

IMPACT OF INTEGRATED CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (ICDS) ON LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF TRIBAL PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract

The present investigation aims at studying the impact of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) on language and cognitive development of tribal Pre-school children. The sample of the study comprised of 600 children within 3-6 years age group, out of which 300 were attending Anganwadi / ICDS centres and another 300 were not attending such centres in tribal areas. The sample was selected randomly from ten blocks of Sundergarh District of Odisha. Tools such as Raven's Coloured Progressive Matrices (RCPM) 1962; Socio-Economic Status Scale by Srivastava, (1978); Developmental Checklist by Bluma et al. (1976) (Indian adaptation by Kohli (1987) and Activity Chart developed by the investigator were used for collection of data. The major findings of the study were: (i) ICDS programme had significant effect on language development of tribal pre-school children (ii) ICDS programme had significant effect on cognitive development of tribal pre-school children.

Key Words: *ICDS, Language Development, Cognitive Development, Pre-school Children*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years a revolutionary change has taken place in child care services not only in India but also in the entire globe. There has been now an enormous increase in centre based alternative care and early childhood educational experiences for them. The testimony of this

fact is evident from the considerable increase in the enrolment figures across all regions of the World (UNESCO, 2003). Though the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED, 1997) has classified pre-primary education as level code of zero in a ladder of level one to six but defined the pre-school education as initial stage of organized instructions, designed primarily to introduce only young children to a school type environment (Pandey, 2004).

The World Summit on Children (1990) synthesized the principles and the concerns, and urged the world societies to work for children's enhanced development and education. Finally, the neglected field of early childhood care and education received further impetus by identifying it as first and foremost goal of Dakar Framework of Action, 2000, which was developed after reviewing the progress of the decade made in respect of Education For All project. Likewise, early schooling has been viewed as one of the main pillars of Education For All movements (Early Childhood Education Programmes, 1997) supported by the UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank (Pandey, 2004).

Every Nation developed or developing links its future with the present status of the Children. India is alive to the pivotal importance of the child in its striving for development. Since independence India had sponsored several measures geared to the promotion of welfare and development of its children. But, these, by and large were adhoc and fragmental in character betraying at best a lake worm concern and commitment. However, today having been chastened by the conservancy of its omissions and commissions India determined to do for its children the best that is can, despite constrained resource situation. The scheme of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) is one of the most significant measures to look to the health, nutrition, education and various developmental aspects of the small children coming to the Anganwadis / ICDS centres.

One of the most important programme of the ICDS scheme is to provide non-formal pre-school education to the children between age group of 3 to 6, through Anganwadi centres which are set up in each urban, rural and tribal areas. Emphasis is not to provide formal learning with rigid curriculum, but to develop desirable attitudes, values and behaviour pattern of children and to bring physical, social, psychological and emotional development of the child. But till today the scheme is not that popular in India in achieving its objectives. In so many villages, urban slums and tribal areas such facilities are not available. Where ever the centres are there due to many problems they are not able to provide the minimum

essential services for the proper growth and development of the young children. Hence, the investigator was curious to study the impact of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) on Language and cognitive development of pre-school children coming from tribal area of Odisha.

Review of Related Literature

Studies in the area of pre-school education and its impact on various developmental aspects of pre-school children have been conducted by Malhotra (2002). The study revealed that pre-school education had significant effect on overall development of children. Subhadra (2002) conducted a study on creativity among pre-school children in Bangalore. She found that the children attending pre-school education were better in language, comprehension, creativity and imagination than other children. Chuaungo (2004) in an investigation on pre-school teacher programme in Mizoram found that pre-school education is helpful in around development of children when they enter to school life. Gadkar et al. (2006) in a study on situational analysis of Anganwadi Workers Training Centres in Jharkhand found that children attending Anganwadi were found proficient in language and cognitive level than children not attending Anganwadi centres.

