



SUB GROUP REPORT



Early Childhood Education in the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012)

**Ministry of Women and Child Development
Government of India
Shastri Bhawan
New Delhi**

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Chapter – One

BACKGROUND

Terms of Reference

In the context of the formulation of Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012), the Government of India decided to set up a working group on “Development of Children”. The working group was set up under the chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development. In order to carry out the job assigned to the aforesaid working group on Development of Children, four Thematic sub group (i) ICDS & Nutrition (ii) Early Childhood Education (iii) Child Protection and (iv) Girl Child, were set up by the Ministry of Women & Child Development.

The terms of reference of the Sub Group on “Early Childhood Education” formulated under Chairmanship of Joint Secretary (CD), MWCD, were as follows

- Pre School Education
- Joy of Learning
- Linkages to Nutrition and Health
- All Matters relating to ECE

The Context

Early Childhood Education: Critical component of Early Development

1. The approach paper to 11th Five-Year Plan categorically states that education is the most critical element in empowering people with skills and knowledge and giving them access to productive employment in the future. An ideal we should strive for is that all children should be able to get as much education as they are capable of getting irrespective of their parents’ ability to pay. Further, the approach paper states that development of children is at the centre of the 11th plan and that Government is committed to ensure that children do not lose their childhood because of work, disease or despair. Children should be given right start from the early childhood stage until the age of 6 to 8 years, which is the most critical period when the foundations are laid for life-long development and the realisation of full potential.
2. Research shows that there are ‘critical periods’ at this stage for full development of brain’s potential. The formation of later attitudes and values as well as the desire to learn are also influenced at this stage, while lack of support or neglect can lead to negative consequences, sometimes irreversible. Early Childhood Education (ECE) requires that young children be provided opportunities and experiences that lead to their all-round development -- physical, mental, social, emotional and school readiness. Alongside with health and nutrition, learning is also equally important. Learning at early stage must be directed by the child’s interests and priorities, and should be contextualised by her experiences rather than being structured formally. An enabling environment for children would be one that is rich, allows children to explore, experiment and freely express themselves and one that is embedded in social relations that give a sense of warmth, security and trust. Playing, Music, Art and other activities using local materials along with opportunities for speaking, listening

and expressing themselves, and informal interaction are essential components of Early Childhood Education (ECE). It is in this context that India has been able to put forward a fairly large number of supportive international commitments, constitutional provisions, legislative, measures, policy framework and some major public and voluntary initiatives for children below 8 years age, and which over a period of time have yielded some really gainful results.

Chapter – Two

Review of International & National Instruments, Existing Policies, Legislations, Schemes & Programmes

International Commitments

3. Focusing upon the principle that learning begins at birth, it was resolved at Jomtien, Thailand (March, 5-7, 1990) under, World Declaration on Education for All and Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, to extend Early Childhood Care and Initial Education either through arrangements involving community, families, or institutional programmes as deemed appropriate. In the World Summit on Children (1990), it was again synthesised to work for children's enhanced development and education. Further, out of the four sets of child rights envisaged in Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989), the right to education including early childhood education has been included under broader framework of right to development. Subsequently, Delhi Declaration and Framework of Action [EFA summit of nine high population countries – Bangla Desh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan], which was an important sequel to the World Conference on EFA held at Jomtien, Thailand in March, 1990 – again emphasised that the challenge before the member countries is not only to provide affordable quality programmes of ECCD including ECE but also to get it linked with nutrition, health care and other community services as part of convergent and integrated approach to meet the basic needs of young children under EFA initiatives. Empowering parents and family members with knowledge and skills to understand and serve the developmental and educational needs of children were identified as key elements of this integrated approach. More recently, in the year of 2000, India has again articulated its commitment to the Dakar Framework of Action, which, besides other five goals of EFA [free and compulsory primary education, life skills programmes, adult learning, eliminating gender disparities and improving quality of education] has designed the goal number one to expand and improve comprehensive ECE, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Constitutional Provisions

4. There are several provisions in the Constitution of India either as Fundamental Rights or Directive Principles of State Policy that have been used to promote quality ECE services in the country. Initially, the Indian Constitution committed to provision of 'free and compulsory education for children up to fourteen years of age'. In the absence of lower age limit, early childhood education services were considered as part of the constitutional commitment. However, the subsequent Eighty - Sixth Amendment to the Constitution in 2001 divided the span of 0-14 years into two clear categories to cover their interests under separate articles in the constitution. Article 21A has been introduced, which makes elementary education for 6-14 years old children a Fundamental Right. With a great deal of protests from several professional organizations and civil society, ECCE has been included as a constitutional provision but not as a justiciable right of every child through article 45, which reads as "*The*

State shall endeavour to provide ECCE for all children until they complete the age of six years”.

Policy Provisions

5. Constitutionally, child development and education are concurrent subjects, which imply a shared federal and state responsibility in ECE service delivery. During the past half a decade, provisioning of ECE services in India, that entails multiple components, is governed by plethora of policies and related action plans. The Education Commission (1964-66), while recognizing the significance of pre - school education (PSE) and its critical linkages with enrollment, retention and learning outcomes at primary level recommended that the state should take up the responsibility for over all supervision, guidance, setting up of model schools, training and research concerning ECE. Subsequently, in 1968, the committee for Preparation of Programmes for Children (Ganga Saran Sinha Committee) also recommended for the first time, that government should invest heavily on pre school education. Later on, while the *National Policy on Education (1986)*, viewed ECCE as “an integral input in the human resource strategy, a feeder and support programme for primary education and a support service for working women”, the Programme of Action (1992) came out with specific targets concerning operational and teacher training strategies of ECE. Further, *National Health Policy(NHP), 2000* is composed with a vital segment of 0-6 years old. The targets of NHP, 2000 includes reduction of IMR to 30/1000 live births and MMR to 100/lakh by the year 2010. It has been further viewed in the policy that under the umbrella of the macro policy prescriptions, the governments and private sector programme planners will have to design separate schemes, tailor made to the health needs of women and children. Further, the health of the children has been acknowledged as an area of concern in the *National Population Policy, adopted in 2000*, as the same has been visualised as a clear strategy for population stabilisation. Furthermore, after realizing the fact that child care services provides a necessary support for women working in unorganized sector, *National Policy for Empowerment of Women, 2001* gives emphasis on expanding the child care facilities, including crèches at work places so as to create an enabling environment and to ensure women’s full cooperation in their socio - political and economic life.

National Charter of Children and National Plan of Actions

6. The *Programme of Action (1992)*, which was formulated to actualise the recommendations of National Policy on Education (1986) drafted the target of setting up seven lakh AWCs by the end of 2000. At the same time, *National Plan of Action (1992)* concerning children was formulated, which also kept up the promises made to children in terms of expanding ECCE services. *National Charter on Children was adopted on 9th, February 2004* ensuring Early Child hood Care and Education for Survival, Growth and Development. More recently, guided by the Common Minimum Programme of UPA Government, which *inter alia*, committed to improving the status of children and creating a favourable climate for their development through a focus on multiple needs of child, the MWCD has also adopted

a ***National Plan of Action for Children 2005***, which besides covering other aspects of health well being and educational nurturance, has also included goals, objectives, strategies and activities for increasing enrolment of 3- 6 years old children in pre - school educational initiatives. This action plan (2005) has been prepared after harmonising the goals for children set in the UN General Assembly special session on children held in 2000, monitorable targets set in Tenth Five Year plan and the goals for children of concerned ministries/departments. In order to have inter-sectoral convergence and coordination between various ministries/ departments, the ***National Action Plan for Children (2005)*** has been prepared in consultation with cross section of implementing agencies like ministries and departments, State governments /UTs administration, NGOs and experts. All concerned ministries/ departments and state governments/UT administrations have been asked for implementation of the provision of the plan in order to achieve the targets in time.

ECE under Various Five Year Plans

7. The well being of children has been an integral part of India's developmental planning since 1951, when India became a republic. Under *First Five Year Plan* (henceforth FYP), the CSWB started grants in aid scheme for voluntary organisations, which were running centres for pre- primary education. In the *second and third FYP*, the pre schooling continued to be within the purview of the voluntary and private sector. It was only in 1968, when the Ganga Saran Sinha committee highlighted the need to provide pre - school education that it was included within the purview of the government.
8. However, the *fourth FYP*, brought the scheme of Family and Child Welfare to rural areas with the objectives to foster all round development of pre- school child not only by providing comprehensive welfare services in all aspects of child development but also by strengthening the role of the family to contribute to the growth and development of the child. The *fifth FYP* saw a major breakthrough in the concept of child development with a shift in the approach from welfare to development and the declaration of National Policy for children in 1974, in pursuance of which, ICDS programme came into existence initially in 33 pilot projects with non formal pre school education as a major component of service delivery. *Sixth FYP* reiterated the approach and strategies outlined in fifth FYP by promoting consolidation and extension of the programmes started earlier. The sixth plan period not only witnessed the expansion of ICDS projects but provisions were also made for pre school education in educationally backward states through grants in aid to voluntary organisations. The *seventh FYP* continued the strategy of promoting early childhood survival and development through programmes in different sectors including ICDS and Pre School Education. In the *eight FYP*, it was proposed to phase out other government-sponsored initiatives by merging them with ICDS. The *ninth FYP* addressed the issues concerning ECE more exhaustively than previous plans. While acknowledging the first six years of life to be critical, it recommended the institution of National Charter for Children to ensure taking care of all developmental aspects of the child by the end of the Ninth Plan. This plan also emphasised the involvement of

Women's groups in the management of ECE programmes , particularly under the decentralized Panchayati Raj System. The major initiatives suggested under currently run *tenth FYP* include strengthening PSE component of ICDS by need based training of AWWs, provision of learning material at AWCs, setting up of PSE centres in uncovered areas, building advocacy and training of community leaders.

