

Working Paper
12

**Intervention on Early
Childhood Care
and Education:
Evidences from Orissa**

Tattwamasi Paltasingh
November 2012



**Sardar Patel Institute
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Social Research**
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Contents

List of Tables	2
List of abbreviations	2
Abstract	3
1. Background	4
2. Status of Child Population in India	5
3. Government initiatives for Existing Pre-school Programmes	6
3.1 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) under SSA	6
3.2 Anganwadi Center (AWC) under ICDS	8
4. Methodology	9
4.1 Research Methods	9
4.2 Population	9
4.3 Sample & Sampling Techniques	9
4.4 Tools for Data Collection	10
5. Major Findings and Discussion	11
5.1 Curriculum in ECCE Centers & AWCs	11
5.2 Children's Participation in Pre-school Activities	13
5.3 Problems faced at the Centres	14
5.4 Infrastructure in ECCECs and AWCs	15
6. Implications of the Findings	20
7. Suggestions & Recommendations	21
References	23

List of Tables

Table-1	Child Population (0-6 years) in India and Orissa
Table 2	Child Population Projections
Table 3	Sample Distribution
Table 4	Curriculum followed in AWC and ECCE Centers
Table 5	Children's Participation in Pre-school Activities
Table 6	Problems faced at the Centre due to lack of provisions
Table 7	Available Infrastructure in ECCECs and AWCs: Cuttack
Table 8	Available Infrastructure in ECCECs and AWCs: Bhadrak
Table 9	Available Infrastructure in ECCECs and AWCs: Boudh
Table 10	Available Infrastructure in ECCECs and AWCs: Nuapada
Table 11	Cleanliness at the Centers

List of Abbreviations

AWC	Anganwadi Centre
AWW	Anganwadi Worker
AWH	Anganwadi Helper
DWCD	Department of Women and Child Development
DPO	District Project Office
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECCEC	Early Childhood Care and Education Centre
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECCEI	Early Childhood Care and Education Instructor
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Scheme
IIPS	International Institute for Population Sciences
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
MTA	Mother Teacher Association
NIPCCD	National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
OPEPA	Orissa Primary Education Programme Authority
SMC	School Management Committee
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Intervention on Early Childhood Care and Education: Evidences from Orissa

Tattwamasi Paltasingh*

Abstract

Children under six years of age learn and grow with much faster pace than other age group children. Education and nutrition plays an important role in their life and hence need special attention. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) facilitate these children for better and healthier life. Provision of ECCE can be seen as the foundation for pre-school education of children under six & support service for girls and working mothers. The ICDS programme aims to provide comprehensive services covering their health, nutrition and development needs. However, the pre-primary education needs to be given more attention in India. Present paper is largely drawn from a study on the role of early childhood care & education carried out in four districts of Orissa i.e. Cuttack, Bhadrak, Boudh and Nuapada. Tools & techniques used in the study include observation, interview schedule, and questionnaire and group discussion. ECCE centers, Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) from each district are visited covering the components like available infrastructure, curriculum followed and students' participation. In addition, problems faced by the ECCE Instructors (ECCEIs) and Anganwadi workers (AWWs) in Orissa are also examined. The paper illustrates a comparative perspective of both the pre-school programmes imparted through ICDS & Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in different blocks of visited districts of Orissa. Housing was found to be the major problem faced by both ECCECs and AWCs. Non-provision of food to ECCECs is one of the major comparative issues confronted by the ECCE instructors. The study suggests some strategies and policies that can help quality grooming of the children under six with school preparedness.

Keywords: ECCE, ICDS, Pre-school Education, Infrastructure, Curriculum, SSA

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1. Background

Child population in age-group of 0-6 years is 158.8 million and it is about 15.2 per cent of the total population of the country. As per WHO, 48% children under five are suffering from stunting in India (Kim & Umayahara, 2010). Mal-nourishment is found to be a major problem among children of 0-6 years. Severe mal-nourishment among 12.3 per cent of children, moderate mal-nourishment among 29.1 per cent, and mild-mal-nourishment among 37.1 per cent is reported. In India only 21.5 per cent children are found to be in the normal category with regard to the nutrition (IIPS 2000). In Orissa 69.9% of children remain without any benefits extended by ICDS (Dash et al, 2006). Access to education with a focus on girls' education has been studied by many scholars (Ramachandran, 2001; Vaid, 2004; Singh, 2011). As per study carried out by Gupta et al the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) has not been given due attention in India, indicated by the poor developmental indices regarding situation of children under the age of six (Gupta et al, 2007). In order to understand pre-school programmes in the state it is important to compare the benefits of children in primary schools coming from both the background i.e. ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) and ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme). The ECCE as one of the school readiness programmes is managed through the involvement of the community as well as productive partnership with the schools under SSA (SSA, 2010).

