

Project Framework

Introduction

Project Children on the Agenda (COTA) had its origin in a brief personal discussion in January 1992 in Delhi between a Programme Officer from the Bernard van Leer Foundation (BVL) and Hon. Director Project ACCESS, MSSRF, who at the time had just initiated the process of setting up the State branch of FORCES in Tamil Nadu. The discussion covered some of the ideas on developing the network for the promotion of child care services in Tamil Nadu. Because of the scale, uniqueness and complexity of the concept it was realised that developing it into a project proposal would take some time and effort. It was then decided to write up a proposal for a small one-time grant-in-aid for preparation of a project proposal, which was submitted to BVL in April 1992. This was approved formally in June 1992 and the preparation phase was undertaken from July 1992.

A consultant was appointed to integrate the findings, a series of brainstorming meetings were held with various potential partners and network members and the outlines of a project proposal began to emerge by about October 1992. This was submitted to BvL and revised over the next few months through a series of interactions between MSSRF and BvL, mostly by letter, fax and phone, but also by personal interaction during a visit to Madras by the Programme Officer, who was able to provide useful and concrete guidelines. The final proposal was again submitted in April 1993, received formal approval in June 1993 and was formally launched on July 1, 1993. At this stage, and at the suggestion of BvL it was named as **Children on the Agenda**.

Brief history

Project COTA was launched on July 1, 1993 and closed formally on December 31, 1997. During this four and a half year period, it has gone through three distinct phases:

- a. Initial phase (July 1993 to April 1995)
- b. Mid-project phase (April 1995 to December 1996)
- c. Consolidation and completion phase (January - December 1997)

a. This phase was from the launch up to the completion of the midterm evaluation which started in January 1995 and was integrated by April 1995. The start up was slow, as was to be expected in a project of this nature. The first meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was held in August 1993, and in the same month, the first major policy seminar under the auspices of TN-FORCES was also conducted and the report prepared. Staff recruitment was completed by November 1993 and project activities were slowly developed. This was a phase of intense experimentation with considerable exploration as well as constant discussions and evaluation internally. In the first year, the level of expenditure was also very low, since activities were only being slowly planned out and carried out. It was felt by both the Project Director and the staff that the mid-term evaluation was too soon, as the project was still in its initial phase and could not be considered 'mid-term'. However, the evaluation, conducted by an experienced professional turned out to be a very useful, insightful and productive exercise, carried out as it was in a participatory manner. This helped in revising the goals and strategies, tightening up the planning and implementation process and procedures and leading to more effective, goal-directed and focused activities (Project objectives in Annexure 1).

b. The second phase, from April 1995 up to December 1996, can be termed as one of consolidation and peak activity. During this phase, the tempo of activities was at its height, but at the same time proceeded in a smooth, well-planned, coordinated and linked free flowing sequence, since the various difficulties had been sorted out in the course of internalising and applying the lessons of the mid-term evaluation. Even though this period saw some changes among the staff, several new faces, and above all a change of Project Coordinator, there was no negative impact on either the quantity or quality of work. The greatest achievement, internally, was the smooth transition from one Project Coordinator to another in June 1996, with no noticeable impact in efficiency or effectiveness, as a result of careful preparation. Project expenditure was maintained at a consistent and reasonable level. However, it was also realised that because of savings due to various reasons such as cost-efficiency, sharing of costs by network members etc. there would be funds available at the end of the three-year period to continue the work, and a no-cost extension for one year was applied for (up to June 1997) and approved. During this period also, the network Convenor for the next phase was identified and the new Convenor was announced in December 1996.

During the last phase, (January December 1997) the thrust was on consolidation and completion of all projected and planned activities and on managing the smooth transition from one Convenor to another. With regular reviews, close monitoring and working to deadlines, all assignments were completed. Only one important activity, the completion of the study of child care workers, has had to be carried over. A few minor activities also could not be completed for reasons beyond our control such as bureaucratic delay or change of officials in the concerned Government Department. The work of network management began to be shared with the new Convenor, though still financed and implemented by COTA, since the new Convenor did not yet have funds or staff for the purpose. At the same time, the activity of process documentation of all aspects of the project was launched, the major one, process documentation of the network component, being entrusted to a consultant, while all the others were handled by the project staff. A second no-cost

extension was sought and approved, and funds were fully spent by the end of the year, with tight financial management in the last two months. During this period also, steps were taken to begin preparation of a project proposal for the next phase. The first proposal was submitted to BvL in July 1997, and went through a series of revisions. It was finally approved in November 1997 and formally launched as **Operation Resource Support(ORS)** from January 1, 1998.

The process

In addition to the bare bones of the narrative, outlined above, there are several important aspects of this project which would not only help to understand its dynamic and functioning, but also throw light on the process of project development, with implications both for understanding the dynamics of the process and for future work in this direction. Some of these are discussed below.

At the outset, it must be reiterated that the project was an unique one, and nothing like it had been earlier encountered, even by BvL in any country. It was hence in every sense an innovative, experimental and unique project—a daring vision, seemingly plausible, yet with no precedents, no fixed guidelines, and no standards or criteria for evaluation. Hence, the manner of functioning at first was, and had to be, highly exploratory and open-ended in nature. Everything was being done for the first time; nothing could be predicted; everything had to be by trial and error, while at the same time it was realised that errors could be costly, especially in terms of relationships with network members, where a single mistake could lead to long-term adverse consequences. While goals and strategies had been conceptualised, their translation into activities was a more difficult task. The kind, nature and amount of activities that could be taken up could not be clearly visualised; they had to be tried out and a pattern allowed to emerge. Similarly even monitoring indicators and criteria for evaluation had to be developed anew and put in place early on, and then modified from time to time to adapt to the reality. In this sense, therefore, the entire project can be said to be a textbook example of the “process-oriented” approach as opposed to a target-oriented approach. Inventing the project as we went along, the process itself was the project.

The two important pillars through whose interaction the process of unfolding, and of eventual flowering, took place, were on the one hand the project staff and on the other, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and a few other Resource Persons who had played a consistent role in its development.

The staff

It is difficult to overestimate the key role played by the staff in the development of the project, especially at the earlier more fluid stages. The vision, the skills, interests, experiences and understandings they brought to their jobs, the combination of complementary strengths and weaknesses at particular points of time, all of these significantly influenced the choice of activities, the extent and pace, within the framework of the accepted goals and strategies, just as their motivation dynamism, harmonious cooperation and hard work lay behind the effectiveness and efficiency of implementation.

