KEY ISSUES IN ECCE

Important Theoretical Postulations

+larst six years are critical for life long, optimal development

 Child development is a continuous & cumulative process so that what precedes influences what follows

 Health, nutrition & psycho-social develop, are synergistically interrelated

 Develop: is optimized if programme addresses child's ecological context

Scientific Facts

Brain Research

 Critical period for the formation of synaptic connections in the brain If a stimulating physical & psycho-social environment is not available in early years,the chances of brain developing to its full potential are reduced & often irreversible

Empirical Findings

•Nutritional status and cognitive development are related •Exposure to pre- school improves enrollment, retention & performance in primary school. • Girls whose siblings go to pre-school are free to go to school.

EXISTING POLICIES & PROGRAMMES A CRITIQUE

Policies

- Despite the critical importance of earlyghildhood a vast majority of 518 million children(0to6) still remain deprived of ECCD services O-G
- The Tenth Plan does not focus on ECCD.It only recommended universalisation of TCDS programme
- The 86th Constitutional Amendment doesnot include ECCD as a fundamental right of children
- The NPA(2005)spells out concrete goals &strategies for ECCD within a Rights perspective

Policy(cont.)

 The ECCE has been nationally recognized as the first step in the ladder of education & a main contributor in achieving the goals of UEE but it is is not recognized as a part of mainstream education

CHALLENGES

•The main challenge lies in translating the commitments in tangible outcome based indicators

In view of large scale expansions quality of programmes needs to be maintained

Some marginalized groups like children of migrant & labourer families. nomadic tribes, children with special needs, etc are left out

The <u>urban poor</u> are not adequately covered by ICDS as only 8 percent of ICDS projects are located in urban areas

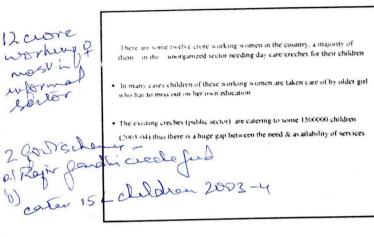
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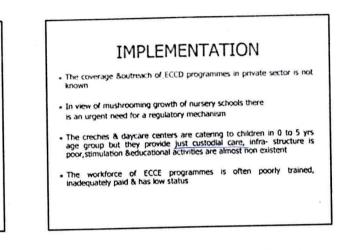
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RECOMMENDATIONS

Some specific recommendations for ICDS are;

smooth transition to primary school

should be developed

Package of services for them

- The access to good quality ECCE services should be a fundamental right of the child
- The existing ECCD programmes like creches, balwadis, pre primary centres etc are giving services in a fragmented manner. It should be mandatory for all ECCD programmes to give a holistic package of services including health care, nutrition, stimulation (0 to 3 yrs) & non formal education(3 to 6 yrs)
- The ICDS is the biggest programme of ECCD in the country it should be redesigned to have a flexible & efficient delivery system.

Capacity Building

 A large number of manpower is implementing ECCD programmes. A long term strategy for capacity building of pre school teachers. AWWs creche worker, etc should be evolved

 The remuneration & working conditions of ECCE workers need to be reviewed and rationalized

Regulatory Mechanism

 A large number of nursery schools & day care centers are being run on commercial basis. Their numbers & quality is not known. Many are located in small places with little or no facilities burdening children with formal curriculum not suited for pre school child.

•There is a need to evolve norms/minimum standards for all ECCE centers & institute a regulatory system for ECCE centres

ECCI - std be a fundamental up ht

Pre school component should be strengthened to include school readiness skills &

Concrete & measurable outcome indicators to asses the efficacy of pre school education

Access of programme to the marginalized groups should be ensured by evolving special

Policy guidelines should be provided to ensure inclusion of children with special needs in Anganwadis /creche

The infrastructure of auganwadis should be improved by providing toilets.drinking wa Proper buildings .play material, teaching material, etc & making them child friendly

The image of anganwadis should change from "feeding centres" to " joyful learning

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Advocacy

•Due to the pressure from parents often AWWor nursery school teacher are pressurized to teach English & follow a school like curriculum which is stressful for young child.Advocacy to create awareness about the need for developmentally appropriate pre school education will help in improving quality of pre schools

Involvement of Community

 For effective supervision & monitoring of ECCE centres the local level institutions like Gram Panchayat,self help groups of women, mothers committees,etc need to be involved. Capacity building of these groups will go a long way in effective community monitoring

