

A Study on the Educational Activities Provided in the Anganwadi Centers of Lakhimpur District, Assam

Dr. Pranab Saikia

Associate Professor, Department of Teachers Education

Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, Assam

Email : saikiapranab@yahoo.in

&

Mrs. Roopa Roy

Research Scholar, Department of Education,

Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, Assam

Abstract

Pre-school education shoulders the responsibility of making children capable to enter into formal schooling. It needs to be recognized as a pre-requisite for the healthy mental and emotional development of children. Rapid growth during the early childhood stages requires the provision of a suitable environment for optimum development. Purpose of the study was to find out the educational activities provided in the Anganwadi centers of Lakhimpur District. Methodology: A self structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the Anganwadi workers of the selected centers and an interview schedule was prepared to collect data from the guardian. Three ICDS schemes were selected for this study and 120 Anganwadi centers were selected by multi-stage sampling method from three ICDS scheme. 120 Anganwadi workers from 120 centers were selected as sample and from each centers two guardians were selected randomly as sample. Result: The result shows that 36% of Anganwadi centers run for two hours and 14% for more than 2 hours. In 96% Anganwadi centers children from 2-6 years had to sit in the same room. Play way methods were used in all the centers and the programme content and activities were found to be appropriate by more than 80% respondents of the study. 90% Anganwadi workers used charts, 88% used posters and 58% used flashcard as teaching aid and 58% guardians were satisfied with the teaching of Anganwadi centers. Conclusion: The curriculum of pre- school should be designed in such a way that child feels encouraged to grasp the learning fundamentals in a fun environment. It is the first concrete steps towards making the child acquire knowledge and become a better citizen.

Keywords: ICDS, Pre-school, Anganwadi centres, Lakhimpur district

Introduction

The earliest year of a child's life is critical. These years determine child's survival and thriving in life and lay the foundations for her/his learning and holistic development. It is during the early years that children develop the cognitive, physical, social and emotional skills that they need to succeed in life. Though mother gives the first education to the child, the idea of pre-primary education through an organized institution outside the home of the child is not a new one. Pre-school education provides a child

an opportunity to start a life-long love for learning. Pre-primary education for early childhood years can be conceived as an extension of parental child rearing or a way of preparing children to fit into a social order or role, that they have to assume as they grow up. The skill and knowledge that the child develops in the pre- school have a great impact on the aptitude of the child in the later life.

In India, according to census 2011 data there are 164,43 million children of 0-6 years of age. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory

Education (RTE) Act 2010 guarantees children their right to quality elementary education. Early Childhood Education (ECE) is not recognized as a compulsory provision by RTE, but RTE urges states to provide free pre- school education for children above three years. The National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) a policy approved by Government of India in 2013 caters to all children under 6 years of age and comments to universal access to quality early childhood education. The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) is the nodal department of Early Childhood Care and Education. Ministry of Women and Child Development is responsible for the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme, which is a centrally sponsored and state administered ECCE programme. ICDS include six components in its package and ECCE is one of the components and aims at Psycho- social Development of Children and Developing School Readiness.

Providing high quality education to all the nation's children is a responsibility shared by the State Government and the Union Government of India. This collaboration has brought a noticeable change in planning, monitoring and funding of the early childhood programme. Action has been taken at the national level to make the programme child centered, context oriented and responsible to the needs of individual and groups. Therefore the aim of the study was to find out the educational activities provided in the Anganwadi Centers of Lakhimpur district, Assam.

Methodology

The present study was carried out at Lakhimpur district of Assam. The researcher has taken three ICDS scheme of Lakhimpur district as the area of investigation. 120 Anganwadi centers were selected from three ICDS scheme, Lakhimpur, Bihpuria and Boginadi by multistage sampling method. 120 Anganwadi workers from 120 Anganwadi centers two guardians from each centers were selected randomly as sample of the study. A self structured questionnaires was used to collect data from Anganwadi workers and an interview schedule was constructed to collect information from the guardian of the students.

An observation checklist was also used during personnel visit to the Anganwadi center. The data were tabulated and accordingly percentages were taken out from the collected data.

Review of Literature

An Anganwadi center is the focal point of service delivery to the community. Non-formal pre-school education an important component of ICDS is provided to the children in Anganwadi centers.