Of the 11 professionals who have worked in the project since its inception, most (7) were recruited directly through advertisement followed by interview, though a few (4) came through personal contacts (Staff & Resource persons list in Annexure 2). All of them were between the ages of 25-30 at the time of recruitment, and none has yet crossed the age of 35 except one. All are post-graduates in some branch of Social Sciences, some straight out of University, others with two to three years of experience in teaching, research, journalism etc. None had experience in the sort of work that the project envisaged and most of the staff expected to work directly at the primary level. However, here the work is neither at the primary nor at the secondary, but at the tertiary level (e.g. We work not with young children directly, or even with teachers, but with teacher trainers; not with communities, or parents, or others, but with their representatives, leaders, and associations; not at data gathering and analysis, but at stimulating, coordinating, disseminating and utilising research). In addition in situations where staff are expected to interact with senior professionals, youth and inexperience can be additional handicaps.

Despite these limitations, the quantity and quality of work output, was consistently high alongwith the smooth functioning of the team. Some of the reasons for this are besides the positive qualities already mentioned, *flexible work patterns* which allowed the team to be strengthened by a few resource persons who functioned as part-time members of the project team; association over a period of time with a *few resource persons* with professional expertise who were regularly available for advice; the steady support, technical guidance and advice from *members of the TAC*, individually and as a group; and *freedom and autonomy* given to individual members of the team to initiate and pursue and develop their own specific activity. Thus, for example, it is possible to identify certain specific programmes and efforts over a period of time with the interests and abilities of specific team members; so much so, that it can be stated that with a different combination of abilities, a very different profile of activities may have emerged as outcomes, though within the project mandate.

The same must be said about the nature of the team's functioning. The turnover among staff has been a slow and silent one, but a complete change. None of the original four people who started in 1993 are still present, while all those in position now joined some time in 1995. The average life of a team member has been slightly under three years. Yet none of this has affected either effectiveness or efficiency, and team spirit and harmony, carefully fostered, have been maintained at a high level. Both these aspects have been commented upon in the mid-term evaluation report.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Equally important has been the role of the TAC, which has worked to provide guidance, support and direction in several ways. As a group, the TAC meets approximately twice a year, reviews the preceding half-year, considers and advises on work plans for the coming half year, and discusses major issues which need attention. In this role, the support of TAC has been invaluable. Thus the very first

meeting helped to draw up a plan of action for the first year or more; midterm corrections are constantly introduced, reported back and evaluated before the next steps are planned. TAC has also played a significant role in developing and maintaining relationships with other institutions, and with Government, since the Director of Social Welfare, Govt. of Tamil Nadu is an *ex officio* member of TAC. This assistance ranges from advice on procedural matters, to personal contacts, to providing valuable information on forthcoming activities and in smoothing difficulties.

TAC has also functioned as a permanent reserve of Resource Persons, constantly available for general advice and guidance, and specifically to make individual resource expertise available for specific purposes. Thus, one member of TAC undertook to monitor the network over the entire period, and finally to write the process report on the development of the network. The same member also undertook the task of developing the detailed monitoring indicators with the participation of the staff, and has lent her expertise in several of the major training programmes. Another member has been responsible for initiating, guiding programmes for and with Government departments; the same member also wrote one of the papers in the Research Series. Two other members as heads of NGOs and, members of the TN-FORCES network could make valuable contributions from a different perspective. The member from the University constituency provided a valuable link with the academic world. Most of the members have been associated with the selection of the professional staff as members of the Selection Committee, and thus have concern for and understanding of the staff members. TAC members also played an important role in both the mid-term and the terminal evaluation. They have also been informally associated with a diversity of project activities, ranging from pre-production critiques of materials, to planning of training, participation in advocacy efforts, and presence at more formal functions like annual days, releases and celebration of special days.

This participatory approach and constant interlinking between staff members, resource persons, TAC members and network members has lent great strength to the project and has been one of the main reasons for both the achievements and the sense of success that all associated with it feel. This can be attributed to the fact that so many people, including network members, feel that they 'own' the project, and are part of the extended family of Project ACCESS (List of TAC members in Annexure 2).

Evaluation

The mid-term evaluation was conducted, as a participatory exercise, by an external Resource Person, and proved to be, as mentioned earlier, a fruitful exercise. For the terminal evaluation, it appeared that this procedure was not available; hence the team decided to go ahead and do it internally. It was decided to undertake process documentation of each major area of activity, from an evaluative standpoint. The project activity was divided into eight segments and each segment was assigned to a specific individual - these included both staff and resource persons. The eight segments form the contents of the following report. In addition, TAC members were asked for their comments and suggestions and these were integrated into the reports.

In completing this report, the team was somewhat handicapped by the paucity of regular earlier process documentation. Though monitoring indicators had been developed in the first year, and though these were regularly applied informally, discussed and utilised for course corrections, they had not been adequately documented at the time. Quarterly progress reports tended to be more of a narrative type, focussing on activities and deadlines. The process elements were discussed and internalised but not recorded. This was mainly due to the shortage of time and the focus on activities. It is arguable that pressure to document at the time could have been complied with, but would have been at the cost of a substantial loss in terms of tempo of activities. While this explains the gaps in documentation, it is undoubtedly a point to be borne in mind for the future and a shortcoming to be avoided if possible.

Annexure 1

Statement of project objectives

At outset

1. To improve trainer's training in order to incorporate quality aspects
2. To cultivate a supportive climate for ECCE, specifically focussing on policy-makers, the general public and media
3. To further develop and coordinate the FORCES network to act as a support structure for the project and ECCE in general
4. To conduct research and documentation to support the process

After mid-term evaluation

1. To support, strengthen and coordinate the TN-FORCES network to act as a pressure group for Early Childhood Care and Education in Tamil Nadu
2. To cultivate a supportive climate for ECCE, specifically focusing on policy makers, the general public and media
3. To improve the qualitative aspects of trainer's training
4. To conduct research and documentation to support the process

*Annexure 2***Project Staff**

Ms. Mina Swaminathan, Hon. Director	
Ms. Rama Narayanan - 1993 onwards	Ms. Santhiya Maheswari (1994-97)
Mr. Sarvesan (1993-96)	Ms. Vijaya (1995)
Ms. Padmavati (1993-95)	Ms. Radhika (1995 - 97)
Ms. Dakshayani (1993-94)	Mr. Raja Samuel (1995 - 97)
Ms. Shanthi (1993-94)	Ms. Glory (1995 - 97)
Ms. Kalaiselvi(1994-95)	Mr. Murali Shanmugavelan (1995 - 97)

