



Centre For Learning Resources  
Pune

**Report of  
the Baseline Study of Early Childhood Education  
in the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)  
in Dharni Block, Amravati District, Maharashtra**

**2008-2009**

**Part 1: Socio-cultural, Structural-functional Perspective**



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## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

ACDPO -	Assistant Child Development Project Officer
AWC -	Anganwadi Centre
AWTC -	Anganwadi Training Centre
AWW -	Anganwadi Worker
CDPO -	Child Development Project Officer
CLR -	Centre for Learning Resources
ECE -	Early Childhood Education
ECCD-	Early Childhood Care and Development
ICDS -	Integrated Child Development Scheme
ICEE -	ICICI Centre For Elementary Education
MLTC -	Middle Level Training Centre
MPR -	Monthly Progress Report
NIPCCD -	National Institute for Public Cooperation and Child Development
NGO -	Non-Governmental Organization
PHC -	Primary Health Centre

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## Preface and Acknowledgements

The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) in India is possibly the largest child development intervention in the world, with a mandate to provide services in health, supplementary nutrition and early childhood education (ECE) to children in the age group 0-6 years. It is widely recognized, however, that the ECE component of the ICDS is extremely weak and often non-existent in many states. With the omission of the education and care of children below 6 years of age in the 86th Constitutional Amendment, the struggle to bring ECE firmly within the framework of Education For All (EFA) will have to continue. In the meantime, ICDS remains in most states the only government avenue for providing ECE to the country's poorest children. Hence, the need to make ICDS accountable for the delivery of quality ECE becomes even more crucial.

It is with this awareness that the Centre For Learning Resources ( CLR) is partnering with the ICICI Centre For Elementary Education (ICEE) and ICDS-Maharashtra to undertake a pilot project in Dharni Block of Amravati District in Maharashtra, in order to demonstrate an effective, decentralized and replicable strategy for strengthening the ECE component in ICDS anganwadis.

We are grateful to Dr. Meera Oke for undertaking the Dharni baseline study and preparing this report which has helped us greatly in designing our further project interventions. As far back as 1984, she had examined the impact of the preschool component of the ICDS scheme as a member of a research team at the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), New Delhi, when ICDS had just completed its experimental phase and was poised for expansion. She has hence been able to lend an informed perspective to the baseline study. We also appreciate the contribution of Shamika Bapat, her research assistant.

ICEE is supporting the ICDS-Dharni project through a grant to the CLR. On behalf of the CLR team, I would like to express our gratitude to them, as also to the Maharashtra State ICDS Commissionerate and the ICDS authorities at the district and sub-district levels in Amravati for their active cooperation in getting the project off the ground.

Zakiya Kurrien  
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## Summary

A qualitative baseline study of the ICDS in Dharni Block, Amravati District was undertaken as part of a larger intervention to strengthen the Early Childhood Education (ECE) component. Dharni's population is essentially tribal, and belongs to the Melghat region in the state of Maharashtra.

**Aim** The aim of the study was clearly to determine the baseline information of the current situation and context of ECE practice in the ICDS, Dharni Block, Amravati District, in order to design, implement and assess an intervention to strengthen this component.

### **Specifically the objectives of the study were to**

- To specify the context (geographical, physical, political and socio-cultural) in which ICDS - Dharni project operates.
- To understand explanatory models of ICDS functionaries and training personnel re- their role in the ECE component with respect to their perceptions regarding knowledge of what is expected, training received and existing practice/challenges and ways to facilitate better practice.
- To describe the process of what happens during ECE in the anganwadi's described as having "good" practice and outline the factors influencing the practice of ECE in Dharni. Also to understand explanatory models of Training personnel
- To make an assessment of learning at entry level in Grade 1 of children having experienced two years of ECE in the ICDS program.
- To identify specific challenges at various levels of functioning.

**Sample:** Twelve Anganwadi Centers (AWC) were selected for detailed information, and observation. The AWCs were selected from the 9 circles ("beats") proportionate to the listed number of "good functioning" AWCs (42 out of 215) as perceived by the Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) and the Assistant CDPO, as per their criteria, in each circle.

**Method:** Detailed information was generated through the use of semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, field notes, and observations. On site photograph and video documentation was also done. The narrative data thus obtained were entered into a text based analysis software and analyzed using MaxQDA (Kuckartz 2001).

**Findings:** The findings highlight the socio-cultural context of a child's life in Dharni; the physical structure and arrangement of the AWC, process and practice of ECE, knowledge and perceptions of the functionaries (caregivers/educators), and

trainers. It also outlines the several situational and systemic factors which contribute to the existing inadequate functioning of ECE in the Dharni Block ICDS program.

"While in the field, I met several young adults (now in their mid and late twenties) and asked them, "Do you remember going to the anganwadi?". They looked at me puzzled for a minute, and then said, "Yes.". Later when I asked them, "What do you remember about the anganwadi?" Promptly the reply was, "Khichri". "Do you remember anything else?" I asked, and "no" was the answer. ECE did not figure."

Meera Oke

- **The Context**

The Context provides an insight into the surrounds of a child, which has direct implications on how and what children learn. The highlights are:

- Dharni Block is located in the Melghat region, part of which is a hilly terrain. Teak (Sagwan) tree plantations are commonly found. Animals and humans co exist.
- The connecting roads are varying in quality, which make internal travel difficult. While the state transport is available, local modes of transport such as bullock carts, motorcycles and cycles are common.
- The villages are spread out and some do get cut off during the monsoon.
- The life style is agrarian, and revolves around the cropping pattern. Festivals, weekly markets and marriages mark celebrations.
- Drinking water is not available in all areas, and individuals store water in large containers, which has to be fetched from long distances.
- Households typically are mud structures and though electrical connections are available, not all homes use electricity.
- Wood is used as cooking fuel, and grains are stored in granaries and ground in a hand mill.
- There are thin boundaries between adult and children's lives. There is no specific allocation of space for children; children are part of all activities.
- Several NGOs operate in the region, but work in isolation of each other.

- **The process of ECE**
  - Space for ECE not a problem, most spaces "pucca" (concrete), usually located near the primary school, some in a dilapidated state. In some AWCs toilets were constructed, but not in use, water supply not regular and easily accessible in all AWCs. Cooking space was close to the AWC, often smoke belled into the AWC. The space and equipment was not always safe and clean for children. In some AWC flies infested the space.
  - Materials were limited in quantity and variety, and not always safe for children to use. ECE related charts and drawings displayed way above the viewing level of children, some were permanent drawings, faded over time. Other charts included growth, nutrition and maternal feeding practice, and pictures of Hindu Gods/Goddesses and political leaders.
  - Although all AWCs have time tables, the time for ECE varied and it was not followed through in practice.
  - There was no active demonstration of organized ECE as a program, sporadic activities were conducted.
  - The language of communication and instruction is a mix of Korku, Marathi and Hindi.
  - When conducted, the ECE related activities include a prayer (Marathi/usually Hindu), no voice modulation, repetition of numbers, and in some places a short story. Children were observed to look for instructions, or were bored, playing with their steel/aluminum vessels, used for Khichri.
  - There are weak linkages between the home and the Anganwadi (AWC), and the developmental stage of the child. Practically no visual material that children see in their daily surrounds is used for teaching/learning.
  - Children are expected to be verbal in school, when questioned, and be onlooker participants in their homes.
  - Children are unaware of a sequence of activities that are conducted, and confused when asked to stay at the AW after distribution of Khichri. Children come to the Anganwadi centre for getting Khichri.
- **The functionaries (caregivers and educators)**
  - Lack of clarity regarding ECE component of the ICDS. The CEO clearly mentioned that he knew nothing about ECE. Assistant CDPO and CDPO remember nothing related to ECE during their training, they vaguely remember "gaani, goshti" (songs and stories).

- The CDPO did not think it necessary to visit all the AWCs he had been unable to visit all in the last two years, viewed this posting as a "punishment", since it is situated in a "backward" area.
- There was a clear hierarchy and bureaucratic style of structure and management in the program.
- Anganwadi workers, were the single point of delivery of all services of the ICDS, they had little capacity and support to make decisions. They were almost always questioned and held responsible for any aberrations at any level. At all meetings, the CDPO, Assistant CDPO Supervisors, health officials and other visitors, issued instructions in authoritarian tones, there was no guided practice through supervision.
- Difficulties in translating knowledge into practice. The AWWs had multiple responsibilities at the operational level. They performed some ECE activities which were repetition of numbers and vocalizing one's name in a loud voice when a visitor arrives. The Helper substituted in the absence of the AWW, making sure that the children remain seated quietly at the centre until the visitor was there.
- Supervisors essentially engaged with ensuring that reports are all filled in. All meetings emphasized this role.
- **Training in ECE**
  - Although the ICDS program emphasis is on "integration", on an operational note early childhood education as a concept was seen as being delinked from care (health). When asked, spontaneous verbal emphasis was on observable processes related to nutrition, such as food preparation, growth and weight charts. There was little emphasis or none on early childhood education (child centeredness and promoting variety of thinking skills). When specifically asked the responses were recitation of numbers and songs and stories as well as recognition of pictures - "gaani, goshti, ank, chitra olakh".
  - There is an inadequate time allotment and emphasis on ECE in basic and in service training of CDPO, Supervisors and AWWs and Helpers. The time allotted for ECE in the training curriculum, is barely 30 hrs at the pre service training, and 5-6 hrs in refresher training.
  - Centralization of training curriculum leads to a process of transaction of information disconnected with the socio-cultural lives of children who come from varied backgrounds. Disconnect between the trainers at AWTC/MLTC and trainees, lack of knowledge of surrounds of Dharni, including local forms of communication. Trainers expressed the lack of "capacity "of AWW who come for training from "tribal areas".

- At the MLTC and AWTC level there was a need for inclusion of skill based training in Anganwadi centre management, and use observations as well as practicum in planning organizing and conducting an ECE program. A lot of note taking occurred during the training sessions.
  - There was no budgetary allotment for practical observations/training.
  - The training centers MLTC/AWTC were managed and run by Non Government Organizations, which had their own concerns/agendas related to sustainability and continuity, and were not working primarily in the field of ECE, nor were they updated with recent trends in the field.
  - Repetition and rote learning were encouraged through activities that are done. Lack of child centeredness and encouragement of thinking skills in the activities at the AWC.
- **Conclusions -Implications: Systemic Challenges**
    - There were systemic problems of crossing barriers created by bureaucracy and hierarchy at all levels. Focus in Dharni was on reduction of malnutrition particularly those children falling in 3 and 4 categories. ECE does not figure as a priority in their roles and responsibilities. Accountability of the functionaries was with regard to decrease in the number of children falling in grade 3 and 4. Children came to the AWC for getting "Khichri".
    - There was a focus on generating monthly progress reports (MPRs), there were discrepancies in the MPRs on the website and practice particularly with regard to number of children and attendance. There was no specific head in MPR with respect to ECE.
    - There was a disconnect regarding materials supplied/information/changes made in the ICDS and at the Middle Level Training Centre (MLTC) and Anganwadi Training Centre (AWTC) and other interventions done by other Government machinery and NGOs, such as sporadic training programs conducted for a few of the AWWs at Dharni. There was a clear need to decentralize training, since socio cultural lives of children vary with the settings in which they live.
    - It was difficult to monitor ECE, since no specific indicators available to functionaries for monitoring quality.
    - Budgets and Finances. There was no allocation for repairs and upkeep of AWC. No allocation for materials specifically for ECE. Need for clarity on how Rs. 600/- is spent for each AW. There was a basic lack of transparency and involvement of functionaries (supervisors and below) in budget heads. A need was perceived for allocation of money for transport (jeep) for

supervisors for travel. Budgets had headings for travel, but functionaries found it inadequate, because of the wide spread terrain in Dharni.

- Materials were delivered to the projects directly from head quarters, without specifications or training on their use. A large number of cooking vessels were seen at the ICDS office at Dharni.
- There was a lack of sufficient focus in the budget for ECE, while budgets states Rs. 600/-, we were informed that Rs. 300/- is allocated. Allocation of Rs. 300/- a year for any material to be purchased for the AW. The AWWs and other staff faced a delay in accessing arrears and bonuses in salary (Diwali - Oct 2008 arrears not received at least until March 2009)

# **Report of the Baseline Study of Early Childhood Education in the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) in Dharni Block, Amravati District, Maharashtra**

## **Part 1: Socio-cultural, structural - functional perspective.**

### **1. Introduction**

The Centre For Learning Resources (CLR) is currently undertaking a pilot project entitled: "Fulfilling the Young Child's Right to Development by Strengthening the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Component in ICDS AWCs of Dharni Block, Amravati District, Maharashtra". This intervention is being carried out in partnership with the ICEE and ICDS-Maharashtra.