Aggarwal et. Al (2000) reported that the behavior, general hygiene and academic performance of children who had availed Anganwadi Services were similar to those who had not availed these services. Barman (2001) in her study observed that 65.33% of the respondent showed dissatisfaction regarding the teaching of Anganwadi centers and 64% expressed the opinion that the content of the classes and timing of classes were unsatisfactory. Arora et.al (2003) conducted a study to assess the non-formal pre-school education provided at Anganwadi centers and observed that 53% of the Anganwadi workers used two-way interaction method in which they take the help of teaching aids like posters and puppets for imparting education to children. Forces (2005) from a study observed that though teaching aids as charts and posters were available in the Anganwadi centers, but the condition of the aids was not good. A study conducted by Gopal, A.K. et.al.(2006) revealed that about 75% of the children registered attended the Anganwadi centers Pre-school activities were conducted by an Anganwadi worker's in almost all the centers. Singing song (95%) story telling (91.71%) and counting were the most common pre-school educational activities which were organized in almost all the Anganwadi centers where as drawing, painting were found in very few Anganwadi centers. Arora et.al.(2007) reported from his study that pre-school education component of ICDS has played a vital role in enhancing the cognitive abilities of children. Tripathy(2011) studied on barriers in accessing child development programme revealed that 51% parents reported that the child is not interested to go to Anganwadi center regularly.

The children except mid-day-meal do not find other activities interesting. No teaching aids were appropriate in the center, though the Anganwadi workers were trained to prepare teaching learning material, toys etc., but they were not interested in doing it. 27% parents think that despite lack of infra-structure and resources, the pre-school activity helps in the Psychological growth of the children, Kular(2015) from his study reported that overall picture of Anganwadi centers were dismal as almost all the aspects were below expectation level. Only 43.70% of the total beneficiary children were enrolled in the register of Anganwadi center. No children were able to count upto 100 and only 6.66% children were able to identify 5-6 pictures of vegetables only 2.5% children could identify three or four colours by name. Most of the Anganwadi workers had to be busy in other works and got less time to devote on educational activities of the Anganwadi centers.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The results of the data collected from the sample are presented in tabular form.

Table-1:Profile of Anganwadi Workers

Categories	N-120	%
a) Age of AWWs		
20-30 years	32	27
31-40 years	47	39
41-50 years	32	27
More than 51 years	19	16
b) Education qualification		
H.S.L.C. passed	17	14
H.S. passed	92	77
Graduate	11	09
c) Year of service		
05-15 years	07	06
16-25 years	31	26
26-35 years	54	45
36-45 years	38	32

From table-1, it is observed that 39% of the AWW were from the age group of 31-40 years. The table also reveals that 27% respondents were both from the age group of 20-30 years and 31-40 years and 16% respondents were of more

than 51 years. Most of the respondents that is 77% Anganwadi workers were Higher Secondary pass, 14% H.S.L.C. and only 9% Anganwadi workers were graduate. The table also indicates that 45% of AWW are in service for 26-35 years, 32 % are in service for 36-45 years, 26% for 16-25 years and only 6% are in service for 05-15 years.

Table-2:Profile of Parents/Guardian

Categories	N-240	%
Educational qualification		
Below H.S.L.C.	45	19
H.S.L.C.	61	25
H.S.	87	36
Graduate	43	17
Post Graduate	04	02
Number of Children		
1 Child	12	05
2 Children	39	16
3 Children	65	27
More than 3	17	07
Occupation		
Government job	04	02
Shopkeeper	23	10
Salesman	14	06
Cultivator	59	25
Wage-earner	121	50
Business	07	03
Teacher	12	05

Table 2 shows that 36% guardians are H.S. pass, 25% H.S.L.C., 17% are graduate, 19% have not passed H.S.L.C. and only 2% are post graduate. From the table it is also observed that 27% family have 3 children, 16% have 2 children, 7% have more than 3 children and only 5% have 1 child. The table also indicates that 50% of the guardians are wage earner, 25% are cultivator, 10% are shopkeeper, 6% guardians are salesman, 5% guardians are teacher, 3% are businessman and 2% are engaged in Government jobs.

