

REVIEW OF PRE-SCHOOL
EDUCATION WITHIN THE CONTEXT
OF THE ICDS PROGRAM IN MEDAK
DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH

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Contents

Executive Summary	4
Major findings	4
Conclusion	6
Introduction.....	7
Overall objectives of the study (as per proposal).....	7
Research Design and Sampling.....	8
Findings.....	9
I. Demand for Pre-school education.....	9
II. Demand for AWCs versus Private Pre-Schools:.....	9
III. Attendance of Children Enrolled in AWCs.....	12
IV. AWC Infrastructure: Basic facilities	13
V. AWC Infrastructure: Worker Qualification, Training and Support.....	15
VI. Functioning of AWCs: Presence of AWC staff	15
VII. Functioning of AWCs: Provision of Pre-School Education.....	17
VIII. Functioning of AWC: Usage of PSE Materials by AWWs.	19
IX. Challenges faced by AWWs.....	20
X. Main and mini-AWCs:.....	21
CONCLUSION:	22

WAY FORWARD:	23
Annexures.....	25
Annexure 1: Pre-School Enrollment rates for households by socio-economics status.....	25
Annexure 2: Preschool Enrollment Percentage Grouped by Mandals.....	26
Annexure 3: Pre-School Enrollment: Private Versus AWC Grouped by Household Characteristics.	27
Annexure 4: Anganwadi Center Facilities.....	28
Annexure 5: AW Worker Educational Qualification:.....	29
Annexure 6: Last training for AW Worker	29
Annexure 7: Last Sector Meeting	30
Annexure 8: Frequency of Supervisor Visits.....	30
Annexure 9: Usage of Module by AW Worker	30
Annexure 10: Correlation between reported activity and teacher qualification.....	31
Annexure 11: Correlation among AW activities	32
Annexure 12: Self - Reported job satisfaction.....	33
Annexure 13: Remoteness of main and mini AWCs.....	33
Annexure 14: Attendance of AWW and AWH.....	34

Abbreviations

AW - Anganwadi

AWC – Anganwadi Center

AWW – Anganwadi Worker

AWH – Anganwadi Helper

ECE – Early Childhood Education

ECCE – Early Childhood Care and Education

HH – Household

IAHH - Indiramma Amrutha Hastham

ICDS – Integrated Child Development Scheme

PSE – Pre-school Education

SNP – Supplementary Nutritional Programme

Executive Summary

This study was undertaken to understand the role of Anganwadi Centers (AWCs) in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) space. The Azim Premji Foundation is interested in exploring useful programs and interventions in the area of early childhood education, as a natural extension of its current work on school education. The AWCs, established under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program of the Ministry of Women and Child Welfare, serve as the primary government channel of intervention in early childhood education. By studying the workings of the AWCs, this study attempts to understand some of the challenges in the field of early childhood education. This is in keeping with the Foundation's approach of research-based understanding of the field before undertaking programs and interventions. This study is based on information gathered from 270 AWCs in 14 Mandals, in the Medak district of Andhra Pradesh.

Major findings

The study collected both qualitative and quantitative information about the workings of the AWCs. Quantitative information was collected from the entire group of 270 AWCs included in this study. In addition, 78 AWCs were chosen from the larger group for detailed observation of ECE activities, and qualitative observation of AWC functioning. The overall information gathered can be grouped into three broad categories: 1. Characteristics of the AWCs and the AWC workers; 2. Characteristics of AWC beneficiaries; 3. Assessment of the efficacy of the AWCs

Characteristics of AWCs and AWC Workers (AWWs):

1. A majority of the AWCs centers lack adequate physical infrastructure. Only 22% of the AWCs studied run in their own premises. Most centers also do not have basic facilities such as toilets, own source of water etc. The qualitative observation of the smaller group of AWCs indicates that space in most centers is taken up in storing food and other materials. There is generally no separate demarcated area for pre-school activities.
2. About 12% AW Workers (AWW) do not meet the minimum educational qualification of matriculation pass.
3. The training programme for the AWWs comprises of 26 working days of **Induction** training and a **Refresher** course for a week. Out of the 26 days, 4 days are allocated for training on the ECCE

component. The training program overall is highly inadequate and the refresher course is seldom conducted.

Characteristics of AWC users

1. AWC enrolment varies significantly with location. Enrollment is lowest in urban and more remote areas. [Annexure 2](#) shows the variation in enrolment in different Mandals. There are however further variations within a Mandal as some villages are remote while the ones near to the Mandal headquarters and town, are relatively more urbanized. Enrollment is higher in villages that are more vulnerable in socioeconomic terms.
2. Among children who are in pre-school, enrollment rate in AWC is greater for households with illiterate parents.
3. Households with higher socioeconomic conditions are less likely to send their children to AWCs. Children of literate parents have higher enrollment rates in private schools rather than AWCs.
4. Children of unskilled labourers have low enrollment rates in any kind of pre-school (AWC or private).

Assessment of the efficacy of the AWCs

1. Irregular attendance is a major issue for the Anganwadi system in Medak. Only 43% of the enrolled students (3-6 age group) attend AWCs regularly. Moreover 30% of children in the 3-6 years age group are currently not enrolled in any pre-school (government, private or AWC)
2. Worker absence is also a concern. On an average about 22 % of workers were absent during the informed visits for this study. There are also large variations in absence across Mandals. **(Annexure 14)**
3. Many workers also do not follow the scheduled times or the timetable of ECE activities. The qualitative observation of select AWCs indicates that the absence of AWWs affects activities related to pre-school education more than other services.
4. While Anganwadi workers (AWWs) self-report that they conduct of a high level of pre-school education activities, this was not supported by the qualitative observations done as part of this study.
5. 41% of parents say that they are expecting good teaching from AWCs. Though only 5% of parents visit AWCs to seek information regarding the education of the child.

Conclusion

The results indicate some relationship between demand for pre-school education and the socio-economic conditions of the village and the parents. The exact nature of this relationship needs to be investigated further. There is a greater demand for AWCs from sections of society that are more vulnerable in socioeconomic terms. This may have an impact on the provision, sustenance and growth of the AWC and these implications should be kept in mind while planning any interventions.

