The Anganwadi Programme

The Anganwadi Programme, started by the Government of India in 1975 as part of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), is a grassroots programme that reaches out to women in rural areas and urban slums, to educate them on matters of basic health and hygiene, nutrition, pre-natal and post-natal maternal and childcare and child rearing.

Introduction

This study aims to understand, explore and evaluate The preschool education Program w.r.t. the tools used by Anganwadi workers to impart the same under Standards and the Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences reflected under ICDS’s commitment to quality, in order to ensure a solid foundation for learning and school success.

Preschool Education may be conceived as developing those competencies, which help a child realize excellence as per her/his inherent potential through proper education in later life leading to a physically healthy, emotionally managed, socially conscious and creative and spiritually enlightened life. The process for Pre School Education has to be culturally sensitive and scientifically appropriate.

The role of the preschool years in a child’s development has received a great deal of attention in recent years. Research on brain development supports the value of high quality preschool education programs for young children, while studies of early childhood education also provide evidence for their benefits. There is research evidence that showed that children who have traditionally been at risk of not doing well in school are affected more by the quality of early childhood experiences than other children are.

The study has mapped the types of tools used by Anganwadi workers using audio visual research documentation process which is new method of initiating research. Interviews were conducted on video with Anganwadi workers on their experience with the preschool kit, how they use the kit, what are the learning outcomes they get from using these tools, exposure to new media literacy tools and their reactions on new innovative tools for their work with preschool education.

This study also found that wherever the Anganwadis have played an active role in early childhood education, it significantly improved the academic achievement of poor children even into early adulthood, showing higher reading and mathematics scores for individuals who had received early intervention.
The research has been able to identify dedicated Anganwadi workers, trainers and anganwadi centres who have been doing their work in an innovative manner using the best tools creatively and intelligently for the benefit of the young children in order to empower them with life skills.

The initiatives of having tribal language translations of preschool education material in Orissa is a positive sign that preschool education tools are constantly being evaluated for their potential usage in different settings, language and regions.

Role of Anganwadi workers in preschool education

Anganwadi workers in this case are expected to be aware of children’s individual interests and strengths and find ways to engage and expand them. They do so by arranging for a rich variety of learning experiences that appeal to all the senses — visual, auditory and physical — and by alternating individual, partnered, small group and large group activities so that children experience various kinds of social interaction.

In early childhood programs, assessment takes place by observing children in daily activities and taking note of their skills, understandings, interests, vocabulary, and attitudes toward various tasks.

It includes communicating with families regularly to learn about the circumstances that may affect classroom behaviors or interactions, such as personal or family illness, injury, and child-rearing beliefs and practices. While children exhibit a broad range of individual differences and personal interests, assessment should ensure that both boys
and girls have opportunities to participate in a range of activities, from block building to musical, artistic, or dramatic play, in order to stimulate the development of spatial, artistic, musical, and verbal abilities in all children.

Progress report of Anju, Nautanya village, Uttar Pradesh
Progress report of Pushpa, Nautanva village, Uttar Pradesh
There is always a scope for improvement and based on this universal fact, the research has come up with some recommendations and suggestions which should not present any additional burden to programs already operating under community partnerships for children as they are already doing this. The recommendations and suggestions are voluntary to the extent the programs are not expected to “meet” all of the guidelines but
only to demonstrate that they are providing experiences that build broad and balanced foundations for learning in all content areas.

While the terminology in the Guidelines may sound sophisticated for preschool children, teachers should be able to articulate to parents and to the community how early experiences relate to later academic achievement.
Pre School Education in ICDS
Anganwadi Centre

village courtyard

Anganwadis is defined as a government sponsored child-care and mother-care center in India. It caters to children in the 0-6 age group. During this research study, we met many anganwadi workers who were proud of their roles and aware of the importance of their work vis-à-vis children and mothers.

It is also interesting to know how anganwadi workers define anganwadis based on their experiences. A dedicated National awardee anganwadi worker Rosy from Tamilnadu defines Anganwadi as “a public relation centre” where parents come, meet, interact and seek information regarding mother and child’s health, development and more importantly view it as an important preparatory ground to send their kids to in order to seek admission for their kids in regular school after their preschool years. It also serves as an important support for low class working mothers who are out in fields or at construction sites or some other projects which fetch them livelihood and attending to small kids is well taken care by Anganwadis.