ECE Initiatives

9. The provision of centre based early childhood education in India is available through three distinct channels – public, private and non-governmental.

Public Initiatives

10. Public, government sponsored programmes are largely directed towards the disadvantaged community, particularly those residing in rural and marginalised areas. Though a number of programmes are being implemented by various departments and ministries, the more important, on which the attention is required to be focussed in XI Five Year Plan are as under;

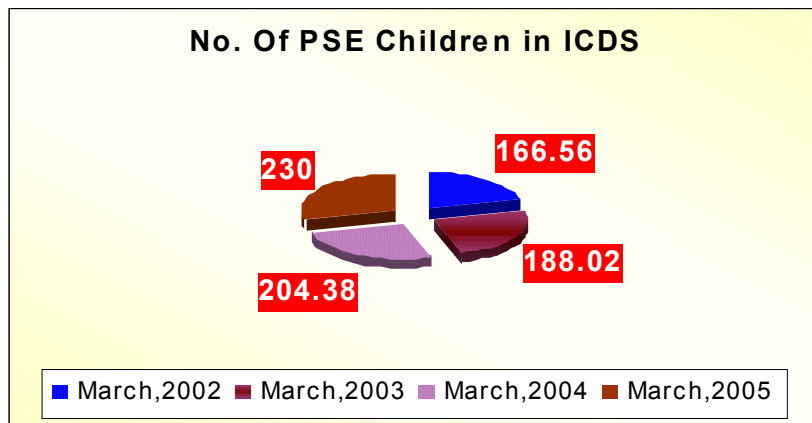
Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

11. As a sequel to the adoption of the National Policy for Children (1974), the Government of India evolved the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme, popularly abbreviated as ICDS. Over a period of time, this centrally sponsored scheme of ICDS, which came into existence in 1975 in selected 33 community developmental blocks of the country, has come out as one of the innovative programme of its kind and the largest public initiative in the world to offer the early childhood education and care services in an integrated way. The basic premise of the programme, which is, centrally sponsored and state administered nation wide programme, revolves around the common consensus among educationists, researchers and practitioners that early childhood education and care are inseparable issues and must be considered as one. Based upon this fundamental assumption, the modus operandi of the programme has been designed in such an integrated way so as to meet out the early childhood education and care needs on a continuum basis adopting holistic approach from a common platform of AWC. The process execution of the programme includes delivery of integrated package of minimum basic services - health care, nutritional nourishment and early childhood educational nurturance to children so as to reach a multitude of objectives including development of school readiness competencies and various others psycho social domains.
12. The non formal pre school education service under ICDS has been identified not only as a significant input for providing sound foundation for development but also as a contributing role to the universalisation of primary education, by providing to the child the necessary preparation for primary schooling and offering substitute care to the younger siblings thus freeing the older ones – especially girls to attend school. For

accomplishment of this task, the AWW is expected to attend multifarious ECE tasks. These include not only organisation of PSE activities for three hours a day, but also attending various peripheral activities like preparation of PSE 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 PSE sessions, programme planning in contextualised way, creating awareness among the masses and the like.

13. Under ICDS, which is centrally sponsored but state administered programme, various States/UTs have been requested to ensure registration of all eligible beneficiaries in accordance with the applicable guidelines and norms. However, it has been reiterated time and again that norms concerning ECE are only indicative in nature and thus should not be construed to imply either an upper limit or a lower limit for registration. All eligible children who come to AWCs have to be registered and provided services under the scheme. In a recently conducted study entitled Three Decades of ICDS- An Appraisal by NIPCCD, it has been revealed that on an average, 37 children are registered for PSE activities in AWCs. The study has also found reduced gap between the children registered for PSE and those actually attending the same.
14. The number of children attending PSE activities under ICDS have been continuously increasing from about 17 million in March, 02 to nearly 19 million in 03, 20 million in 04 and 23 million in 05 (Annual reports of MWCD for the concerning years).

Figure –1



15. A number of other initiatives have been taken by national and state governments to strengthen the PSE component of ICDS. These initiatives include distribution of PSE kits in AWCs located in 11 states namely J&K, Himachal, Haryana, Punjab, UP, Bihar, MP, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and Rajasthan. Similarly, the skills of trainers of ICDS training centres(MLTCs and AWTCs) are being developed by organising skill training programme in PSE by NIPCCD. Also, many of Supervisors of the programme were given the opportunity to develop their skills in PSE by undergoing

ECE programme being run by IGNOU. Different states have also adopted various contextually suited innovative practices to strengthen PSE component under ICDS.

16. Overall, the significance of nationally run initiative of ICDS may be judged on many counts. **First**, the **universalisation** of this programme has been identified as the basic strategy to achieve the first goal of ECE under EFA, as envisaged in the Dakar conference held in April, 2000 and as part of the CMP of UPA Government. **Second**, the Government of India has also identified eight flagship programmes in which ICDS figures as one of them. **Third**, ECE has been identified as an important component for monitoring within changing thrust of GOI from 2005-06 in favour from outlays to outcomes. The indicators identified for this purpose concerning PSE pertain to number of operational projects, number of operational AWCs, number of functionaries trained, number of children (3-6 years) receiving PSE etc.

Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for Working Mothers

17. Keeping in mind the need for an effective and expanded scheme for childcare facilities, a new crèche scheme named Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme has been recently launched for the children of working mothers. The scheme has been designed by merging the existing two schemes of National Crèche Fund (which was set up in 1994 to meet the growing requirements for crèches with a corpus fund made available from the social safety net adjustment credit from the World Bank) and the Scheme of Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for running crèches for children of working and ailing mothers (which was started in 1974 in pursuance of the objectives of National Plan for Children, 1974). Under this new initiative, the crèches are being allocated to the States/UTs on the basis of the proportion of child population. Uncovered districts / tribal areas under the scheme are being given highest priority so as to ensure the balanced regional coverage. The services being provided pertain not only to care aspect but pre school education as well. Currently, 22038 crèches have been sanctioned till 31st March 2006 to run across the country.
18. Very recently, the responsibilities pertaining to training tasks of these crèche workers have been given to NIPCCD, which has developed separate training module for training of trainers of crèche workers and training of crèche workers. The MWCD has entrusted the responsibility of training of crèche workers to three national level organisations namely Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB), Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW) and Bharatiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangha (BAJSS).

ECE under Primary /Elementary Education Programmes

19. Taking cognizance of the importance of ECE as an important factor in promoting retention of children in primary schooling, this component was included in the design of the externally funded District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). The approach under DPEP was one of convergence. It provided for strengthening of existing provisions for ECE through the ICDS by strengthening their linkage with primary schools. This was envisaged through (a) reallocating the ICDS centres to the primary school premises, as far as possible, (b) synchronising the timings with primary schools so as to facilitate girls' participation (c) training the ICDS service

providers in ECE, and (d) providing play materials for children. The ICDS service providers were compensated for the longer working hours from the DPEP budget. New centres were opened on the same model, only where ICDS was not physically in operation. Programmatic linkages were also attempted between pre- school and primary school under DPEP, by introducing the component of school readiness as an initial part of the primary curriculum and by continuing the play based methodology in grades one and two.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

20. Under SSA, which is one amongst the eight identified flagship programme of the Government of India (GOI) for universalizing elementary education and which has succeeded the DPEP, provisions have been made not only for greater convergence of pre school education initiatives, specially of ICDS, with that of primary schooling but also of setting up Balwadis as PSE centres in uncovered areas, training inputs for stakeholders, organizing awareness and advocacy campaigns in favour of importance of PSE and the like. Further, in order to practice any innovative activity to strengthen ECE , a financial provision of Rs 15 lakh per annum in a district has been made available. It is the result of actualising these provisions that many states have not only opened the PSE centres (either separately or as a wing attached with the primary schools) but also have designed various state specific interventions suiting to their local relevance.

ECE through Pre Schools attached with Primary, Elementary and Secondary Schools

21. In some cases, the pre schools are attached to the primary section of the school. As per analytical report of 2003 carried out by National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) under the name of 'Elementary Education in India: Where do we stand', 14.27 per cent primary schools have attached pre primary sections. Except West Bengal, the percentage of primary schools attached to pre primary section in all other states is above three per cent. West Bengal has only 0.12 percent such primary schools. The states of Madhya Pradesh (35.33%), Andhra Pradesh (22.95%), Assam(15.90%),Chhatisgargh(16.80%),Maharashtra(36.47%) Tamil Nadu (11.65%), also have attached primary schools.