The high worker absence is similar to the rates of school teacher absence across the country. This indicates that there may be some structural issues, which need to be tackled differently. AWWs receive very little training on ECE. A poor starting point (a total of 4 days of initial training given at the time of appointment) and poor subsequent support system, provides very limited scope for the sustenance of ECE activities. Any new training initiatives will also have to address the needs and constraints of the supervisors and CDPOs in adequately providing support to the AWWs.

In response to the above analysis and interpretations any intervention in AW sector in Medak district needs to consider the different parameters that have a bearing on the enrollment and performance of Anganwadis. These include the socioeconomic conditions of the village (like the percentage of ST population verses others, adult literacy, population of male labourers), geography (Mandal), educational qualification of the AWW, and whether AWW belongs to the same village or not.

Introduction

Azim Premji Foundation (referred to as Foundation hereafter) has been working in the area of education for over a decade. While the Foundation's current programs focus mostly on elementary and high school education, pre-school education seems to be a natural extension of its work on school education. This study is intended to provide a research-based understanding of some of the challenges in the current pre-school education landscape. The prominent government intervention in the area of early childhood care and education is the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program, of the Ministry of Women and Child Welfare. The program was initiated in 1975 and currently conducts about 7000 ICDS projects. The Anganwadi Centers are the primary implementation arm of the ICDS programs. There are 13 lakh Anganwadi Centers (AWCs) across the country. Studying the Anganwadi Centers, therefore, can provide many insights into early childhood education.

This study focuses on AWCs in Medak district of Andhra Pradesh. Medak is Foundation's District Institute and is the proposed site for our work in Early Childhood Education (ECE). There are eighty six thousand AWCs with 387 projects in Andhra Pradesh. Medak district has 11 projects with 3041 AWCs. This study is based on information gathered from 270 AWCs in 14 Mandals, in the Medak district of Andhra Pradesh.

The mandate of the ICDS program goes well beyond pre-school education, including pre-natal and ante-natal care for expecting and lactating mothers; health, immunization and nutrition for children in the age group of 0-6 years, and health education for adolescent girls and adult women. This study focuses specifically on the pre-school education component of the ICDS program.

Overall objectives of the study

- To assess the extent to which Anganwadi centers provide the entitlements on food nutrition and pre-school education (PSE). However the focus of this report is on the PSE component.
- To identify gap areas in implementing the pre-school education component of the ICDS program
- To study the relationship between classroom processes, resource utilization and the ability to use concepts of shape, colour, number and language.
- To identify the challenges faced by Anganwadi workers and helpers in implementing the pre-school component of the program

The research was carried out in two phases. The first phase focused on collecting basic information about the Anganwadi Centers (AWCs), the workers (AWWs) and helpers (AWHs) and the socio-economic characteristics of the population they serve. It also tries to assess the demand for Anganwadis from the community. The data collected in phase 1 is primarily quantitative in nature. The second phase delved deeper into the Anganwadi Workers' and parents' understanding of Early Childhood Education (ECE) and the manner in which aspects of early childhood education are implemented in the AWCs. This data is largely qualitative in nature, collected through observations and interviews.

Research Design and Sampling

The research was carried out in Medak district of Andhra Pradesh. **Medak** is located about 60 kms north of Hyderabad city. It is a small district, sharing boundaries with the adjacent districts of Warangal, Nalgonda, Hyderabad and Nizamabad. A national highway and a railway line connect Medak district to Hyderabad city.

In 2011, Medak had population of 3,033,288. Average literacy rate for Medak in 2011 was 61.42 percent, compared to 51.65 percent in 2001. Female literacy rate was 51.37 percent, while the male literacy rate was higher at 71.43 percent. The sex ratio in Medak in 2011 was 992 per 1000 male. This represents an improvement over the 2001 figure of 974. In the census enumeration, data regarding children in the 0-6 age-group was also collected for all districts including Medak. There were a total of 367,603 children aged 0-6 in 2011, against 402,643 in the 2001 census. The Child Sex Ratio as per census 2011 was 952 compared to 964 for 2001. In 2011, children under 0-6 formed 12.12 percent of the total population of Medak District, compared to 15.08 percent in 2001, representing net change of -2.96 percent.

The present study was carried out in 270 Anganwadis selected through a multistage stratified random sampling of 110 villages across 14 Mandals in Medak District. The entire district is divided into 11 ICDS projects zones. All the projects were covered in this sample. The sample, 14 out of the 46 Mandals, includes at least one Mandal for each of the 11 ICDS projects. In certain projects, additional Mandals were also chosen to get a better representation of SC/ST population, rural/urban populations, type of food supplement and geographical spread.

Secondary data available from the ICDS and the Census of India was used for stratification. At the next level, villages were chosen, proportionate to their population size. All AWCs from each of these villages

were included in the study. There are a total of 270 AWCs in the sample. The catchment area of each AWC was determined and all households within that catchment area were surveyed. This includes approximately 45,000 households (HHs) and is equivalent to the entire villages. Based on certain categories (no. of children in different age groups, no. of children attending AWCs and private schools etc.), 12% of the HHs were then chosen for a more detailed community survey.

In phase II, 30% of the AWCs (of first phase), i.e. 78 AWCs were chosen for more detailed observations. The AWCs were selected with an objective to have a wide representation on important quality characteristics of the center and demographics of the population it served. Additionally a few HHs per AWC were also selected for detailed interviews, totaling about 430 interviews. These were based on the population demographics. All the data, quantitative and qualitative, was collected by our internal team of trained researchers.

Findings

The key summary information from the quantitative data is presented below. Specific examples and insights from the qualitative observations are also included to provide a more nuanced understanding of the quantitative information.