When children come to Anganwadis, they bring life to Anganwadis. Aanganwadis smile. Anganwadis flower.

P. Rosi Siriya Pushpam
National Awardee Anganwadi Worker,
Tamil Nadu.
We found Anganwadis in Orissa resonating with welcome songs by kids and anganwadis workers together.

Hasila...koni Bhai Hasila...
Hasila......
Koni Bohuni Asila.
Hasila......

This is a welcome song that says “Our sister and brother has come to Our Anganwadi center.” With kids around, it becomes joyous and playful.
Objectives

To study the impact of preschool education in ICDS

To analyze the impact of media literacy tools (when used in preschool education) on children and young people

To understand the awareness ‘Levels’ of Media Literacy among Anganwadi workers

To understand how Media Literacy is actually used in everyday life (performance)

To collect data on access to type of traditional and modern media literacy tools available to Anganwadi workers.

To analyse the perceptions and attitudes of Anganwadi workers towards Media Literacy

To look for more ideas, more best practice examples, further ideas of what can be done in the children learning environment in Anganwadis by using examples of media literacy tools created by them using local dialect and materials.
Research Strategy

1. Tool preparation
The research team initiated work on preparation of tools where the research methods were new and evolved with the study as this was the first time audio visual research method were used. The foremost tool was to observe participants (Anganwadi workers in this case) with the use of digital camera.

After two rounds of discussion the research team finalized on one digital movie camera for audio & video recording, one handy HD video recorder for supporting footage and one 18 mega pixel digital camera for high quality photographs.

2. Survey
The research team decided to conduct survey in some of the Anganwadi Centres. The team conducted the survey along with the coordinators in Anganwadi Centres in Delhi, Haryana and Rajasthan. Based on their survey and observation the team was satisfied that the tools prepared by the research team are appropriate.

3. Pre Run
The research team decided to have a pre run of the tools prepared by them. A survey of one Anganwadi Centre in Rajasthan along with the evaluators is conducted.

Research team was trained on use of field camera and on non-interfering methods of shooting the participants doing their work.

4. Planning
The research team did elaborate planning regarding collection of data. The Anganwadi centres were identified and sought appointment for research work.

5. Workshop
Media Literacy workshop was conducted during 5th Chinh India Kids Film Festival in New Delhi where Ramavtar (Coordinator, Rajasthan), Lalchand (Coordinator, Rajasthan), Sonu Pal (Coordinator, Delhi), and Jag Pal (Coordinator, Haryana) participated as observer.
6. Workshop for Volunteers

Media Literacy workshop was conducted from 20th – 25th June 2012 in Mahraj Ganj District, Uttar Pradesh for research volunteers, anganwadi volunteers and other participants. A film Maina was developed by the participant on the relevant issue of Child Marriage. The film is uploaded on www.chinh.in [Chinh Early Education Web Channel] and is also enclosed with Video Research document.

Two preschool documentary films for preschool children were developed in close coordination of anganwadi workers and preschool educators in New Delhi titled “Butterfly” and “Peacock”. The films were based on the concept how butterfly is made and how peacock is created using paper by kids as an activity and in the process makes children learn about colours, shapes and concepts of flying.

In all three films were developed to test with anganwadi educators in the framework of Media Literacy tools in preschool education. One of the films uploaded on www.chinh.in made with preschool educators titled “Ka hei Lamba Ka hei gol” using traditional animation was also used for the same purpose wherever internet facility was to be found available in order to assess the adaptability of anganwadi workers on e-space.
Best Tools used by Anganwadi Workers in Pre School Education
Pictorial Charts

The research identified and explored the traditional media and print media like Pictorial Materials are used for preschool education in Anganwadi Centres. It also assessed the suitability of the materials for Pre-School Education. Pictorial material was available for learning through play and meaningful activities in a developmental sequence. The forms in which it is available are

Charts
Flash card
Counting Frames
Picture Books
Purpose of the print material has been to enable kids in helping in:
Identification of Birds and Animals
Identification of Colours
Identification of Numbers/ Days
Identification of Fruits and Vegetables

Framework of learning outcomes through print media materials
The research study also examined the use of pictorial charts by anganwadi workers for children.
Following are the excerpts from a video interview of the Anganwadi worker using a pictorial chart of fruits.