22. It has been also observed that pre primary section is also attached to a large number of elementary (23.21%) and integrated Higher Secondary Schools (39.84%).In Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh , pre primary section is attached to 36.97 and 45.30 per cent of the total elementary schools. On the other hand, in Karnataka and Tamilnadu, pre primary section is attached to as many as 78.43 and 66.50 per cent of the total integrated higher secondary schools.

Private Initiatives

23. The past few decades have also witnessed an unprecedented expansion of early childhood initiatives in the country. Together with major public initiatives like ICDS, a remarkable expansion has taken place primarily in private sector, which has played

an important role in the growth of ECE in the country. Private initiative here refers to fee charging/profit making initiatives in ECE.

24. In the absence of available figure on unrecognised private sector initiatives (which are operating in various catchy names like family & day care homes, nurseries, kindergartens and pre-primary classes in private primary, elementary and secondary schools), it can be roughly estimated that number of children enrolled in these initiatives comes to around 10 million (National Focus Group, 2005), or as about the same figure as the major public initiative of ICDS at that time. These private initiatives, which were mainly in the urban areas for nearly a decade ago, have now started springing up in semi urban or even rural areas also.

Voluntary and Corporate Initiatives

25. The ECE services, being provided by voluntary or non-governmental organisations with financial assistance of national and international aid agencies, trusts, denominational and parochial groups, also play a marginal role especially in socially and economic backward areas, special communities in difficult circumstances like tribal people, migrant laborers and for children affected by natural calamities of specific contexts like flood, earthquake etc. The various integrated services under these NGOs run initiatives are either being provided in the name of crèches or in the name of ECE centres. Some NGO's also run mobile crèches, which move along with the construction labour from one site to another. In addition to these, some universities also have Laboratory Nursery Schools attached to them, particularly to Departments of Child Development like in M.S. University, Vadodara.
26. Apart from this, in order to discharge their social responsibilities specially in the era of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation, various corporate groups like ICICI have also come forward by running pre schools, which, over a period of time, have established themselves as fairly competitive with preschools being operated under private initiatives.

Training and Capacity Building of ECE functionaries

27. Corresponding to the wide range of ECE programmes and initiatives in the country, a variety of ECE training programmes are currently in vogue. Some of them, which are common and better known, may be classified under following heads;
- Pre Service Courses (being run by different state owned and private institutions)
 - Job and In service Courses (exclusively meant for functionaries of Integrated Child Development Services Scheme)
 - ECE Diploma / Certificate Courses (being offered by distance learning institutions like Indira Gandhi National Open University, National Institute of Open Schooling and several others State Specific Open Universities) and
 - Specific ECE Intervention based training inputs
28. As for the training programmes under first category of *pre service courses*, several teacher training initiatives (Integrated Pre Primary and Primary Teacher's Training,

Nursery/Pre Primary Teacher's Training, Vocational Training in Child Care and Education) have been set up by different state owned and private institutions.

29. Integrated Pre Primary and Primary Teacher's Training is being run since many years. This programme was basically designed on the recommendation of pre school teacher education committee appointed by NCTE to address the developmental continuum from pre school stage and was planned for teachers of pre schools and grades 1 and 2. The programme, which is recognised by NCTE and is commonly known as NTT, aims at preparing teachers for pre school stage (3-6 years) and for the first two grades (6-8 years) of the primary stage.
30. Besides this, the curriculum of higher/ senior secondary stage of education (+2) in CBSE, NIOS and many State Education Boards have also included early childhood education as an area of vocational education. The content of this course includes both theory and practice components of ECE. After completion of this course, the students can either opt for higher education or for employment or self-employment in the ECCE centers/school.
31. So far as training initiatives under ECE component of ICDS is concerned, soon after inception of the programme in 1975, the GOI came out with **Comprehensive Training Strategy** for ICDS functionaries. Under this well planned ICDS training initiative, every functionary (CDPO, ACDPO, Supervisor, AWW, AWH) has to undergo job training at the initial stage of taking up the assignment and refresher training every two years. NIPCCD has been identified as the apex institute not only for designing and giving the academic training inputs for these functionaries at national level but also for the purpose of developing training modules and other learning material for all the ICDS related training programmes. While, NIPCCD organises the foundation and refresher training courses for middle managers of ICDS namely CDPOs/ACDPOs, a net work of nearly 45 MLTCs and 400 AWTCS undertake the task of organising training programmes (Job and refresher both) for middle level workers known as Supervisors and grass root level workers known as AWWs and AWHs respectively .
32. So far as training inputs under ECE in these programmes are concerned, out of 26 working days job training being imparted to CDPOs, Supervisors and AWWs, 4 days intensive training is being imparted on ECE only. Similarly in refresher training, which is of five days duration, the ECE is being covered by allocating 3-4 sessions. For the use of ICDS trainers, NIPCCD organises the skill training programmes specifically on ECE of five days duration. The training inputs concerning ECE in all these programmes also emphasise on developing the skills for preparation of indigenous teaching material.
33. The open and distance learning mode of training is also being used extensively to offer certificate and diploma courses concerning ECCE. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), and several other State Specific Open Universities (SSOUs) like Kota Open University of Rajasthan, Bhoj Open University of MP, Rajarshi Purushottam Das Tandon Open University of

UP also offers specialised certificate and/or diploma courses in ECCE through open and distance learning system.

34. Provisions were also made in DPEP initiative to not only train the ECE functionaries but also the community representatives and members of the women's groups as well because they have been vested with the responsibility of the management of ECE centres. Regular induction and in service training programmes were imparted to the ECE functionaries using specially designed training curriculum. In most such cases, the pre school kit and training content has followed the model developed by NCERT. The members of the ECE resource groups set up in various SCERTs and DIETs were also trained and sent on exposure visits to learn from the examples of ECE interventions. Further, under DPEP initiatives, the AWWs from selected AWCs were trained on specific aspects of ECE by DPEP as a part of the convergence strategy with ICDS.
35. NCERT has also initiated a proposal for a year long training programme for those functionaries who are already engaged in provisioning pre-school services. The NCERT run nursery school in IIT Delhi also houses the ECE Resource Center. In addition to above such training inputs, NCERT, NIPCCD and various other state specific SCERTs also contribute to the professional development of early childhood educators using a reverse pyramid model. Under this model, these Institutes of repute first train the ECE master trainers, who, in turn, impart the training to supervisory and grass root functionaries.
36. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), which is a statutory body, has laid down the norms and standards for two programmes namely Pre School and Nursery Teacher Education Programmes. These norms laid down by NCTE are now expected to impact on quality.
37. Besides laying down the norms and standards of teacher education courses concerning ECCE, the NCTE has also undertaken the task of accreditation of the institutions offering Pre primary and Nursery Teacher Training Courses. Currently, there are 124 NCTE recognized pre primary and nursery teachers training courses with an intake capacity of 5938 students in the country.
38. Further, keeping in view the ground realities obtaining in different parts of the country and to ensure the adequate supply of suitably qualified teachers for the growing area of ECE, the following four programmes have been further proposed by NCTE. These are;
 - Certificate in Early Childhood Care and Education (CECCE)
 - Diploma in ECCE and Early Primary Education (DECCE & EPed)
 - Diploma in ECCE and Primary Education (DECCE&PEd) and
 - Post Graduate Diploma in ECCE (PGDECCE)

Chapter – Three

Implementation Status of various programmes, policies, and commitments

39. After reviewing the national framework of ECE which, *inter alia*, described the constitutional provisions, international commitments, placement of ECE in National Five Years Developmental Planning etc, this section of the report describes the implementation status of these programmes, policies, and commitments This has been done by putting in fore first the overall access and coverage of centre based ECE initiatives followed by research based critical examination of the various schemes / programmes / initiatives (implementation status of ECE in different public, private and NGOs initiatives and other peripheral issues like training and capacity building, curriculum prescription vs. practice etc).

Access and Coverage

40. As in majority of other developed and developing countries, in India also, all the three channels – public, private and voluntary / corporate – are actively engaged in providing early childhood education experiences through a variety of modes and of varying degree in quality. Under public initiatives, the enrollment figure, which was 15 per cent of the 3-6 years old children in 1989-90 got improved to 19.6 percent in 1996-97 and is currently 20.95 per cent only.(Source: Lok Sabha, Starred Questions, 2004,reported in www.indiastat.com).

41. Similarly, the Gross Enrolment Ratio for ECE, which was 10.33 percent in 1990 grew to 16.9 percent 1997-98 (ECCE in India- An Overview, MHRD, GOI,2003) .