ICDS currently spans the entire state, and the Dharni ICDS project was one of the 33 blocks initially selected on an experimental basis when the scheme first became operational in India in 1975. Although recently ICDS has had a significant impact in stemming child malnutrition in several districts, its mandate to fulfill the child's right to holistic development poses many challenges and requires a fresh commitment, effort and innovativeness, particularly as regards the ECE component which continues to be very weak.

#### Background to the Intervention

As a member of the Bhavishya Alliance<sup>1</sup>, ICEE has been initially involved in reducing child under nutrition, morbidity, and the resultant disability and mortality in the Melghat area of Amravati District, where Dharni Block is located. The population in Dharni block is mainly tribal (89-27% Korku-speaking). In order to address early child development through the ICDS in a more holistic manner within this tribal area, technical support for ECE was sought from the CLR, an already existing partner of ICEE, with long experience in the ECE field.

An important and broader goal of both the CLR and ICEE is to demonstrate a replicable decentralized strategy, through capacity building at all levels of ICDS, for strengthening the ECE component in ICDS projects in Maharashtra.

#### Baseline Study

It was necessary to understand, by undertaking a thorough baseline study, the

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<sup>1</sup> Bhavishya Alliance is an Indian partnership comprised of Government bodies, corporations and non-govt. organizations with a mandate to reduce child under nutrition by 50 % by 2015, with a multisectoral approach. The members of this alliance are The Maharashtra State Women and Child Development Department, UNICEF Maharashtra, Hindustan Unilever Ltd, Tata Group, ICICI Bank, HDFC Ltd. CHETNA, AKHS, SNEHA, VACHAN and MAHAN.

current situation and context of ECE in ICDS-Dharni prior to finalizing the project design and strategies. This aspect of the study is documented in Part 1 of this report. Part 2 (presented separately) deals with a pre-intervention learning assessment of children who have had two years of preschool experience through the ICDS Anganwadi in Dharni block, and who are now in Class 1 of government primary schools. Taken together, Parts 1 and 2 provide the baseline against which the outcomes of the project can later be assessed.

While Dharni has been the site of this baseline research, it is our conjecture that the significance of the findings go far beyond the AWCs of this block. The information is likely to apply to ICDS at large. However, this report does not formally claim to be representative of ICDS in the entire country.

## **2. Review of Literature**

Two major aspects have been examined in the following review (1) research indicating what constitutes good practice and benefits of early childhood programs in general and (2) An overview of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in India with a focus on ICDS intervention.

- **Early Childhood programs and their outcome benefits**
  - Perspectives on literacy and early years.
  - What constitutes good practice in ECE
  - Emergence of national level concerns, reflected in policy and services.
  - Some Current Issues and Concerns
- **Early Childhood Education in India**
  - Historical development of ECE in India
  - ICDS intervention, its philosophy
  - Spread of ICDS - from experimentation to expansion
  - ECE component and its linkages with care
  - Some Current concerns and future directions

### **2.1 Early Childhood program and their benefits**

For long, developmental scientists have indicated that the younger the child the more interrelated is the areas of development. This fact has had direct implications for the kind of intervention programs considered necessary for young children. Initiatives have been taken the world over to help maximize the potential of the early years, such as the Babies Second Home Project in Thailand, Home Start, Positive Parenting Columbia and several others. Depending on the cultural, socio-economic and political context, the programs have ranged from being basic to fulfilling basic hunger needs, meeting with higher end cognitive functions to being integrative of both. (see Bernard Van Leer Foundation Reports 'Early Childhood Matters')

Research has shown that the economic returns from investments made in early childhood development programs are substantial. Studies from the western countries have demonstrated the gains that young children can make in measures of cognition and educational performance when they participate in a high quality early childhood development program. (Consultative Group on ECCD, 1993; Erickson & Kurz-Riemer, 1999; Ramey 2000) In a review of longitudinal follow up research of early childhood development programs in the USA (e.g. Perry Preschool program in Ypsilanti, Headstart) Burr and Grunewald (2004) clearly indicate that "high" quality early childhood development programs have generally led to the following:

- Improvement in child educational performance, including higher test scores, reduction in special education, grade retention, and fewer school dropouts.
- Increases in child high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates.
- Some short term gains in IQ scores.
- Reductions in child juvenile delinquency and criminal activity later in life.
- Higher earnings and tax payments by child and parents.
- Reduction in welfare use.

Further, in a benefit cost analysis, Burr and Grunewald (2004) report that the benefits of early childhood development programs are larger than program costs. This only underscores the need to have high quality programs for children below age 6 yrs. However the definition of "high/good" quality programs needs clarity since it involves judgments.

Some of the points to note for practice are that in the earlier referred studies high levels of teacher education and training and low child to teacher ratio, were aspects seen as high quality, when seen with the perspective of education (basic infrastructure and health outreach did not form a basis).

In the Indian context an exploratory study done by Swaminathan Foundation in 2000 in Tamil Nadu raises concerns about what is perceived as "high/good" quality in ECE. The findings of this study indicate "good" quality ECE as a pedagogic process leading to an access to better perceived "English medium schools", which may be delinked with children's processes of learning and development.

## **2.2 Perspectives on literacy and early years**

A basic understanding of research in neurosciences indicates the biological basis for inputs into these formative years, and any deficits resulting from a deficient environment in these early years may be very difficult to reverse later. An increased awareness about the utility of literacy in the global scene has led us to look at early childhood programs from the context of literacy. Promoting literacy in early childhood means recognizing linkages between literacy and usage of symbols related to numeracy and language and meaning making (Dickson and Tabors, 2001). These aspects of our understanding help frame the content of the learning that happens in the program, in preparation for later school inputs. However, we cannot

ignore at the same time importance of milieu and cultures including language, theories have informed us about the importance of context and relationships (Vygotsky, 1978; Rogoff, 2003; Swaminathan, 2000, Katz, 2003). Literature clearly indicates that early childhood education is not context free, care and catering to development needs of a child as well as involvement of the family and community forms a part of the overall outcomes of child development (UNICEF, 2008)

In order to generate an understanding of programs for the early years and examine "good" quality practice, it might help to look at a reference point. LeVine et. al (1994) classify the approach and content of an intervention provided for young children into two, which in practice may coexist to an extent, although one of them predominates. The two approaches are (1) the pediatric model<sup>2</sup> of child care, and (2) the pedagogic model<sup>3</sup>. This paradigm will help us to appreciate the approaches and examine the nature of collaboration between socialization based and education models.

The quality of an early childhood program is dependent on the care, stimulation and protection it provides the child. Areas such as nutrition, drinking water, and health and child protection are all relevant including the child-caregiver/educator relationship as well as provision of on cognitive inputs.

In practice there are several programs such as the Amazonas Indigenous Children Project Columbia, the Community Foundation for the Western Region of Zimbabwe's Home Based Program, The Roving Caregiver Program for Caribbean Children, that have linked early childhood, to mother education, and community development and made an attempt to respond to local conditions, local values and local needs (Bekman, 1998; Dahlberg et al., 1999; Kagitçibasi et al., 2001; Myers, 2002) combining to an extent the pediatric and pedagogic approaches. The common features of these programs are that they are all essentially catering to poorer sections of society. Other programs focus on developing school based competencies and are seen as preparatory for schools, and focus on verbal expression, and symbolic learning focusing on pedagogy such as the Montessori and kindergarden, which are essentially accessed by socio-economically advantaged families. (Bhavanagari 1995, Swaminathan 2000).

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<sup>2</sup> **Pediatric model:** Early socialization emphasizes, health and survival, and the teaching of values may occur through oral means, but there is typically little use of language between adults and children for encouraging or answering questions, reading stories, vocabulary building, or conceptualization. Value is placed on the child's ability to master specific skills through observation and imitation. This model emphasizes co-operation and obedience to the commands of a knowledgeable elder.

<sup>3</sup> **Pedagogic model:** Early socialization childcare methods and interaction patterns include what the child will encounter in school. These patterns include the effective and extensive use of language for listening, speaking, reasoning, explaining, asking, answering, comparing, labeling, computing and eventually reading and writing. In preparation for the world of school the mother is expected to take on a teaching role.

There is, however a debate from one locale to another as to what constitutes 'best practice', as well as about the meaning of such concepts as 'child-centered approach', 'developmentally appropriate practice' (DAP), and 'play-based curriculum' even in western countries, in practice. Currently, it seems that despite the best efforts to recognize local cultures as valuable resources for planning appropriate education programs, 'early childhood programs are taking their cues from imported models that reinforce value shifts towards the individualistic, production oriented cultures of the west' (Myers, 1992, Myers 2002), which has a focus on the pedagogic approach<sup>4</sup>.

The following directions appear to emerge in our understanding of the manner in which intervention in the early years needs to be examined:

- There is a need to blend the pediatric with the pedagogic approaches, with a goal of promoting child development, what constitutes 'best practice' might be debatable.
- The cognitive perspective focuses on mental processes that appear to link activities with literacy activity (e.g. negotiating meanings, thinking symbolically, and using language to make sense of experience) as is in the preparation for school, pedagogic approach.
- The ecological, socio-cultural perspective emphasizes opportunities to engage in literacy activity that exist in the environment and existing socialization practice. It promotes the interface between the literacy and activities experienced in the home and school.
- ECE is not context free and must aim to promote children's development.

With an intention to improve the quality of human resources at an early age several countries initiated national level programs for children. The difference between the developed countries and developing nations was that in the developed countries the service programs were closely linked and were informed by academic universities and departments of child development leaning essentially towards a pedagogic model. In the developing nations, and particularly in the colonized world, services have followed the Western countries and been initiated by the Government, with sporadic inputs from academic departments. (Bhavnagari 1995 ) The approach has been predominantly pediatric, which is evident through the evaluation studies. (see NIPCCD report 2005, Ramchandran 2006)

### **2.3 Brief overview of Early Childhood Education in India**

Early childhood education is not new to the country in practice, but what stands out is that in India practice did not emerge from research outcomes and academic departments, but from a very basic philosophy of thinkers and writers, not necessarily 'trained' in child development and education. As practice evolved and

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<sup>4</sup> Clarification: each approach has its benefits, in terms of the child's development.

funds were available, academic departments sought to understand existing practice. There is however a lack of a sound theoretical base. (Kaul 1993, Saraswathi and Kaur 1993, Bhavnagari 1995,)

The practice of early childhood education developed in the twentieth century in India, with Gandhi and Maria Montessori being important early influences. Montessori's writings and philosophy were integrated into the teacher education programs (Pattnaik, 1996). After India gained independence in 1947, the efforts and vision of educational reformers and scholars such as Tagore and Gandhi, the mission of the Indian educational system incorporated a developmental viewpoint that included meeting the needs of the children. They believed in a holistic (pediatric and pedagogic) view of the child.

With regards to teacher inputs, it was suggested that they use hands-on methods of imparting knowledge in the areas of language, mathematics, science, social studies and physical education. Another salient feature of this post-colonial mission was to impart knowledge in the child's native language, (Paranjothi, 1969), it however was restricted to under privileged children.

In terms of ECE programs, the programs have a social welfare focus, sometimes called custodial, that minds children in the absence of their parents. Beyond food and shelter and medical care, this service generally adds moral training on the order of social skills and the teaching of values such as listening to teachers and getting along with friends. Concern for health often extends to the family as a whole, and the mother in particular; joining with the mother - or instructing her - in raising a healthy child through clinics, feeding programs, and vaccination campaigns. The focus of the pedagogical orientation is mental, social and moral training, although physical well-being exists as a background concern. Indeed, the two orientations are not situated at opposite ends of a continuum, but represent distinct program dimensions.

Since the 1960s, childcare and early education programs have conflated to some extent, with childcare in particular taking on a greater pedagogical role, as more and more children spend their preschool years in childcare centers. On the other hand, school based programs such as kindergartens have largely retained their pedagogical orientation as a preparatory stage of formal schooling, with minimal attention to pediatric concerns. The pediatric orientation on the other hand involved provision of food and shelter in the early years, and had a minor concern with intellectual stimulation.

In 1986 the government's National Policy on Education recognized the value of the education of the whole child. Furthermore, this policy discouraged academic instruction in early childhood. With the passing of the seventh Five Year Plan (1986-1990), more guidelines were put in place for teacher preparation with some focus

placed on meeting the needs of the child and using developmentally appropriate strategies. However, more emphasis was placed on teaching the content areas.