I. Demand for Pre-school education

Around 70 percent of all children in the age group 3-6 years are enrolled in pre-school. 42 percent are enrolled in the AWCs and the remaining 28 percent are in private pre-schools. **About 30% of all children aged 3-6 years are currently not enrolled in any pre-school** (government, private or AWC). Pre-school attendance rates are higher for households with higher socio-economic status. [Annexure 3](#) presents the enrollment rates for households categorized by different indicators of socio-economics status. For example on an average only 60-65 percent of children from households where the father is a laborer are enrolled in pre-school compared other households. In addition, households with water facility in the house have higher rates of enrolment than households without water facilities.

II. Demand for AWCs versus Private Pre-Schools:

The choice of an AWC versus a private pre-school differs by the socio-economics status of the village and the household. The AWC is chosen, rather than a private school, more often in villages

that are more vulnerable in socioeconomic terms ([Annexure 1](#)). For example amongst children who attend some pre-school, the proportion enrolled in an AWC is higher in villages with predominantly tribal populations. On the other hand, villages with better general facilities have a lower average rate of enrollment in AWC among children who are in pre-school. ([Annexure 2](#)) The enrollment in AWC is lower in urban areas compared to rural areas.

Similarly the choice of private school is higher in households where the parents are literate. Among children enrolled in some form of pre-school, households where the mother is illiterate have a 64.68 percent enrollment in AWC. On the other hand in households where the father is illiterate, there 67 percent of the children are enrolled in an AWC. The enrollment rate for AWC versus private pre-school also differs by the SC/ST status of the household. ([Annexure 3](#))

The specific reasons for sending (or not sending) a child to a private school vis-a-vis an AWC can involve many different trade-offs for each individual household. It is difficult to draw any definite conclusions regarding these reasons based on the above quantitative data alone. The qualitative data collected from interviews with select households provides some more insights. The following list represents some of the recurring themes, explaining the preference of private pre-schools, from the household interviews.

Why parents prefer private pre-school?

- Medium of instruction is English
- Qualified teachers
- Infrastructure and facilities
- Long school hours (9am- 4pm)
- Take responsibility for learning outcomes
- Because they pay fees, parents can hold the school accountable
- Discipline
- Cleanliness premises

In general parents feel that the AWC are mainly feeding centers and do not have an environment conducive to learning. The general untidiness, lack of infrastructure and demarcated space for ECE activities contributes to this perception. Parents tend to treat the AWC as a transition point for a short while before the child is admitted in private pre-school. Previously parents used to send their children to AWC between 3-6 years. Now the trend has changed. Children are admitted at 2.5 years only to get them habituated to formal schooling and later on are withdrawn and sent to private pre-school depending on the feasibility and school accessibility. Parents do not believe in play-way method as a learning tool. They are keen that the child should learn to read and write the English alphabet. In some centers parents put pressure on the AWC to teach the English alphabet. Many parents might also prefer the AWC if the hours were to extend from 9am to 4pm, so that they can leave the child in the morning before they go to field/work and bring them back after their arrival at home.

Special cases:

- *AWW of one of the village expressed that all most all her AWC pre-school children attend the AWC until they are 4 years and later on based on finances move to the nearby private school. This is a matter of pride for every parent and most of her AWC children get admission here without fail.*
- *AWW of one of the village opined that the AWC's carelessness is prompting parents to send children to private pre-schools.*
- *AWW of an urban area opined that PSE component should have English as well as Telugu as the medium of instruction and this is the current demand from the community which is compelling them to opt for private pre-schools.*

III. Attendance of Children Enrolled in AWCs

Attendance at AWCs is highly irregular. Only 43% of the enrolled students (0-6 age group) attend AWCs regularly. Even in the 3-6 year age group, 38% students do not attend regularly. These attendance figures are based on self-reported enrollment and attendance data by AWWs. Only 14% of the children (3-6) were actually observed to be present at the time of the visits for this study. It suggests that a number of children are enrolled primarily for the non-educational benefits, such as health and nutritional supplementation and therefore do not attend regularly. More nuanced details about attendance was obtained from the qualitative observations of the selected AWCs. Some of the specific observations are listed below:

- In a majority of AWCs, the attendance and regularity of children from BC category is better than those from other categories.
- The attendance of girl children is higher than that of boys irrespective of caste.
- In most of the AWCs, the average age of children attending is 2.5 to 4 years.
- In urban AWCs, the attendance of children in the age group of 2.5 to 3.5 years is more due to private school effect (after 3.5 years children are shifted to private schools).
- In rural and remote AWCs the age group of children who are attending is between 3.5 to 5.5 years.
- Attendance is more in AWCs attached to government schools.
- In majority of the AWCs there is no impact of facilities on child attendance but wherever the AWW is active and some component of PSE is taking place, attendance is more.
- In majority of the Thandas, (a small habitation which predominantly comprises of tribal population) attendance is minimal and irregular.
- The average time at which children arrive is between 8.30am and 11.00 am.
- Wherever AWCs are attached to government schools some of the children come between 8.30am and 9.15 am accompanied by their siblings.
- Wherever one meal program has been implemented the average time at which children arrive is between 10.00 am and 11.00 am
- Anganwadi children whose parents are daily wage earners are the first ones to come to the AWCs. Parents drop them at the center before going to work.

- In AWCs located in primary school premises, children who are enrolled and attend avail Supplementary Nutritional Programme (SNP) and sit in class 1 of primary school. The reason could be their siblings are attending the primary school.
- In a few cases the head teacher of the primary school motivates parents and compels AWWs to send some of the children who are yet to complete 5 years to primary school. The reason could be due to low admissions/attendance in class 1.

Special cases:

- *AWW of OC category does not have any children attending the center. This AWC caters to Muslim minority population.*
- *In one of the AW out of 3 in a village, in spite of own building and neat appearance, no children attend the AWC. AWC is opened only for delivery of dry ration. The AWW resides in a hamlet outside the village. The AWH's post is vacant. But records show that 17 children are attending the AWC.*
- *The AWC pre-school attendance is 28-32 in one of the well-connected village despite its space constraints and unsafe surroundings.*

IV. AWC Infrastructure: Basic facilities

Basic facilities are lacking in a majority of the AWCs. The following points summarize the data on AWC facilities

- 80% of main AWCs and 90% of mini AWCs have less than 50% of the required facilities. ([Annexure 4](#))
- Only 21% AWCs are run in own premises. 36% AWCs are in rented buildings and 37% in other government buildings.
- In 24% AWCs there is no space available for children to play. Another 10% AWCs have only indoor space.