Most of the studies on Early Childhood Care have focused on ICDS Programme & the intervention (Ramachandran, Jandhyala , Saihjee , 2003). Studies on ECCE under SSA are limited. The present paper has made an attempt to highlight both the pre-school education programmes with certain elements of comparison on the

infrastructure, curriculum followed and problems confronted by the ECCE and ICDS centres. In addition to the findings, specific observation on each district and overall observation on issues related to pre-school education in all visited districts is reported. In the last section of the paper there is an attempt to bring out some relevant suggestions from the experiences learnt from the visited centres.

2. Status of Child Population in India

India has reported a decline in the child population under six years from 2001 to 2011. Rural India has 117 million children and urban India has about 41 million children (Census, 2011). Orissa has also reported a decline in 0 - 6 year old child population (Table 1).

Table-1
Child Population (0-6 years) in India and Orissa

	2001		2011	
	Numbers (million)	%	Numbers (million)	%
India	163.8	15.9	158.8	13.1
Orissa	5.36	14.56	5.03	12

Source: Census, 2001, 2011

Technical group on Population Projections has projected that pre-school education services would be required for more than 72 million children by 2016 within 3 to 5 years age group (Table 2).

Table-2
Child Population Projections

Age (in Years)	2006		2011		2016	
	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%
<1(Infants)	24.855	2.27	24.294	2.06	24.918	1.97
1-2(toddlers)	45.865	4.19	48.177	4.09	49.357	3.91
3-5 (Pre School)	63.731	5.82	70.034	5.94	72.498	5.74

Source: Census of India: Population Projections for India and States 1996-2016,
Registrar General of India (for figures from 2001 onwards).

It is observed from Table 2 that due to growing number of child population in future; more coverage with ECCE facility should be extended to the deserving children in India.

3. Government Initiatives for Existing Pre-school Programmes

An importance of Early Childhood Care has been realised and there are existing programmes that can take care of some of the services like Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), pre-primary schools run by the State Govt., Municipal Corporation and other Government and Non-Government agencies. In order to understand the structure and function of pre-school programmes in the state, it is important to understand the ECCE and ICDS as both these schemes have the major contributions to early childhood care component. Pre-school programmes by the government under SSA (ECCE) and ICDS (AWC) is discussed briefly in the following section.

3.1 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) under SSA

ECCE is an essential part of human development and one of the major components in achieving Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) under SSA. The ECCE

plays a positive role for promoting enrolment, reduction in drop out and greater retention in primary schooling (NIPCCD, 2003; NCERT, 2006, Paltasingh, 2010). However an effective implementation is yet to be materialized in desired way all over the country. Children are still dropping out of the school because of lack of school preparedness. The pre-school activities are to be carried out in such a way so that a child feels at home and gets interested to attend school regularly. Altogether the ECCE prepares children to adjust to formal schools in a much better way. The ECCE has been intervened by SSA on a small scale i.e. under 'innovation head' fund. This fund is utilized for setting up of new centres where there are no ICDS centres. The ICDS fund is utilised for children below 6 years and the lactating mothers in the locality. The funds are also used for payment of the staff in ICDS department and the centres. Under this scheme; provision is made for setting up of community based child care centres in areas where such services are not provided under ICDS. The ECCE centres are expected to function where Anganwadis do not exist. In addition ECCE centres are operational in difficult geographical areas such as desert, hilly areas, scattered and remote habitations and forest areas. ECCE centres are school readiness programme that facilitate the children to experience school environment. However, pre-school components have been ignored under SSA and need to be taken into consideration with more seriousness. One-third of the children in the age group of 3 - 5 years are currently enrolled in pre-schools whether public or private. Percentage of primary school (33.71) with attached pre-primary section under private management is higher than the percentage of schools (22.70) under government management (Mehta, 2010). The data indicate that the number of children enrolled in the private pre-primary sections are more compared to the government enrolled children. It is important to study the activities

and programmes that are linked with the pre-school as well as the Early Childhood components. It is interesting to examine the intervention of ECCE that can help relieving the girl children from sibling care and can strengthen the Early Childhood components in different centres.