More recently researchers have observed an attempt to make a combination of western practices and Indian philosophy and practices, which means more involvement of the community, more individual performance-based assessment, school readiness programs and home-based programs to help parents care for and prepare their children for school. ECE programs, on paper today have inherited features of both the pediatric and pedagogical orientations and 'ethos'. Prochner, (2002) Rao and Sharma, A. (2002)

Individual ECE programs can be identified as having a high or low pedagogical orientation, and a high or low pediatric orientation. Programs with a high pedagogical/low pediatric orientation are mainly concerned with academics and preparation for later schooling; whereas those with a high pediatric/low pedagogical orientation focus on child welfare and survival.

**2.3.1. Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) - in India:** The ICDS is one of the world's largest and most unique programs for early childhood care and development for children under 6 years. It was envisaged that by the end of the tenth five year plan (2005) the outreach will be universal in the country. However this is yet to be achieved. It symbolizes India's commitment to its children, particularly the disadvantaged and marginalized. With the Head Start in the west, having shown positive results, India envisaged the benefits for the poorest of the poor through this program. (Bhavnagari, 1995)

The ICDS operates through a network of AWCs, or courtyard play centers, which form the focal point for delivery of services at the community level. Poised for universal coverage by the turn of the century, ICDS today reaches around 70 million children under six and about 15 million pregnant women and nursing mothers (MWCD 2009) from disadvantaged groups. Of these, 10.2 million children (three to six years of age) participate in center-based early childhood education. There are 5652 blocks across the country and about 5000 projects (Lal and Paul 2003). Some 350,000 trained community-based anganwadi workers and an equal number of helpers, supportive community structures and women groups are involved. Yet we have not been able to reach out to all children, due to poor implementation. (Rao 2005).

**The objectives of ICDS:** The objectives of ICDS are aimed towards holistic development of children, and include expectant mothers as part of their target groups, the services it offers are listed in Table 1.

- To improve the nutritional and health status of children below the age of six years.
- To lay the foundation for the proper psychological, physical and social development of the child.
- To reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school dropouts.

- Achieve effective coordination of policy and implementation among various departments to promote child development.
- To enhance the capability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child, through proper health and nutrition education.
- To provide basic health services viz. Immunization, provision of health check-ups referral services, nutrition, supplementary feeding, growth monitoring and promotion of nutrition and health education (NHED), treatment of minor illnesses.
- **To provide Early Childhood Care and Non formal Pre-school Education<sup>5</sup> to children in the age group of three to six years.**
- To promote convergence of other support services, such as safe drinking water, environmental sanitation, women's empowerment programs, non-formal education and adult literacy.

**Table 1: Types of Services provided by the ICDS and their recipients under the ICDS**

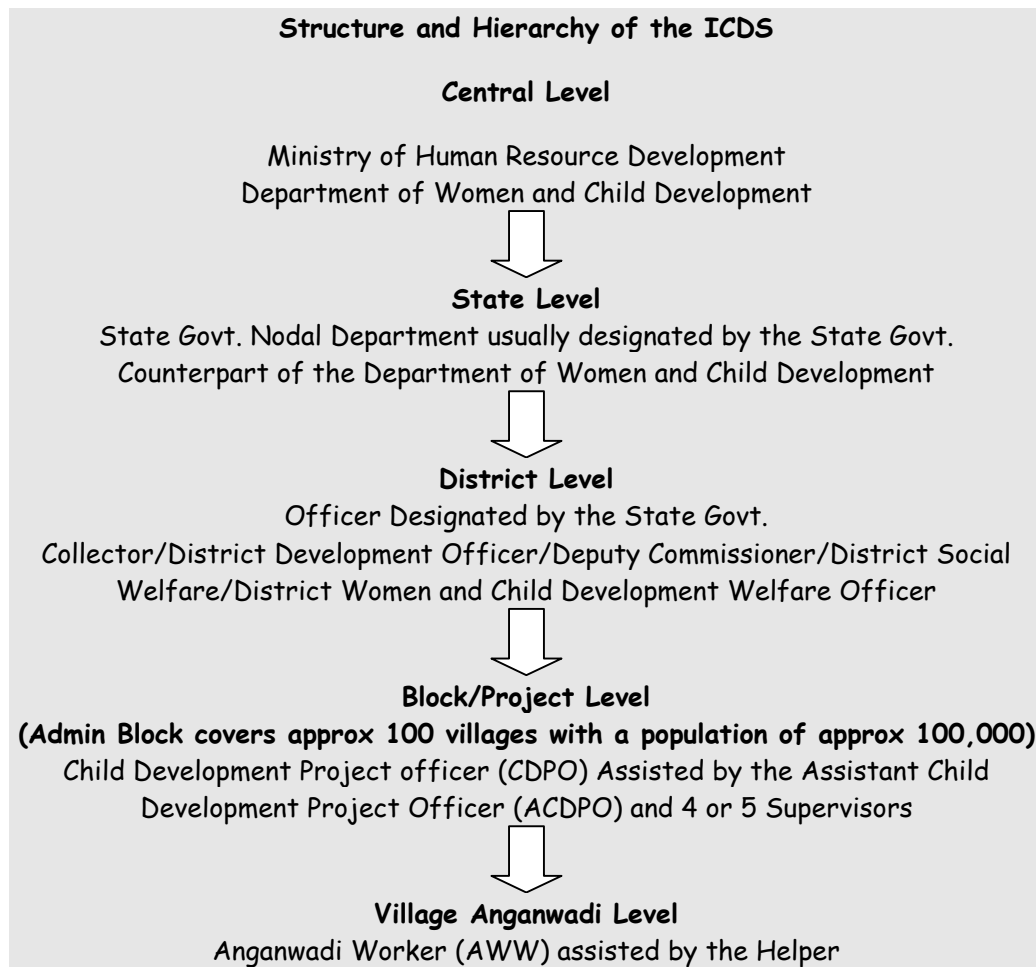
Type of Service	Delivered by	Recipient
1. Health Checkup	PHC - Doctor, LHV/ANM with the help of AWW	Pregnant/ Nursing Women; Children below six yrs.
2. Immunization	PHC - Doctor, LHV/ANM with the help of AWW	Pregnant/ Nursing Women; Children below six yrs.
3. Supplementary nutrition	AWW/Helpers (Self Help Groups)	Pregnant/ Nursing Women; Children below six yrs.
4. Referral Services	AWW/ LHV/ANM	Pregnant/ Nursing Women; Children below six yrs.
5. Non Formal Preschool education	AWW	Children 3-6 yrs
6. Nutrition and Health Education	AWW with occasional Help from ANM/LHV	All women between 15 to 45 yrs of age.

The structure of the ICDS is presented in Figure 1. The training of the ICDS functionaries was initiated by NIPCCD, and now partially decentralized carried out by NGOs identified by NIPCCD across the country. These training centers have been provided a curriculum for training, and are communicated changes in curriculum from time to time.

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<sup>5</sup> In the terminology of UNESCO (2000b), and as generally used in the literature on development and education, 'formal education' is considered to be of an academic nature and within the context of a structured, age-graded school system. 'Informal' or 'non-formal' education is an organized educational activity outside the school. In a preschool, non-formal education refers to a play-based, child-centered approach. Formal education within a preschool refers to a teacher-centered approach with a focus on academics.

**Fig 1. The structure of the ICDS program**



**Outcomes of research on the ICDS:** While research clearly shows gains in the pediatric outcomes, early childhood education has received little focus (Singh and Singh 2008). A huge amount of available literature on impact of the ICDS are reports done by Government and fall within the realm of grey literature. This report will focus on available literature on the ECE component

Studies have led us to understand that at the expense of quantitative expansion of the ICDS program, its quality has been compromised; ECE has been practically nonexistent. (World Bank Report 2004; Nair and Radhakrishnan 2004; NIPCCD 2005; Rao 2005; Ramchandran, 2006.) These reports clearly indicate that functionaries themselves are unaware of good quality ECE practice. They also highlight inadequate training related to ECE, and a "lackluster" curriculum and resources for children<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Also look at the two major study reports by NIPCCD 1992 and NCAER 2001.

National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (1992) National evaluation of Integrated Child Development Services: New Delhi

National Council For Applied Economic Research (2001) Concurrent Evaluation of the Integrated Child Development Services: National Report. New Delhi.

In rural areas (Ramchandran 2006) while examining the lives of children under six years, reports that children at age 5 years are enrolled in Class 1. This observation implies that parents do not have access to ECE and therefore enroll their children into school. ICDS does not appear to have ECE in these areas. Given an economic choice, parents would choose private ECE (pedagogic centers) as they do so in urban locales, Serpell, (1993).

Other isolated impact and intervention studies in ICDS projects across the country also have led us to understand the weak functioning of the Early Childhood Education component of the ICDS, ( Arora, Bharti and Mahajan 2006; Dongre, Deshmukh, Garg 2008). These they have however essentially been done in isolation of other roles and responsibilities of those who deliver and receive the service, and the influence of the context of the projects location. The researcher did not find any research study examining the curriculum used for training functionaries of the ICDS.

This baseline study makes an attempt to holistically study the Dharni project, so as to be able to make suitable interventions in the best interest of early childhood education and thereby child development.

## **2.4 Concerns**

Although we are better informed about early childhood education and practice over the last two decades in India, much needs to be understood about blending an understanding of cultural influences in development and develop a component in the training of educators on how to help children's transition into a world of common symbols and language for communication.

## **3. Aim**

The aim of the study was clearly to determine the baseline information of the current situation and context of ECE practice in the ICDS, Dharni Block, Amravati District, in order to design, implement and assess an intervention to strengthen this component.

### **3.1 Study Objectives**

**Objective -1** To specify the context (geographical, physical, political and socio-cultural) in which ICDS - Dharni project operates. More specifically to describe the

- Physical features of the terrain - Melghat
- Concepts of child care/education
- Celebrations of life events - in tribal settings (including changes)
- Other NGO/Govt interventions - tiger/forest/nutrition etc.

**Objective-2** To understand explanatory models of ICDS functionalities. This includes re- their role in the ECE component with respect to their perceptions regarding knowledge of what is expected, training received and existing practice/challenges and ways to facilitate better practice.

**Objective-3** To understand explanatory models of Training personnel regarding

- their understanding of the ECE component of ICDS
- their perceptions regarding knowledge of what is expected/good practice
- Training given and existing practice, and requirements for better practice.
- Perceived challenges in practice

**Objective-4** To describe the process of what happens during ECE in the AWC's described as having "good" practice and outline the factors influencing the practice of ECE in Dharni.

**Objective -5** To make an assessment of learning at entry level in Grade 1 of children having experienced two years of ECE in the ICDS program.

## 4. Research Strategy

At the very start of the study, as a baseline for an intervention, it was felt necessary to look at existing practice in order to augment the quality of service provided. Any program impact is best understood not only by the number of beneficiaries it reaches out to, but also the quality of the outreach. The perceptions of the functionalities were critical with regards to perceptions of "good practice". The study took an 'emic'<sup>7</sup> perspective in identifying the sample. Those centers were chosen for detailed study, which were believed to be following "good practice". The study therefore looks at the quality of services currently offered in Dharni ICDS project and looks at contextual factors as well as process aspects of the ECE component, besides examining learning outcomes in grade (Standard) 1 (children who have attended at least two years of ICDS preschool program (pedagogic)

### 4.1 The theoretical framework

The study was undertaken to understand the quality of existing practice focusing on ECE in Dharni ICDS project, for which an ecological (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) framework was used, so as to gain an insight into existing systemic processes which translate into practice. (see Fig. 2.)