Sangwan, Sangeeta and Punia (2000) in a study on factors affecting language development of pre-schoolers found that children with pre-school experience were strong in verbal comprehension. Mohanty (2002) concluded that children having pre-schooling had better language development and better communication skills than the children having no pre-schooling. Muralidharan and Agarwal (2009) conducted a study to assess the effectiveness of TLM materials on development of language and cognitive skills in urban slum ICDS children of Khanpur, Delhi. The study revealed that the mean score of experimental groups were significantly higher than control group.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were;

- 1) To study the independent effect of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) on language development of tribal pre-school children.
- 2) To study the independent effect of age on language development of tribal pre-school children.
- 3) To study the independent effect of sex on language development of tribal pre-school children.

- 4) To study the interaction effect of ICDS and age on language development of tribal pre-school children.
- 5) To study the interaction effect of age and sex on language development of tribal pre-school children.
- 6) To study the interaction effect of ICDS and sex on language development of tribal pre-school children.
- 7) To study the interaction effect of ICDS, age and sex on language development of tribal pre-school children.
- 8) To study the independent effect of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) on cognitive development of tribal pre-school children.
- 9) To study the independent effect of age on cognitive development of tribal pre-school children.
- 10) To study the independent effect of sex on cognitive development of tribal pre-school children.
- 11) To study the interaction effect of ICDS and age on cognitive development of tribal pre-school children.
- 12) To study the interaction effect of age and sex on cognitive development of tribal pre-school children.
- 13) To study the interaction effect of ICDS and sex on cognitive development of tribal pre-school children.
- 14) To study the interaction effect of ICDS, age and sex on cognitive development of tribal pre-school children.

Hypotheses of the Study

- 1) There exists significant independent effect of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) on language development of tribal pre-school children.
- 2) There exists significant independent effect of age on language development of tribal pre-school children.
- 3) There exists significant independent effect of sex on language development of tribal pre-school children.
- 4) There exists significant interaction effects of ICDS and age on language development of tribal pre-school children.

- 5) There exists a significant interaction effect of age and sex on language development of tribal pre-school children.
- 6) There exists significant interaction effects of ICDS and sex on language development of tribal pre-school children.
- 7) There exists significant interaction effects of ICDS, age and sex on language development of tribal pre-school children.
- 8) There exists significant independent effects of ICDS on cognitive development of tribal pre-school children.
- 9) There exists significant independent effect of age on cognitive development of tribal pre-school children.
- 10) There exists significant independent effect of sex on cognitive development of tribal pre-school children.
- 11) There exists significant interaction effect of ICDS and age on cognitive development of tribal pre-school children.
- 12) There exists significant interaction effect of age and sex on cognitive development of tribal pre-school children.
- 13) There exists significant interaction effect of ICDS and sex on cognitive development of tribal pre-school children.
- 14) There exists significant interaction effect of ICDS, age and sex on cognitive development of tribal pre-school children.

Method and Design of the Study

Since the objectives of the present investigation were to study the effects of ICDS on language and cognitive development of pre-school children belonging to social setting of tribal area, the method of Causal Comparative Research was applied followed by cross-sectional and naturalistic observation approaches. In the present investigation, the effects of three independent variables (ICDS Programme, Age and Sex) on two dependent variables (Language and Cognitive) have been studied in tribal area, following Ex-post Facto research design. The independent and interaction effects of independent variables on dependent variables have been studied statistically following 2 x 2 x 3 factorial design (ICDS vs Non-ICDS x boys and girls x three age groups) with unequal cells.

Sample

The sample of the present study comprised of six hundred children within 3-6 years age group, out of which three hundred were attending Anganwadis / ICDS centres and another three hundred were not attending any Anganwadi/ICDS centres in tribal areas. The sample was selected randomly from ten blocks of Sunargarh district i.e. Subdega, Lephripara, Rajgangpur, Lahunipara, Lathikata, Bonaigarh, Bisra, Kuarmunda, Kutra and Nuagaon. The criteria for the eligibility of the sample were :

- i) The children were within three to six years of age at the time of investigation.
- ii) The ICDS children had attended the Anganwadis / ICDS centres minimum for six months to one year.
- iii) The language and cognitive status of the ICDS and non-ICDS children were equal (lower category).
- iv) The IQ of the respondents were within average range.