Fig.-1:Location of AWC N=120

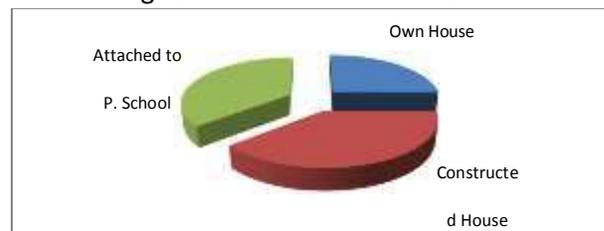


Fig.-1 reveals that 45% of the Anganwadi centers are attached to primary school. They are allotted a room to run the AWC. 31% AWC's are runned in the house of the AWW. Either they constructed a separate room to run the centre or they even run the AWC in one of the room of their own house. 48% AWC are functioning in Government constructed house.

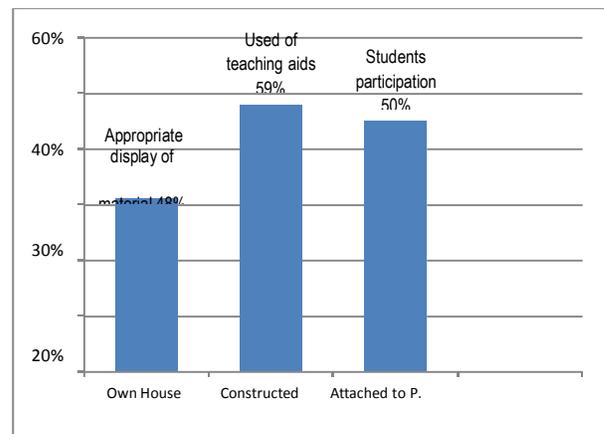
Table 3 (A) (Appendix) reveals that 86% AWC runs for two hours, 14% AWC runs for more than 2 hours, no AWC were found to run for less than 2 hours. It also reveals that in 92% AWC's all the children sit in the same room, because most of the AWC's had one room only. Only in 8% students were found to be sitting in veranda or in separate space. The table also AWC's it was found that some children sit either in the veranda or in separate space. The table also shows that all the AWC's are using play- way method for teaching. 69% AWC's used to conduct evaluation though they did not follow any strict norms. It was observed from the table that 57% students were regularly present in the center and the attendance was more where foods were available in the center. It also reveals that only 69% students participated in classroom activity and only 48% guardians took proper care of the children.

From table 3 (B) (Appendix) it was observed respondents found the programme content satisfactory and 81% of the respondents found the activity to be age appropriate. Songs, storytelling, conversation, outdoor play, creative activity were carried out in all the AWC's. The table revealed that in 73% of the AWC's the time span for each programme was less than 20 minutes. 19% AWC's carried out a programme for 20-30 minutes and 8% AWC's carried out an activity for more than 30 minutes. It was observed from the table that 90% AWC's used charts as teaching aids, 88% used posters, 58% used flash cards and 48% AWC's used other, teaching aids as block, puzzle etc. Most of the the teaching aids were supplied by the Government, and some teaching aids were prepared by AWW also. Table 3(B) also revealed that only 52% AWC's received their books and

kits on time and all the kits were not of good condition.

Table 4 reveals that 58% respondents were satisfied with the teaching method of AWC. They said that play way methods were used to teach the children. The table also shows that only 59% students goes willingly to the AWC, most of the children were eager to go to school only when the food were given in the centre. It was also observed from table 4 that 59% respondents had positive response regarding use of teaching aid. Mostly charts and posters were used in the centers, 48% respondents said that they received report cards of their students though it was not a permanent one. The table also shows that 60% respondents were satisfied with the sitting arrangement of the AWC, 62% respondents felt that the AWW's were busy with other works, so they were not able to give enough time to the children and sometimes only the helper had to run the centre. It was also observed from the table that 77% respondents felt that AWC helps in the future education of the child.

Figure-2: Percentage distribution of observation checklist regarding educational activities



From figure 2 it is observed that 50% of the students participated eagerly in different academic activities, 59% of the AWC's used teaching aids for their educational activities. Only 48% of the AWC's were found to be properly displaying the aid and other materials. Finding and Discussion: The study conducted revealed that 86% of the AWW run their centers