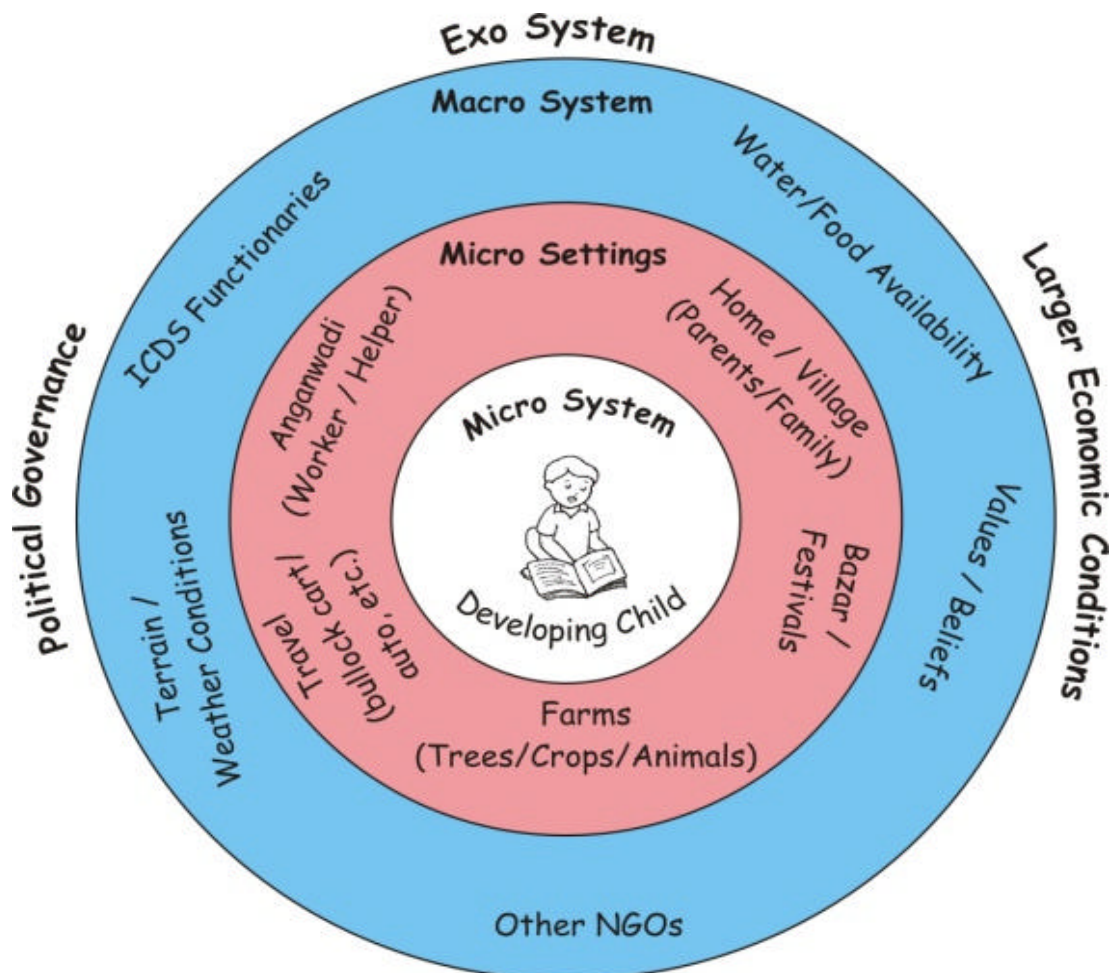
The ecological framework guides the methodology for generating data and framework for analysis, which will help to identify the strength of linkages in the Dharni project, which may need effective intervention in order for the goals of ECE

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<sup>7</sup> 'Emic' perspective provides an insider viewpoint.

and overall goals of ICDS to be met. The pediatric and pedagogic model of child development, may further help to understand the complex nature of interventions for children. The identified areas in Fig 2 in the concentric circles provide the context from which data needed to be generated.

**Fig. 2. The Theoretical Framework**



## 5. Methods

The following table describes the methods used and the sample from whom the data were generated. (Table 2)

**Table - 2 Methods and sources of information**

Method	Sources of information
<b>Interviews</b>	
Focus group interviews	Anganwadi workers and Helpers. Training functionaries Community (families/parents/significant community members such as the panchayat members, the SHGs)
Semi structured interviews	AWW (n=12) Helpers (n=12) Supervisors (9) ACDPO (1) CDPO (1) CEO (1)
<b>Observations</b>	
Field Observations (Notes) Daily notes	Researcher's observations and conversations during field work re cultural framework and practice related to child education and development.
Semi Structured Observations	Locales Training centers (2) AWC centers(12) Practice at the AWCs Homes of children
Secondary data	Budgets, expenses, and other documentation related to ECE in the context of the larger project.
Venn diagrams and seasonal calendars, time lines	Roles and responsibilities, attendance/routine of children, personal and that of the AWC.
Photographic documentation	Locales where children spend their time.
Learning Assessment tool	Children attending grade 1 in primary schools.

### 5.1 Sampling frame.

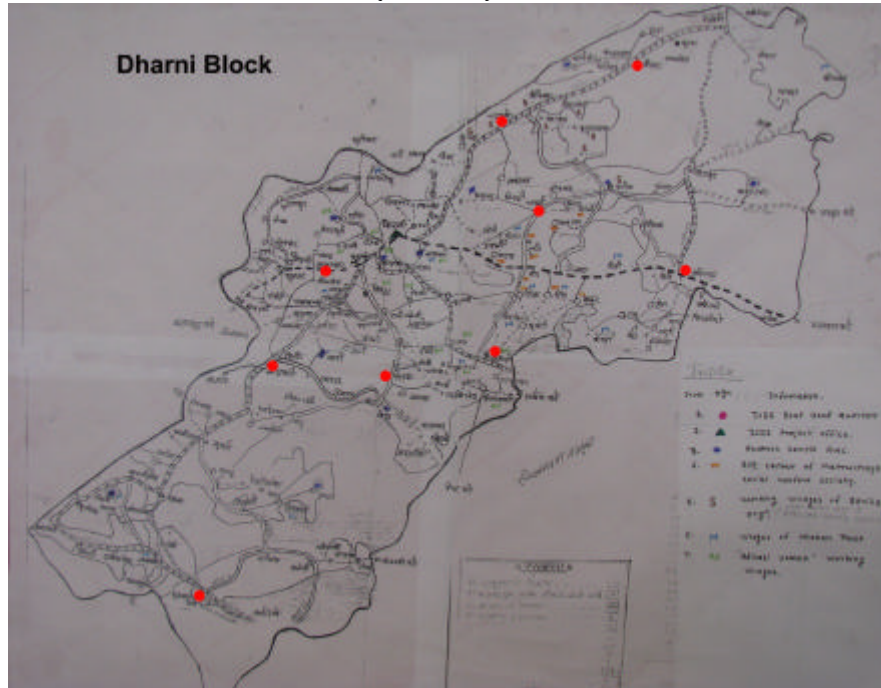
The following provides the frame on the basis of which the sample was selected.

Objective 1 - Observations, interactions with key informants, such as the local govt. functionaries (CEO) the panchayat, local parents of children attending the ICDS program services.

Objective 2 and 4. - The following were the sources of information for these objectives.

- A selection of 12 AWCs was made from a total of 215 in Dharni Block for detailed information, and observation, using a stratified purposive sampling technique. The AWCs were selected from the 9 circles "beats" proportionate to the listed number of "good functioning" AWCs (42 out of 215) as perceived by the CDPO and ACDPO, as per their criteria, in each beat. (See Fig.3 and Table 3)

**FIG 3 - MAP of Dharni Block (Taluka) with selected AWCs in 9 beats<sup>8</sup>.**



- The CEO, CDPO and ACDPO, all supervisors and selected AWWs and helpers from the selected AWWs were interviewed individually.
- Focus group interviews and observations during monthly meetings of the AWWs and helpers.
- Secondary data sources such as the budgets, training curriculum, and other material used for training.
- Informal conversations with training functionaries.
- Informal conversations with parent and community at the AWC and other locales in Dharni, such as the local health centre, and persons met at the Bazar, or while traveling in the local transport.

For Objective 3 the MLTC and AWTC at Amravati and Nagpur were chosen. These included the personnel who train and observations of the venue.

For Objective 5 All children (210) attending grade 1 in Govt. primary schools, who have attended the ECE program of the ICDS for two years, from those AWW centers where there will be model AWCs set up over the next two years.

<sup>8</sup> Beats are Geographically marked out boundaries within the Block, for supervision and management.

## 6. Tools

**Interview guidelines:** (details in Annexure 1)

The components of the tool were

- Background information related to time lines of career/job history/personal history
- Existing knowledge regarding ECE practice (goals, use of 3Rs, activities etc)
- Information related to training, including gaps
- Expectations and desired changes in practice/training.
- Parents and community members' expectations from ECE
- Transitions to primary school

**Venn diagrams and hierarchy charts** were developed through interaction related to

- Perceived duties and responsibilities, perceived challenges (AWW, Helper, Supervisor, ACDPO, CDPO, CEO)
- Reporting structures and performance indicators.

**Time line**

- Daily practice, and of AWC centre.
- Career pathways of functionaries

**Observation guidelines**

- Detailed observation of what happens during the ECE time in selected AWCs on a typical day as well as training centers.
- Number and age group of children/trainees
- Teaching content and methodology, materials used
- Infrastructure/ Physical setting/ storage, walls of the AWC.

**Adapted Tool used "Primary School Level Entry Level Assessment Scale of children (age 5+) with a sample of 210 children currently in Grade 1 of Govt. primary schools. (Results in section 2 of this report)**

## 7. Process of generating information

**Rationale for selection of AWCs.** Since we were interested in gaining information about the ECE component of ICDS, the CDPO and ACDPO were requested to list out those AWCs with best practice so that we could look at what constitutes best in the top level functionaries perception. The criteria used by the ACDPO acknowledged by the CDPO, was the following, a "good" AWC<sup>9</sup> working was one which

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<sup>9</sup> This criteria is a reflection of the degree and kind of emphasis given to early childhood education,

1. Keeps timings from 10 am to 2 pm.
2. It is clean and the AWW keeps it clean..."even though we do surprise visits".
3. It has water facility
4. There is equipment which is needed for teaching
5. Food is served at the right time
6. The children can count from 1-30
7. The records are provided and completed as per requirement.

This also helped to minimize the researcher's bias in selection. The CEO additionally suggested that we look at some of those AWC's whose workers were additionally trained under the Sarva Shiksha abhiyan<sup>10</sup> recently (6 months ago April 2008).

The ACDPO selected 42 AWCs out of 215 on the basis of criteria , from which 12 were selected, including those mentioned by the CEO, care was taken to have at least two AWCs which were located in the interior areas of Dharni.

The 12 AWCs finally selected have been represented in the table. (see Table 3)

**Table 3 - Beats (Circles) and selected AWCs**

Number	Beat (Circle)	AWC
1.	Chatvabode	i. Patiya
		ii. Dharanmahu-1
2.	Harisal	iii. Malur
3.	Chakarda	iv. Baspani
4.	Bijudhavdi	v. Kusumkhot -khurd
5.	Ttamba	vi. Dodhra
		vii. Khari-2
6.	Bairagadh	viii. Kasaiشهد
7.	Sadrabadi	ix. Paankhalya
		x. Dadra
8.	Durghat	xi. Khidkikalam
9.	Kalamkhar	xii. Daihanda

\*Note: the AWCs in green are those suggested additionally by the then CEO.

**Training of researchers:** The researchers went through a training of four days in Pune, including hands on training of the methods in an AWC at Mulshi (where CLR already has a presence). They were also experienced video screenings with discussions on early childhood education. ("Watch me Grow"<sup>11</sup> series birth to 5+)

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by the decision making authorities in the ICDS structure.

<sup>10</sup> Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a National initiative to achieve universalization of Elementary Education in India GOI (Government of India )

<sup>11</sup> Watch me grow is a series of short films, made by Prakriti, Nirmala Niketan College of Home Science, Mumbai, for understanding early childhood education and development, conceptualized by Mrs. Ranjan Amin (an expert in Child Development) in 1994.

## 8. Data generation and analysis

Data were generated over a period of 5 months Nov.- March 2009 for part of the study, the data for children's assessment was done in Sept/Oct 2009. One of the research assistants was stationed in Dharni and two other researchers visited twice during this period for a total period of 10-15 days (6-8 hrs of field work each day). Each AWC was visited twice, once to build rapport and the second to note observations, and conduct semi-structured interviews. Detailed observations were made and data recorded through narratives, videos and photographs. Ecological validity was established so as to ensure that interpretations and inferences drawn were a reflection of grassroots understanding. The data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel and software for Qualitative data analysis - Max QDA (Kuckartz, Udo, 2001).

## 9. Results

The results of the study are presented in five sections, which specify the current status of the Early Childhood Education component of the project as per the objectives of the study viz. The context of a child's life in Dharni; the Functionaries (caregivers/educators) and community perceptions about early childhood education and care; the Physical structure, location and context of the Anganwadi centre in the community; the process of ECE at the AWC; highlights of situational and systemic factors leading to poor functioning ECE component of the ICDS- Dharni project.

### 9.1 The context of a child's life in Dharni...the socio-cultural environment

This section provides details regarding the context in which the child grows up in Dharni. It includes the geographical description, the homes, the locations, the modes of transport, and the wedding and festivals celebrated

**The terrain and weather:** Geographically, varied, depending on location of village... from hilly to plains could be green tree covered to hot dusty and dry. The trees are essentially sagwan (teak), although there are other trees such as mango and banyan. Part of Dharni falls within the Melghat Tiger reserve. While travelling, we heard reports of forest reserves being pilfered in connivance with Govt. forest officials. There is little undergrowth in the forest. There are a variety of birds and the commonly known animals are the tiger, bear, wild fowl, and fox. During our stay at Dharni we had the opportunity to see some of the birds including owls and listened to reports of a bear having visited to eat berries from a neighborhood farm.