Closer observation of the 78 selected AWCs in the second stage of the study provided more details about the lack of facilities in the AWCs.

- Not all AWCs have sufficient water source, power facilities, or toilet facilities. Only one third of AWCs have a water source.

- Not all AWCs are congenial or safe for very young children. In majority of the AWCs, food materials are dumped all around and cooking happens in the same room allowing limited space for PSE activities.
- In 50% of AWCs there are cooking and serving utensils and also chairs for children (chairs sponsored by UNICEF). In most of the AWCs, a medical kit is available. In a few AWCs medical kit replacement is not done on time.
- A majority of AWCs suffer from one or more of the following problems:
 1. No separate room for storing food supplements and cooking materials
 2. Theft of food supplements from the center
 3. Rodents/snakes/ants/ house flies/cockroaches/cobwebs

In general AWCs attached to a government primary school have better facilities compared to other AWCs in all the project areas. This suggests that when attached to a school, the AWCs are able to share resources making them more conducive and responsive to community needs. The AWCs in rented premises have the least infrastructural facilities including minimal availability of water and cooking wood and utensils. All the AWCs have a medical kit and food supply. This suggests that the AWCs are functioning more as distribution centers for health and nutrition rather than as a place for regular pre-school activities (PSE). Observation in most of the AWCs was that due to lack of storage facility food materials were dumped all around, paving the way for rodents and cockroaches. In order for an AWC to be a child friendly PSE center, a set of minimal facilities are required which involve costs. Irrespective of the project area, the community pressure on AWC is more for food and health but not for any physical facilities or PSE which could also explain the government's indifference towards spending on physical facilities and PSE.

Special cases:

- *The Anganwadi center in Dharmasagar village located in a government primary school has been constructed with a NABARD fund of Rs 4.5 lakhs. This was initiated by the village Sarpanch.*
- *The Ameenpur Anganwadi center in Patancheru Mandal is attached to the government school adopted by Coca-Cola which sponsors the maintenance of sanitation and water facilities.*

V. AWC Infrastructure: Worker Qualification, Training and Support

AWW workers receive inadequate training and on-site support. Supervisor visits usually focus only on record verification. The following is the summary of the data on worker qualification and training.

- 12% of AWWs (main AWCs) do not have the minimum qualification of having completed class 10. This is in addition to mini-AWCs where there are no AWWs, only helpers. Another 56% have completed class 10 only. 32 % are with higher education qualification ([Annexure 5](#))
- 5% of AWWs have never been trained. Another 40% last attended a training more than 2 years ago. 40% have been trained in the last 6 months. ([Annexure 6](#))
- A sector meeting was held within the last month for almost all AWCs. ([Annexure 7](#)).
- There is a large variation in frequency of supervisor visits. 20% of the AWCs were last visited more than 3 months ago ([Annexure 8](#)). When supervisor visits do happen, there is overwhelmingly focus on record verification (97% of AWCs), with less than 30% AWCs reporting that they got feedback on their work, tips for improvement or solutions to their day to day issues.
- 40% of the AWCs had never been visited by the CDPO. Another 47% had been visited 3 months ago or longer.

AWW workers receive only 4 days of initial training exclusively on ECE at the time of appointment as part of job course training. Given this low starting point and poor support system, it may not be adequate to rely only on the present training and support system for emphasizing PSE. Moreover, any additional training will also have to address the needs and constraints of the supervisors and CDPOs in adequately providing on-site support to the AWWs.

VI. Functioning of AWCs: Presence of AWC staff

There is significantly high worker absence in the AWCs. Based on the quantitative study of 270 AWCs, on an average the absence rate is about 22% though there are large variation across Mandals ([Annexure 14](#)). There are some variations in absence and sustained presence of AWWs during the center hours across rural and urban AWC. The high level of absence in general seems to imply that there are some structural issues, which may or may not be solved by training in pre-school education. More investigation needs to be done on the correlates of their absence.

Based on observations of the smaller group of 78 AWCS, the absence of AWWs is more than that of AWHs. Except in a few Mandals like Dubbaka, Toopran and Wargal, where the AWH's absence is more. This is perhaps because of being older by age in some cases. The absence of AWWs/AWHs seems to affect activities related to pre-school education (PSE) more than other services. It is clear that Anganwadis mostly concentrate on health and nutrition. In the absence of the AWW, the AWH seems to manage the Center with ease even working on some PSE components in some instances. However the same is not the case with AWW. If AWH is absent, the attendance of children as well as delivery of the Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) is affected and no PSE takes place - the AWW spends time cooking for the children hence the PSE cannot be carried out. The AWW engages in direct and regular monitoring and supervision of AWHs but this is not the case with the AWW – there is no regular monitoring/supervision of their work. Irrespective of caste and location, the AWW and AWH's unofficial absenteeism can be attributed mainly due to lack of regular monitoring, lack of self-motivation and the indifference of the community towards the functioning of the Anganwadi Center (AWC). Therefore frequent absenteeism of AWWs also seems to be more of a managerial issue rather than an individual problem. In addition willful absence during strikes/dharnas, due to high levels of dissatisfaction among them, also seems to be common.