Technical Advisory Committee Members

Mr. Deenadayalan I.A.S, 1993 - 95
 Mr. P. Kuppaswamy I.A.S, 1995 - 96
 Ms. Nirmala I.A.S, 1996
 Ms. Sabita Bhengra I.A.S, 1996
 Mr. Vijayakumar I.A.S, 1997
 Ms. Andal Damodaran, Hon. Gen. Secretary, ICCW-TN
 Dr. L.S. Saraswati, Freelance Development Specialist
 Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, Chancellor, Avinashilingam Deemed University
 Ms. E. V. Shanta, Consultant, UNICEF
 Dr. Radha Paul, Executive Director, World Vision of India

Representatives of Donor

Ms. Rekha Wazir
 Ms. Liana Gertsch

Networking

Background

Project ACCESS (Action for Child Care and Education Strategies and Services) started in August 1991, is one of the project activities of the Centre for Research on Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development established by M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation. This project focuses on Child Care while addressing problems that involve the intersecting needs of women, children and girls. The activities of Project ACCESS have been at three levels : developing alternate child care strategies through action research in balwadis in selected sites at the **micro-level**; mediating interventions through other agencies and institutions offering training, instructional materials, documentation support at the **intermediate level** ; and focusing on advocacy, dissemination of information regarding issues of child care and through launching TN FORCES an informal network of organisations forming a non-political, broad-based platform to press for better child care services in the state (in January 1992) at the **macro level**.

A project **Children on the Agenda** funded by Bernard van Leer Foundation started in 1993 by Project ACCESS aimed at supporting, strengthening and coordinating the Tamil Nadu FORCES as a pressure group for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Tamil Nadu. Hence one of the broad areas of action of the project became network development to enable the agencies and institutions concerned with child care services to share ideas and lobby jointly for issues of common concern. This meant orienting existing Tamil Nadu. FORCES towards developing as a more sensitised, alert and responsive network able to address a range of issues related to child care. Networking as a process gained importance.

TN FORCES has been active over five years. The network has grown in size and scope of activities. The project children on the Agenda that supported the networking process is moving into its next phase.

Objectives and Methodology of the Study

As a part of evaluation of the children on the Agenda project, a documentation of the process of networking is being undertaken. The broad objective is to take a look at the efforts at networking for understanding what made the networking possible? What made it difficult? What are our learnings regarding the process of networking? Specifically the documentation is expected to identify and analyse stages in the process of networking, nature of constituent interaction, the outcomes, the short comings and to provide pointers for the future.

The efforts in documenting the networking process are made through

- drawing relevant information from the reports of the activities of the network, the minutes of the meetings at different levels, the products in terms of materials, newsletters and communications of importance.
- eliciting the experiences (in participating in network activities) opinions and perspectives of the TN FORCES member organisations which were active, in one-to-one interviews (June-July-August 1997) with a prepared guideline (presented in Annexure 2 and 3)
- being an observer in four TN FORCES annual general body meetings, a few core-committee meetings, in several different activities of the network and recording the observations.

The information gathered from the indicated sources were analysed in terms of the objectives presented.

Context

The context in which TN FORCES network was initiated has to be seen in terms of the conditions of child care services in Tamil Nadu and also the National FORCES which sparked of the State level FORCES - the first to emerge in the scene being TN FORCES.

Child Care Services in Tamil Nadu

Over 6 million children are in the age range of 0 - 5 years in Tamil Nadu. About a third of these children's mothers work. These children of working mothers either accompany their mothers or are cared for by older siblings. Hence, the child's need for a safe, hygienic, healthy and stimulating environment is compromised. In Tamil Nadu Child Development Services cover about 2.5 million children(0-6 yrs). There are three State supported programmes - the chief Minister's Nutritious Noon Meals Programme (NMP) the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS) and the Tamil Nadu Nutrition Programme. Though they were three different sets of services, efforts are on to merge these to provide a standardised model. Besides these, creches are also run by Statutory Sector (under the Plantations, Factories, Mines, Contract Labour, Inter-State Migrant Workers' Acts) and the Non-government Organisations (NGOs). There are also self-financed ventures as innovative social development programmes by private bodies. Creches in the voluntary sector cover only 1.4 percent of the State-sponsored programmes. A total of 29,590 child care centres with over one lakh of child care workers are serving the state. It can be said that some form of child care service is available to every child in need.

Though the picture is impressive the services are far from adequate in reach and quality. Mainly midday meal is provided. Available day care is only for children of 2 + and wholly custodial in nature. The needs of lakhs of women in the unorganised sector are not met. There is practically no educational or developmental input for children.

A brief note on National FORCES

FORCES (Forum for Creche and Child Care Services) is a national network of NGOs committed to the care of children below the age of six, of poor and underprivileged sections of society. This non-political, broad-based advocacy group was formed in January 1989 with a group of 19 NGOs and is growing steadily. The forum emerged in the context of the international and national fora concerned with women and children focusing on the child care as an issue.

FORCES at the national level has been active as an advocacy group presenting their demands regarding crucial child care issues to the Government of India at the level of Ministers, Secretaries and MPs. The continued demands made since 1989 for setting up of a Central Fund for Creches and Child Care Services brought forth the announcement of National Creche Fund in 1994. The attention of the Government is constantly drawn to a variety of demands such as child care to remain the primary responsibility of the State; inclusion of child care in the Minimum Needs Programme ; allocation of fixed percentage of GNP for child care services as children below 6 years constitute 18 % of the population ; involvement of FORCES in the process of policy formulation; reconsideration of structure, conditions and patterns of funding of the National Creche Fund as suggested by the critique prepared by FORCES ; fair wage structures for Child Care Workers.

The major strategies seem to be creation of an environment and provision of space for a meaningful exchange of dialogues with the Government, sensitising and orienting the Governments at the centre and State levels with issues of importance and presenting demands and mobilising public support through creation of mass awareness. With experiences gained, FORCES stand on addressing the issues of the young child is spelt out. (For details see Annexure 4)

The structure of the National FORCES indicates that the responsibility of networking rests with the Secretariat (rotatory) with inputs from the Steering Committee and the Convenor Organisation. Funding is to be raised by the Organisation hosting the Secretariat.

Process of Networking of TN-FORCES

Origin

Project ACCESS, as one of the founder members of the National FORCES took the initiative to launch the TN FORCES as early as January 1992, on the same lines as national FORCES. Tamil Nadu is the first state to have an active state level Network. More recently steps are being taken to initiate similar networks in four States, Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal and Rajasthan. Its objective is to lobby for improved child care services, especially for the young children of working women in the unorganised sector.

On the basis of the experiences of TN FORCES in the past five years (1992-1997) as derived from the information sources indicated earlier, an attempt has been made to identify distinct stages in networking, present the process of growth and development of the network using the frame of the distinct stages.