Let’s look at common fruits which are available…
What is this?
This is Papaya.
Have you eaten it or not?
This is banana. This is very familiar. Available everywhere.
Yes I have eaten it. I like it. It is sweet.
It is also good for health etc like that and so on…
Then we also tell them that use sea food also.
This is for child education as well as mother and nutrition health education also.

Traditional Media
Rangolis are actively used in Anganwadis in Uttar Pradesh to identify different colour
Low cost materials
Impact of Local Culture in low cost materials created as learning tools

Based on the region and availability Anganwadi workers are creating and producing Pre School learning material on their own.

Creating learning materials

• Lot of importance is given on color concepts that would be helpful in identifying basic colors while creating learning materials. For example in Orissa lot of pictorial charts would be decorated with sea shells and lentils. Lot of charts had pencil shells used to enhance the aesthetics and add texture. Cut and paste method was used to create animal faces and expressions.

• The animal and bird characters created by Anganwadi Centres in Orissa clearly stand out because of effective use of rice, pulses, jute, waste wood material and decorative jewellery items.

Tamilnadu

Anganwadi centres in Tamilnadu are using best use of waste CDs to create animal faces.
Interview with Anganwadi Trainer in Tamilnadu

We are right now teaching using low cost materials. Writing stories for story telling and creative activities using low cost materials to increase children’s knowledge and overall improvement.
I can see some interesting low cost effective tools... learning tools. What is it that you are trying to demonstrate here.
We have made lot of simple material and low cost material.
For example I am showing... this one is a waste CD – Cat’s Face.
I have done simple cut and paste here. This is a low cost learning material and looks very interesting also.
This one is an elephant. Now this one is also waste CD. Waste brown paper. This is a fish.
Hand Made Puppets
Preschool Education through Puppets & Story telling

Story telling is an integral part of Pre School teaching method. The Anganwadi centres across India are making handmade toys using low cost material for story telling.

Interview with Anganwadi Trainer in Tamilnadu

This is a story telling toy. You can conceive any conversation with this. Hi papa... how are you? Are you fine? You know I learnt many new things today? This is also very simple. A handkerchief is used as frock. A stick is pasted at the back side and simple drawings. She is wearing flowers, bindiya, a necklace etc. So it is also nice looking catchy puppet for children.
The Anagnwadi trainers feel it is important to create these toys as children are able to co-relate with the toys created using low cost material. The most interesting thing that is happening in this process is the distinct presence of local and regional culture in these toys. The characters bear significant regional reflection in the attire, design and decoration. This helps kids to identify with these characters easily and quickly. Anganwadi workers also feel confident in handling such characters/puppets in their own language. It helps to impart important messages about personal hygiene and grooming like comb your hair, dress properly… look nice…

The Anganwadi workers in Andhra Pradesh are focusing on using low cost materials to create animal toys.

Interview with an Anganwadi worker in Hyderabad demonstrating the use of puppet

How is it?
What is it?
It’s an animal. It’s an Elephant
It has ears. It has eyes. It has long nose. Like that
It’s saying – “Namaste”
It’s saying – “Yes
The Anganwadi trainers in Tamil Nadu are also making animal shapes using fruits and vegetables. Bitter gourd to make shape of Crocodile and telling stories around them is most common practice.
Innovative
Cost Effective Tools
There are ample examples of sound based toys and learning material using low cost material in Anganwadis in Punjab. A ‘Matchbox Jhunjhuna’ stood out among all the other tools in its look and purpose.

### Process of creating Matchbox Jhunjhuna

- It was created with empty matchboxes. Anganwadi workers filled small stones and beads in it. They decorated it with some waste ribbons etc. Nothing had been bought from the market. They took a stick and pasted the matchboxes around it using waste material from clothes etc. Whenever a child cries, this toy comes handy to divert his/her attention. This toy makes good sound which children enjoy.
Process of creating Counting Toy

- Counting toy was made with the waste bottle covers of cold-drinks drilled locally and put into a Y shaped wire covered with nice blue silken waste material neatly stitched over it. This toy was a great hit among children as it made sound with every count. It can be replicated and is easy to create/use.
An interesting learning material on “Sparsh Gyan” i.e Touch and Feel is worth mentioning in this study as it helped children to learn about the surfaces and their textures. Vocabulary like soft, hard, rough etc can be easily imparted using this tool where small circular pieces of different types of charts (velvet, glossy, rough etc) were pasted and Anganwadi worker is educated on how to use it with kids.