Special cases:

- *Medak Mandal- AWW is not available (at the time of visit), occasionally visits, helper manages the work. It is understood that the AWW belongs to the OC community and is posted in the BC community AWC, in addition she is highly influential that she manages her post just by occasional visits.*
- *Sangareddy Mandal - helper post is vacant, children do not come to Anganwadi and AWW comes from 2kms away. She opens the AWC only for the delivery of take home ration (THR). The members of the community are afraid to raise any complaints against the AWW. In spite of these facts the attendance register shows enrolment and attendance of 19 children.*
- *One of the AWW was on maternity leave. Other center AWW visits occasionally for distributing dry ration to the beneficiaries.*

- *The AWH is a senior person; she is so attached to the AWC that she even comes on Sundays , opens the AWC and sits for a while with or without children and is rarely unavailable in the AWC.*

Other Staffing Concerns

The majority of AWWs come late. Only a few turn up on time or within a reasonable time frame. In some other cases, they appear only once in a while during the working hours of the AWC. This late and irregular arrival impacts PSE activities. Not much time is allocated to PSE because of the various other activities that need to be conducted. In the absence of the helper, the AWW finds it difficult to manage the center, whereas when the AWW is absent the helper is able to engage the children. The centers that are closer to primary schools function better than those that are located away from schools. This also has an impact on the presence of AWW and AWH in the centers. Newer recruits report to work earlier than older recruits. In centers where IAH (Indiramma Amrutha Hastham) is implemented the AWW and AWH absenteeism is less compared to centers where the program has not been implemented. This is probably due to the importance given to nutrition and health in these centers and the required maintenance of records of growth and physical check-ups which makes the staff directly accountable.

VII. Functioning of AWCs: Provision of Pre-School Education

While AWC workers self-report a high level of pre-school activities, the qualitative observations do not support this claim. Below is the summary of the self-reported data.

- High level of activity reported, mainly around conversations, rhymes and songs, games and good habits. Nearly 90% AW Workers conduct these activities daily. AW Workers report no difficulty in undertaking these activities.
- Creative activities including arts and crafts happen less regularly, about once a week in 70% of the AWCs.
- About 50% of the workers report that it is not feasible to conduct activities around scientific knowledge and cultural awareness
- 50% of the workers report that they follow the modules and instructional manuals, every day with another 38% doing it once a week. ([Annexure 9](#)).

This above information from the self-reported data is important since it suggests that AWWs are aware of the expectations of pre-school education, and may be open to learning more about how to transact this part effectively. There are also some patterns in the self-reported data that might be useful to understand. For instance:

- There is no correlation between the worker educational qualification and the frequency of these activities. ([Annexure 10](#))
- Frequency of conducting activities like good habits, conversations, games and stories, correlate with each other. If an AWW is conducting good habits activity regularly, she is also likely to engage children in activities like conversations, games and stories regularly. However, there seems to be less or no correlation between the above activities and activities like creativity, scientific knowledge and cultural awareness. ([Annexure 11](#))

The qualitative observations of the selected AWCs in the second phase of the study present an entirely different picture from the above self-reported data.

In fact the qualitative study found that AWCs are for the most part custodial in nature and tend to miss out on the early stimulation and psycho-social interaction that is important for children under-6. AWWs are engaged in multiple initiatives, their energy is divided and attention diverted, leaving limited space and time for PSE activities. More specifically the following observations were made:

- Most AWCs do not have a separate demarcated area for pre-school activities or specific timings for conducting them.
- Insufficient play material and if available not all material is accessible to the children.
- The AWWs feel that SNP and health services are more important services compared to PSE component.
- As per the AWW, the PSE component is important only for school readiness.
- The AWW feels that the suitable age group for PSE is 3 - 4 .5 years
- In majority of AWCs, the PSE component is not visible during observation visits.

- Wherever the one meal program has been implemented, PSE is neglected due to lack of time. Wherever PSE activity is observed, it is limited only to tracing of alphabets, oral drilling and some action rhymes.
- Average time spent on PSE activities is between 30 minutes to 1 hour.
- The AWW is not trained to handle the PSE component effectively.
- Time spent on PSE is negligible compared to other activities.
- In AWCs where there is adequate space, it was observed that a little more time was spent on PSE activities when compared to other centers.
- Irrespective of caste, very few AWWs carry out all the PSE components in a comprehensive manner.
- In most of the AWCs there is no time table for PSE, it is done at random. Children are seated in front of the AWW in lines whenever PSE activity is being conducted. The rest of the time children are seated randomly without any order/sequence.
- In majority of the AWCs if at all PSE is visible, it is limited to good habits, conversation, and songs.
- In some of the AWCs, older children conduct PSE activities like oral drilling, action rhymes, and so on in the presence of the AWW who may be busy with record writing, interacting with community members or other work.
- Wherever the AWW involvement is seen in PSE activity, the AWW's time spent on PSE is also more.

Special cases:

- *An AWW in Sangareddy Mandal conducts PSE activities for two-three hours. She has created a stimulating environment in the center which attracts children and makes them attentive. Her center has received the Best Anganwadi award. On any given day, the pre-school attendance of the center is above 25.*

VIII. Functioning of AWC: Usage of PSE Materials by AWWs

The qualitative study also makes it clear that the PSE materials are not adequately used or understood by the AWWs. Observations inform that in almost all the AWCs activities are hardly done as per norms indicated in the PSE materials or curriculum. Most of the PSE activities are

done randomly or spontaneously and the activities revolved around reading/oral drilling, slate writing, and numbers - pressure from the community/parents being the driving force. Absence of any play activities was quite evident. The lack of knowledge on modules may be attributed to insufficient training.

More specifically:

- Majority of the AWWs lack clarity about different domains of development and appropriate usage of the prescribed material in the kit.
- AWWs who have inter-plus qualification and experience of more than 5 years are able to share their understanding about the relevance and significance of the PSE kit.
- Knowledge about the PSE component is inadequate among majority of the AWW and situation prevails irrespective of the varied social backgrounds of the AWW.
- In spite of some AWWs being young, having the necessary educational qualification, and adequate space, they are unable to transact the curriculum in the AWC as the other services of ICDS being more demanding on their time.
- Disproportionate PSE component trainings for the AWWs limit their understanding of this component. Gap in monitoring and follow-up of the attendance for training augments this inadequacy.