Networking - Distinct stages

The process of networking which began with the launching of TN FORCES continues and has been through three distinct stages

1. Forming the Network - bringing together organisations for collective action on issues related to child care serving the purpose of creating an atmosphere to feel the need and importance of collective action for better child care services ;

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2. Strengthening the Network - consciously introducing the participatory process in planning and implementing collective actions by the network members thus facilitating member organisations to get themselves totally involved and to feel strongly that they are a group working towards the cause of child care in the state :
 3. Consolidating the participatory process of networking for further strengthening and sustaining the network in future.

The three stages could also be seen as stage of coming together of organisations concerned with child-care, experiencing the strength of joint actions and beginning to nurture and nourish the strength gained.

1. Forming the Network TN FORCES

The period from January 1992 to October 1993 marked the initial phase of forming an informal network which at that time was conceived of only to serve as a "watch-dog" body in relation to child care issues in Tamil Nadu.

The approach to networking at this phase was one of the Convenor Organisation bringing together state branches of all India Organisations belonging to the National Forum. TN FORCES came into being on the lines of national FORCES. The information about the national Forum was circulated to these organisations.

Thirty eight organisations including several Women's Organisations (10) Voluntary Organisations concerned with child welfare (15) Training institutions and Educational institutions (7) Professional Associations (2) and Trade Unions (4) joined the Forum.

The structure of the network, similar to the National forum, consisted of the convenor organisation, a small steering committee and a general body. The responsibility of networking rested with the Convenor using their own resources; whereas at the national

level. It was with the secretariat housed in one of the steering committee organisations the funding and accounting for which is with the same organisation. Helping the formation of state level FORCES is spelt out as one of the major responsibilities of the Steering Committee as it is considered vital to have a nation wide networking for focusing on child care.

During this initial phase, the activities of the network here in terms of taking a good look at the existing conditions of child care service in the state, to chalk out a plan of action for improved child care services ; preparing and presenting a memorandum to the minister of social welfare ; focusing on child care as special theme in International Women's day (March 8) celebrations / preparing plans for developing resource centres in different parts of the State for improving early childhood care and education by forum members who have expertise in training and education ; participating in some of the state level discussions on issues of importance such as female infanticide ; playing a supportive role to the call of noon meal workers for better wages.

Important outputs of activities of the TN FORCES at this phase were preparation of a blue-print for action for the improvement of child-care services in Tamil Nadu; drawing up and submitting memorandum to the Social Welfare Minister of Tamil Nadu, stressing the demands of upgrading existing services to provide holistic day-care for all round development of children and as a support for working mothers, decentralising the management of child care services with greater community and parental involvement and setting up a special State Child Care Fund to provide support for a state-wide programme; lively theatrical presentations on women's double burden and the need for child care support in the women's day celebrations of the member organisations.

Some of the outcomes of importance during this phase were intensive campaign by TN FORCES to start a creche in the industrial estate to meet the needs of thousands of women workers in the area resulting in the establishment of a common creche in SIDCO

compound, financially supported by Manufacturers' Association and managed by a network member Indian Council of Child Welfare. The network also halted the Government Order to grant exemption to establishments and industries from statutory norms of running a creche under the guise of minimum contribution to common creche.

During this phase, the focus of efforts seems to be on action rather than on building the group or networking as such. The process was one of bringing together members who were individually serving the cause in their own way, introducing them to a process of collective action, helping them to see child care in a wider perspective, in a way begin to feel the need for and importance of coming together as a forum through the activities mentioned.

It appears that the convenor Project ACCESS played a central and active role in organising meetings in which the member organisations participated. The extent of participation of member organisations and the role of Steering Committee at this initial phase were minimal.

Stage 2 : Strengthening the network

Period : The period from November 1993 to July 1996 constituted the second stage in the process of networking. During this period conscious efforts were made to strengthen the network formed in Stage 1.

Redefining goals and objectives :

It was at this time the **Children on the Agenda** project was launched by Project ACCESS (July 1993), the major activity of which was networking to be supported and nourished by the other three components of Advocacy and Communication, Training and Instructional Materials, Research and Documentation. Specifically the project attempted to work at orienting TN FORCES to develop as a more sensitised alert and responsive

network able to address a range of issues related to child care. It was also visualised that TN FORCES serving as the base would provide support to the rest of the project activities mentioned, through collaborative efforts of member organisations. The objectives of the networking with agencies and institutions concerned with child care is to share ideas, fulfil needs and lobby jointly for issues of common concern. In other words, the network was expected to serve as a common platform for information sharing, capacity building, strategising and carrying out joint activities.

Objectives of TN FORCES stated by member organisations during interviews brought out in general that they are working towards achieving common objectives, which is a sign of gaining strength as a group. The statements of objectives were **either general** in terms of group lobbying with the Government and / or creation of public awareness for the cause of children; campaigning on child care issues, strengthening the early childhood care and education by improving the quality ; **or specific** such as taking up an issue and working on it, reducing the pressure on pre-school children working with teachers, parents and management, revamp creches and train people who require training. There was clarity in their expression of the objectives of TN FORCES and objectives related to the specific issues they were working on.

A Profile of the Member Organisations

The membership of TN FORCES increased from 37 in 1992-93 to 55 in 1994, 68 in 1995 and 72 in 1996. The growth in terms of number has been steady. The types of member organisations at present are Non-Government Organisations (37), Women's Organisations(11), Educational Institutions (14), Professional Associations (6) and Trade Unions (4). The increase has been in the number of NGOs, educational institutions and professional associations. Looking from the angle of coverage with reference to geographical area, it is fairly spread in different parts of Tamil Nadu. There are 38 Chennai-based organisations and 34 from other parts of Tamil Nadu, covering the districts of Chennai, Chengai, North Arcot and Tiruvannamalai in the North; Tiruchi and

Pudukkottai in the Centre; Nilgiris, Coimbatore, Dharmapuri and Salem in the west; Dindigul, Madurai, Sivagangai, Ramanathapuram, Virudunagar, Tirunelveli, Tuticorin and Kanyakumari in the South (A list of members of TN FORCES in annexure 5)

The number of organisations reached by TN FORCES network could be considered to be many-fold than the number indicated as the effect is multiplied with a number of network members themselves serving convenors of other specialist networks: Tamil Nadu Voluntary Health Association (TNVHA) functions as networking, liaising and resource agency. There are at present 430 organisation in their network. They reach their members through workshops, training programmes and publications. Development Association for Training and Technology Appropriation (DATA) in Madurai is closely associated with NEERA, Network for Education and Empowerment of Rural Artisans, a network of NGOs functioning in Tamil Nadu. All the Professional Associations in the network such as IAP (Indian Academy of Paediatrics) and IAPE (Indian Association of Preschool Education) have their own member organisations, who are interested in the child and hence in the network activities, who have been drawing in their members.