42. Since no survey has yet been undertaken, accurate figures are not available for private sector commercial ventures operating under various names. However, according to some estimates, the number of children enrolled in private sector initiatives (including day care centres, nurseries, kindergartens and pre primary classes) was about 10 million or about as many as children as the number under ICDS at that time (NCERT, 2005). The table 1 shows estimated coverage of children under various ECE programmes ;

Table-1 (Coverage under various initiatives Concerning ECCE)

Programmes	Number of Centres	Coverage
ICDS	767680*	24 million
Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for the Children of Working Mothers	22038**	0.55 million@
***Pre Primary School	38,533	(1, 94,000) approximately 0.02 million
NGO Services for ECCE		Varying from 3-20

		million****
Private Initiatives		10 million approximately (2005)****

*Ministry of Women and Child Development (as on 31st , Dec, 2005)

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

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

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

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

Impact Assessment

43. As for the status of implementation of ECE under different public programmes/initiatives, impact assessment of the PSE component of ICDS not only indicated its positive effect on children's continuation into primary school system but also in developing various psycho – social and cognitive competencies among children. Several commissioned studies like of NIPCCD, 1992, 2005; NCAER,2003; NCERT1998, NIPCCD,2006 and other micro level studies conducted by various institutions of higher learning and of national technical and academic bodies have suggested that though AWWs are making tremendous efforts for bringing children to utilize PSE activities. However, due to absence of systematic and infrastructure adequacies, the ICDS system makes it difficult to deliver the required results [in a recently conducted three decades of ICDS- An Appraisal, it has been found that only about fifty per cent of AWCs have the adequate provision of in and outdoor activities. Similarly, about 18 per cent of the children have to travel about 3 Kms to come to AWCs while more than 21 per cent have to travel the distance between 1-3 Km]. This fact has been further substantiated in the Mid Term Assessment Report of 10th FYP outlines that in the state of Jharkhand, there may be one ICDS centre for a village comprising 4-5 settlements. These settlements may be located at a distance of 2-3 km from each other, making it difficult for children to reach the centre.

44. These research studies further speak about the fact that multi dimensional unreasonable expectations of the state from AWWs by way of the workload she carries, most of the time, puts them under hard situations to deliver the expected outcomes . A recent study conducted by World Bank (2005) has also identified this mismatch and has recommended the contextualizing of the PSE programme design, rationalising the workload of the service providers particularly AWWs and promoting utilisation through improvement in quality of service delivery. The *Mid Term evaluation of Tenth Five Year Plan* further, has pointed out that the PSE component of the ICDS scheme continues to remain one of the weakest areas in view of focussing on the health and nutritional aspect. Thus, over the time, there has been a continuous concern relating to quality of PSE services, which has a strong ground to recommend a comprehensive review of the existing arrangements from holistic perspective to ensure quality ECE for all children.

45. The evaluation of erstwhile *Crèche services in 1995* and of *National Creche Fund in 2003* also reveal that though, most of children attending the crèches were receiving pre school education but there was a need to improve the quality.
46. Similarly, an evaluation of DPEP indicates that DPEP model for ECE (adjacent to and part of the school) is more effective in providing the children an stimulating educational environment and in creating a sense of ‘bonding’ with the school which can go a long way in promoting retention. Further, girls’ enrolment and school attendance was found to be higher in DPEP states with ECE centres than those without ECE centres.
47. ECE initiatives under SSA have also been evaluated from several angles including utilisation of funds and process based execution of ECE service delivery. In this context, the recent findings of two NCERT’s studies (*A Study of ECE Programme as an innovative activity under SSA* and *A Study of Process and Effectiveness of Linkages between ECE and Primary Education in the Context of SSA*) clearly reveal of the positive impact of putting ECE initiatives under SSA not only in terms of use of financial resources provided under SSA but also of pedagogical advantages of locating PSE centre close to primary schools. These studies recommended provisioning of ECE initiatives up to class two of primary schooling.
48. In contrast of public provision of ECE initiatives like ICDS, Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme, ECE under SSA, which basically caters to children from disadvantaged communities, private initiatives are targeted towards children of socio-economically better off families. This type of pre schooling is oversubscribed and the competition for space in the lead schools is intense, with as many as 300 children competing for a single opening. This phenomenon is not limited to the elite. In fact, it has resulted in what may be termed a bourgeois revolution by the growth of consumer class and more parents who can purchase their children a pre school experience. A study conducted by M.S.Swaminathan Research Foundation in 2000 in the state of Tamilnadu found that even parents from low-income communities in urban areas sought private pre schools for their children once they reached the age of 4 years. The committee appointed by Government of India on ECE (2004) also reports that socially and economically upward mobile families are often fleeing from public initiatives towards locally available alternative, so-called English medium schools. In the absence of any regulatory system of these private initiatives, their early childhood education programmes are characterised by serious inadequacies like cognitively undesired teaching learning practices, overcrowded class rooms, developmentally inappropriate curriculum, assigning home work, engagement of untrained teachers, monotonous, uninterested class room routine, formal method of appraisal etc.
49. Further, interviewing the child seeking admissions and his/her parents is a common practice followed by many private schools. The child is tested for general knowledge and made to perform tasks, which are expected of him in the class after he gets

admitted. This results in pressure, tension, and anxiety for both parents and children, and has harmful effects on children.

Chapter – Four

Identification of Inadequate Provisions, Gaps and Neglected Areas

50. The above review of status of implementation of various initiatives in the field of ECE leads us to identify the inadequacies of the provisions, gaps and neglected areas which are discussed in the following paragraphs.

National Framework, Policy Directions and Developing Data Base

51. It is being continuously observed not only by professionals but in the Mid Term Appraisal of 10th Five Year Plan also that the exclusion of the ECE from fundamental right is set to deprive many children in the three to six age group of ECE, which may lead to greater school drop out rates and other problems. In the recently held conference (6th June,06 of State Secretaries of WCD and Elementary Education on Early Childhood Education [the conference was also attended by professionals, practitioners, representatives of international bodies, members of civil society, members of national advisory council, and representatives of prominent NGOs] it has been again reiterated that ECE should be made a fundamental right duly backed by adequate resources and initiatives for capacity building .
52. Both, the National Policy on Education, 1986 and subsequently the Programme of Action(1992) ,which was designed to implement the recommendations of NPE in an action plan mode , categorically stated that day care centres should be established to provide support services not only for universalisation of primary education and enabling the girls to attend primary schools by way of discharging them from taking care of siblings but also as a supportive role to working women belonging to poorer sections. POA, 1992 had also recommended the conversion of AWCs in to Anganwadi cum crèches in a phased manner. Though this was done under National Crèche Fund initiative, which was designed partly with a corpus fund made available out of the social safety net adjustment credit from the World Bank but with the merger of NCF with Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme, this initiative of converting the AWCs into AWCs -cum –crèches has come to an end. Thus, overall, the policy recommendations of NPE, 1986 and POA, 1992 were though partially implemented in the past, but currently remains unimplemented. Thus, in XI Five Year Plan, provisions to fulfil these aspects need priority in the right earnest.
53. There has been no national database of various aspects of ECE. In the absence of such data base, currently, we find it difficult to prepare the status report of EFA goal 1 concerning ECE for the purpose of its Mid Decade Assessment (the report demands comprehensive data base/ information related to policy and governance framework, resource deployment, delivered curricula and learning outcomes etc). In order to do so, state specific data base / state profiles concerning ECE need to be developed. While developing the state specific ECE profiles, the data on specific indicators like state specific policy and governance framework, target setting, policies and

directives, stakeholders participation, national and international development partners, monitoring and evaluation mechanism, assessment of the effectiveness of ECE intervention, strategies being adopted, implementing agencies, resource inputs in terms of financial, infrastructure, material, programmes/ services, delivered curricula and learning outcomes etc ,needs to be collected and collated . Some of these indicators have already been identified in various studies. Tamil Nadu Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (TECERS) can be used as a starting point for such a comprehensive exercise. Further, though effective convergence and coordination has been identified as one of the objective of ICDS (the largest state initiative in India to provide ECE) and the same has also been envisaged in various policy documents for effective run of centre based ECE initiatives, yet several commissioned studies (World Bank, 2005, NIPCCD,1992, NCERT, 2003, NCAER,2001, NIPCCD,2006) have come out with the recommendation of further strengthening of this aspect . In order to accomplish this task, under XI Five Year Plan, a well designed and well thought institutional monitoring system concerning ECE for all sectors (public, private, NGOs) has to be established in every State/ UT administration at the sub national system level and at the national level. This will not only facilitate the convergence and coordination mechanism across various players of ECE but would also ensure the flow of data base information right from grass root to GOI level. The data base, as envisaged should cover all kinds of centres i,e – private (centre and home based ECE interventions), NGOs(aided and unaided),public initiatives as well as statutory crèches . This national and state specific ECE data and statistical indicators so collected and calculated would also smoothen the ways in developing proper national/ state specific action plans concerning ECE and in designing mid decade / term end progress assessment report of goal 1 (universal provision of ECE) of EFA project.