Special cases:

- *AWW of a village in Hathnoora Mandal, catering to a multi lingual group in the AWC has difficulty understanding and communicating in Telugu. She was not able to attend the training and unable to read the PSE modules which are all in Telugu, hence the PSE component is at stake!*
- *In Patancheru, the AWW said “The present PSE kit does not promote the play- way method. It is very formal, structured and rigid, contrary to the nature of non-formal education at AWCs.”*

IX. Job satisfaction by AWWs

AWWs report a very high level of satisfaction on all counts, except salary amount and avenues for professional advancement ([Annexure 12](#)). The main challenges indicated by them are availability of materials and student attendance. This is not surprising, given the nature of the study, which did not allow for deeper investigation.

Closer interactions with the AWW workers during the qualitative data collection phase also revealed that across all Mandals, all AWWs had a one-dimensional subjective affective job satisfaction or in other words an overall emotional satisfactory feeling. This might be due to the social status and recognition they have at the village level, the job location (it is mandatory for the AWW to belong to the same village) as well as the excellent support from the AWH. A family bonding like mother – daughter/ sisters between the AWW and the AWH was apparent.

Apparently there is a variation in the satisfaction levels of the AWW based on the academic qualifications vis-a- vis the lesser qualified are more satisfied, and the more qualified are less satisfied with the job with regard to the remuneration and the work expected to be done. On the other hand in the centers where Indiramma Amrutha Hastham(IAH) program has been implemented, the AWWs feel over burdened with cooking and serving food twice to the expecting and lactating mothers leaving them with very less time for PSE activities.

The revised remuneration for the newly recruited AWW is 3700/- per month, while the more senior AWW started with much less and have been getting 31/- increment once every 5 years, which now makes it 3762/- for an AWW with 20 years of experience. The survey also identified irregular payment of honorarium to workers and helpers. It was gathered that there is no clarity on the retirement age of the AWW and AWH thus creating a sense of insecurity in them.

While professional progress might help to bring about affective job satisfaction, the two constructs are distinct, not necessarily directly related, and have different logics and consequences. Similarly there are other factors like facilities, timings of work and support from beneficiaries that pose considerable dissatisfaction in the AWW.

X. Main and mini-AWCs:

Mini-AWCs are more remote, have only helpers and are less prepared to conduct pre-school activities

There are two types of AWCs – Main AWCs and mini AWCs. A single main AWC caters to villages with population ranging from 400 to 800. These AWCs are supposed to be staffed by two people - an Anganwadi Worker (AWW) and an Anganwadi Helper (AWH). The mini AWCs provide ICDS services to

villages with population ranging from 150 to 400 and inaccessible to main centers. These mini AWCs are run by the AWH and no AWW post is assigned here. ([Annexure 13](#))

CONCLUSION:

The broader picture indicates that the ICDS programme is truly an integrated and wide - ranging programme, with interventions that encompass the development of a child from the pre natal stage to age 6 when he/she is moves to the primary school. Apparently the components of health, hygiene and nutrition are duly addressed and monitored in the program. Whereas, though not deliberately, the education aspect of the programme is being neglected in the overall ICDS program implementation. It is clear that the education component needs to be assigned due emphasis while continuing the good practices in the other components.

This study has identified many factors hindering the efficient implementation of the PSE component. First and foremost, the enrollment in the AWC is greatly dependent on the literacy levels of the parents, indicating that higher literacy levels equips parents with awareness that preschool or early learning opportunities enable children to move to school education better; therefore sending children to Anganwadi centers or pre-school where 'education' component is dealt with in a systematic manner.. Further, such families are higher up in the socio-economic ladder and can afford to pay fees in a private preschool. These pre-schools in turn seem more accountable to the parents and community.

The above factors furthered with lack of cleanliness, basic amenities like water and sanitation, proper infrastructure, resources and attention from the AWW towards the children does not allow parents to engage with ECE aspect of the AWC. Thus the community predominantly uses the AWC as a center providing supplementary nutrition and the actual meal itself in some cases!

The AWW is expected to perform multiple roles that require multiple skill sets. For instance the AWW's roles range from taking care of health and nutrition aspects to those of involving children in meaningful learning activities. In order for the AWWs to incorporate the PSE component and perform well in the role of an educator, it demands adequate training, supervision and guidance. . Unfortunately, the current training programme spends relatively lesser time for the ECE portion as against other aspects of the ICDS program, posing a major challenge to the AWW in taking forward the pre-school programme successfully. The presence and role of an Anganwadi helper also seem to be equally important in the overall execution of the pre-school component.

Though the AWWs enjoy the recognition and respect in the community, they do have some grievance with regard to the pay, the work allotted and the additional tasks assigned. Along with this, more or less stagnant professional growth is cumulative to the demotivation amongst AWW.

POSSIBLE AREAS OF ENGAGEMENT:

Any intervention in AWCs in Medak needs to consider the different parameters that have a bearing on their enrollment and performance. These include the socio-economic conditions of the village (like the percentage of ST population verses others, adult literacy, population of male labourers), geography (Mandal), and educational qualification of the AWW.

To begin with, the following actions/modifications would help increase the functioning and efficiency of pre-school component of the AWC:

1. The training programme can include additional days of induction training and refresher courses for the AWW to enable them understand the developmental stages, and the various domains of development for children of 3-6 years; and thus helping workers recognize the significance of the various prescribed activities such as creativity, conversations, etc. in the curriculum.
2. Skill enhancement of AWW needs to be planned for disseminating the different activities, using appropriate material corresponding to the domain of development and time management.
3. Strategies may need to be different for mini AWCs as these are located in remote areas, do not have AWWs. The helpers managing the mini AWs should also be given relevant training to ensure consistency in inputs for all similar aged children across all AWCs.
4. The importance of Anganwadi worker level factors, such as teacher training, may differ based on the socio-economic and geographic conditions of the communities. Therefore different interventions may be required for different situations.