Efforts at enlarging the scope of networking were made by the convenor organisation through sending the quarterly newsletter of TN FORCES *Imma* to a large number of non-members (average 400 per special events as high as 2000 through the members and other networks with some responses from time to time ; participation of the personnel of the Project **Children on the Agenda** in meetings, workshops, conferences related to women and child care mainly sponsored for NGOs, in the state through having a slot to orient the group with TN FORCES, its objectives and activities using support materials such as leaflets, video-films, slide-sets especially appropriate for use in such meetings - generating lot of interest and concern for child care; individual contacts with member NGOs, with a purpose to initiate members and staff of the NGO concerned with the idea of TN FORCES to enable any member of the organisation to effectively participate in the activities of the TN FORCES - a time consuming process; individual contacts with non-members, resourceful and capable of playing a vital role in taking up or serving as a resource support to important child care issues- e.g. Legal Resources for

Social Action; encouraging member organisations to take the messages of TN FORCES further through their own communication channels.

Membership Criteria

The number of members has not been a major criterion of this network. In 1994, responding to a question on who could be members, the general body arrived at three criteria : commitment to issues, willingness to undertake work and secular approach. This was later spelt out more clearly in charter of the TN FORCES, adopted in 1996.

Comments made by the member organisations during the interviews revealed that in the network there are active and passive members and there should be revalidation of members from time to time and those who have not been active need not be part of the network. Some efforts could be made in linking member organisations and helping them to work together. There is full-fledged acceptance and reiteration of the criteria of **willingness to undertake work and commitment to issues.**

Approach to Networking

The networking at this stage, became active and vigorous since networking process gained importance. The approach to networking became participatory in nature with the member organisations collectively identifying child care issues of importance, widening the scope of TN FORCES from developmental care of young Children of Working Mothers to a more holistic perception of care in childhood and associated factors such as issues related to women's economic participation and maternity and gender sensitisation, decentralisation of Child Care Services to the level of local bodies, namely, panchayats in the rural areas and municipal authorities in the urban areas ; making decisions on campaigning as a major strategy ; setting the agenda on contextual theme(s) of the year for Campaign (s), forming sub-group(s) on the basis of the issues, working in the sub-groups planning events, mobilising resources and organising events on the issues taken up. The approach is essentially issue-based and participatory decision-making and action.

The member organisations interviewed underlined the importance of issue-based participatory approach. They were of the view that it gives life to the network. The members affected by the issue(s) come together. Unless it is issue-based it will be difficult to work together. According to Mr. Sarvesan the earlier network Coordinator, issue touches the partners, events bind the partners and common programmes make the events all pervasive and network visible.

Evolution of the Structure of TN FORCES Network

TN FORCES network is a loose conglomeration of member organisations joined together for the cause of care of children below six years of age in Tamil Nadu. It was and it is an unregistered and non-fee paying network.

The first Convenor Organisation Project ACCESS played the role of bringing together concerned Organisations in the first stage. In the second stage, the same convenor and the Secretariat located at the Convenor's Office, consisting of network coordinator with some assistance in typing and office work played a big role in planning, strategising, providing momentum and thrust for network activities. The process involved in the whole effort is one of facilitating collective decision making on themes or crucial issues for campaign, formation of sub-groups or action groups to take responsibility for strategising and carrying out actions on issues, each group formed by volunteering organisations based on their own strengths and needs and interests with regard to the identified issues. Convenor Organisation is represented in every sub-group. Any organisation other than the network convenor representative serves as the convenor of the sub-group. **Regional group** emerged in the scene in July 1994 by the conscious efforts of the Convenor Organisation with an intention to create a **sub-network**, nucleating out of the parent network. Southern Regional Network came into existence by addressing the felt need of the organisations who came together in the region, namely Training of Teachers and on the basis of the issue they considered important - Pressures on the Preschool Child.

1995 marked the emergence of a **core-group** with many senior persons of some of the member organisations attending the annual meetings regularly and actively participating in the collective decisions on setting the agenda for the network and also taking up the convenorship of the action sub-groups. Core-committee was formed with representatives (Chairs) of sub-groups and it is flexible in including others from time to time depending upon the issues for discussion and / or action. The core-committee determines priorities and provides directions to the activities of TN FORCES Network. The aims and objectives, the membership, the selection of members and their roles in the core-committee, the rotatory nature of convenorship, the term, the roles of the convenor and the Secretariat and funding for the Secretariat have been spelt out in the Charter of the TN FORCES, which was evolved over the years', written out and discussed at the core-committee, circulated to the members and adapted at the annual meeting held in December 1996.

It could be seen that the structure of the network evolved, over the years, out of the efforts and experiences in intensive networking of TN FORCES. A democratic process is inherent in the evolutionary process.

The members interviewed made several observations on the structure of TN FORCES which, in general, reinforce the structure that has evolved. There are some apprehensions expressed and some suggestions have also been made.

Most of the members strongly felt that the network should remain a loose conglomeration and that it is not necessary that it should be registered. The reasons given included setting in of power politics with registration, too much of paper work probably leaving less time for action, making it more rigid and stereo typed, experiences of other networks indicating signs of deterioration in quality of actions with registration.

There were two members who voiced their apprehensions about non-registration. They felt that it should be registered at least at a later date say after five years. According to them, registration brings in a feeling of permanency and there will be democratic process of elections. A suggestion was given to move at least one staff to the Secretariat wherever it moves and this will ensure certain continuity and a sense of permanency.

The idea of collecting some membership fee came from a few of course with some reservation that it will not bring in any big money. A suggestion for creation of a corpus fund to sustain the networking was given by a member. Most of them are for a non-fee paying structure.

The crucial role played with remarkable effectiveness by the network convenor was, overwhelmingly brought out with one voice by those who were interviewed. As Convenor, Mina Swaminathan gave lot of time and energy. She had a missionary zeal in making TN FORCES a force to reckon with. She has the personal capacity and capability to do what has been done. She has been highly democratic to give others the authority and freedom in the activity organised ". "She has been instrumental in giving the push." "She has been the real driving force." "Her personality, commitment to the cause of child care, capability and the way she carries herself has definitely attracted members and TN FORCES has created an impact. "She has helped the organisations involved in working together and enabling them in raising funds etc. to carry out planned activities.

The importance of active, committed Convenorship was well brought out. It was also suggested that the convenor should have the facilities for promotional work that is essential.