Dharni witnesses definite changes in **seasons** from greenery in the monsoon, to cold winter, to hot dry and dusty weather in summer, and experiences extreme temperatures. There are shades of green, brown which changing hues, with changes in the weather. The summer and winter are harsh and dry, and the monsoon is lush green.

The soil, rain and terrain influences occupation of the residents. While there are some who own the land they till. Others work on farms as labour. Crops such as



cotton, jowar, wheat, gram are commonly found...some do grow vegetables including chilies and tomatoes on small patches of land. While working in the farm...people spend more time with nature than with persons. They go for special weekly markets or festivals where they are in contact with others. It is not uncommon to see a family live in the middle of the farm in isolation for an area of 2-5 km, caretaking the farm. (see photograph)

The work is seasonal, with the season ending by Holi festival in the farms, although one does see some crops at this time which are sown late. ( also see Fuchs, 1986; Khandare, 2004 {for life and origins of Korkus}; Karade, Ranjan, Bagri G, (2008) {for livelihoods in Meghat} Pande et.al (2008) {for medicinal plants in Melghat}.

**Roads** conditions are varied, they range from well maintained tar paved roads to dusty pathways, which are more so in the interiors, which often get inaccessible during the heavy monsoon down pour, which causes flooding of the river.



Along the paved road, with cattle



Unpaved Road to Malur



Bridge that gets flooded during monsoons

**Home environment Village and Home spaces:** The villages are typically set in rows with approx 15 ft. pathway running in between. (see photographs) In general, the meeting place for women is the water source, a hand pump, or a well, women were also observed to meet at the AWC.



Picture of a typical village structure



Picture of a typical home

**The homes:** The homes are essentially mud structures, with three rooms all one behind the other, the backyard can be seen from the front entrance. In the front and back yard, cattle, chicken, dogs coexist along with humans. The 4 feet height of entrance door was such that an adult has to bend to enter. (see photograph). Typically there are no locks, which is indicative of general safety.

**Cooking space:** The fuel used for cooking is firewood, which is collected from the forests and stacked for use during the monsoon. Big vessels used for storing water (see photograph). Storage of fodder for cattle was observed to be in the house itself. Grains are stored in mud constructed granaries. (see photographs)



Granaries in the home



Water storage and Gods

The foods eaten are low vegetable, consist essentially of wheat/jowar (local cereal) roti (round bread), chillies chutney. Use Gutka/alcohol consumption is not uncommon evidenced in observation of wrappers of tobacco packing seen by the road side, on the farms and in the AWC surrounds. Tobacco was available in the hands of a 4 year old child at an AWC. Interestingly the AWW confiscated it and consumed it after the children had left!

Personal belongings are usually hung on small wooden extensions of the constructions, and on small ledges. Photographs of Gods are hung on wall or on a stand, when asked, they specified that there is no specific time for worship. There is a need to note that the prayers sung in the AWC are not familiar to the home settings.

There was no separate sleep area for children infants in makeshift swings made from rope and hung across the room. (see photograph)



Child in makeshift swing.



Reflected in play in the AWWs home.

Electricity and usage: Most homes have no electricity, some use solar lamps. All school buildings have electrical connections.

## 9.2 Children's Routines

**Profile of children's (3-6) lives in Dharni :** Typically a child wakes up with the morning sun, eats left over roti/bhakri and then spend time loitering, being with animals while mother readies for going to farm or lights chulah (stove). (The researchers saw 8 children who were visibly malnourished in the 12 centers they visited<sup>12</sup>) There are no toilets in the homes; it was common to see children relieving themselves in the open. In most homes there is no luxury of water. Children often accompany mothers or adolescent girls to fetch water, collect cow dung or wash clothes/cattle at nearby river if available. (see photographs)



Assistance in fetching water



Washing clothes



Accompanying while washing cattle

Children were also often seen without a shirt, girls with frocks with broken buttons and unwashed.

<sup>12</sup> When the AWW was asked about the background of the visibly malnourished children, we were informed that the parents do not take care of these children (they are alcoholics) and leave the children to fend for themselves or the parents have left the child and are not traceable. They questioned, "How can we take responsibility of the child?"

**Locations where children spend time:** The places and activities where children spend their time outside the home were as follows

- a. Fetching water/ washing clothes, although young children are with their caregivers, they are rarely given the responsibility to accomplish the task.
- b. Following parents in the farm where children have extended views of the surrounds and open spaces.
- c. With adults washing cattle.
- d. Visiting the local bazaar, with caregivers.
- e. Visiting temples, religious and village fairs.
- f. In institutions such as AWCs, PHCs, primary school compounds.
- g. Loitering outside the home, which involves running around, following adults, animals.

**Children's play at home and surrounds :** Their play consists of playing "stapoo", marbles, climbing, running around, pretend play, playing with a string, doing home activities including mixing cow dung with water( see video clip).



playing marbles



playing with a string

The village witnesses frequent visitors such as visits of blacksmith/clothes vendor particularly during the onset of festivals, children were observed to gather around the visitor for instance watching when a blacksmith repairs a bucket or vessel, they were also observed to listen to the calls of a vendor on a cycle. Children are onlooker participants at wedding and other festivals. If possible and affordable the children get new clothes at such times.



A view of the local Bazar<sup>13</sup> in Dharni



Holi<sup>14</sup>. Around the "palash" tree, children watch...

At about 11 am, children carry their vessels for collecting 'Khichri' at the AWC, some children collect the food from the AWC and accompany parents to the farm. Long distances and work at the farm prevents some children from staying on at the AWC, particularly during sowing and harvesting time. When in the village, children spend their time other than the surrounds of their homes and school/AWC.

Children were reported to sleep soon after sunset. (also see Kate, Phadke, et. al. 1995, Singh, and Singh (2008) {for children's health and genetic problems}

**Thin boundaries between childhood and adult life: Exposure to adult behavior (Are children excluded from adult lives?)** : Children are often not given specific names; they are recognized as an adult's daughter/son, or simply called "boko" (child). Formal names are given to children when they are registered either at the AWC or at the primary school.

It is not uncommon to see children as young as 4-5 yrs with "gutka" (tobacco) packets in their hands and consuming it. Children are apprentices to all adult behavior. For example, during weddings and other festivals children do not have specific roles, (see photograph on previous page) They are vicarious participants in the festivals and weddings, never excluded from adult lives.

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<sup>13</sup> Each beat(circle) has a weekly day for a market, where the villagers can sell their produce, and buy their provisions. It was observed that the Anganwadi worker or the helper, was unable to attend the AWC, because she was either about to go to the market, or was already there, the substitute was usually a family member. Children are excited to go on this outing, either on foot, or a bullock cart, or a local autorickshaw, or the state transport bus. Going to Dharni market was always a novelty for most residents from villages of far away villages.

<sup>14</sup> Holi is a major color festival celebrated by the Korkus, where people get together, and offer sacrifice of hens in prayer, eat special food. Consume alcohol and dance together (men and women) in the night around a bonfire, to a tune drum rhythm and a clarinet. Preparations for this festival mark the harvesting crop and commencing of the lean summer months. Children are onlooker participants.

**Modes of travel:** Children and adults use the following modes of travel other than walking.

- a. Bullock carts
- b. Bicycles
- c. Motorcycles
- d. Tempos, private auto rickshaws,
- e. Busses - run by the state transport, as well as private.



Travel by local state transport



By Bullock cart

**Communities and Language spoken :** The communities in Dharni constitute Korku, Gavlan, Gavli, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian. The major languages of communication are Korku, Hindi, Marathi. Most billboards are in either Hindi or Marathi. All government communication is in Marathi. All residents understand Hindi definitely, the local bill boards (see photograph) are all in Hindi. Those individuals who have migrated to Dharni, from other places like Akola, Amravati city, speak in Marathi. The curriculum in the local Govt. schools is in Marathi.



Billboards at Dharni

**Expectations from a child :** A well behaved child as perceived by the functionaries and community was described to be one who obeys and follows instructions by an adult. Children were observed to be rarely spoken with; they were pushed by hands to follow instructions. However, there appeared to be a positive attachment with

parents/caregivers, which was visible in children either physically or socially referencing to parent/caregiver, in the presence of a stranger.

In an AWC a child must sit with hands folded and when asked be able to say his name (complete name, which includes father's name and last name) village, taluka and district. When specifically asked about a child who is well cared for, the perceptions related to a child being "sudrud", "sashakth" (healthy). This is link with the concept of a pediatric model of child development.

Observations supported the fact that a child is expected to follow instructions, in short be "obedient - "do what is told". Children just hang around parents/older siblings for sense of security. Children communicate by crying when they need something.

**Methods of child management/discipline:** Force is commonly used for disciplining children, a rap on the head, back, pulling or pushing, yanking with one hand and dragging, through the use of power. In the school similar techniques of discipline are used and expected behaviors are "Sitting in one place, eating what is given and repeating what is said". It is not uncommon to see parents slap a child on the cheek, when the child gets unmanageable and keeps on tugging at the saree/skirt.

### 9.3 Other Non Government Organization interventions

Several NGOs function in Dharni, with the objective of 'social upliftment' of the community, in the area of health and education. The NGOs function in some of the villages in Dharni. The ones working with women and children, focus basically of RCH programs. Matruchaya trust, is one that runs Balwadis (ECE centres) in some villages. The ICDS functionaries are involved in some way other another to carry out the work of NGOs (See annexure 3 for details of NGOs operating in Dharni and their focal areas of work). It is essentially the AWW who is involved in the NGO activities. Places where work has been done in AWCs by the NGOs it is clearly documented on the walls, so as to get visibility for the NGO (see photograph)



Permanent board outside the AWC

#### **9.4 The Functionaries (Caregivers / Educators) - Helpers/Anganwadi workers / Supervisors/ ACDPO/CDPO/CEO**

This section will provide results of the functionaries education status/professional training, other training experience, work/ responsibilities allocated ("Kaam" and "Jawabdari") in general and specific to ECE. It also describes the current reporting structure, expectation of superiors in the hierarchy and specifically related to ECE, their perceptions regarding well run ECE program, behavioral indicators of learning having occurred in children, and perceived best environment for child care.

Functionaries perceptions regarding actual practice will also be outlined, which includes, time taken and number of registers to be filled in daily, routine during ECE time, expected "good behavior" of children in AWC, perceived reasons for children coming to AWC, work enjoyed, learning from the work experience, perceived needs for teaching in AWC, perceived burden of work, burden of finances.

Community (parents, and other significant members) expectations from the ICDS as perceived by the functionaries will also be described.

**Background and understanding of ECE :** All the functionaries had been through training, except one helper, although none of them had a background in child development. (see details of curriculum of training to get an idea of amount of time allocated for ECE later in this report.)

When asked to recall anything related to their training...the spontaneous answer was related to health and nutrition, aspects related to ECE were essentially "gaani, goshti" (songs and stories) , nothing related to numbers/alphabet, although that is what they do in practice. (see Table Annexure 2. Recall of training activities related to ECE). Almost all (85%) said that they found their training useful generally.

All the functionaries were aware that the AWC is a place for "shikshan" (unaupcharik shikshan") non formal education, which is a part of the ICDS services. However, when asked specifically they all mentioned that children must know numbers and alphabets, in addition to "gaani/goshti" (songs and stories). The CEO clearly stated, "We know nothing about ECE".

**Specific findings related to the Background and responsibilities reporting mechanisms, knowledge and attitudes about ECE of the functionaries include the following:**

- The age range varied from 21 yrs to 59, with an average age 35 years.
- The Helpers were essentially uneducated. Only 2 AWWs educated were educated upto 12<sup>th</sup> grade, Supervisors education ranged from 10<sup>th</sup> std to Masters, the ACDPO had a masters with Law, and the CDPO was an Arts graduate with have passed the MPSC (Maharashtra Public Services Commission examination)

- All functionaries were familiar with local conditions, even though they have not all grown up in Dharni, they belong to the district or nearby districts, they have been promoted from within ICDS set up, the only exception is that of the CDPO.
- Academic qualifications were not in synchrony with job requirements.
- All helpers and AWW (with the exception of 1) had never worked before in any other job.
- Recollections about training reflected reports of more of theory, needing memorization, which meant taking notes and reproducing, they were not able to put into practice.
- Numerous refresher training programs were undertaken by the AWW (who not a decision maker).