3.2 Anganwadi Centre (AWC) under ICDS

Anganwadi Centre (AWC) under ICDS has been envisaged as the holistic intervention for providing better health care, as well as psychological and nutritional development of the children. The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) is introduced by the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). The ICDS programme is most important with regard to the provision of services for children under six are concerned. ICDS works through a network of Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) which means a play centre or a child care centre located within the village. These centres are run by Anganwadi workers (AWWs) and Anganwadi helpers (AWHs).

The ICDS provides six major services viz (1) Pre-school education; (2) Nutrition and Health Education; (3) Supplementary Nutrition; (4) Referral Services; (5) Immunisation and (6) Health Check Up. It is a centrally sponsored programme with the Government of India contributing towards 90% of all the programme costs and 50% of the cost of supplementary nutrition. The state governments contribute to the remaining 10% of the programme costs and a matching grant of 50% towards supplementary nutrition. There has been a massive expansion in the number of anganwadi centres in the country. However, the outreach is still low with coverage of less than 30 per cent (IIPS, 2006). The supplementary nutrition programme of the ICDS reaches about 42% of the children under six in the country (Supreme Court

Commissioners Report, 2009). Considering that almost 50% of children in the country are malnourished, this coverage is indeed very low. Separate programmes are recommended for nutrition intervention for 0-3 year and for 4-6 year children (Gragnotati et al, 2006).

4. Methodology

This section provides information on the methodology adopted in the present paper. It specifically highlights the detailed plans and procedures, tools used, sampling frame and data analysis.

4.1 Research Methods

The paper is drawn from a larger study on ECCE carried out in Orissa. Broadly survey research with both qualitative and quantitative approach is followed. The details of sampling frame with categories of sampling units have been presented in a tabular form (Table 3). Data have been collected from selected ECCE Instructors, Anganwadi workers with personal visit to each centre.

4.2 Population

The populations of the present study cover all ECCE centres and AWCs in four districts of Orissa. Data have been collected from four districts i.e. Cuttack, Bhadrak, Boudh and Nuapada districts of Orissa. The blocks from different districts are selected on the basis of highest concentration of ECCE Centres.

4.3 Sample & Sampling Techniques

Multi-stage sampling procedure has been followed for the purpose of the study. This particular study has begun with the selected districts covering Cuttack, Bhadrak, Boudh and Nuapada, at the second level, blocks are selected with maximum number

of ECCE centers and finally the centers are selected where the intervention has been examined. Following the multi-stage sampling procedure 5 ECCE centers, 3 AWCs from each block are selected. All the 40 ECCE instructors, 24 AWWs are interviewed. Approximately 2 community members are approached to ascertain their perception and evaluation of the ECCE intervention. Two blocks from each sample district have been chosen for the purpose of the study. The selected blocks from each district are Salepur, Nischintakoili, Dhamnagar, Bhadrak, Boudh, Harabhanga, Sinapalli and Komna (Table 3).

Table 3:
Sample Distribution: Block-wise No. of Visited ECCECs & AWCs

Name of the District	Name of Block	No. of ECCECs	No. of AWCs
Cuttack	Salepur	5	3
	Nischantakoili	5	3
Bhadrak	Dhamnagar	5	3
	Bhadrak	5	3
Boudh	Boudh	5	3
	Harbhanga	5	3
Nuapada	Sinapalli	5	3
	Komana	5	3
Four Districts	08 Blocks	40	24

4.4 Tools for Data Collection

As per the requirement of the study different tools i.e. Observation Schedule for ECCE Centres/AWCs and children's involvement at the centers, Interview Schedule & Questionnaire for ECCE Instructors/AWWs, Interview Schedule for community members and members of Mother Teacher Association (MTA) are used for data collection. In depth interviews are carried out by the principal investigator and field investigators in all the selected centres spending one day in each centre. By spending one full day, the interviewers have got the clear insight on the functioning of the

centre. Group discussion was carried out among the community members, some villagers & members of SMCs to obtain some qualitative information on the functioning of ECCECs & AWCs covering the use of curriculum 'Arunima', children's participation, problems faced at the centres and available infrastructures. Data for the proposed study are collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was obtained through personal visits to all the ECCECs & AWCs in the selected blocks of all the four districts. Orissa Primary Education Programme Authority (OPEPA) & District Project Office (DPO) in the concerned district had extended their support for obtaining the relevant secondary data.