Access and Coverage

54. As per census, 2001, the country has approximately 60 million children in the age group of 3-6 years. The approximate figures of covering about 34 million children by pre schooling initiatives under ICDS and other private initiatives (not counting NGOs initiatives as the variation in expected coverage is too large from 3 to 20 million), leaves apart a large segment of about 26 million in the 3-6 years population bracket unattended for pre school activities. Thus, the gap between the numbers of pre school children and the available pre school services seems to be very large.
55. Here, it has to be mentioned that as per estimate of technical group on population projections, pre school education services will have to be provided for 70 million children by the end of 2011 (the near end period of XI Five Year Plan) and 73 million of children by 2016 (or the near end period of XII Five Year Plan).

Table –2 (Pre School Age Population Projection)

Age	2006		2011		2016	
	Numbers	%	N	%	Numbers	%

3-5 Years*	63.731	5.82	70.034	5.94	72.498	5.74
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* Pre School age

Source: Census of India: Population Projections for India and States, 1996-2016

Registrar General, India for figures from 2001 onwards

56. Though, it needs to be acknowledged here that in a country as diverse and large as India, with approximately 60 million children in the age group of 3-6 years (as per census, 2001), achieving universal access is not an easy task. However, the current and futuristic magnitude of uncovered ECE children is a major challenge in the XI Five Year Plan.
57. The uncovered and unreachd children of ECE are found in both rural and urban areas. While in rural areas, they are located in isolated and remote hamlets, dalit hamlets and settlements, seasonal migrants road side workers, construction and quarry workers, fishing hamlets, in urban areas, they may be broadly identified as living on those pavements, unauthorized settlements, small slums, construction workers, temporary/seasonal workers, rural migrants, itinerants etc. Children living in difficult circumstances like children of long term patients, children with special needs and children of sex workers, women prisoners, riot and disaster affected, refugees and displayed, orphanages and founding homes, militancy affected children may also be identified as uncovered and unreachd children for ECE.
58. In order to extend the benefits of ECE to such large number of presently uncovered, unreachd and projected population of 3-6 years age children for the next one decade , it is urgently needed to come out with contextually suited , locally relevant innovative strategies and approaches and also strengthening of resources being required to fill this huge gap. In order to do so, setting of one ECE centre for a group of about 25 children within accessible distance from the home of the child needs to be considered. The home based model of ECE tried out by NCERT some times back needs to be encouraged and experimented with far flung and smaller community helmets, scattered population, areas affected by floods and other disasters and especially in tribal and hilly zones. Support for various forms of mobile services/crèches (crèches in flexi time, flexi space, transitory/temporary, mini AWCs) may also be enhanced for this purpose. Further, these strategies ought to be linked with primary schooling system either by way of locating ECE centres in proximity to local primary schools or peripheral feeder schools.
59. The ECE provision is also pronounced to rural /urban slums disparities. As per findings of the study conducted by National Institute of Urban Affairs, though the share of urban population in the country is approximately 27.78 per cent (expected to go up by 33 per cent), corresponding provision of ECE facilities in these areas are insufficient. Urban slums are under represented in ICDS also, as majority of these projects are located in rural areas (out of total 5671 sanctioned projects, 4548 are rural, 763 are tribal and 360 are urban). The greater access to ECE in urban settlement

also needs to be accelerated. For this, in the XI plan , rules pertaining to area/town planning may be amended so as to provide the space for neighbourhood ECE centre. The schedule for urban local bodies also needs to be strengthened to ensure responsibility for allocation of space for AWCs, Crèches etc.

Day Care Services

60. As per NSSO 55th Round Survey, 1999-2000, there are around 106 million women in the work force, out of which 40-45 per cent are in the reproductive age group. Day care support services are an essential requirement for these women. The total number of operational crèches, though have increased up to 22038 till 31st March, 2006, however, keeping in view the enormous number of ECE children, this figure of crèches seems to be inadequate. Though, crèches are mandated by law also in different areas like mines, plantations, factories, salt and dolomite mines, cigar making units, contract labours, inter state migrant labourer and construction sites, however, in practice, very few crèches are being run in obedience of these laws . Further, whatever the crèches are being run, they are in very bad shape. Thus, the existing crèche facilities need to be expanded exponentially. This can partly be attained, as rightly observed in Mid Term Assessment of 10th FYP, if the obligatory legal stipulation for provision of crèches at the place or site of work is strictly enforced. Thus learning from the past experiences, it is amply clear that placing the entire liability on employers is a non-starter and thus, under XI Five Year Plan, some form of shared liability is required to be designed.
61. The ICDS programme does not have the critical component of day care in the package of services being provided. One consequence of the lack of day care is its impact on the education of the girl child, since she is made to stay home to take care of younger siblings. Further, in order to cover the ECE needs of children of working mothers engaged in unorganised sectors, there persists a need to convert the AWCs into the AWCs – cum- crèches. Though, under the scheme of National Crèche Fund, a provision of conversion of 10 per cent AW centres into Anganwadi Cum Crèches was made, however, the initiative has come to end with merger of NCF with Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme.

Infrastructure

62. ICDS scheme does not provide for construction of AWCs except in World Bank Assisted ICDS projects. However, as a special case, Government has permitted construction of AWCs in NE states. Further, from 2005-06, it has been decided to undertake construction of AWCs in NE States at enhanced cost, which is to be met out from NE component of the Departments Plan budget. The feasibility of construction of AWCs buildings in other parts of the country besides of World Bank Projects needs to be given a serious thought. In the XI plan, there is a need to consider the possibilities of construction of all AWCs in a phased manner with priority to those areas, where educational indicators are weak.

SSA, DPEP and other Innovative Programmes

63. Although, the SSA initiative has accommodated the ECE but has not carried forward all the initiatives undertaken under DPEP. Instead, it has only provided for a limited 'innovations grant' of Rs 15 lakh for ECE for each district, which does not allow for scaling up of the facility. However, subsequent to the launching of the SSA, the GOI has recently also launched the National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) under the umbrella scheme of SSA for especially backward administrative blocks. Provision has been made under this programme for opening of ECE centres at the cluster level to facilitate girls' participation in elementary education.
64. Though linking of ECE in previous initiatives concerning primary education like DPEP, Janshala and other innovative initiatives taken under various state run programmes have yielded good results for wider provision of ECE but these have now been closed. Thus, it is felt that in the XI plan, not only there is a need to have a relook at these initiatives once again but also allocate more financial and structural inputs to these.

Data Base on ECE

65. There exists no viable information about operative numbers, infrastructure, manpower and process indicators especially of private ECE centres since none of the educational surveys, census and even sample survey has considered this aspect as worthwhile. Further, as registration of these ECE centres has not been made compulsory due to which, there seems to be a general agreement that majority of these ECE centers either lack basic requirements and/or practice pedagogical inappropriate practices. Thus, a comprehensive survey needs to be undertaken in to address these issues pertaining not only to quality control but also to universal provision of ECE. Data base should cover all kinds of centres, private (centre and home based both), NGO (Govt aided and unaided both) as well as statutory crèches including information on number and age group of children, staff strengths and other basic indicators. The national level organizations such as NCERT, NIEPA, NIPCCD could be requested to look at this issue also in addition of taking care of certification of training courses, documentation and research. Analytical studies are required to be carried out by these organisations on lines similar to those in case of primary and elementary schools.

Minimum Standards and Regulatory Mechanisms

66. In the absence of any minimum specifications concerning ECE centers, the current approach in the public sector ECE seems to be of a minimalist approach, which is not likely to pay dividends. On the other hand, little is known about standards in other sectors. Given this over all situation, NCERT, NIEPA and NIPCCD may be required to evolve minimum specifications incorporating different pedagogical, infrastructure, administrative, staffing and training parameters of ECE centres, which can later on

be applied to all categories of centres ,using different instrumentalities appropriate to each sector.

NGOs/Corporate Involvement

67. As for private initiatives in ECE, NGOs/Corporate sectors involvement is yet another area about which little is known since no census or educational surveys have come out with estimated number of NGOs engaged in ECE, or the kind of services that they provide. Thus, it is urgently needed to conduct a national survey of ECE initiatives by NGOs and corporate sectors. Further the innovative practices being adopted by different leading NGOs like Ruchika, SEWA, Nutan Bal Sangha located in different parts of the country have not been properly documented, and as a result , one finds it difficult to replicate them in other parts of the country after making contextual corrections.

Working Conditions of ECE Teachers/ Child Care Workers

68. Currently under public initiative of ICDS, nearly eight lakh AWWs and an equal number of helpers totalling about more than one and half million women, have been engaged in imparting centre based ECE to 23 million of children. Most of the time, these workers are subjected to treatment at par with other regular government employees (before and on the job structured training inputs, some times transferred from one place to other, subjecting to disciplinary actions like other regular employees), however, they are having poor working/service conditions due to the honorary status of their work . The situation gets further compounded as due to absence of the term child care workers/ nursery school teacher in 27th schedule of the minimum wages act, the minimum wages and working conditions of these workers are not subject to the regulation of any law in the country. The similar situation is true with private sector and NGOs run ECE initiatives also, where they are victims of exploitatively low wages with no security of service as in case of primary /elementary/secondary school section.