### **Responsibilities:**

- Helpers perceive themselves to be in assistive role (they also were observed to get their family to assist) they perceived their role in calling children and individuals for meetings, cleaning up the AWC. Helpers were observed to seat themselves in a corner until provided with instructions in AWCs where the relationship between the AWW was favorable. In AWCs where the relationship between the Anganwadi worker and the helper was "good" the helper assisted in ECE activities, by getting the children to repeat numbers and sing rhymes, in monotonous tones and 'managed' the children.
- AWW views herself responsible for delivery of all services and record keeping, besides attending monthly meetings. Almost all said they were burdened with the responsibilities they had. She is also responsible for the food served through the 'Bachat gat' (small saving s group) and needs to accompany expectant mothers to the hospital for delivery.
- ECE seen is not priority, as indicated in AWWs responses. It took anything between half an hour to 3 hrs to fill registers as indicated by the AWWs. Most (70%) AWWs were observed to be filling in registers during visits. The numbers of registers to be filled were mentioned as being 5-6. The ACDPO and CDPO did not have to fill any registers. The registers that were to be maintained were attendance records, nutrition gradation registers, home visits, "daura" (tour) registers (for supervisors), meetings with villagers (supervisors), food raw material registers.
- The budget planning for the project was determined by the number of "beneficiaries ". There is an allocation of Rs. 300/- a year for any material to be purchased for the AWC. In the last year, mirrors were bought, with additional contributions from the AWW, this was decided by the Assistant CDPO.

- Supervisors perceive their responsibilities were to make visits to her allocated AWC and make sure that registers were filled correctly, besides conducting monthly meetings. Supervisors were viewed by the AWWs as to be one who instructs, checks and she does no demonstration
- CDPO reported that he had not visited all AWCs. His responsibilities were in making sure that he was available when the CEO visited, reducing malnutrition in Dharni besides attending meetings, visiting Mumbai office when needed. He also mentioned that he was responsible for the Monthly Progress Reports. The Assistant CDPO mentioned that her responsibility was in making sure that malnutrition is reduced. She said she was more in contact with the AWCs, as she spoke Korku and was officiating as CDPO for a year or so before the current CDPO was appointed. She was observed to visit AWCs and report to CDPO with information.
- The CEO indicated that he was not directly concerned with the ICDS and saw his responsibility as passing on circulars and information to the project head. The CEO at Dharni had been given the Dharni Block as an additional responsibility.

**Reporting mechanisms :** Clear hierarchy was visible and experienced as per the structure of the ICDS set up. The expectation of superiors in the reporting content and methodology involved.

- Filling of registers.
- Reduction in number of children suffering from Malnutrition.
- Noting the attendance of worker and children during the hrs of AWC.
- Little or no hands on demonstrations, more of questioning, hierarchical power structure evidenced in the behavior of each functionary when in presence of superior. (eg. Superior will sit on chair others will stand, until told to sit, and sit on the ground.) The supervisors, ACDPO and CDPO supervise with unscheduled visits.
- CDPO was observed to be sitting in the ICDS office in Dharni, when meeting with CEO.

**The functionaries lifestyles/adjustments as related to their job functions :**

- The AWWs usually lived in the vicinity of the AWC or adjoining the AWC, therefore it was an extension of her home activities, she moved in and out of the AWC when required at home.
- The CDPO usually visited his home in Amravati (his home) on weekends, and combined visits for meetings enroute his return on Mondays. CEO managed to visit Dharni once in a week, and heard reports about the ICDS project functioning, and communicated any orders or instructions.

- The Helpers families often helped in conducting activities, while the helper was away either on farm, land or attending to some other chores, or visiting the local Bazar.
- Supervisors plan visits as per their convenience and obtain information during monthly meetings.
- The job routine appeared burdensome, when additional home responsibilities occurred, such as making visits to the market, attending marriages or arrival of guests in the home.
- A typical day for an Anganwadi worker begins at 6 am., before sunrise and ends with sunset. A few AWWs mentioned that they have become "daring"<sup>15</sup> since they have been working at their jobs.

#### **Knowledge/attitudes towards ECE :**

- Lack of consistency between knowledge and practice, eg. Knew what mirror was for, but hung the mirror high above the eye level of children.
- They saw ECE as repeating numbers, telling stories and singing songs.
- There was a high variation in knowledge with regards to promoting all areas of children's development; the supervisors were better informed about the goals of ECE.
- There was little knowledge of process of ECE and habit formation.
- ECE not a priority, feeding and management of feeding children seen as being primary.
- There was no mention of parent involvement, as parents were seen as individuals who need to be educated, and not part of the process.
- Number of training experiences appears to have little to do with practice; the more trained AWWs did not appear to be better organized in their activities and implementation of the same.
- Few (4 AWWs and 5 supervisors) mentioned that they needed more training. The ones who did state their needs, mentioned more songs and stories and asked for techniques to make children speak.

#### **Perceptions regarding a good ECE program :**

- They found it difficult to state in terms of observable outcomes, other than children being able to repeat numbers and alphabets. See the activities as preparation for primary school, delinked from the social-cultural practice in Dharni.

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<sup>15</sup> AWWs mentioned that they can now speak in front of other people; they have developed confidence in themselves.

- Should be able to speak when asked questions, tell their names, sing a song, state their name and address including village, block and district.
- Most AWW were (80%) were unable to specify.
- Almost all supervisors mentioned that a good ECE program includes activities for all areas of development, and it should be non-formal in nature.

**Perceptions regarding behavioral Indicators of learning having occurred in children :**

- There was a limited understanding, it focused on children being obedient and being able to recite songs and numbers, tell their names and the names of their father and village, block and district.

**Functionaries' perceptions, and beliefs regarding child care and practice :**

- **AWC was seen as a 'kichri' centre:** All the functionaries said that children come to the AWC for food, however 30 percent of the functionaries said that children come to the AWC to learn (which meant counting) as well.
- **Home is the best place for child rearing:** With the exception of 4 supervisors, and two AWW all the functionaries felt that the best place to look after the children was the home, with the parents. The rest felt that the AWC was the best place, since parents are uneducated.

**9.5 The Anganwadi Centre**

**Physical structure (See photographs) space and arrangement:** The AWCs that were selected for observations were all pucca buildings with small entrance doors and high ceilings of a size of about 15ft by 20 ft. All with the exception of one had adequate space. There were no fans, and some of them as we were informed were constructed on the 'World Bank model'<sup>16</sup>. The structure often stood out from the rest of the village homes and was located near the primary school. The AWC constructed on the 'World Bank Model' have been constructed recently (over the last 2 years) and were therefore newer, than the other structures. The room had a small verandah with an open space and a few steps leading to the porch. There was a small adjoining room, which was used for storage (dusty and unkept). There were two large windows with bars and windows often were broken or had slits in it. We were informed that it often leaks during the monsoon period.

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<sup>16</sup> World Bank Model refers to infrastructure provided through funding from the World Bank (as informed by the ACDPO) The structure has a main room, an adjoining store room, and a 3.5 feet tall toilet. (which was not used and locked up in all the observed AWCs.)



An Anganwadi structure -1



World Bank Model Anganwadi -2

**Cooking area and toilets :** In the vicinity of some of the AWCs is an area for cooking the meal and a toilet...none of the toilets were in use...and the cooking area constructed and designated was rarely used for the purpose, the observers wondered if it was in use, since there were no physical traces.



Cooking area (enclosed)



Cooking area (open)



An Anganwadi toilet (not used)

The floorings were often unclean and were sticky and at places were uneven. If a child fell on the ground while running he/she would surely get hurt. Some AWC had swings and slides...but were not always safe for use. (see photograph)



Play equipment (swings) tied up since it is unsafe for use.



Broken flooring on which the slide is placed

With the exception of two AWCs water was a problem. Water had to be stored in vessels. Children often dipped their hands in a common bucket to wash them. (see photograph) In some AWC, soap was used, although it appeared that it was not used regularly, since children did not know what they were confused about the sequence of actions required to wash hands using soap.



Bucket for dipping hands to keep them clean!

**The furniture** in the main room included a desk which was in a dilapidated state and a metal or wooden chair, usually used for visitors or by the person conducting a meeting. In some of the AWCs the table had some toy material, which was way above the height of the children. The AWCs have 10-12 padded mattresses used for children to sit most of which were rundown and worn out.

**The walls** of some of the AWCs were painted and colored and had posters hung on the, few of which were related to early childhood education material. The walls had charts some growth and all the AWCs had the ECE curriculum written on the walls, they also had information regarding the objectives of ICDS, the statistics of the village and the food supplementation time table of the AWC. Some of the AWCs had pictures of Gods and Goddesses and politicians and some had political leaders. Some had fixed paintings of animals, colors shapes, and story sequences. (referred to while telling a story in one AWC)

**The Material** displayed in some AWCs on a table were all piled up and ill maintained. (See photograph) the material included



1. Play horse
2. Spinning top
3. Puzzle
4. Doll
5. Slate
6. 'lagor'
7. Play binocular
8. Slide
9. Potato head
10. Blocks
11. Stacking toys
12. Abacus

Material for ECE

There was more material in the storage room and in boxes in some of the AWCs, some were flash cards, booklets, which were not used, however the amount of material is not sufficient for all the children, and the goals of ECE.

## Organization of space

**Seating arrangement:** The arrangement for seating varied from sitting in a rectangular shape along the walls of the AWC to sitting in rows horizontal or vertical, to no specific arrangement. Often children had to strain to see the material on the walls. When the AWW used any material, it was not at the level of the children's vision, often she had to see herself what was written on the booklet. Occasionally children sat around the AWW in a circle, while the AWW gave instructions about writing on a slate.

**Arrangement:** Pictures on the wall in the AWCs and some directions (North-South; East- West) high up way above the eye level of children. (see photograph)



Children strain up to see  
(a stick is used as a pointer)



Children during ECE gathered for writing on  
a slate

**Material used :** A wooden abacus was used for counting in two of the AWCs. In another AWC two charts of the monthly curriculum were pulled out, haphazardly, with no specific planning and the AWW asked the children what the shapes were, and repeated the answer soon after. The black board was used by some to write numbers and barakhadi (alphabets). (see photographs) In 2 AWCs some children had slates with no chalks. In other AWCs children held on to their steel vessels closely. In three of the AWCs the steel vessels were taken from the children and kept out of their reach. They were returned, once the children were allowed to go home.



Numbers on the board, hardly visible to the  
children



Children wait for ECE activity or for Khichdi?

## 9.6. The process of Early Childhood Education (ECE)

**Activities for ECE :** Two words, unplanned and interrupted, appear to be the way in which activities are done during ECE time. All AWC have a time table on their wall but in practice there was sporadic activity occurring.

The activities during ECE time "preschool time" varied from doing nothing at all to performing exercise, repeating numbers using abacus or from the black board from 1 to 50 in Korku, to pointing with a stick to the posters/pictures on the wall and identifying, there was absolutely no description or sequential thinking, only pure identification. A long stick was available in every AWC, used as a pointer, and sometimes as a veiled threat; children were observed to be obedient to instructions when the AWW held it in her hand. The number of children at ECE activities were either none or at the maximum 15. A large number of children wore primary school uniforms.

When observed (4 out of 12 AWC), children said a prayer in Marathi in a monotonous voice after the AWW. During the prayer children were expected to be seated cross legged in rows one behind the other with hand folded and eyes closed. (The AWW had to constantly repeat these instructions. If a child did not follow instructions, the child was usually given a rap, or yanked and made to sit in his place.)

Children (some above 6 years) were observed to be waiting for food, with thalis/bowls, while AWW spent her time shifting between attending to mothers who come for food at the door to making the children repeat numbers after her. In some of the AWCs the children came partially dressed, hair uncombed, nose running, listless and with older siblings. (see photographs and video clips)



Food served, consumed by children



Children served Kichadi

Focus of the AWW in ECE time was distribution of food and when in an activity; it was managing the children, since they kept moving in and out of the AWC.

While the timetable for early childhood education (see photograph) is up on the walls of all the AWCs. However, observations revealed that the time table is not followed, since the activity designated on the timetable was not in progress at the

time and duration of observations. The timings displayed is not uniform, it varied from one hr. to two and a half hrs for ECE. (Written as Non Formal Education) (An attempt to focus on pedagogic model)

अंगणवाडी बुधदुप्याची वेळ - १० वा.	
आहार वाटपाची वेळ	११ वा
अवोपचारिक शिक्षणाची वेळ	१२ ते १ पर्यंत
अंगणवाडी बंद करण्याची वेळ	२ वा.
पत्रज घेण्याची वेळ	२०/१/०९
सामुदायिक लेखा परिक्षा दि.	११/१/०९
लक्षांकरणाचा वेळ	पिढीमंत्रिक
माता बैठक - किशोर बैठक	
आयुष्य सुपासणीचा दिवस	
ग्रामस्तरीय सहनिर्माण सभा दि.	
नैमासिक...	

Timetable of the AWC

In about half an hour the AWW would exhaust her resources and then repetition begins, in one of the AWCs children ran through the abacus counting up to 10 for one hour.

Children on the other hand sit/run about (if energetic) and wait with their steel plates. Children are 'managed' with physical force, they are recipients and not participants in their "education". (Also see 'video clip' for looking at the process of ECE).