5. Major Findings and Discussion

Functioning of ECCE centres and AWCs with respect to the Early Childhood Care & Education component is compared in terms of curriculum, children's participation, infrastructure and various problems confronted by them. Each component is discussed & analysed subsequently.

5.1 Curriculum in ECCE centers & AWCs

School-readiness skills and behaviour to facilitate children's entry in primary schools depend on the curriculum followed in elementary education (UNESCO, 2007). Need for an appropriate curriculum has been reiterated through the National Curriculum Framework-2005. According to the review of NCF, curriculum is the sum total of all experiences available to the child which cannot be reduced to a syllabus. Curriculum for children under six should be meant for their better cognitive development, language development, socio-emotional development, physical and motor development, development of creativity and inculcation of healthy habits (Sultana, 2009). In a study conducted by the NCERT (1998) it was found that in almost all the

ICDS centers there was a virtual absence of any play activities. Government of Orissa has developed a unique curriculum, named as 'Arunima', for children under six years. This curriculum contains Oriya rhymes, some games and daily activities to be followed by the ECCE instructor & AWC workers that can keep the children productively engaged. It has been provided to all the AWWs & ECCE Instructors for engaging the children in different playful activities. In the present paper information regarding use of the curriculum 'Arunima' in both AWCs and ECCE centres is depicted below (Table 4).

Table 4
Curriculum – 'Arunima' followed in AWCs & ECCECs

'Arunima' followed		ECCECs (n=10) n(%)	AWCs (n=6) n(%)
Cuttack	Yes	7(70.00)	4(66.67)
Bhadrak	Yes	9(90.00)	5(83.33)
Boudh	Yes	10(100.00)	6(100.00)
Nuapada	Yes	8(80.00)	6(100.00)
All Districts	Yes	34(85.00)	21(87.50)
	Total	40(100.00)	24(100.00)

For ECCE Centres in each district n=10 and for AWCs in each district n=6

The 'Arunima' as curriculum is followed in 70% ECCE centres of Cuttack, 90% ECCE centres of Bhadrak, 80% ECCE centres of Nuapada and in all the ECCE centres of Boudh district. Regarding the AWCs, it is found that the 'Arunima' is followed in all the centres at Boudh and Nuapada districts. However, in Bhadrak and Cuttack district it is followed by about 83% and 67% AWC centres respectively. Most of the centres are following the curriculum Arunima in the visited districts and the curriculum is found to be very useful by all. Based on the discussion with the parents & community members it was found that lack of training among staff of the centres are the main reason for not following Arunima.

5.2 Children's Participation in Pre-school Activities

Children's participation in pre-primary education programs is affected by several factors including social group, locations of centres, parental education, household income & economic status of the region (Kaul and Sankar, 2009). There are continuous and cumulative socio-cultural and economic exclusion like poverty, compulsion of older girls in families to look after the families and younger sibling, some myths and beliefs that poor children face and influence their ability to complete the primary schooling (Ramachandran et al, 2003, Singh 2011). Participation of the children from both the category of elementary education is studied and presented in Table 5. Variation in the participation of the children in pre-school activities is reported from all the 4 visited districts.

Table 5
Children's Participation in Pre-school Activities

Dist. name	Participation in ECCECs	ECCECs(%)	AWCs	AWCs(%)	
Cuttack	Active	7	70.00	5	83.33
Bhadrak	Active	6	60.00	4	66.67
Boudh	Active	5	50.00	4	66.67
Nuapada	Active	7	70.00	4	66.67
Total Average	Active	25	62.50	17	70.80

For ECCE Centres in each district n=10 and for AWCs in each district n=6

The participation among the children are measured under two major categories like active & passive. An active participation was found among the children in 70% centres in Cuttack and Nuapada district, 60% in Bhadrak district and 50% centres in Boudh district from the ECCECs. Whereas in case of AWCs an active participation of children was found in 83% centres of Cuttack district and about 67% centres in rest of the 3 districts i.e. Bhadrak, Boudh and Nuapada district. Provision for basic facilities, motivated teachers, adequate pre-school education component,

improved public awareness of health, nutrition and strengthening of traditional community structures are some of the measures for better participation of children in pre-primary centres. On the whole it was found in the visited centres that children's participation in AWCs is more active and enthusiastic compared to the ECCECs. As per the observation & discussion with villagers & staff of the centres this positive trend of better participation could be possible because of multi-dimensional infrastructure provisions in AWCs and food provided to the children in the centres.