for two hours and 14% AWC's were runned for more than two hours. Though there were children from 2 to 6 years in the centers, but in 92% of AWC's children had to sit in the same room due to the unavailability of room. Method of teaching was playway method in the centers. None of the centers used formal methods of teaching in the centers 69% of the centers evaluation the children and it was continuous evaluated through observation. Different developments were observed through the performance of the children in the different activities. A certificate is provided to the children after they successfully complete their preschool at AWC. Certificate is given from social welfare department, which is signed by AWW, supervisor and the CDPO. It was observed that 57% AWC's had regular attendance in the center and the attendance were even lower during rainy season, students were mostly eager to come to the centers when food were provided to them. 69% of the students participated in the programmes conducted in the school. The irregular children mostly did not participate in the activities. The study also revealed that 48% of the guardians were conscious regarding attendance, participation in activities, tidiness, punctuality of the children. The rest were not much bothered about their children's activity due to different reasons as hard earning living, busy with household chores etc. The programme content and the activities were found to be appropriate by more than 80% of the respondents in the study. The programme included was same in all the centers because the daily programme was prepared by the social welfare department. Though the activities included were same in all the AWC's but it was found from the study that 73% of the AWC's conducted an activity for less than 20 minutes, 19% conducted activity for 20-30 minutes and 8% conducted activities for 30 minutes. The difference of time was mainly due to the number of students, and the ways of conducting the activities by the AWW. 90% AWW used charts, 88% posters and 58% used flashcards as teaching aids. Aids were supplied by the Government to the centers and the AWW also prepared some aids by themselves according to the needs. Some local institutions also gave some teaching aids to

the AWC's. The other aids used in the AWC's are stuffed toys, matching cards, puzzles etc. The study revealed that 52% AWC's received books and kits on time. Books, copy, bag, pencil, rubber, glass and dish were given to the children, but the materials provided were of not very good condition. From the study it was observed that 90% of the guardians had a positive response regarding AWW. 87% guardians felt that the AWW gave individual attention to the children. They responded that the AWW took special care to the slow learners, help the children in adjustment and also took care regarding their health and cleanliness issues. Only 18% guardians responded that AWW gave physical punishment to the children and because of this also children were not willing to go to the AWC. 78% AWW went for home visit, it was mostly if the children do not go to AWC for long duration. Majority of the guardians attended guardian meet and they felt that through guardian meet they came to know about different facilities provided to their children and even solution of the problems were also discussed in the AWC's. In some meetings experts also delivered talk in some important issues related to their children 58% AWW were eager to involve the guardians in various activities of the AWC. They were involved in organizing functions held in different occasion as children's Day, Independence Day, Handwashing Day, World Food Day etc. and sometimes they help in cooking the meals of the children. 74% guardian felt the AWW were well trained as they were able to handle the children and also were conscious regarding different development of the children. 77% of the guardians responded that the AWW were able to maintain the record properly but some of the guardians were not aware about the records to be maintained by the AWW. 58% of the respondents were satisfied with the teaching method used in the center but the 42% respondents said that the AWW were not much eager to teach the children and passed the time by talking with the guardian, helper or other people. AWW were overburdened with different other works imposed on them as election duty, training programme etc. Guardians responded that only 59% of the AWW used teaching aids and some of the teaching aids used were not

appropriate also. Some teaching aids supplied to the centers were also not accurate. Though report cards were to be given to the children with certificates but only 48% responded that they got report cards which were prepared by the teachers themselves. The report card to be given by the social welfare dept. with signature of AWW, supervision and CDPO were not yet given to the children. 60% of the respondents were satisfied with the sitting arrangement but 40% were not satisfied, because all the children of different age-group had to sit in the same room. Some of the centers were very congested and as there were no separate space so the AWW had to store the materials also in the same room. 77% of the guardians responded that AWC education will help their children coming to AWC to adjust in primary school.

Conclusion: Early childhood period constitutes the most crucial period of life, when the foundations are laid for cognitive, social, emotional, physical development and cumulative lifelong learning. At this stage they should be given opportunities to investigate, explore and develop an understanding of their immediate and wider environment – human, social and cultural. The early periods of life are a period of tremendous growth both in terms of expanding the horizons of development and in deepening the development. A stimulating environment is a necessary condition for development of a child.

ICDS is a unique programme which encompasses the main component of human resource development specially education. Non- formal pre-school education is imparted to children in the age group of 3-6 years. It does not impart formal learning but develops in the child desirable attitudes, values and behavioral patterns and aim at providing environmental stimulation. Since inception of ICDS scheme several researches and evaluations are done by various institutions and organization. The utilization of ICDS services depends upon various factors like infrastructure, availability of resources, adequate staff and client satisfaction. The result of the present study put forth more emphasis on the fact that the educational

activities of the Anganwadi centers were not up to the mark. The pre-school education component should be strengthened by providing required training and orientation to Anganwadi workers. Necessary educational equipment and teaching aids should be made available to each center.

