

Chapter III

Methodology and Approach

Children are the future human resources of our country and it is now globally acknowledged that investment in human resources development is a prerequisite for economic development of any nation. Child survival, growth and development have to be looked at holistically. There should be balanced linkages between education, health and nutrition for proper development of a child and for this reason the Ministry of Women and Child Development implemented various schemes for the welfare, development and protection of children. ICDS is one of them. It is the world's most unique and certainly the largest programme of health and nutrition services for early childhood development, which is being operated since three decades.

The ICDS programme provides an integrated package of health, nutrition and education services targeted to children aged below six years; pregnant and nursing mothers, and in some blocks, adolescent girls. It is being implemented by Government of India through the network of "Anganwadis". The programme especially aims to cover poor and low-caste women and children as primary beneficiaries. Thus there is ample justification to study the Child Care Policies as well as Integrated *Child Development Scheme (ICDS)* which integrates several aspects of early childhood care to children below six years of age as well as expecting and nursing mothers.

The literature review suggests that despite these Child Centric Policies and programmes there is improvement in the vital parameter related to status of children

of our country .However much more need to be done as some of the matter concerning to children are as follows:

1. Every third malnourished child in the world lives in India and 150 million children are at risk of becoming malnourished.
2. Status of immunisation is abysmally low (61%) i.e. only 61% of the child get vaccination as per immunisation schedule by the time she/he becomes 1 year old.
3. Our country is among the countries where child mortality rate is quite high.(i.e 33 per 1000 Child Birth)
4. The increasing level of dropout rates (42%) in higher classes is a cause of worry. Over half of India's children are either not attending school or dropping out before class eight.
5. As per Child line India Foundation²⁰, nearly 4.6 Cr children (5-19 years of age) are engaged in labour market, which constitute 11.0 % of total work force.
6. In India, those mothers who work for income or has intent to work, child care is the highest matter of concern for them.
7. Despite provision of 2 year Child Care Leave for working mothers, participation of women in labour market is quite low.

Rationale or Justification for Research

1. India is midst of a major demographic transition where, the median population age is very young. In near future this young population shall enter into the

²⁰ Assessed on Sept 24 , 2014 :<http://childlineindia.org.in/child-labour-india-growth-story>

working age group (15-59). With nearly half a billion children in this country, this opportunity can be gainfully utilised in the development of society as well as nation. Child centric policies of government of India may act as a catalyst to achieve this objective by ensuring holistic development of this precious human resource. However a lot more remains to be done to ensure the survival, growth and development of India's greatest asset: its children so as to convert this mammoth population into a productive work force in the time to come so as to ensure a rightful place of India among the community of nations. Government policies related to Child Health Care , Education, Family planning, Integrated Child Development Service Scheme, Balika Samridhi Yojna, Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls, Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for children of working mothers and other social security programmes such as UJJAWALA(It is a Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-integration of Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation) , may act as key drivers to achieve this objective.

2. As per Times of India report²¹ nearly 160 million women in India, 88% of which are of working age –that is from 16 to 59 years just remain at home doing household duties. These 16 crore are the great potential productive workforce, primarily involved in home care work and rearing families.
3. The large proportion of working age group women who are confined to their home, is partly because of social pressure (i.e looking after children is primarily the responsibility of the mother. Either way, it is shocking loss to the country, and to the women themselves.

²¹The Times of India , Thursday, July ,2014 pp 10

4. According to Forbesindia blog²² dt 04/04/2013 “Why Indian Women Leave the Workforce” Women make up 24 percent of the workforce in India, which boasts of one the largest working populations in the world. Only 5 percent of these reach the top layer, compared to a global average of 20 percent.
5. A recent study by Booz and company²³ says that if men and women in India were to be equally employed India's GDP could go up by 27 percent.
6. Keeping working mothers engaged in the workforce has been a much-debated subject and a challenge to policy makers. Statistics shows that women join work in good numbers, much less continue to work after motherhood and very few make it to the top. One of the main reasons for this is their responsibility towards childcare.