Some of the issues, impacting variables, possible strategies for intervention and criteria for selecting sample locations for each of these interventions are listed in the following table:

Issues	Variables	Possible Strategies for Foundation	Sample Criteria
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Enrollment at the Village Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population of ST • Geography (Mandal) • Worker Education • Workers' Residence 	Creating awareness among the parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ST Population verses other • Covering different Mandals
Attendance of Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy/awareness of the Parents • Labourer Status of Fathers 	Creating Awareness among the parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult literacy rate (Low and Medium) • The proportion of male labour population (Low and Medium)
Performance in Pre-School Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worker Education • Place of Residence of Worker • Worker Training/Motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worker Training; • Enhanced motivation and Supervision; • Enabling community-connect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worker Education Status (those who completed 10th and others) • Worker Residence (Local or Outsider)

Annexures

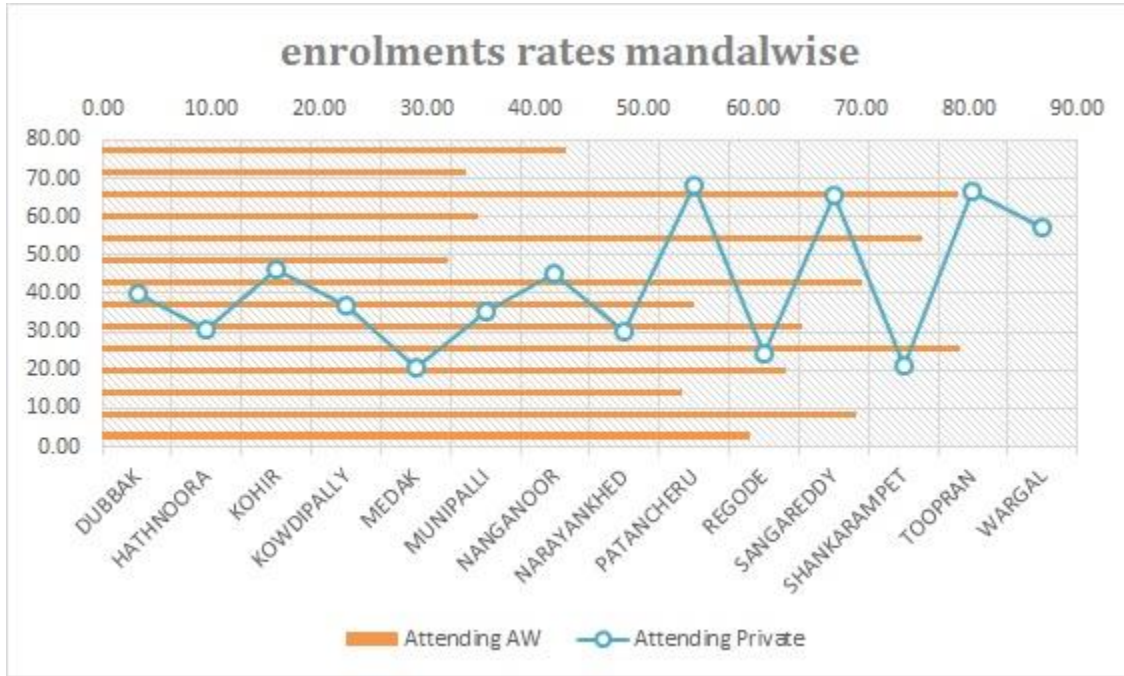
Annexure 1: Pre-School Enrollment Rates for Households by Socio-economic Status

Education

Father's Education	Total 3to6 year olds	In Pre-school	In Pre-school (%)
Illiterate	3642	2440	67.00
Just Literate	875	588	67.20
Class 1st- 5th	773	555	71.80
6th - 10th	2640	2056	77.88
Inter	621	515	82.93
Degree and Above	400	334	83.50
Others	329	208	63.22

Social Category	Total 3to6	In Pre-school	In Pre-school (%)
SC	2104	1472	69.96
ST	826	1012	460.00
OBC	5123	397	121.00
General	542	1799	1985.00
Minorities	685	71	351.00

Annexure 2: Pre-school Enrollment Percentage Grouped by Mandals



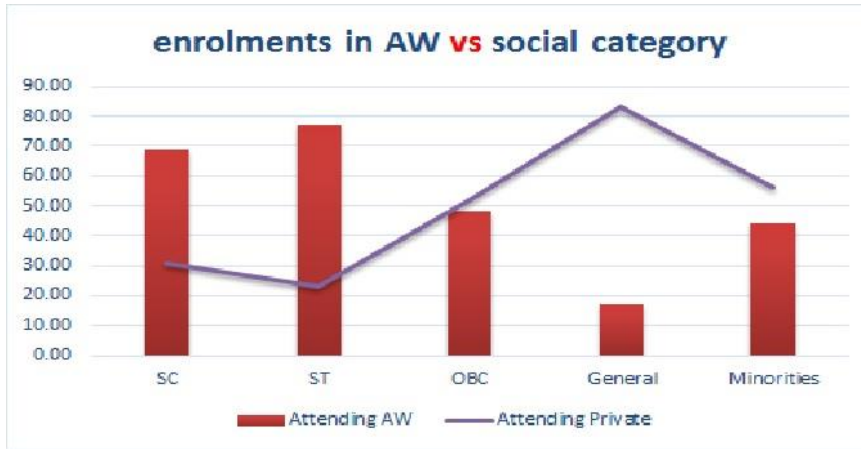
Annexure 3: Pre-School Enrollment: Private versus AWC Grouped by Household Characteristics

Education

Level of Education	Father Education		Mother Education	
	Attending AW	Attending Private	Attending AW	Attending Private
Illiterate	67.00	33.00	64.68	35.32
Just Literate	62.84	37.16	57.90	42.10
Class 1st- 5t	56.44	43.56	43.55	56.45
6th - 10th	40.06	59.94	36.75	63.25
Inter	31.62	68.38	22.27	77.73
Degree and Above	24.32	75.68	18.99	81.01
Others	67.15	32.85	46.43	53.57