69. The basic reason behind poor working conditions of ECE teachers/ child care workers is first, that that they have not yet been recognised as skilled workers, though ECE involves set of both productive and reproductive skills, second the proclaimed lack of financial requirements and third, the unavailability of the pool of trained manpower of ECE in scattered and inaccessible areas. This unworthy situation needs to be properly corrected , while designing out the ECE inputs under *Eleventh Five Year Plan*.

Training and Capacity Building

70. While there is wide spectrum of training provisions, there are marked variations as well, which reduce the scope for any standardisation or quality control of ECE training initiatives. A cursory look of these courses discussed earlier reveal the fact that training inputs vary considerably on numerous counts i,e from institutions to institutions, courses to courses and state to state and on pedagogical aspects like duration of training, methodology, and exposure to theory and practice. While

minimum educational eligibility criteria ranges from no bar (as in case of ICDS community workers) to primary standard (as in case of crèche workers) to high school pass (as in case of NTT) to class XII (as in case of IGNOU and Integrated Pre primary and Primary Teachers Training), there exists marked variation in duration of training too. This varies from a few days (in case of several NGOs which run their own courses) to fortnight (as in case of ICDS) to relatively longer time frame (as in two years) for the integrated training . While minimum educational eligibility criteria ranges from no bar (as in case of Anganwadi Workers) to primary standard (as in case of crèche workers) to high school to class XII (as in case of IGNOU and Integrated Pre primary and Primary Teachers Training), there exists marked variation in duration too varying from few days (in case of several NGOs which run their own courses for internal consumptions only) to fortnight (as in case of ICDS) to relatively larger time framework (as two years in case of Integrated pre primary and primary teachers training, one to four years in case of IGNOU programme). Further, taking advantage of absence of minimum accepted guidelines for teacher preparation curriculum of ECE , most of these institutions have adopted different curriculum from their own point of view. While State run Integrated pre primary and primary teachers training courses have adapted the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) prescribed curricula. Just opposite to these frameworks, the institutions being run within the territory of ICDS have adopted the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) prescribed curricula, which has superficial theoretical connotation and practical knowledge having no term end examination and evaluation mechanism.

71. Due to lack of employment opportunities of the products of ECE teacher training, the system has not grown up in proportion of increase of ECE centres. The employment opportunity of ECE trained teacher is only available in private sector, where most of the cases, service conditions are often deplorable. The number of available posts of trained nursery teachers in the government sector in almost all the states are negligible, Further, as there has been no demand for trained staff in ECE, so none of the state government has laid down any norms for staff qualifications or remuneration, nor any guidelines for recognition of ECE staff as teacher (NCTE, 2004). This under developed teacher training system of ECE can be easily seen from the dichotomy between the ECE teacher training and secondary/elementary teacher training system. Thus state governments under XI Five Year Plan are required to be advised to take corrective measures in the matter.
72. Though Programme of Action (POA) 1992 and NCTE draft approach paper, 2004 had recommended of having different courses of ECCE at certificate, diploma and postgraduate diploma level [the certification at various levels is based on the assumption that while postgraduate diploma holders may take up the job of teacher educators, the certificate holders may be engaged in running the ECE centers], yet existing programmes have not accommodated these needs. It might be due to the fact of absence of ECE as a subject in any of the social science faculties in Indian Universities. Thus, there seems a urgent need to bring up the Universities, Institutes and other centres of higher learning in teacher education within the realm of ECE also.

73. There is a popular perception that special training is not necessary for teachers of pre primary and nursery schools as their job simply involves teaching of alphabets, numbers etc, and taking care of young children. It is felt that any person who has passed higher secondary or senior secondary examination can easily handle the job of nursery teacher. Even any person who has caring temperament towards children, or who herself is mother, will be a good staff member in early childhood programmes. It is because of this perception that untrained teachers are posted in a majority of nursery schools in the unrecognized private sector. Nearly over three-quarters of teachers engaged in ECE have not received any type of pedagogical training. There exist tendencies to recruit untrained or poorly qualified teachers, which often have serious consequences for pre schooling quality (NCTE,2005). Needless to say, these assumptions are professionally not sound and need to be corrected after educating the community to be more selective and /or demanding as consumers ,which could serve as an effective monitoring device of ECE in private sector. This awareness aspect needs to be promoted using different modes of mass media during XI Five Year Plan. Adequate budgetary provisions for such awareness generation campaigns should be made available in XI Five Year Plan.
74. A glance at the structure of privately managed early childhood teacher training programmes shows that it lacks both academic rigor and professionalism. So far as former view of academic rigorousness is concerned, scarcely any attempt is made to the true meaning of early teaching learning repertoire (a set of skills, strategies, methods, knowledge and understanding) presumed valid for achieving preferential learning outcomes. From later view of professionalism, it is noticed that these ECE courses are not only of shorter duration but also lack the opportunity of transforming the class room based learning experiences into real context. The ultimate result is that most of the ECE teacher's falls downward from the depths of what they learned during their training inputs. Further, several studies speak about the truth that privately managed teacher training institutions have either not come up properly or they have not been functioning efficiently and effectively. Further, many of them have not yet developed a professional work culture that may enable them towards quality improvement. It has also been pointed out in studies that the kinds of faculty placed or recruited in these institutions are questionable. This is substantiated by the fact that in quite a few institutions, there is hardly any recruitment or placement policy. NCTE may be suitably strengthened under XI Five Year Plan period so as to keep an eye on these concerns by putting appropriate accreditation system.
75. Though the country has well defined system of ICDS training but often it is observed that system is confronting organisational problems in terms of standardized training package, fragmented and centrally designed curriculum and of low financial norms . Further, considering the large number of ICDS training centres across the country, the monitoring of the training programme has been posing serious problems (NIPCCD, 1996). In the absence of any well defined monitoring mechanism of training programme being organised by these training centers, some of the spinal parameters of training such as trainer strengths and their academic background, organization of programme for prescribed number of days, full coverage of syllabus, sequencing of

delivery of contents etc are not being observed properly. Further, most of the prevalent institution based ICDS training programmes are being organized in haste through deployment of contingency measures such as course based release of funds, short tenability of ICDS training centres, short lived increase in honorarium of trainers, contractual time bound appointment of faculty etc.

76. At the initial phase of implementation of ICDS, the duration of JTC for ICDS functionaries was 72 days. However, it was subsequently reduced to 52 working days and finally to 26 working days. This reduction of working days has been done without compromising of content areas delivered during institutional setting. The suppression of duration has drastically reduced the opportunities for hands on experiences of PSE skills in the field situation. Currently, the ECE component under JTC of various ICDS functionaries only figures for 4 days. This aspect needs to be looked into.
77. The curriculum content of the existing ECE teacher education programmes by and large, lacks relevance and state /UTs based context specificity. In most of the cases, it is modeled on the pattern of elementary teacher education programme. Besides, the training methodology generally lacks cultural flavour and local specificity. In this connection, it is recommended that state specific courses needs to be devised within the broader framework provided by NCTE. There is also a need to initiate dialogue with NCTE on evolving a need based, practical oriented and flexible curriculum. In order to have state based flavour in training of ECE functionaries, it may be suggested that SCERTs and DIETs need to be strengthened in a sustained manner with regular guidance of lead institutions like NCERT and NIPCCD. In addition to these, decentralised training capability for ECE has to be nurtured in Block and Cluster Resource Centres. Documentation and case studies of best practices in training needs to be prepared for wide dissemination, replication as well as to feed into the training process itself.
78. Under XI plan, lead institutions like NCERT and NIPCCD also need strengthening by developing a suitable resource pool at the national level so as to work as clearing house in all matters concerning ECE. While separate department of Pre school education may be established in NCERT, a resource center of ECE should be developed at NIPCCD. Similarly while, NCERT may be assigned the task of doing work in pedagogical aspect, NIPCCD may be given responsibility of continuing with training, research and resource material availability of ECE under ICDS.
79. There has been an unplanned and unmapped distribution of ECE teacher training courses. Though POA, 1992 had committed the adequate training facilities for this sector through 2 year vocational course at +2 level and creating a system of accreditation of institutions dealing with ECE training, yet, NCTE has till date recognised only 124 courses at the pre primary level . The state wise distribution of these courses present a very grim picture. No institutions have been reported from NE region. This poor scenario underscores the need for creating workforce requirement in a more systematic way. Further, due to the uneven geographical distribution of training centres, majority of ECE providers are forced to undergo training not only at distant places, but almost in decontextualised way with lack of responsiveness to local

needs. Thus, NCTE may come out with more appropriate method after adopting simplified norms of accrediting training institutes / courses. Further, a well-established accreditation system recognised by the government for monitoring ECE training institutes has to be set up in XI Five-Year Plan.