5.3 Problems faced at the Centres

Challenges confronted at the early childhood services are studied by earlier scholars (Rao and Sharma, 2002; Myers, 2006). In the visited centres there are some problems noticed in day to day functioning of the centres. Major problems are found due to non-availability of housing facility to run the centres and absence of kitchen facility in both ECCECs & AWCs (Table 6).

Table 6
Problems faced at the Centre due to lack of provisions

Sl. No.	Problems	ECCECs (n)	ECCECs (%)	AWCs (n)	AWCs (%)
1	Housing	12	30.00	8	33.33
2	Food	1	2.50	0	0.00
3	Kitchen	0	0.00	1	4.17

For ECCECs total n=40 and for AWCs total n=24

In AWCs provision of food was not a problem because it is provided to all children from the department of ICDS. However, this facility is not extended to ECCECs. In exceptional case one of the ECCE centres children are receiving food as this centre is attached to a primary school. There is provision of hot cooked food to be served to the children of AWCs; however they do not have separate kitchen facility in the centre.

The staff members manage to cook food for children with some temporary arrangement like shed or under the tree.

5.4 Infrastructure in ECCECs & AWCs

Children's participation in education can be encouraged by addressing social, economic and linguistic barriers in addition to barriers arising out of physical distance, topography and infrastructure etc. (SSA, 2010). A study by National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) has emphasized the importance of adequacy of infrastructure/facilities in elementary education (NIPCCD, 1995). Adequate number of classrooms, activity rooms for staff members and appropriate space for the outdoor and indoor activities of children are major infrastructural requirements of pre-primary education which affect the ECCE environment (Sultana, 2009). Provision of adequate infrastructure is found to be significant in determining children's enrolment and attendance. In the present study provision of certain infrastructure in the visited centres like playground, drinking water, toilet, game and play instruments, instructional materials, nutrition programme and health check-up are studied.

Cuttack District:

It was found that facilities of regular health check ups are extended to all the AWCs in Cuttack District. Out of the visited centres, in 50% of the ECCE centres and 33.3% of the AWCs there are facilities of playground for the children. Drinking water facility was available in 80% of the visited ECCE centres whereas the same facility was found in all the AWCs. The toilet facility was found to be available in 40% of the visited ECCECs and 50% of the AWCs. Provision of game and play instruments was almost missing in most of the ECCECs & available only in 10% of the centres,

whereas the same provision was found to be available in 83.3% of AWCs. Half of the ECCECs had instructional materials and 83.3% AWCs had instructional materials for children. With regard to nutrition, none of the ECCECs had such facilities whereas all children of AWCs are provided food in the centres (Table 7).

Table 7
Available Infrastructure in ECCEs and AWCs: Cuttack

Sl. No.	Available facilities	ECCE (n=10) n (%)	AWC (n=6) n (%)
1	Regular health check up	2 (20.0)	6 (100.0)
2	Playground	5 (50.0)	2 (33.3)
3	Drinking water	8 (80.0)	6 (100.0)
4	Toilet	4 (40.0)	3 (50.0)
5	Game and play instruments	1(10.0)	5 (83.3)
6	Instructional materials	5 (50.0)	5 (83.3)
7	Nutrition programme	0 (0.0)	6 (100.0)

Bhadrak District:

In Bhadrak district, it was found that facilities of regular health check-ups are conducted in 50% of the AWCs. Out of the visited centres in 30% of the ECCE centres and 50% of the AWCs there is playground for the children. Drinking water facility was available in 80% of the visited centres whereas it was found in only 16.7% of the AWCs. The toilet facility was available in 40% of the visited ECCECs and 16.7% of the AWCs. Provision of game and play instruments was quite less in most of the ECCECs (20%), whereas the same provision was found to be available in most of the (83.3%) AWCs. The instructional materials for children are found in 70% of the ECCE centres and in all the AWCs. With regard to food and nutrition, none of the ECCECs had such facilities where as 83.3% children of AWCs are provided food

and nutrition in the centres (Table 8). Non provision of food was found to be the major point of difference between these two programmes.