Tools Used

The following tools were used to collect information for the present investigation.

- i) Raven's Coloured Progressive Matrices (RCPM) 1962.
- ii) Socio-Economic Status Scale by Srivastava (1978).
- iii) Developmental Checklist by Bluma et al. (1976) (Indian Adaptation by Kohil, 1987).
- iv) Activity Char, developed by the investigator.

Main Findings

The followings were the findings of the present study.

- ICDS programme had significant effect on language development of tribal pre-school children.
- Age had significant effect on language development of tribal pre-schoolers.
- Sex had significant effect on language development of tribal pre-school children. Non-ICDS boys were found to be better in language development than girls of this category.
- There was significant variation in language development of Non-ICDS pre-school children because of interaction effect of age and sex. 5 year boys of Non-ICDS category

were found better in language development while 3 years girls had lowest language development.

- Boys of ICDS category were found better in language development of girls going to ICDS centres.
- ICDS programme had significant effect on cognitive development of pre-school children in tribal areas.
- Age had significant effect on cognitive development of tribal pre-school children.
- There was significant difference between boys and girls in their cognitive development.
- Boys of Non-ICDS category were found better in cognitive development than girls of this category.
- Boys of ICDS category were also found better in cognitive development than ICDS girls.
- There was significant difference between boys and girls of Non-ICDS pre-school children because of interaction effect of age and sex. 5 years boys of this category were found to have better cognitive development while 3 years girls were found to have lowest cognitive development.
- There was significant difference between boys and girls of ICDS pre-school children because of interaction effect of age and sex. 5-year boys of ICDS category had highest cognitive development and 3-year girls had lowest cognitive development.

Educational Implications

The findings of the study are that ICDS programme had significant effect on cognitive development of tribal pre-school children is a good and welcoming result which will encourage the educational administrators, planners, Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs) and supervisors in giving more importance to the scheme. The pre-school education / ICDS programme launched in rural areas needs to be strengthened. There should be more supervision and deep sense of dedication by CDPOs and supervisors in yielding good results in rural and tribal areas. Importance should be given to stimulate the beginning of intellectual curiosity and creativity by providing the child with sufficient opportunities for self-expression.

Some innovative methods of imparting refresher training and involving academic and technical institutions in strengthening continuing education through peripatic training in the field needs to be explored. Supervision by the officials may be strengthened through

appropriate measures. There may be proper monitoring by the officials like CDPOs, Supervisors etc for proper implementation of the scheme.

The findings that the ICDS programme had significant positive effect on language development of tribal pre-school children is important in the context of medium of instruction used in ICDS centres. The ICDS centres adopt Odia as their medium of instruction and all instructional materials are developed in Odia language only. The Anganwadi workers use the local vernacular in interacting the children, which is a peculiar contribution to the programme. So, steps be taken for co-ordinating Odia language with their local dialects in the development of ICDS programme in tribal areas.

Non-availability of materials for play and learning in tribal areas create hindrances in both language and cognitive development of tribal pre-schools. Hence, efforts may be made to provide appropriate educational aids and play materials in each Anganwadi / ICDS centres. The findings that both boys and girls perform at par in some areas of development is a signal for eradicating gender disparity in society. Moreover, the findings that ICDS children are better in almost all the areas of development than non-ICDS children will certainly help those parents in realizing the importance of the programme and sending their wards to Anganwadi centres because every child should undergo pre-school experiences before he/she starts schooling. Pre-school education proves to be a solid foundation stone for entire educational superstructure of a child. Hence there is need of more involvement of community in ICDS programme.

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