80. A revolutionary change has taken place during 1990s across the globe in staff training and development sphere of ECE. The training task of teachers and teacher educators of kindergarten and early childhood education centres has now become the responsibility of colleges and university system in most of the countries like China, Australia, Finland, Hongkong, Japan etc. However, the same case is not true with India despite of the fact that we have more than 50 Institutes of Advanced Studies in education and about 450 District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs) across the country. Besides this more than 100 education departments in various universities are also in operation. The scope of these Institutes/ Centres needs to be widened so that they not only take up the training task of teachers from early to secondary stage through diverse ways of different certification level but also discharge their responsibilities in research and extension dimensions too. NIPCCD may provide a torch-bearing role in this regard by adopting cascade model and by imparting training to trainers of these institutions. The launching of Diploma and Certificate level course in ECE by the Universities like IGNOU, Jamia Millia Islamia and prominent institutes like State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) , Delhi from the academic year of 2004/5 in the field of early childhood education may be seen as a lead role model in this direction. Other universities, which are implementing self-financing courses, may also be encouraged to opt for same model under XI Five Year Plan.
81. Based on the rich experiences of training of ECE functionaries in India and training of similar manpower in other countries of Asia and Pacific, one of the stronger alternate of getting them trained through distance mode needs to be put on the priority agenda of discussion among trainers fraternity. This juncture, especially when ECE has found a specific and explicit mention in the constitution for the first time under Directive Principles of State Policy, seems to be the right time to usher in such a dispassionate and informed discussions on the proposal in a collective manner. As traditional way of institutionalised training is certainly unequipped to cater emerging demands of imparting training on several counts, the distance mode of training by its innate potentiality of quick delivery mechanism, boundary less operation, taking care of contextual sensitive pedagogies and cost effective way may only be viewed as an alternate to surpass these contemporary training weaknesses. Since training through distance mode requires moving in altogether different paths in contrast to contemporary practices, the proposal needs to be thoroughly contested and debated. Here, it has to be mentioned that NIPCCD had already taken a lead by facilitating the states to get the ECE functionaries enrolled in IGNOU run distance learning ECE programme. NIPCCD has also started discussions with NIOS to develop tie ups with NIOS run distance mode ECE programme. The committee appointed by Government of India for contemporary look into the training aspects of ECE services has also recommended designing courses of shorter duration using distance mode. State open universities (SOUs) may also take up these courses so as to take into consideration

the contextual responsiveness of the programme. Though, all these developments present case for application of distance mode training system in context of early schooling but still the proposal needs to be put on the priority list in the agenda for discussion amongst professionals and academic fraternity working for the XI Five Year P.Lan. Here it would also be in fitness of things if a planned and systematic feasibility study may be undertaken before actualizing the project on pilot basis. This will have the advantage of not only speeding up the innovations but also providing a continuous source of excitement and interest.

Curriculum of ECE: Prescription Vs Practice

82. Though appropriate curricular guidelines are available in the country for ECE; the reality is that there is a large gap between what is prescribed or suggested and what is practiced. It can be generally seen that in the private sector pre schooling, the overriding emphasis is placed on pedagogical concerns of formalised cognitive domains by way of down ward extension of primary schooling and thus marginalising a dozen of other affective and psycho motor domains, which are also required to be attended too. In fact, the early childhood education centres have to offer such activities in which cognitive development may occupy an important place but not an overriding focus of attention. In a study conducted by the NCERT (1998) it was found that almost all the ICDS centers observed adhered to teaching of 3 R's (reading, writing and arithmetic) and there was a virtual absence of any play activities. Typically, the activities of pre school education under ICDS are conducted for a period ranging from 45 minutes to two hours duration daily, with minimal play and learning material support. Though, unprepared and untrained status of ECE worker is the root cause of this phenomenon, however, most of the time, it is the demand of the community/ parents also to prepare the PSE children in formalized way of primary schooling. These practices are acknowledged to be detrimental to the health of children and of the system as a whole. Thus there emerges a pressing need to educate the community on various aspects of joyful learning and to be more selective and/or demanding as consumers which could serve as an effective monitoring /regulating device.
83. Another unequivocal view pertaining to early childhood education relates to the issue of transition of the child from early to primary schooling. There has been a global consensus that child's successful transition from early stimulating centres to primary education is particularly important because her performance and behaviour in the first few years of school substantially affects subsequent achievement transistories. After all, there has been interdependence of various sub sectors of education. . It is a matter of ground reality that either early childhood education providers are least concerned on this issue or if concerned, they make the early education activities as down ward extension of primary schooling irrespective of age specific and contextually sensitive pedagogical considerations. They do not further organise various stimuli and interventional strategies keeping the onus on adjustment of these entrants in new physical settings, larger class size and comparatively slighter structured academic inputs and formalised core process practiced in primary schooling system. This unwanted wider gap between two root streams might perhaps not only act as strongest

reason for prevalence of high drop out phenomenon in first few years of primary schooling against nearly universal enrolment rate but also of producing unprepared state of school readiness skills. Thus, there emerges a definite need to further develop close tie-ups between primary schooling and ECE initiatives (as in case of DPEP by way of synchronisation of timings, locating AWC in primary school, allowing AWW to act as teacher of grade 1 and 2 by giving special training etc). Adequate financial resources for this purpose may be allocated under XI Five Year Plan on the estimated cost under DPEP initiatives.

- 84.** Though language intervention thorough mother tongue has been scientifically proved as most appropriate way of working with pre school children, however, due to increased urbanisation and privatisation , the child's learning in English medium schools has now a days comes out as a legitimate desire even in rural parts of the country. The committee appointed by GOI on ECE (2004) also substantiated it by stating that these days socially and economically upward mobile families are often fleeing from public initiatives towards locally available private alternatives in search of so called English medium pre schooling. Though some of the pedagogical/curricular experts, located in the developed and advanced countries, favour the introduction of second language from very early stage, however, in our case, keeping in view the socio - political realities, the pre schooling has to be done in mother tongue only, with options of oral introduction of a second language and regular with introduction of second language only in grade one. Thus, while detailing out the provisions for ECE under XI Five Year Plan, the popularity/ advocacy of language reality in pre schooling through mother tongue has to be kept in mind by involving mass campaigns and fully utilisation of print / electronic media so that this language policy will eventually be applicable to all categories of pre schools and schools.

Chapter – Five

Summary of Recommendations for Eleventh Five Year Plan

85. In view of the forgoing discussions in the previous sections of the report, the sub group has formulated following recommendations to be considered for inclusion by working group in its report for the XI Five-Year Plan.

Providing National Framework, Policy Directions and Developing Data base

(i) The group recommends that 11th Five Year Plan should develop a *New Paradigm* to deal with stagnant problem of pre school education. It must rest on:

- *A right based approach* that strengthens the ECE directive, under 45 of the Indian Constitution, in preparation for its inclusion as a Fundamental Right to Education.
- *A holistic approach* based on the continuum of growth and development for the child under 6 years that removes the arbitrary divides between ECCE and ECE, between care and education, between parental participation and state responsibility that currently exists.
- *A fresh approach and strategy towards ‘Crèches and Day Care’* and recognition of its role in the survival and development of the young child in diverse situations;
- *A scientific approach* that is guided by the empirical evidence and economic rationale that strongly endorses investment in the early years of our precious human resource.
- *An Integrated approach* to programme planning and delivery of ECE that institutionalizes effective structures for coordination, convergence, and accountability between states, ministries and departments.

The policy for ECE must also rest on

- The recognition that women and their young children are intimately linked during the period 0-6 years. ECE services have to, therefore, be firmly linked to strategies for employment, rural development and women’s empowerment.
 - That the basic services of water, sanitation, and quality health care are integral to ECE.
 - That concerted, cross-sectoral efforts have to be made to create an environment that protects nurtures and ensures early learning.
 - That dislocations of population from urban revival or rural development have to be tested against the incalculable harm caused to children and thus requires speedy setting of ECE and other supportive services.
- (ii) The group recommends that provisions concerning ECE made in the National Policy on Education, 1986 and POA, 1992 should be implemented in right earnest and in consonance of the contemporary realities. Further, if needed, a new policy concerning ECE may be designed by the state.
- (iii) The education sector is already burdened with responsibilities of several other levels of education viz, primary, secondary, higher, technical and vocational education etc. As a result, it appears that early childhood education segment does not receive the due attention of the education sector. Keeping this in view, it is

recommended that ECE should be made a subject under Business Allocation Rules of Department of Women and Child Development by various state governments as has been made in Government of India under MWCD.