Occupation

Type of Occupation	Father's Occupation		Mother's Occupation	
	Attending AW	Attending Private	Attending AW	Attending Private
1. Cultivation	65.11	34.89	68.14	31.86
2. Agriculture L	61.61	38.39	63.41	36.59
3. Non-farm Labour	47.12	52.88	52.70	47.30
4. Business	22.76	77.24	27.87	72.13
5. Private Service	30.92	69.08	27.38	72.62
6. Govt. Service	25.60	74.40	42.22	57.78
7. Traditional O	47.78	52.22	48.44	51.56
8. House maker	45.90	54.10	35.19	64.81
9. Expired	66.83	33.17	45.75	54.25
10. Others	33.33	66.67	45.00	55.00



Annexure 4: Anganwadi Center Facilities

AW Facility Index	% of Main AWCs	% of Mini AWCs
0	2	36.36
1	12.8	22.73
2	14	22.73
3	25.2	9.09
4	25.6	0
5	13.6	9.09
6	4	0
7	2	0
8	0.8	0
Total	100	100

Higher score on the facility index means greater facilities. Maximum possible score was 11.

Facility Index includes: *Chairs for children; Chairs and tables for children; Chair and table for Teachers; Almirah for academic materials; Almirah for dry ration; Mats; Electricity; Fan; Radio; Television; First aid kit*

Facility	Availability (% AWs)
Chairs for children	32.3
Chair and table for Teachers	44.7
Almairahs for academic materials	49.8
Almairahs for dry ration	9.6
Mats	41.9
Electricity	29.2
First Aid Kit	80.4
Child Weight Balance	61.9

Annexure 5: AW Worker Educational Qualification

General education	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
1. Up to class 5th	1	0.39	0.39
2. up to class 7th	4	1.55	1.94
3. Matriculation fail	26	10.08	12.02
4. Matriculation passed	144	55.81	67.83
5. Intermediate passed	50	19.38	87.21
6. Graduation passed	27	10.47	97.67
8. Any other specify	6	2.33	100
Total	258	100	

Annexure 6: Last training for AW Worker

Last training	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
1. Six months back	102	39.53	39.53
2. One year back	27	10.47	50
3. One and half year back	10	3.88	53.88
4. Two years back	104	40.31	94.19
5. Never attended	15	5.81	100
Total	258	100	

Annexure 7: Last Sector Meeting

Last Sector meeting	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
In the past one week,	47	18.22	18.22
7-30 days	209	81.01	99.22
Never held/Not applicable	2	0.78	100
Total	258	100	

Annexure 8: Frequency of Supervisor Visits

Last Supervisor Visit	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
This month	61	23.64	23.64
Last Month	98	37.98	61.63
Three months ago	37	14.34	75.97
More than three months ago	54	20.93	96.9
Never	8	3.1	100

Annexure 9: Usage of Module by AW Worker

Module usage frequency	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Every day	131	50.78	50.78
Once a week	99	38.37	89.15
Once a month	13	5.04	94.19
It is not feasible to follow	15	5.81	100
Total	258	100	

Annexure 10: Correlation between Reported Activity and Teacher Qualification

Correlations	Worker Qualification
Worker Qualification	1
Good habits	0.0455
Conversation	0.0869
Rhymes and songs	-0.018
Games	-0.0922
Stories	-0.1021
Creativity (art and craft)	-0.0695
Readiness (reading, writing,	-0.02
Scientific knowledge	0.0006
Cultural awareness	0.0845

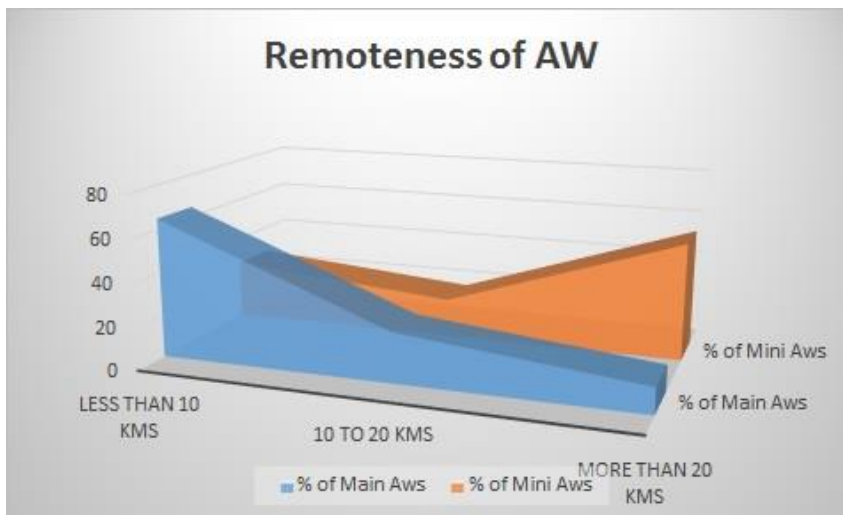
Annexure 11: Correlation among AW activities

Activity Frequency: Correlation Matrix								
Activities	Good habits	Conversation	Games	Stories	Creativity (art and craft)	Readiness (reading, writing,	Scientific knowledge	Cultural awareness
Good habits	1							
Conversation	0.6349*	1						
Games	0.5898*	0.3689*	1					
Stories	0.4297*	0.2873*	0.5082*	1				
Creativity (art and craft)	0.2213*	0.1136	0.1986*	0.3017*	1			
Readiness (reading, writing)	0.3228*	0.2101*	0.3388*	0.4136*	0.2713*	1		
Scientific knowledge	0.0913	0.1128	0.121	0.1823*	0.1796*	0.0777	1	
Cultural awareness	0.083	0.0992	0.0336	0.1225*	0.2009*	0.1346*	0.5675*	1

Annexure 12: Self - Reported job satisfaction



Annexure 13: Remoteness of main and mini AWCs



Remoteness index constructed using: Closest Pucca road (in KM); Closest Government health care center (in KM); Closest private health care center (in KM); Closest bus stop/place (in KM); Closest Government Primary School (in KM); Closest Gram Panchayat office (in KM); Closest CDPO office (in KM)

Annexure 14: Attendance of AWW and AWH