Thus there is ample justification to study the Child Care Policies as well as Integrated *Child Development Scheme (ICDS)* which integrates several aspects of early childhood care to children below six years of age as well as expecting and nursing mothers. In the light of above expressions, the following objectives were set-up for the work.

OBJECTIVES:

- a) To understand and study Child Care Policies in India, and.
- b) To study and chart out scope of Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).

²² Assessed on Sept 12, 2014: <http://forbesindia.com/blog/business-strategy/why-indian-women-leave-the-workforce/#ixzz3AToQ7Q2C> Forbesindia blog dt 04/04/2013 “Why Indian Women Leave the Workforce”.

²³ Assessed on Sept 24, 2014: <http://www.diversityjournal.com/11834-maintaining-career-momentum-for-indias-talented-women>

In order to focus on the key deliverables, the following research questions have been framed to get responded from the secondary literature.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- a) To what extent Child Care Policies in India have brought improvement in the status of children?
- b) Whether Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) has achieved its objective of "Early Childhood Care"?

For the assessment of the efficacy in child care policy, some important content specific indicators have been developed. For the intensive survey of literature pertaining to the research questions, we have reviewed relevant books, Journals, New Papers, Magazines, Govt. Reports, materials available on Internet.

Indeed, as the methodological orientation pertaining to this research consists of only secondary sources, so we have collected relevant secondary information derived from reports, articles, periodicals, books, journals, news paper clippings, studies & survey conducted by Government / Non Government agencies , UNICEF reports, etc. In specific contexts, performance Audit Report of CAG for various schemes and programmes has also been consulted.

Information collected from secondary sources have been interpreted and analysed to impart logical flow of thought to the study and arrived at specific facets of the problem.

DATA COLLECTION

- A) **Review of Policy Documents:** important related documents were studied such as annual Report of Ministry of Human Resources and Development(MHRD), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare(MH&FW), Ministry of women and child development (MWCD), Government of India Census Report 2011 ,

- B) **Government Reports/Websites/Databases:** Data has also been collected from agencies such as , MHRD, MHA, MWCD, MH&FW, CAG, UNISEF , World bank and Planning commission.
- C) **Academic Literature:** Review of published literature in Journals, Books, conferences, presentations and existing surveys formed the primary source of secondary data.
- D) **Other sources:** Newspaper items and presentation and presentation analysis of official statistics has been widely resorted to.

An attempt is made in this study to assess the extent of effective coverage of ICDS which is being universalised by the Government of India. Whereas according to programme design the AWC are required to deliver the following six services as a package, emphasis is particularly placed on delivery of supplementary nutrition to the target groups.

- Supplementary nutrition,
- Immunisation ,
- Health check-up,
- Referral services,
- Pre-school non-formal education and
- Nutrition & health education.

Main approach and objective of the study are:

- a) To assess the extent to which ICDS has been successful in rendering the six services to children as per objective of the scheme :
- b) How far ICDS has improved the nutritional status of children in the age group of 0-6 years

- c) Quality of pre-school education and as to how far ICDS has been successful to enhance enrolments and reduce school dropouts
- d) How far has ICDS been successful in reducing the incidence of infant mortality/child mortality/maternal mortality and morbidity (based on data available in Anganwadi Centres).
- e) To make suitable recommendations for improving the quality of implementation of ICDS and services provided under the scheme.
- f) To identify and document the best practices in implementing ICDS.

Scope/Limitations:

The scope of this study shall be Descriptive Research and limited to collection of relevant secondary data. The secondary data used in the study is based on the data and qualitative information collected from existing documents and websites. Since the sources of these are established one like government website and publications, the data have not been verified. Every effort has been made to explain the subject in the light of set objectives and materials available for the comprehension.

Moreover, due to logistic constraints including the paucity of time and resources, data regarding efficacy of ICDS on holistic development of children could not be verified except in Trivandrum District during my Rural Visit .I would be prudent to mention here that I found ICDS being implemented there in true spirit and active participation of village Panchayat was noticed. Within the limited framework, the study bridges the literature gap within the subject area and advocates for more empirical works to be carried out.