There were questions raised by two members as to will it work with anyone else ? Can this be done by all, by anyone who takes up the convenorship ? It leaves us not with a feeling of security that it will go on but with a feeling of insecurity "let us wait and see."

There were comments on the structure that has emerged. In general the structure is considered to be facilitating the work on taking up issues and it allows the member organisations to work together with no unhealthy competition. Emerging structure is also seen as a sign of growth.

One of the members described it as "ad hoc" structure and it will work for another five years as the tempo created will be there.

A strong comment by one of the members probably requires some reflection : TN FORCES does not have a legal standing and there is no accounting procedure. Is funding given to the network or to the convenor ? This is a major weakness of a loose conglomeration. Accounts should be transparent to the Network member organisations. So far everything is on the basis of trust. What has been done so far is excellent. But the work should go on. Another similar comment is that "TN FORCES is resting on a person and not on a system, a body of members who form TN FORCES core should be there on whom the Network should rest."

Such comments may reflect the reality or may be due to communication gaps that may exist between convenor organisation Project ACCESS and some of the organisations in the network which need to be clarified. Function of facilitating the process of networking is not the same as the function of network itself though they may be complementary. The structure that facilitates may not be the same as the structure that is facilitated. "Networking" is one of the major areas of work of the "Children on the Agenda" project of Project ACCESS funded by Bernard van Leer Foundation. Project ACCESS is accountable to the funding agency for networking. The confusion between

Project ACCESS and TN FORCES is because one part of the TN FORCES (Project ACCESS) takes on the roles of the facilitator for a specific period of time. There is a possibility that the activities of Project ACCESS are seen as activities of TN FORCES and vice versa as they are interlinked. Had the doubt been raised in the fora provided, it would not have been a problem that is hard to resolve. There has been information flow from Project ACCESS as a facilitator on all such matters of importance including funding sources. Six constituents have been enabled to obtain independent funding from Bernard van Leer Foundation for some of their activities that are relevant and supportive to the child care issues.

Communication Links in TN FORCES Network

Communication plays a vital role in networking. The channels of communication among the members of the network and among all those concerned with women and child care issues are consultations, seminars, Interactions, Annual General Meetings, Periodic Core-Committee meetings, meetings of the issue-based sub-groups frequently at the time of events, letters, telephone calls, *Imma* Newsletter. Print and electronic media are used to create awareness and to advocate issues.

The first effort in sharing information with Child Care Workers all over the state was made through **Chittu Kuruvi** (a bi-monthly magazine published by the Social Welfare Department for the Child Care Field Workers with a circulation of 30,000 copies). A six four page supplements on pre-school education were prepared by the network members and published in Chittu Kuruvi issues during 94 - 95. Later these articles were compiled and published as a book **Ippadium Karkalame** and disseminated.

A brief note on *Imma* Newsletter deserves a place here as it is an important medium through which information is shared among network members. It is a quarterly newsletter published in Tamil with the objective of serving as a Forum for all the member Organisations to voice themselves ; for sharing their ideas and activities. A total of 13

issues of the newsletter have been printed and circulated to date. The content of the newsletter includes the reports of the sub-group activities, the reports of Annual General Meetings, information on relevant publications - books on Child development, Early Childhood Education - books published by member organisations, audio-video support materials available for use while involving in sub-group activities, events organised by individual organisations on important days decided upon, announcements of new members, important achievements of member-organisations etc. The views of member organisations interviewed, on the channels of communication in the network indicated

- the adequacy of the channels
- the need to keep up the meetings, to increase the frequency of meetings wherever possible and improving the quality of meetings - annual general meetings to be made into more lively debates with more home work from the participants, the review of work to be made critical reviews, sub-group meetings be made regular than event based
- the interactive nature of the communication in practice in the network
- the influence of the communication modes on the members such as establishment of contacts, development of trust and fellowship, reaching lot of people
- the need to communicate messages through all actions that due credit is given to work carried out
- the need to be cautious about such subtle messages that set patterns such as TN FORCES will find money for the events, which results in the organisations unwilling to spend money for any event.

About *Imma* Newsletter, the member organisations felt that it is informative, comprehensive, gives fairly detailed news in limited space, gives information on relevant issues, gives the feeling of going through a training, has a personal touch, connects people, regularly read in Teachers' meetings. The problems spelt out by them regarding the newsletter are that the members are not serious and regular in sharing the information on the sub-group activities and also sometimes the information sent did not find a place in the newsletter. Some of the suggestions made were to form a committee to involve members in information sharing ; a person can take responsibility in collecting the information from all the sub-groups as the activities of the sub-groups are under-reported ; or a sub-group be given major space in each issue.

Communication support from Project ACCESS

A large number and variety of materials have been produced and disseminated by Project ACCESS in support of the TN FORCES network activities. The types of materials include campaign leaflets, pamphlets, Memoranda, Seminar reports, research study reports, training manuals, books for teachers, video-films, audio - cassettes, audio and video-spots.

The video spots on the **Burden on the Pre-school Child** produced by Project ACCESS and shown on Doordarshan regularly generated a tremendous response from the public - the parents, teachers and managements of schools. Parents have enquired about alternate schools, School managements have shown interest in play-way education and there is a demand for training. Professional organisations such as the Indian Academy of Paediatrics is planning to work on the theme - Healthy primary and pre-primary education. A series of activities around the theme are being conducted in different parts of Tamil Nadu. The member organisations of TN FORCES feel that these spots have created awareness on the pressures of pre-school children.

A table showing the events organised and materials produced by Project ACCESS in support of the TN FORCES Network is presented in Annexure 6. This clearly brings out that many videos and video spots and audios and audio-spots have been produced by Project ACCESS.

Member organisations of TN FORCES Network highly appreciated the role played by the Convenor. One or two of them raised the question of giving due credit to the member organisations for the roles played by them in collaborative activities. It can be seen as a problem especially with electronic media playing a big role with Project ACCESS or MSSRF coming up frequently in public. In view of the high profile enjoyed by all the departments of MSSRF it is quite possible that Project ACCESS also comes in.

This has both positive and negative impact. This may create an uncomfortable feeling in some of the members. In the course of production of these materials, it is necessary to discuss and clarify the aspect of credit with the organisations concerned.

There is a need to examine the roles of Project ACCESS - an independent organisation, as Convenor of TN FORCES and as a member organisation in TN FORCES. Clarification and discussion mentioned should be in terms of these roles and the materials produced.

Activities of TN FORCES

Experiencing group strength through Network in Action

Providing a broad perspective of crucial issues as a base was considered useful for understanding the need to network as well as to have a framework for the issues taken up for actions. TN FORCES Network was provided with such perspectives through consultations and Seminars. The first such consultation was held on Maternity and Child Care in August 1993, for advocating issues related to maternity and child care from the perspective of women's triple roles. NGOs, Professionals and Government Officials participated. The outcome of the seminar is that National Commission for Women set up a panel on Labour Legislation and Social Security for Women.

