

**TEACHER TRAINING FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION
UNDER SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN IN KERALA**

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Abstract

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a major national initiative and a step forward towards achieving the goals of Universal Elementary Education (UEE) ECCE as a crucial input in the strategy of human resource development, as a feeder and support programme for primary education and as a support service for working women of the disadvantaged sections of society. Objective of the paper is to study about the training and the impact of training provided by SSA for ECCE of Kerala. Questionnaire on ECCE and General Data Sheet were the tools used and study conducted on a sample of 160 Teachers working in pre-primary institutions selected randomly. The study revealed that District Project Offices are not properly keeping records about the ECCE centres of the districts. State Project office of SSA should instruct District Project Offices to collect detailed information of staff in ECCE centres under each district. 31.25 percent expressed satisfaction in the training programmes provided by the SSA. But only 0.6 percent expressed dissatisfaction in the programmes. 25 percent opined that the training helped them in making classroom practices effective .

Introduction

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a major national initiative and a step forward towards achieving the goals of Universal Elementary Education (UEE). It has set forth the targets for itself to reduce the dropout rates and enhance the quality of learning of primary school children in a planned manner by making all-out efforts for and addressing issues related to the three major parameters of UEE, that is universal enrolment, universal retention and enhancement of learning achievement level. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) has been recognized as a crucial input for achieving the goals of UEE by providing necessary impetus to universal enrolment, retention and quality of learning at primary stage of education. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan realizes the importance of pre-school learning and early childhood care and its role in improving participation of children in schools.

ECCE involves the total development of child, i.e. Physical, motor, cognitive, language, emotional, social and moral. The age span under consideration in ECCE is from conception to about 6 years. Even a modest development process during this period includes care of mother during pregnancy (ante-natal health check-up, nutritional support, control of anemia, immunization for prevention of tetanus following delivery, etc.), hygienic and skilled birth attendance, nutritional care of mother during lactation, correct infant feeding practices, immunization of infant from communicable diseases, mothers' education in child care, early childhood stimulation, and health and nutritional support throughout.

Thus, ECCE is a complex integral function. it requires workers with integrated ECCE training, integrated worksites or ECCE centres where the essential services flow to young children through the period of their growth and preparation for formal education, and coordinated functioning of various agencies

governmental and non-governmental, striving to meet different needs of young children. ECCE as a crucial input in the strategy of human resource development, as a feeder and support program for primary education and as a support service for working women of the disadvantaged sections of society. It has also taken into account the holistic nature of ECCE and has pointed out the need for early care and stimulation of children belonging to the vulnerable sector.

Since the age span covered under ECCE is from conception to 6 years, emphasis has been given to a child-centered approach, play-way and activity-based learning in place of formal methods of teaching and early introduction of the three R's. The importance of community involvement has also been highlighted. Emphasis has been given to establishing linkages between Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and other ECCE programs.

SSA emphasizes the importance of strengthening convergence with the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program of Ministry of Women & Child Development to promote pre-school education as it directly benefits children in primary education.

In order to facilitate a greater convergence with the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), efforts to strengthen them in the area of pre-school education will be made. Specific support may be made available to existing ICDS centres from funds available under the financial head, Innovative activities of SSA. In habitations not covered by the ICDS and wherever the State government is desirous of starting a pre-school education centre in the formal primary school, support from the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan could

be accessed, through funds available under the head Innovative activities. In case of a new ICDS center coming in such a habitation, the pre-school facility will necessarily have to work in conjunction with the ICDS.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is one of the important areas of intervention under SSA program and hence the study analyses an important aspects of the ECCE, the teacher training.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.To study the existing status of ECCE centres in Kerala state
- 2.To study about the training provided by SSA for improving ECCE in Kerala stat
- 3.To study the impact of training provided by SSA for ECCE of Kerala.

METHODOLOGY

Tools used for the study:

1. Questionnaire on ECCE (Jibin & Naseema)
2. General Data Sheet

Sample used:

160 Teachers working in pre-primary institutions selected randomly from the selected six districts of Kerala state constitute the sample of the study.

Statistical Technique used:

Percentage analysis and verbal interpretation were used.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Analysis of the results and major findings based on the objectives set for the study are presented below:

1. Existing status of ECCE centres

Analysis of the status of ECCE centers revealed the following:

I) Distribution of ECCE Centres

District wise distribution of ECCE centres is given in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Distribution of ECCE Centers

	Malappuram	Thirissur	Trivandrum	Kasaragod	Kozhikode	Alappuzha
ECCE Centres-Total	2608	2555	3004	1235	2869	2107
Recognized pre-primary	NA	6	NA	88	9	4
Pre primary running by PTA	NA	242	291	NA	NA	50
Pre primary under Panchayat ("Sisumandiram")	NA	NA	NA	NA	27	NA

Table 1 gives a picture of total number of ECCE centers in each district selected for the study and distribution under different category. Complete picture of the distribution is not available in the District Project Offices of SSA. It clearly shows that many private institutions not recorded by government are working at many places

ii) Availability of Staff

Table 2 presents the availability of staff of different centers and whether they are trained or not.

