the State should have the ECE Cell like one in Ministry of WCD, govt. of India and suggest about how to develop institutional mechanism for a technical Cell for ECE.

Interface with Department of Education will be a crucial step to mobilize technical resources of SCERT and its long withstanding experience with ECE and Udaan in particular. The convergence and coordination can go a long way in strengthening ECE in the state.

To strengthen ECE, a State ECE Resource Group should be established which can facilitate state level strategic planning, work with concerned; DWCD and Education Departments for ensuring quality of the training, learning resource material and facilitate joint planning and review of implementation, develop monitoring mechanism, evaluation and research and facilitate coordination/ convergence, in the state. This unit can be supported by the Technical Agency. Professional networks that promote a “knowledge-sharing culture” should be created and facilitated as they are of critical importance in providing effective policy advocacy and practice improvement efforts.

To clarify the role of various stakeholders in ECE, role directory of all partner departments could be developed and regularly reviewed.

Mechanisms for regular dialogue; joint planning and review of ECE/PSE activities among all the partner departments (DWCD/Education/Panchayat) should be developed at all levels.

The positive image and impact of ICDS on health and nutrition of children and women can be leveraged for education; ECE/PSE.

The study has provided substantial empirical information with respect to implementation of Udaan programme within ICDS, its beneficiaries and the impact of the various components, especially the Udaan package consisting of learning material, training on the ICDS functionaries as well as children and community. It was hoped that this study will add to body of knowledge and understanding of importance of ECE/PSE and would result in important policy decisions in the state.

We must take concerted steps at all levels to strengthen ECE with in ICDS programme so that every child's right to develop to his full potential and grow optimally is realized.





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About CHETNA

CHETNA* meaning “awareness” in several Indian languages and an acronym for Centre for Health Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness, is a non-government support organisation based in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Established in 1980, CHETNA addresses issues of women’s health and development in different stages of their lives from a “Rights” perspective. CHETNA is an activity of the Nehru Foundation for Development, which is a public charitable trust, registered under the Bombay Public Trust Act 1950.

CHETNA supports Government and Non-Government Organisations (GO and NGOs) through building the management capacities of educationists /health practitioners/supervisors/ managers enabling them to implement their programmes related to children, young people and women from a holistic and gender perspective and advocate for people centred policies. Our core activities are capacity building, forging partnership at local, regional and national level. CHETNA also does advocacy, development and dissemination of materials.

Identified as a Regional Resource Centre (RRC) for Gujarat State and the Union Territories of Daman, Diu and Dadra Nagar Haveli to provide technical assistance to NGOs to improve Reproductive and Child Health (RCH), facilitate GO-NGO partnership, document and disseminate successful approaches and provide inputs to Government of India to ensure effective implementation of policies.

CHETNA Outreach (O)

Vision:

CHETNA Outreach (O) envisages an equitable society where disadvantaged communities are empowered to live healthy lives.

Mission:

To systematically upscale and mainstream evidence based models, promising practices and strategies and collectively advocate for gender sensitive, comprehensive nutrition, health and education programmes and policies.



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