The second one was a Seminar on the Policy of the Young Child which the Professional Social Workers Forum and Project ACCESS organised in October 1994. Some of the network members participated.

This brought together NGOs, Professionals and Policy makers to critically review policies and identify strategies for change. Report of the Seminar has been published. The outcome is that the TN FORCES members are involved in several government initiated consultancies.

In November 1995 a seminar on "NGO-GO partnership" was organised by ICCW (Indian Council of Child Welfare) and Project ACCESS. The objective was to bring together government, NGOs to plan and review possibilities of partnership in child care. The participants were Government, NGO personnel and academics. A document "Design for Partnership" has been published.

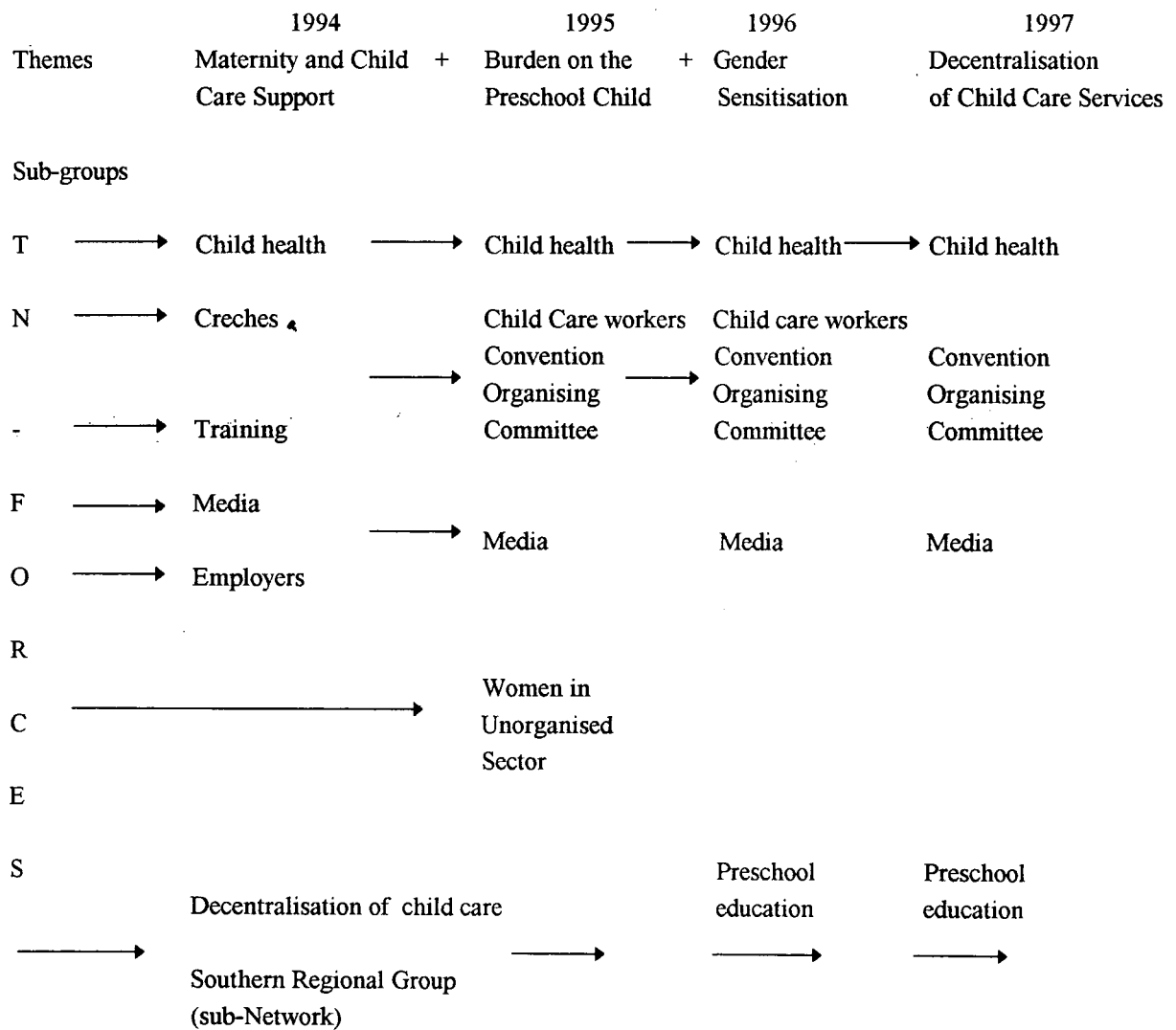
Campaigning : The major strategy

Campaigning for the review of laws, policies and programmes relating to support services for the continuum of maternity and child care from the perspective of women's multiple roles was adopted as a major strategy in TN FORCES in order to reach and influence a wide range of people involved, namely, policy makers, legislators, employers, programme planners, implementors, and the general public. Campaigning incorporates within it the multi-faceted activities of advocacy, information sharing, capacity building, lobbying, strategising and carrying out joint activities.

Decisions regarding theme for campaigning, strategising for campaign activities and taking responsibilities for carrying out the activities were made jointly by the member organisations at the annual general body meetings. This process of participatory decision making was initiated in November 1993 and continued in subsequent annual meetings to-date. Each of these meetings was chaired by a person of one of the member organisations. Though the attendance in these meetings was made voluntary and the travel cost is borne by the organisations themselves the member, the seniority of the person(s), continuity in attendance of the same level persons over the years have been encouraging. The emergence of the core group is the result. The number of organisations represented including the arrangement of the Southern Regional Network to send one or two to represent several organisations to save cost, it could be said that a little less than one half of the organisations attended these meetings.

The emergence of core-group could be taken as a sign of commitment of the organisations and hence the network gaining strength as a group. In other words, TN FORCES network has gained its identity and members identify with it. After identifying the theme of the specific issues of importance, the members formed into sub-groups according to their strengths, needs and interests, as was mentioned in the earlier section on structure.

Fig. Themes for Campaign and Issues based action Sub-groups



The "figure" presented on the "Themes for Campaign and Issue-based Action Sub-groups" indicates that the theme that gets introduced continues over the years as new themes get added up. The four themes for campaigning have been chosen in the four annual meetings. They are "Maternity and Child-care Support" , Pressures on the Pre-school Child (Burden on the Pre-school Child), "Gender Sensitisation" and "Decentralisation of Child Care Services". The themes have been chosen on the mandate of TN FORCES,

As is shown in the figure, there has been some modifications such as merger of sub-groups and additional groups added over the years. Sub-network of Southern Regional group continues with its activities throughout the period.