- (iv) There emerges a pressing need to come out with national data and statistical indicators (GER, NER, gender differentiation, regional disparities) concerning various aspects of ECE. This may be done by gathering the requisite information / statistical data on various indicators of ECE in the (a) forthcoming eighth national educational survey to be carried out by NCERT shortly, (b) in national census, which is scheduled to be conducted in 2010, (c) through National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), (d) through District Information System of Education (DISE) and (e) through SSA district education plans. While designing the statistical indicators concerning ECE, the parameters adopted in data base of UNICEF, MICS (Multi Indicator Cluster Survey) in terms of GER, NER, age group served, number of pre schooling years, ECE attendance rate, pre primary school expectancy rate may also be taken into consideration.
- (v) Besides developing the national data base on identified statistical indicators of ECE, state profiles also need to be developed so as to facilitate taking corrective measures. While developing the state specific ECE profiles, the data on specific indicators like state specific policy and governance framework, target setting, policies and directives, stakeholders participation, national and international development partners, monitoring and evaluation mechanism, assessing the effectiveness of ECE intervention, strategies being adopted, implementing agencies, resource inputs in terms of financial, infrastructure, material, programmes/ services, delivered curricula and learning outcomes etc ,also need to be collected . For accomplishment of this task, under XI Five Year Plan, a well designed institutional monitoring system concerning ECE for all sectors (public, private, NGOs) has to be established in every State/ UT administration at the sub national system level and at NIPCCD at the national level. This will not only facilitate the convergence and coordination mechanism across various players of ECE but also would ensure the flow of data base information right from grass root to GOI level. The data base, as envisaged should cover all kinds of centres – private (centre and home based ECE interventions), NGOs (Govt aided and unaided),public initiatives as well as statutory crèches . The national and state specific ECE data and statistical indicators thus collected and collated would also pave the way for developing proper national/ state specific action plans on ECE and in designing mid - decade / term end progress assessment report of goal 1 (universal provision of ECE) of EFA project.

Access and Coverage

- (vi) It is recommended to set up one ECE centre for a group of 25 children in 3-6 years age group within easily reachable distance from the home of the child.
- (vii) The home based family day care model of ECE tried out by NCERT some times back needs to be encouraged and experimented with uncovered and unreached children and with PSE children located in far flung and smaller community helmets, scattered population, areas affected by floods and other disasters specially in tribal

and hilly zones and PSE children belonging to difficult circumstances, having special needs etc. Support of various forms for mobile services/crèches (crèches in flexi time, flexi space, transitory-temporary, mini AWCs etc) may be provided for this purpose. Schemes should be flexible enough to allow new and different institutions (labour unions, SHG's,CBOs etc) to run crèches, with funding on a per child norm and freedom to develop their own programmes , along with a support system including monitoring and guidance. However, before implementing these innovative strategies, considerable emphasis needs to be given on designing proper teacher education inputs in contextually relevant situation. Resources of District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs), Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) should be concomitantly strengthened and utilized for this purpose.

- (viii) All ECE approaches and strategies need to be linked with primary schooling system either by way of locating ECE centre in proximity to local primary school or close to peripheral feeder school so as to address the issue of transition from ECE to primary schooling.
- (ix) Since access to ECE in urban slums seems to be very low, it is recommended that the rules pertaining to area/town planning may be amended so as to provide the space for neighbourhood ECE centre. The schedule for urban local bodies needs to be strengthened to ensure the responsibility for allocation of space for AWCs, Crèches, etc.

ECE under ICDS and Crèches

- (x) Due to reduction in the entry age in grade one of the primary schooling from 6 to 5 years in most of the states, the age range under PSE component of ICDS needs to be redefined within the age group of 3-5 years in place of 3-6 years as currently provisioned in the operational guidelines of ICDS. This would, in turn, also facilitate the smooth transition of children from pre primary to grade one of primary schooling.
- (xi) The group recommends that instead of one, two AWWs be appointed in each AWC. One of these two AWWs should be exclusively engaged for imparting pre schooling and other should be assigned the job of attending care issues, which inter alia includes supplementation, health and well being etc as well as care of the children in the 0-3 age group in the crèche, if any. The same two AWWs model, which is being practiced in Rajasthan (in the name of Sahyogini), though from state's own initiatives and financial resources, has yielded good results. Additional resources in the XI plan for ECE component under ICDS have to be made available for this purpose.
- (xii) More urban poor groups are needed to be brought within the purview of ICDS through active participation of various urban bodies and NGOs supported ICDS projects.
- (xiii) In accordance with the policy directions given in NPE(1986) and POA(1992) there persists a need to convert all AWCs into the AWCs – cum- crèches to meet the unmet needs of care and education of children of working mothers of both organised and unorganised sectors. This has to be done in a phased manner and by

allocating adequate financial resources under the scheme of ICDS. If need be, the entire structural, financial, training and manpower aspects of ICDS also need to be redesigned under XI Five Year Plan.

- (xiv) Keeping in view the importance of the Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme, it is recommended that the scheme be expanded comprehensively under XI plan throughout the country. Not only this, the crèche workers are required to be thoroughly trained on pre schooling on the same lines and adopting strategies similar to ICDS.
- (xv) Construction of buildings of AWCs in a phased manner, with priority to areas where educational indicators are weak, in XI plan is strongly recommended. Adequate financial allocation, therefore, need to be made in the XI plan.

ECE under Private and NGOs Initiatives

- (xvi) A comprehensive survey needs to be undertaken in order to arrive at operative numbers, infrastructure, manpower requirements, and to assess the process / pedagogical inputs especially of private and NGOs initiatives. The national level organisations such as NCERT, NIEPA and NIPCCD could be requested to look at this issue. Analytical studies are also required to be carried out by them on lines similar to those in case of primary and elementary schools.

Advocacy and Awareness

- (xvii) There emerges a pressing need to educate the community to be more selective and/or demanding as consumers which could serve as an effective monitoring /regulating device of ECE under private sector. This awareness aspect needs to be promoted using different modes of mass media during the XI Five Year Plan. Adequate budgetary provisions for awareness generation be made in XI Five Year Plan.
- (xviii) In order to sensitize the public on various aspects of ECE – pedagogical and mother tongue language concerns, warns against the danger of neglect, significance and true meaning of ECE etc – mass public awareness and advocacy programmes needs to be undertaken involving different forms of print , electronic and folk media, . Experts and experienced practitioners need to be engaged in this task. Thus, in XI Five-Year Plan, appropriate funds to undertake these activities are to be earmarked.

Training and Capacity Building

- (xix) The scope of education departments located in universities and other institutes of higher learning needs to be widened so that they not only take up the training task of teachers from ECE to secondary stage through diverse ways of different certification level (certificate, diploma, bachelor and master degree) but also discharge their responsibilities in research and extension dimension of ECE too. They need to assist in widening the conceptual base for ECE courses so that the principle of continuum of childhood development is firmly integrated and informs the approach to ECE workers/ teachers. NIPCCD and NCERT may provide a torch-bearing role in this regard by adopting cascade model and by imparting

- training to trainers of these Institutes. The universities, which are implementing self-financing courses, may also be encouraged to opt for this model. They may be provided grants for this purpose under XI Five Year Plan.
- (xx) Based on the rich experiences of training of ECE functionaries in India and training of similar manpower in other countries of Asia and Pacific, one of the stronger alternate of getting them trained through distance mode needs to be put on the priority agenda of discussion among trainers fraternity. Adequate financial provisions for expanding the distance mode of training to the ECE workers be therefore made in the XI Five Year Plan.
 - (xxi) NCTE ought to be suitably strengthened under XI Five Year Plan so as to develop appropriate accreditation system of training inputs being given by various institutions. For this purpose, existing norms and standards should be simplified with variations for each type of institutions and should be applicable to all sectors of government, private bodies and NGOs.
 - (xxii) State specific courses needs to be devised within the broader framework provided by NCTE. There is also a need to initiate dialogue with NCTE on evolving a need based, practical oriented and flexible curriculum.
 - (xxiii) In order to have state based flavour in training of ECE functionaries, it is suggested that SCERTs and DIETs be strengthened in a sustained manner with regular guidance of lead institutions like NCERT and NIPCCD. In fact, these institutions should work as State Resource Centres (SRC's) and District Resource Centres (DRC's) respectively. In addition to these, decentralised training capability for ECE has to be nurtured in Block and Cluster Resource Centers. Necessary financial resources are required to be earmarked for this purpose in XI Five Year Plan.
 - (xxiv) The trainers of DIETs, BRCs, CRCs are required to be thoroughly trained by lead institutions like NIPCCD, NCERT so that they may impart training for contextually suited operationalisation of innovative models like home based model, crèches with flexi time, space etc.
 - (xxv) Documentation and case studies of best practices in training needs to be prepared for wide dissemination, replication as well as to feed into the training process itself.
 - (xxvi) Under XI plan, lead institutions like NCERT and NIPCCD also need to be strengthened by developing a suitable resource pool at the national level so as to work as clearing house in all matters concerning ECE. While separate department of Pre school education may be established in NCERT, resource center of ECE may be developed at NIPCCD. Similarly, while, NCERT may be assigned the task of doing work in pedagogical aspect, NIPCCD may be given responsibility of continuing with training, research and preparation of resource material for ECE under ICDS and crèches.

Working Conditions of ECE Teachers/ Workers

- (xxvii) Keeping in view the poor working conditions of ECE teachers/workers in all the three main sectors of public, private and NGOs, the group strongly recommends that duly qualified and trained ECE workers /teachers may be categorized as

skilled workers. They should be given a fair and decent wages arrived on commonly evolved consensus of policy makers, implementers and social / educational /child rights activists.

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