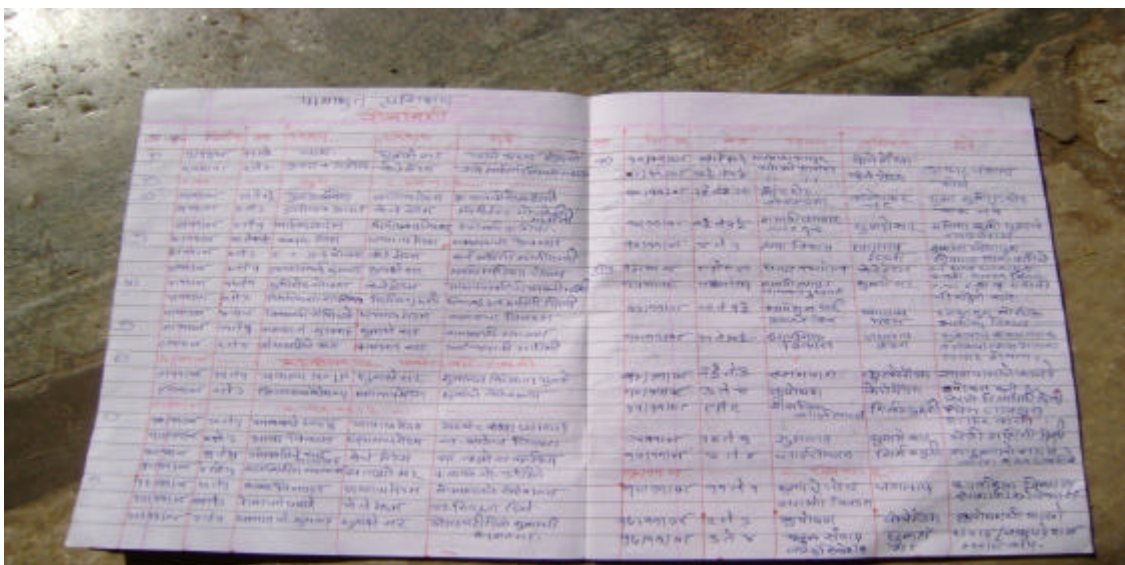
### 9.7 Basic Training and Refresher training (at MLTC and AWTC)-content and focus on ECE

A content analysis of the training curriculum revealed that ECE at all levels of training does not seem to be a priority. Approximately, up to 30 hrs are spent in the basic course and 8 hrs in the refresher. The time allocation is slightly less than 1/6th of the basic program and less than 1/7th of the refresher training program, although it forms an important objective to be achieved in the overall program.

It further indicated certain gaps such as no inclusion of methods of assessing learning outcomes, no use of videos in training, lack of dealing with localized specific cultural equipment, e.g. equipment used in a farm, or during a Korku wedding. The current material used for training is culturally irrelevant; it included use of boots, clothes, and lifestyles alien to the children of Dharni.

Besides this, the curriculum content shifts from being broad such as "physical/ social/cognitive development of children" to specific activities such as "nature walk", with no indication of relative emphasis. Other aspects related to consistency, safety and security are not dealt with in the curriculum.

**Methodology used for training:** At the training centers both at the AWTC and MLTC the trainers reported that there is a basic gap between trainers and trainees, in terms of understanding context of trainees. They stated that the training involves no observations/supervised practice/ it was observed to be "less hands on", less skill based. The participants write copious notes during the training. These notebooks are shown to visitors, when they arrive at the centre. The paper work (handwriting) is exemplary (neat)! (see photograph)



A snap shot of notes taken for ECE training (time table)

Specifically the comments of the trainers at the MLTC, AWTC with respect to Dharni were: Supervisors and AWWs from the 'adivasi'<sup>17</sup> areas perceived to have individuals with "less capacity".

- New kits that are given directly to the AWCs in Dharni, should be given to MLTC/AWTC first.
- They felt a need for an additional three resource persons at the MLTC.
- They also indicated a need to train trainers in ECE, recent developments and techniques.
- Documents and Government orders and regulations related to ICDS need to be sent to the MLTC and AWTC. As well so that they are informed about changes made in the program.

## 9.8 Budget Allocation

An analysis of the budget and the mechanisms involved revealed;

- A lack of allocation for repairs and upkeep of AWC. Need for clarity on how Rs. 600/- is spent for each AWC. AWWs reported that Rs. 300/- is available to them for the entire year.

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<sup>17</sup> Adivasi, is a term used for persons residing in forests and "primitive".

- No allocation for materials specifically for ECE.
- Delays in delivery of arrears for the AWWs.
- Lack of transparency and involvement of administrative staff at the ICDS office and functionaries (supervisors and below) in budget heads.
- No allocation of money for transport (jeep) for supervisors for increasing accountability, and possible supervision, and clarity is needed on how the travel budget is spent.
- Money is spent on materials which are delivered to the projects directly from Commissionerate (head quarters), without specifications or investment in training on their use.
- An allocation of finances by other Government Schemes directly for the AWCs, through Panchayat. The Panchayat does not always facilitate the disbursement of these funds.

## 10. Conclusions, Highlights and Directions

Based on the baseline the following causal factors appear to be responsible for the non functioning of the ECE component of the ICDS program in Dharni.

1. Anganwadi workers, are the single point of delivery of services of the ICDS, they have little capacity and support to make decisions. They are almost always questioned and held responsible for any aberrations at any level. At all meetings, the CDPO, ACDPO and the superiors issue instructions in authoritarian tones, no guided practice in supervision.
2. There needs to be a blend between the pediatric and pedagogic approach to ECE. Clearly, on an operational note, early childhood education as a concept is seen as being delinked from care (health).
3. The focus in Dharni is on reduction of malnutrition, grade 3 and 4 children, ECE does not figure as a priority in their roles and responsibilities. Accountability is with regard to decrease in the number of children falling in grade 3 and 4.
4. Systemic problems of crossing barriers created by bureaucracy and hierarchy at all linkages.
5. There is a clear need to decentralize, both in terms of training and budgetary allocations. There is a lack of sufficient focus in the budget for ECE. Budgets have headings for travel, but in Dharni it is inadequate, because of the wide spread terrain.
6. Focus on generating Monthly Progress Report (MPR), there are discrepancies in the MPRs on the website and practice.

7. Inadequate time allotment emphasis on ECE in basic and in service training at all levels. There are difficulties in translating knowledge into practice; there is centralization of training and inadequate integration of lives of children; there is a lack of skills in performing activities and being child centered and a lack of observations of "good quality" ECE in practice.

**Highlights :** The study highlights the following in terms of ECE, using Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective.

**At the level of the child :** There are weak linkages between the home and the anganwadi, and the developmental stage of the child. The expectation and material used for education in the anganwadi has weak linkages with the home setting, and developmental abilities of the children at Dharni ICDS.

- Practically no visual material that children see and experience in their daily surrounds is used for teaching/ learning.
- All material places high up on the walls, way above the eye level of children.
- Children are expected to be verbal in school, and be onlooker participants in their homes.
- Children are expected to sit for long durations of time in the AWCs.
- Children sing prayers and songs containing concepts and ideologies alien to their daily lives eg ...songs on Ladoo (sweet not commonly eaten in this culture)
- Socialized to be obedient.

**At the Caregivers (functionaries) level**

- Lack of clarity regarding ECE program.
- Helper and Anganwadi worker are at the bottom of the hierarchy, more responsibility and less capacity for decision making. AWW is a single point of delivery for all services
- Weak linkages with parents and community, as well as Bachat gats (saving groups)
- No active demonstration of organizing ECE as a program, lack of facilitation in supervision and monitoring
- Focus on increase "labharthi varg" beneficiaries
- Attending all meetings at beat levels
- Face delay in accessing arrears and bonuses in salary (Diwali (Oct 2008 arrears not received at least until March 2009)
- Accountability is currently seen in serving and delivery of food, and filling of registers, and presence of children at the AWC.

### At ECE program level

- Infrastructure is available but needs maintenance.
- Material for ECE not enough and no budget for more.
- There is a lack of clarity about ECE and process indicators such as ECE program planning process, creating learning environments, facilitating children's ability to think sequentially, classify, facilitating children's "good" habit formation (e.g. not eating "gutka" (tobacco), creating feedback mechanisms from primary schools, parent involvement etc.
- Difficult to monitor ECE, since no specific indicators available to functionaries for monitoring quality.

### At the training level

- Disconnect between the trainers at AWTC/MLTC and trainees, lack of knowledge of surrounds of Dharni.
- Lack of interaction with ECE academic organizations, perceive a need for training inputs.
- Disconnect regarding materials supplied/information/changes made in the ICDS and at the training centers e.g. supply of "potato head", interventions done by Sarvashiksha Abhiyan as part of the training.
- Lack of concrete observations and practicum, making of a few puppets and singing some songs, and playing some games, does not help them to develop skills in working with children.
- Disconnect between the expectation of skills of the AWW and supervisor and the time allotted for ECE in the training curriculum, barely 30 hrs spent on pre service training, and 5-6 hrs in refresher training on ECE.

### Budget heads

- Need for allocation of resources specifically for ECE
- Need budgetary allotment for practical observations/training.
- More transparency on how money is spent on various heads.

**Directions for ECE:** The following table (Table 5) sums up the directions for intervention so as to strengthen the ECE component of the ICDS program. The intervention needs to bring changes in the functionaries approach and understanding of ECE, bring specific changes in the ECE program and stimulate community involvement.

**Table 5 - Directions for change - at systemic and operational levels in the ICDS - Dharni - ECE component**

<p><b>Functionaries: State level CEO, CDPO, ACDPO, Supervisors and AWW and Helpers.</b></p> <p><b>Training to focus on</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awareness and clarity on what is ECE, there is a lack of clear understanding on what to expect- indicators of a good quality ECE program. (it needs to be in link with what is done in the training for all CDPO/ Supervisors/AWWs.)</li> <li>- Information for Commissionerate and other decision makers on ECE practice.</li> <li>- Have an understanding about specific locational/cultural features of each project, which are to be integrated into ECE practice.</li> <li>- Use available audio visual material for training.</li> <li>- Develop skills in speaking with children, as opposed to questioning them.</li> <li>- Set up a mechanism for monitoring ECE in her beat...have specific time for ECE during beat/monthly meetings.</li> </ul>	<p><b>At Training Centers NIPCCD MLTC /AWTC Level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TOT (training of trainers) needed for ECE and sensitization of different cultural backgrounds of trainees.</li> <li>- Integrate methods of enabling transitions of children from home to anganwadi to primary school. Need inputs in child centeredness and handling.</li> <li>- Provide inputs/skills and workable strategies for functionaries to help themselves and children transition from a pediatric to a pedagogic model. Include more pedagogic symbolic representations of reality, such as encouraging use of verbal language.</li> <li>- Have demonstration of good quality ECE set up for hands on work with children, do curriculum planning and execution.</li> <li>- Integrate specific locational/cultural features into curriculum of training.</li> <li>- Have linkages with trainees for feedback on utility of training inputs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ECE Program in AWCs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Program needs to be child centered, planned and organized.</li> <li>- To include developing skills in thinking and problem solving</li> <li>- Focus on language for expression and communication, to use of Korku and Hindi for explanations.</li> <li>- Help children transition to use Marathi, which is the medium of instruction in primary schools.</li> <li>- To include activities which are in consonance with Dharni's cultural surrounds.</li> <li>- Having adequate and appropriate materials for learning.</li> <li>- Inclusion of parents in some activities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>At Program Systemic level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Setting up specific accountability measures, not just attendance. Specify consistently and follow exact time for ECE,</li> <li>- Separate ECE from other responsibilities such as feeding, immunization etc.</li> <li>- Inform MLTC/AWTC about all changes made in the ICDS program overall and specifically for ECE</li> <li>- Have a separate ECE facilitator - use existing NGO support or train in-house.</li> <li>- Have a budget allocation for ECE program -for materials for ECE, and renovation of infrastructure.</li> <li>- Take a realistic view of money spent on travel.</li> <li>- Develop a travel itinerary for visits to all centers; ensure that some time is spent on ECE in all beat meetings.</li> <li>- MPRs need to reflect what was done during ECE</li> <li>- Look into the use of constructed toilets and cooking space in some AWCs.</li> <li>- Decentralization of curriculum and training and budgeting.</li> </ul>

**Infrastructure**

- Separating use of space for learning.
- Creating storage space for materials for ECE
- Examine space in terms of safety and security for children

**Parents and Community Level**

- Involve parents/ community in actual practice, by inviting them to the AWC for sharing information.
- Encourage parents to speak with their children
- Help them develop specific strategies in handling children
- Bring some of the festivals / community activities into the AWC, encourage symbolic play.