Interview of an Anganwadi Worker from Punjab demonstrating the use of Touch & Feel chart

I would ask you again... and you can tell me turn by turn. How does it feel? Very soft. Soft. Now you touched this surface. How was it? Hard and uneven.... So this is rough surface. So today’s lesson is “Sparsh Gyan” i.e “Feel through touch” which means you touched, felt and understood.
Eye & Hand Coordination Tools

The tools aimed at strengthening eye and hand coordination among preschool children were the best in Anganwadis in Andhra Pradesh. They have designed special colourful tools for this purpose aimed at eye and hand coordination.

It is made of soft board with holes drilled in this. A pencil size needle is there where woolen threads of different colours are used and the child is asked to weave this pencil and thread from one hole to the other. This is how kids work out their fingers and muscles in the hands. This tool helps children in eye – hand coordination. We also come to know whether child has blindness. Many learning outcomes are associated in the usage of this single tool.
Interview of an Anganwadi worker in Hyderabad

We ask children to weave the material. We have eye and hand coordination development with this activity. This applies in all the Anganwadis in Andhra Pradesh. It is very easy for the child to do.

When children see different colours, they learn the names of the colours. They learn the shapes also. These are different shapes. This is triangle. This is big. This is small. This is hexagon. This is square. And this is very useful for eye hand coordination. Small muscle development is also there and more importantly children are learning about sizes and shapes.
Among all the learning tools the most popular character stands out to be a bird. Bird as a tool and as a toy finds great connectivity with preschool children and a variety of learning materials have been using bird to convey different messages.

These messages and learning outcomes vary from identifying colours to making kids aware about beak to wings to flight. Lot of poems revolves around birds and find an instant connectivity with kids of all ages.

Interview of an Anganwadi trainer in Orissa
This is a bird.
This bird has two colours.
One is red and the other is yellow.
Red colour is for its tongue (beak) and yellow colour is for the body.
Bird as Learning Tool

(Poem on birds used in Anganwadis in Orissa with Learning outcomes including colour concepts and concepts of going up, coming down)

• टिक्की टिक्की चढ़ेयी, रंग बिरंगी चढ़ेयी ।
  टिक्की टिक्की चढ़ेयी, रंग बिरंगी चढ़ेयी ।

• डेना मेली उड़ेयी....
  डेना मेली उड़ेयी....

आई बाकू पोकोटीय, उपर को उपर को जाये
खाई बाकू पोकोटीय, तड़कू – तड़कू आसे
लागी ले बौंडो ताकू, उपर को उपर को जाये
पोकोटीय पाई लासे, तड़कू – तड़कू आसे

• टिक्की टिक्की चढ़ेयी, टिक्की टिक्की चढ़ेयी
  रंग बिरंगी चढ़ेयी.... रंग बिरंगी चढ़ेयी ।
(Poem on birds used in Uttar Pradesh with Learning outcome that include counting)

• चिड़िया चिड़िया उड़ती जा
  चिड़िया चिड़िया उड़ती जा
• चिड़िया चिड़िया... खुशी मना
  चिड़िया चिड़िया... खुशी मना
• पाँच छोटी चिड़िया....
  पाँच छोटी चिड़िया....
  खा रही थी अनार
  एक चिड़िया उड़ गई
  एक चिड़िया उड़ गई
  बाकी बच गई चार।।
• फिर से गाओ....
• चार छोटी चिड़िया....
  चार छोटी चिड़िया....
  बजा रही थी बीन
  एक चिड़िया उड़ गई
  एक चिड़िया उड़ गई
  बाकी बच गई तीन।।

• चिड़िया चिड़िया उड़ती जा
  चिड़िया चिड़िया उड़ती जा
• चिड़िया चिड़िया... खुशी मना

  तीन छोटी चिड़िया....
  तीन छोटी चिड़िया....
  बीज रही थी बो
  एक चिड़िया उड़ गई
  एक चिड़िया उड़ गई
  बाकी बच गई दो।।।।