Table 8
Available Infrastructure in ECCEs and AWCs: Bhadrak

Sl. No.	Available facilities	ECCE (n=10) n (%)	AWC (n=6) n (%)
1	Regular health check up	3 (30.0)	3 (50.0)
2	Playground	3 (30.0)	3 (50.0)
3	Drinking water	8 (80.0)	1 (16.6)
4	Toilet	4 (40.0)	1 (16.7)
5	Game and play instruments	2 (20.0)	5 (83.3)
6	Instructional materials	7 (70.0)	6 (100.0)
7	Nutrition programme	0 (0.0)	5 (83.3)

Boudh District

The facility of regular health check up is extended to 83.3% of the AWCs in Boudh District. Out of the visited centres in 20% of the ECCE centres and 16.7% of the AWCs there is playground for the children. Drinking water facility was available in half of the ECCECs whereas the same facility was found in 83.3% of the AWCs. The toilet facility was available in 30% of the visited ECCECs and 16.7% of the AWCs. Provision of game and play instruments was quite insufficient in most of the ECCECs (30%) whereas the same provision was found to be available in 83.3% of the AWCs. The instructional materials for children were found in 40% of the ECCE centres and in all the AWCs. With regard to food and nutrition none of the ECCECs had such facilities whereas 50% children of the AWCs are provided with food and nutrition in the centres (Table 9).

Table 9
Available Infrastructure in ECCECs and AWCs: Boudh

S. N	Available facilities	ECCECs(n=10)	AWCs (n=6)
		n (%)	n (%)
1	Regular health check up	1 (10.0)	5 (83.33)
2	Playground	2 (20.0)	1 (16.67)
3	Drinking water	5 (50.0)	5 (83.33)
4	Toilet	3 (30.0)	1 (16.67)
5	Game and play instruments	3 (30.0)	5 (83.33)
6	Instructional materials	4 (40.0)	6 (100.00)
7	Nutrition programme	0 (0.0)	3 (50.00)

Nuapada District

It was found that facilities of regular health check ups are extended to 83.3% of the AWCs in Nuapada District.

Table 10
Available Infrastructure in ECCECs and AWCs : Nuapada

Sl. No.	Available facilities	ECCE (n=10)	AWC
		n (%)	n (%)
1	Regular health check up	1 (10.0)	5 (83.33)
2	Playground	2 (20.0)	1 (16.67)
3	Drinking water	5 (50.0)	5 (83.33)
4	Toilet	3 (30.0)	1 (16.67)
5	Game and play instruments	3(30.0)	5 (83.33)
6	Instructional materials	4 (40.0)	6 (100.0)
7	Nutrition programme	0 (0.0)	3 (50.00)

Out of the visited centres in 20% of the ECCE centres and 16.7% of the AWCs there is playground for the children. Drinking water facility was available in 50% of the visited ECCE centres whereas the same facility was found in 83.3% of the AWCs. The toilet facility was available in 30% of the visited ECCECs and 83.3% of the

AWCs. Provision of game and play instruments was insufficient in most of the ECCECs (30%) whereas the same provision was available in 83.3% of the AWCs. Out of the total ECCECs, 40% of the centres had instructional materials for children where as all the AWCs had instructional materials. With regard to food and nutrition none of the ECCECs had such facilities where as 50% children of the AWCs are provided with food and nutrition in the centres (Table 10).

Cleanliness at the Centre

Proper health of the children can be ensured by managing proper cleanliness. Poor status of cleanliness & maintenance in the pre-school provisions are reported earlier (Ramachandran et al, 2003). Based on the personal visit it was observed that in Cuttack district 60% of ECCE centres and 66.67% of AWCs were found to be cleaned. In Bhadrak district proper cleanliness was maintained in 60% of ECCECs and 50% of AWCs. In Boudh District cleanliness was maintained in 40% of ECCECs and 33.3% of AWCs and in Nuapada district cleanliness was maintained in 40% of ECCECs and 33.3% of AWCs (Table 11).

Table 11
Cleanliness at the Centre

Cleanliness at the centre		ECCECs n(%)	AWCs n(%)
Cuttack	Good	6(60.00)	4(66.67)
	Average	3(30.00)	2(33.33)
	Poor	1(10.00)	0(0.00)
Bhadrak	Good	6(60.00)	3(50.00)
	Average	2(20.00)	3(50.00)
	Poor	2(20.00)	0(0.00)
Boudh	Good	4(40.00)	2(33.33)
	Average	5(50.00)	4(66.67)
	Poor	1(10.00)	0(0.00)
Nuapada	Good	4(40.00)	2(33.33)
	Average	6(60.00)	4(66.67)
	Poor	0(0.00)	0(0.00)