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## ANNEXURE 1

### Base line qualitative study of Dharni Block ICDS –ECCE Dr. Meera Oke (PhD) The Centre For Human Growth and Development

#### Information to be collated from Helpers, Anganwadi workers, Supervisors, CDPO, ACEO (individual)

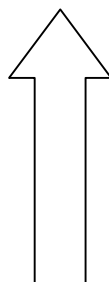
- A. Through a time line list out the subjects (functionaries) life events and reasons for changes in any of the events, personally and professionally.
- B. Through a Venn diagram to understand the duties allocated and executed by the helper, AWW, and Supervisors
- Role and responsibility overall
  - Role and responsibility for pre- school education
- Ask the worker and supervisor to tell you what “work” she is supposed to do and is responsible for make circles for each item she states.
  - Ask the subject specifically what are the activities she is supposed to do in connection with preschool education and make circles of the same overlapping where ever mentioned.

Supplement this diagram with specific focused verification questions, such as...

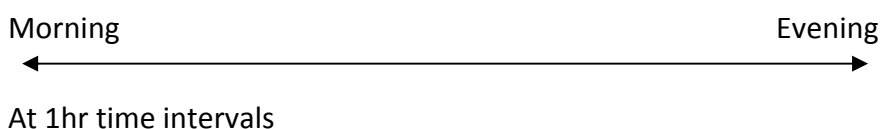
- Are .....the duties, responsibilities and activities that you need to perform?

- C. Through a hierarchy chart to understand the reporting structure...and highlight difficulties and gaps...general with a focus on Pre- school education.

Draw a hierarchy chart and list reporting format, starting from the bottom of the arrow with the subject and out of the arrow dotted lines for reposting to persons outside the ICDS format.



- D. Through a time line identify the daily routine of the subject (functionaries and children)



E. Focused questions related to attitudes, training, knowledge content

- a. You have had your training for working as an anganwadi worker/supervisor/CDPO/ACDPO, can you remember any two things that you experienced or were taught, that are related to pre school education.

If yes

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

- b. Are you able to put these into practice?

1. Yes
2. No

2. What else would you have liked to learn during your training related to preschool education?

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- c. Sentence completion

1. The most important part of preschool education is to get children to

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Drawing and coloring are helpful for children to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. The mirror in the anganwadi is meant for \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Children have learn't when they \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- d. Questions practice

1. Do you fill in registers everyday?

If yes

It takes me \_\_\_\_\_ hrs to fill out the registers everyday.

2. I have to fill the following registers

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ number of children from my anganwadi have are admitted gone to the primary school this year. Girls \_\_; Boys\_\_

4. I need \_\_\_\_\_ to be able to teach in the AW.

5. If rupees hundred were given to you for preschool education, you will spend it on....

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6. Children are well behaved when they....

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7. When in the anganwadi I expect children to.....

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8. Children come to the anganwadi because...

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9. The best part of my work is...

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10. The worst part of my work is...

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11. My supervisor expects me to...

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12. My CDPO expects me to...

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13. The parents expect me to...

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14. The elders in the community expect me to...

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e. Questions regarding concepts of child care

1. How will you describe a child (3-6yrs) who is well looked after?
2. How does such a child look in terms of expressions?
3. Which is the best place for a child to be looked after?
4. What can a preschooler learn?

f. Concept of a "good anganwadi"

1. A well running anganwadi is one which (give three or more characteristics)
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_

g. What will be a good "pre school program"?

1. What will an anganwadi worker/helper be doing in an anganwadi?

## Observations Schedule

### Section : 1

Components	Comments/description	
<b>A. Organization of Materials</b>		
1. Materials displayed clearly from child's perspective (what is the material on the walls)		
2. Materials labeled with words/pictures as is appropriate		
3. Amount of materials appropriate for age/issues		
4. Materials and activities are "in the moment" emergent from the present.		
5. Representational material such as clay, paints etc is available.		
6. Activities involving transformational materials, such as water, clay are open ended and child directed.		
7. Materials that allow children to experiment with cause and effect relationships (e.g. balls, blocks etc.)		
8. Any other material specify.		

Components	Comments/description	
<b>B. Responsiveness to Issues and Developmental Levels</b>		
1. Materials are both content and arrangement sensitive		
2. Arrangements meet developmentally appropriate needs		
3. Reflects cultural material..e.g. locally grown grain/animals which represent children's realities.		
4. Elements of children's home environment reflected (e.g. pictures of families)		
5. Other forms of representation such as opportunities for dance, movement is planned and emergent.		
6. Literacy /readiness/number activities are developmentally appropriate.		

Components	Comments/description	
<b>C. Environment</b>		
1. Available space for AW		
2. Arrangements for cooking the food		
3. Arrangement for sitting		
4. Availability of bathroom and water		
5. Cleanliness		
6. Material in the AW		
7. Space for AWW and Helper things		
8. Number of children with age backup.		

Components	Comments/description	
B. Relevant symbolic Play Materials and Equipment		
1. Props are relevant (to the environment that children come from)		
2. Some material such as dolls/ family figures are available.		
3. Reflects cultural material..e.g. locally grown grain/animals		
4. Elements of children's home environment reflected (pictures of families)		

F. Costs incurred in a month...items and heads.

Is the cost that you incur on travel bearable for you? What amount do you have to spend and on what?

### Questions (Areas of information to be collated) from AWW, Supervisors (focus group)

A. Expectations from job

What were your expectations from this job...when you joined? And what are they now?

B. Attitudes towards work in general and pre-school education in particular.

Do you look forward to working...what is it that you have gained from this job personally?  
Is preschool education important/necessary for children?

C. What changes would they like to see in their work in terms of expectations and supervision?

In which ways can your supervisor help you to do your work better?

### Questions (area of information to be collated) from the community

A. Communities perceptions (parents, teachers, laborers etc.) regarding the purpose of the AWCs

Whom is the Anganwadi meant for? Has it helped the people?

What do they do there?

How can you help?

B. Responses from community informants (local primary school, health centre) re the functioning of AWCs with respect to what happens at the centre...satisfaction with centre, and further expectations from the centre.

How many of the children who have attended anganwadi's end up going to primary schools?

Additional Field guidance notes observations of AW Centers and training centers (to be followed up with specific confirmatory questions)

1. Generic.
  - a. See schedule (size, number of children, age group, visible material in the room. Written curriculum, expected to be done)
2. Specific
  - a. Observation of a session to note
    - i. Discipline methods
    - ii. Manner in which curriculum is transacted. (seating of children, tone of voice of voice used.
    - iii. Handling of parents.

## ANNEXURE 2

### Some Tables.

Table No Recall of activities in training related to ECE\*

Activities.	Helper (n=11)	AWW (n=12)	Sup(n=8)	ACDPO (n=1)	CDPO(n=1)
Preparation of food	1				
Filling registers		1			
Flexibility and tolerance			1		
Making flowers/craft	1	4	2	1	1
Songs/stories		8	3	1	1
Games		4	4		
Drama		1			
Identification of animals			1		
None	9				

\*Multiple responses

Table Importance of ECE\*

Activities.	Helper (n=10)	AWW (n=12)	Sup(n=8)	ACDPO (n=1)	CDPO(n=1)
Singing songs, make children stand in a row and sing prayer		8	2		1
Stories		7	3	1	1
Teaching numbers and alphabets		4			
Telling names/address		3	3	1	1
Identification of fruits/animals etc.		3	4		
Keep physical cleanliness/washing hands		4	1		
Giving information about festivals		5	2		
Make children read charts, animals, birds		3	3		
Games indoor and outdoor		3	3		
Taking parent meetings			1		
Science concepts			1	1	
Activities to /make them intelligent/promote all areas of development		1	1		
Make children sit and catch them when they run away	1				
Can't say	9				

\*Multiple responses

## Training and experience of Functionaries

	Helper (n=10)	AWW (n=12)	Sup(n=8)	ACDPO (n=1)	CDPO(n=1)
Age/ range (yrs)	27- 56	21-59	37-59	51	39
Education	None-8 <sup>th</sup> std	7 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> std	10 <sup>th</sup> -Masters	MA with Law	BA
Working experience	4-15 yrs	8 mths -33 yrs	8-14 yrs as AWW 3-14 yrs	15 yrs SUP 10 yrs	12 yrs. 2 yrs
Training experience	5-15 days	1-4 mths	1-4 mths	3 mths	1 mth

## Concept of a good ECE program\*

	Helper (n=10)	AWW (n=12)	Sup(n=8)	ACDPO (n=1)	CDPO(n=1)
Encourage hidden qualities of children			4		
Develop a liking for school			3		
Children should be present/sit properly		1	2	1	1
Children should tell their names, village		1	5		1
Giving children "education" for one hr.			3		
Education given in playful manner			1	1	
Children can count from 1-20			2		1 (1-50)
Children will sing songs and tell stories		2	5	1	1
AWW and Helper should do their job (unspecified)		3	1		1
Sitting with children and teaching with slates		2	2	1	
Should have a board		1			
Should be able to read and write		1			
Meeting with kishoris and mothers		2			
Vaccination		1			
Celebrating birthdays		1			
Cannot say	10	4			

\*Multiple responses

**Behavioral Indicators of learning having occurred in children**

Helper (n=10)	AWW (n=12)	Sup(n=8)	ACDPO (n=1)	CDPO(n=1)
Speak write alphabets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exercise</li> <li>- Recognize pictures</li> <li>- Read/write</li> <li>- Sing songs/tell stories</li> <li>- Follow instructions</li> <li>- Numbers 1-50</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- if they can imitate AWW</li> <li>- if they able to tell songs,</li> <li>- self introduction, address, name, village</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Obedient</li> <li>- Can say numbers</li> <li>- Tell name, address</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Numbers</li> <li>- Alphabets (recite)</li> <li>- Speak when asked to.</li> </ul>

### Annexure 3

#### NGOs in Dharni and their focal areas of work

Sr. No	Name of NGO	Focal area of work
1.	Adivasi Utthan Karyakram (Adivasi Development Dept , Funded by Maharashtra Govt.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To decrease 'child absorption' and 'child-labor' and making people aware about child-rights.</li> <li>• To create a platform for children through Child-Group and child assembly.</li> <li>• To facilitate inherent capacities and education through COC (Child Opportunity Centre)</li> <li>• To help economically poor children through sponsorship program.</li> <li>• To make people aware about the children's problem, by establishing 'child protection committee'</li> </ul>
2.	'Apeksha Homeo Society'	To guide and create awareness in general - not specified.
3.	'korokora'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide health facilities for tribal people through Mahatma G andhi Tribal Clinic.</li> <li>• To provide free facilities for cataract operation and other treatment needed for eye..</li> <li>• Through Home-based Neonatal Care Project, to control the deaths of mother, child death, malnutrition in 22 villages, with the help of 'Health Envoy'.</li> <li>• To encourage, guide for the development of enclosure around the house (Paras bagh) and for saving electricity.</li> <li>• To run 'health facilities empowerment program' in the Government health centre</li> </ul>
4.	Mahan Trust'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To encourage child health, nutrition and intellectual development.</li> <li>• To run ECE centre from 1.30p.m. to 5.30p.m.and support class in 9 villages of Dharni (ECE age group- 3-6 years)</li> <li>• Making arrangement of diet food between 1.30 p.m. to 5.00 pm. At ECE centre.( These centers run houses built by people in the villages)</li> <li>• To arrange picnic and cultural programs for children</li> <li>• To acquire more and more participation of people, at village level and to make them aware about child education, health.</li> </ul>
5.	'Matruchaya Social Welfare Society'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary education, English medium school.</li> <li>• Awareness about 'forest land rights' Night school,</li> <li>• Establish and start self -help group.</li> <li>• Awareness about 'Employment assurance scheme' (Rojgar Hami Yojna)</li> <li>• To people aware about other government schemes</li> </ul>
6	Mont-fort Community welfare Centre*  Note: temporarily currently not functioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To control 'child death', 'deaths of mother', 'malnutrition'</li> <li>• To train AWWs, about procreation, child health, healthy food, vaccination, face pregnancy, and Government health schemes.</li> <li>• To make awareness about RCH through role-play.</li> <li>• To empower women with the help of 'self-help groups'</li> <li>• To male people aware about 'Employment assurance scheme' (rojgar hami yojana')</li> </ul>

7.	Sarita	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To run development program in general.</li><li>• To control child death, mother death, malnutrition.</li><li>• Providing diet-food for grade III and IV children.</li><li>• To provide health education to adolescent girls.</li><li>• Awareness and guidance about 'forest-land' rights.</li><li>• Arranging workshops at village level for good- health</li></ul>
8.	Upekshit Sevabhavi Society.	Not known