Name of staff	Total number of staff						Number of trained staff					
	Malappuram	Thirissur	Trivandrum	Kasaragod	Kozhikode	Alappuzha	Malappuram	Thirissur	Trivandrum	Kasaragod	Kozhikode	Alappuzha
Anganwadi teachers	2608	2555	3004	1235	2869	2107	2500 (95.9)	2320 (90.8)	3004 (100)	1235 (100)	2250 (78.4)	2107 (100)
Helpers	2608	2460	3004	1235	2869	2107	2500 (95.9)	2000 (81.3)	3004 (100)	1235 (100)	2242 (78.1)	2107 (100)
Recognized pre-primary teachers	NA	6	291	88	9	50	NA (100)	6 (100)	291 (100)	88 (100)	9 (100)	50 (100)
Panchayat/PTA pre-primary teachers	NA	242	NA	NA	27	NA	NA	116 (47.9)	NA	20 (74.1)	NA	NA

Table 2 shows that majority of the teachers and helpers of ECCE centers are trained, though a minimum number of untrained staff work in some centers. In Kozhikode district 78.4 percent of Anganwadi teachers are trained. In all other districts the percentage ranges from 91 percent to 100 percent..

Percentage of helpers trained for the purpose ranges from 78 to 100 percent. But in the pre-primary schools working under Panchayats or under separate PTAs trained teachers ranges from 47.9 percent to 74 percent. But a complete picture is not available in the District Panchayat offices of SSA.

iii) Distribution of Children

Distribution of children in different types of ECCE centres is presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
Distribution of Children in ECCE Centres

Number of Students	Malappuram	Thirissur	Trivandrum	Kasaragod	Kozhikode	Alappuzha
In Anganwadis	NA	42400	85534	NA	44219	31038
In other pre primary centres	NA	11200	12000	NA	NA	NA
Total	NA	53600	97534	NA	44219	31038

(NA-Not available)

Table 3 shows that majority of the children under ECCE stream are in Anganwadis. Complete picture is not available in all of the District Project offices. This is a serious drawback and shows the neglect of the area of ECCE by the responsible persons. SSA should instruct all District Project Offices to collect details about children in ECCE centers.

2. Training Provided by SSA

SSA provided training to Anganwadi teachers. Details of training are indicated in Table 4.

TABLE 4
Details of Training Provided by SSA
(for the selected districts)

	Number of Training in Different Areas				Duration of Training			
	Pre primary school training	TLM* preparation	Refresher programmes	CWSN* training	Below 5 days	6-15 days	16-30 days	Above 30 days
No. of programmes	37	21	6	3	30	25	6	6

(TLM- Teaching Learning Manual., CWSN- Children With Special Needs)

Table 4 shows that 37 pre primary school training programs were conducted by SSA in the selected 6 districts. 21 TLM preparation trainings, 6 refresher programs and 3 training programs for caring the Children With Special Needs(CWSN) were conducted by SSA for the six districts. Of these 30 training programmes were having duration below 5 days, 25 programmes between 6 to 15 days, 6 training between 16 to 30 days and 6 programs above 30 days.

3. Impact of Training

i) Satisfaction of the teachers in training received

The study revealed that, of the total respondents, 31.25 percent expressed satisfaction in the training programs provided by the SSA. But only 0.6 percent expressed dissatisfaction in the programs. Not getting regular classes and demand for more training were the reasons for the dissatisfaction.

ii) Benefits of training

Benefits of training provided by SSA in the view of teachers was examined. Details are given in Table 5.

TABLE 5
Benefits of Training provided by SSA

Benefits of training	Percentage of Responses
For making classroom activities effective	25
To know more about children	6.88
For preparing effective TLM	5.63

Table 5 shows how the teachers use effectively the training in improving their classroom activities. 25 percent opined that the training helped them in making classroom practices effective .6.88 percent of teachers responded that it helped them to know more about children and 5.63 percent responded that it helped them in preparing effective TLM

CONCLUSION AND INTERPRETATION

The study revealed that District Project Offices are not properly keeping records about the ECCE centers of the districts. This shows a serious neglect from the part of Project offices. Therefore, proper direction should be given by the state office of SSA to the District Project offices, for keeping detailed information regarding ECCE centers about the trained staff, number of children in the centers and also working conditions of ECCE centers in each district.

Since the pre-primary stage is an area which demands more caring, authorities should give priority for the same. Distribution of materials to ECCE centers should be according to the demand. SSA can also think about the physical facilities available in the centers and providing grant for helping them more seriously.

Proper training in different areas can be imparted to Anganwadi teachers and plan programs for motivating the teachers for carrying out more activities useful to the children and society. 37 pre primary school training programs were conducted by SSA in the selected 6 districts. 21 TLM preparation trainings, 6 refresher programs and 3 IEDC trainings were conducted by SSA for the six districts. Of these 30 training programs were having duration below 5 days, 25 programs between 6 to 15 days, 6 training between 16 to 30 days and 6 programs above 30 days.

31.25 percent of teachers expressed satisfaction in the training programs provided by the SSA. Only 0.6 percent expressed dissatisfaction in the programs. 25 percent opined that the training helped them in making classroom practices effective .6.88 percent of teachers responded that it helped them to know more about children and 5.63 percent responded that it helped them in preparing effective TLM. More grants should be allotted to the intervention of ECCE under SSA programs of all states.

State Project office of SSA should instruct District Project Offices to collect detailed information of staff in ECCE centers under each district. SSA should give priority in ensuring the availability of trained staff in all pre primary education centers. Considering the importance of the early childhood of the children, special training should be given to those untrained staff under SSA project.

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