A large number of children do not get an optimal child care environment in the earliest years of their lives, which can lead to development delays & deficits for life. Further efforts must be made by the Government to ensure that the objectives of ICDS is reached to the target group in appropriate way. Availability of quality pre-primary education will promote inclusive education and meaningful access to school education by increasing enrolment and reducing the vulnerability of children to failure and dropout at later stages of education.

Reference

- Barman N.R.,(2001) Functioning of Anganwadi centers under ICDS scheme. An evaluation study, Jorhat, Assam. DCWC Research Bulletin XIII, Vol.- 4
- Draft, pre-school curriculum, National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi, 2018
- Focus (2005) A micro study of the status of the young children-A block level study in Chandauli district U.P., New Delhi
- Kaushik P., Marhawa R., (2004) Importance of Pre-school education. www.progressive teachers.in
- Kular S., A study on Pre-school Education Programme for children under ICDS scheme in Rural Punjab. The International Journal of Social Science and Humanities invention. Vol.- 2, issue 04/2015
- Pankajan, G.(2005) Pre-Primary Education Philosophy and Practice, Concept Publishing House, New Delhi.
- Patnaik J.,(1996)Early Childhood Education in India, History, trends issue and achievement. Early Childhood Education Journal-24(11).

APPENDIX

Table-3 (A): Percentage distribution of responses of AWW regarding Educational activities undertaken in AWC (N=120)

Sl. No.	ITEMS	(60) LAKHIMPUR		(20) BIHPURIA		(40) BOGINADI		(120) TOTAL	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Programme content satisfactory	54	90	18	90	32	80	104	87
2	Age appropriate activity	52	87	15	75	30	75	97	81
3	Activity included	60	100	20	100	40	100	120	100
	Song	60	100	20	100	40	100	120	100
	Story telling	60	100	20	100	40	100	120	100
	Conversation	60	100	20	100	40	100	120	100
	Outdoor play	60	100	20	100	40	100	120	100
4.	Creative activity	60	100	20	100	40	100	120	100
	Time span for activity Less than 20 min.	42	70	12	60	33	83	87	73
	20-30 min.	08	13	08	40	07	18	23	19
	More than 30 min.	10	16	-	-	-	-	10	08
5.	Teaching aids used	53	88	18	90	37	93	108	90
	charts	53	88	18	90	35	88	106	88
	Poster	39	65	11	55	20	50	70	58
	Flashcard	29	48	07	35	21	53	57	48
	Any other	29	48	07	35	21	53	57	48
6.	Books & Kits available on time	32	53	09	45	21	53	62	52

Table-3 (B): Percentage distribution of responses of AWW regarding Educational activities undertaken in AWC (N=120)

Sl. No.	ITEMS	(60) LAKHIMPUR		(20) BIHPURIA		(40) BOGINADI		(120) TOTAL	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Time Period of AWC- Less Than 2 Hours	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	More Than 2 Hours	09	15	03	15	05	13	17	14

	2 Hours	51	85	17	85	35	88	103	86
2	All Children Sit in Same Room	54	90	20	100	36	90	110	92
3	Method of Teaching-Formal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Play way	60	100	20	100	40	100	120	100
4	Conducted Evaluation	43	72	11	55	29	73	83	69
5	Students' Regular	37	62	09	45	22	55	68	57
6	Students' Participate	41	68	12	60	31	78	83	69
7	Guardian Take Care	26	43	14	70	18	45	58	48

Table-4: Percentage distribution of responses of guardians regarding Educational activities undertaken in AWC (N=240)

Sl. No.	ITEMS	N=120 LAKHIMPUR		N=40 BIHPURIA		N=60 BOGINADI		N=240 TOTAL=240	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1.	Satisfied with teaching method	77	64	16	40	47	59	140	58
2.	Children go to AWC willingly	86	71	16	40	39	49	141	59
3.	Use proper teaching aids	73	60	25	63	44	73	142	59
4.	Get report cards	48	40	21	53	47	59	116	48
5.	Satisfied with sitting arrangement	92	77	12	30	41	68	145	60
6.	AWW busy with other work	61	51	36	90	51	64	148	62
7.	AWC education will help in future education	84	70	33	83	68	85	185	77