For ECCECs (n=10) and for AWCs (n=6)

6. Implications of the Findings

It was found out that in all 4 districts of Orissa both the ECCECs and AWCs are following 'Arunima' as their curriculum. An active participation of children was found in Cuttack and Bhadrak district followed by Nuapada and Boudh district. Out of the total visited centres more than 40% of ECCECs as well as AWCs face problems in running the centre. Housing was found to be the major problem faced by both ECCECs and AWCs. Food provision and housing facility is not extended to any of the visited ECCECs. Provision of food for the AWCs was not a problem because food is provided to all children from the department of ICDS. The food provision is a major attraction for which AWCs have an advantage over ECCECs. Children and parents are more attracted towards AWCs because children receive both snacks and meal every day. There is demand by the villagers that ECCECs should provide food and nutrition to the children. It was found that facilities of regular health checkups are extended to most of the AWCs in all four districts, and children of ECCECs do not receive such support on regular basis. Majority of the villagers are not co-operative in providing space for ECCECs. In Cuttack district majority of the centres are run at ECCE Instructors' house. Many ECCE instructors are to some extent compelled to run the centres to retain the job. Many ECCE centres in the villages of Boudh district and Nuapada district are functioning in the community centre. The ECCE Instructor finds it difficult to keep the instructional materials within the community house. The play and instructional materials to all the ECCE centres in Nuapada district was supplied only once, i.e. during 2006. After that none of the centres have received any instructional materials for the children. Very often it was noticed that in one of the blocks of Cuttack, the ECCEC children are sitting on the floor without mat. There was evidence of caste hierarchy in one of the blocks of Cuttack district. The present

study supports that the children exposed to pre-primary education through either AWC or ECCE are found to perform better than the children who are not exposed to these preparatory programmes in early age. Views taken from the community members, villagers, members of SMCs ascertain the strength of pre-school component.

7. Suggestions and Recommendations

The activities related to ECCECs are undertaken by SSA whereas in case of AWCs the responsibilities are carried out by ICDS. Both ECCECs and AWCs are the programmes undertaken to promote pre-school education among children till they attain the age of 6 years. There is no doubt about the convergence between these two departments of Govt. of India. At the same time there is mismatch between these two programmes in terms of provision of infrastructures, provision of nutritional components and supply of instructional materials etc. ECCECs are strongly compared with AWCs because there are mismatch in facilities and provisions. MHRD should look into the details of providing differential treatment to these two categories of pre-school activities. Department of Women and Child Development should also converge with SSA in some areas, for instance provision of training to the staff members, supply of instructional materials, supply of food and nutrition to the children. Otherwise both ECCE and AWC would function as two parallel departments without looking at the requirement of children and the community. The responsibility to educate children under 6 years must be shared as a major responsibility in all related departments like Department of Women and Child Development, Department of Rural Development, Health and Education as well as Tribal Development. These departments should address the issues pertaining to

pre-school education on a common platform based on the need of the community and the children. ECCE has major role to play for all-round development of the children. It cannot be narrowly understood which is confined to the four walls of a class room. The centre can be connected to the community and linked to the primary school based on the requirement. The centres can also operate at construction site where a large number of children below six years can take the benefits of pre-school education. There may not be strict and rigid principles rather there should be flexibility in adopting the strategies, models and structures. ECCE interventions can respond to the vast, diverse & complex needs of the pluralistic society. The livelihood pattern of the locality including the work style of the woman, timings of the woman agricultural labourers can be taken into consideration. There should be utmost care to retain the regularity of children in pre-school centres. This will be possible only if the instructors are regular in attendance. Pre-school programmes need not be de-contextualized from the community as all children belong to the same community. In many instances community perceive these programmes as isolated from them and assume to be the only responsibility of Government. Therefore, there are instances where the community is reluctant to provide space for children. The under privileged group should be the focus of attention to take benefits from pre-school education programmes. It is important that ECCE centres should be linked with the primary schools whether physically or programmatically. Regular and appropriate salary for ECCE instructors could motivate them for better performance. Provision of foods and instructional materials in ECCE centres will encourage the children and their parents for better enrolment and retention in these centres. Regularity of funds can encourage the ECCE Instructors and parents as the children will get sufficient instructional materials. The curriculum, 'Arunima' need to be followed more firmly

for better development of the children under six years of age. The school connectivity of ECCECs help a lot in diverse ways with the direct supervision and facilities provided in school system.

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