A brief account of major activities of the sub-groups may be useful in understanding interactions within and among sub-groups.

1. Child health

There have been four member-organisations consistently in this sub-group. They are Indian Academy of Paediatrics (IAP), Tamil Nadu Voluntary Health Association (TNVHA), Family Planning Association of India (FPAI) and Project ACCESS.

The group decided to focus on a specific goal of "Promotion of Breast Feeding for better child survival". The group organised interaction session with legislators to orient them on the need for change in laws and schemes relating to child care interaction with trade unions to include issues of maternity leave for working women and creche for their children; preparation and submission of a Memorandum on "Mothers milk - every child's birth-right (a two page note in English and Tamil) with recommendations for support services for maternity and child care to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and copies to Secretaries and Ministers of Health and Social Welfare. The demands made were extension of maternity leave from three months to four months from the date of delivery,

two nursing breaks with a minimum of 45 mts. a day, sufficient increase in the cash benefit under Muthulakshmi Reddy Scheme, from Rs. 300 - Rs. 1600 as a financial support to enable women to breastfeed for four months, removing the income ceiling and restrictions on number of children, creating public awareness by widely distributing the pamphlet, by reproducing in journals of several member organisations, using for signature campaigns by Trade Unions interactions with health related professionals, NGOs and Government officials - Secretaries of Health and Labour departments and working mothers, releasing an 18 mts. video film "Anguish" depicting the problems of working mothers in breast feeding; distributing copies of this film to educational institutions, NGOs, women's groups and telecasting on Doordarshan' participating in a panel discussion on AIR to sensitise public on breastfeeding as the right of the child' conducting training for a large number of health workers for empowering women to breast feed using the Manual **Annaikku Adaravu**.

During the first week of August 50 - 60 programmes are conducted annually focusing on the social responsibility to enable young mothers to breastfeed their children.

The **outcomes** of the activities are:

- Announcement in the budget speech for 1995 - 96 about six months maternity leave to women in the organised sector
- Extension of noon-meals to pregnant women and lactating mothers for six months
- Tamil Nadu Voluntary Health Association, the member organisation in the sub-group has adopted the four month maternity leave and 45 mts. nursing break (allows young mothers to come to office 45 mts. late for one and a half years) for their own employees.
- The medical profession, Indian Academy of Paediatrics (IAP) the member organisation in the sub-group on "Child Health" has taken as its theme for 1997 "Healthy Primary and Pre-primary Education" and is organising a series of activities around the theme, bringing together various stakeholders meetings are being held in different parts of Tamil Nadu. Four meetings have already been held. Few more meetings are planned.

The video-spots and films produced by ACCESS as well as resource persons are utilised by them. Early childhood education is focused in a big way from the health point of view, which is striking to parents and other adults concerned.

2. Child Care Workers' Convention Organising Committee

The sub-groups on training and creches were merged to form a sub-group on Child Care Workers' Convention Organising Committee. This group had eleven members - Women's Voluntary Services and Women's Indian Association (Convenor) Gandhigram Trust, Indian Council of Child Welfare TN, Indian Red Cross Society, Vidya Vikasini, Indian Association for Preschool Education, Family Planning Association of India TN, Children's Garden School Society, Nutrition on Wheels, Guild of Service, Lakshmi College of Education and Project ACCESS (MSSRF). The same members continued over the years.

The formation of a special committee (as a sub-group) for organising child care workers convention meant their concern was about the child care workers better working conditions, recognition as teachers and building their capacity for providing a stimulating environment for children.

The major activities of this group are :

Organising child care workers' Convention for two days in September 94 with objectives of bringing together child care workers (350 from 93 NGOs running creches in Tamil Nadu) for training and sharing experiences. Recommendations were made on conditions of work, on administration of creches, training needs, relationships with the community, participation of management. Follow-up activities were organising a seminar on Management of Creches in April 1995 for the NGOs running creches to review objectives and status of creche programme, supervision and monitoring, morale and motivation of workers ; organising a five day orientation course for 30 supervisors from 15 institutions of creches and balwadis in NGO sector in Tamil Nadu to improve capability of supervisors

in order to strengthen child care services, celebrating Teachers' day in September 1996 with 125 child care workers from 20 NGOs with an objective of bringing child care workers together to share their concerns, prepare learning aids and offer recreational activities.

The events listed show that one event followed the other. Feedback obtained from convention led to the workshops for Management and Supervisors indicating the linkages in the chain.

The important outputs are the video and print documentation of the convention, the reports of the workshops. An important outcome is that the teachers have become aware of play-way education and some have adopted the method in their centres.

3. Media

Since the first annual meeting in November 1993 there was lot of interest and enthusiasm among member organisations in sensitising media (especially electronic) to play a positive role in strengthening the child care services. Several different kinds of interesting strategies were also suggested. Though five organisations joined the sub-group there was hardly any action in the first year 1994. In the second annual meeting in December 1994, lot of discussions centred around media and a reorganisation of sub-group took place since then four members constitute the Media sub-group. They are All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) Convenor, Feminist Association for Social Action (FASA), National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) and Project ACCESS.

The major activities of this group are :

- Conducted a study of the portrayal of women in Tamil Cinema and a publication on **Thirai Padangalil Pengal** (Women in Cinema) was brought out in May 1996 for use by Women's organisation, legislators, media, TN-FORCES members - 750 copies distributed.

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- Monitored the FM Channel of All India Radio to see whether social advertisements, particularly those related to women and children are aired to prescribed norms (for every nine minutes of programme, one minute of social message is to be given) some messages on women and children are being given (child's weight, Mother's milk) and there is scope for Media group preparing jingles.
 - Another study on depiction of women and children in TV programmes - cable TVs as well as DD1 and 2 in collaboration with several women's organisations - two weeks study is completed. Analysis of data are on. One major finding is that TVs telecast cinema related programmes more than 70 % of their time. Plans are on to make certain demands such as reducing the time etc.
 - Played a significant role in participating in the discussions on the themes of video spots, produced by Project ACCESS for advocacy, on gender justice - women's and children's rights - regularly shown on Doordarshan, in use for discussions with public, NGOs, women's groups and students.
 - Participated as resource person in the Orientation workshop for programme executives of 10 AIR stations to sensitise on the issues of women and children - a supporting activity by Project ACCESS - an entirely new perspective on women and their roles were given.
 - The major outcome is the creation of awareness among public and media personnel regarding issues related to portrayals of women and children in cinema and television.
 - Signs of positive intervention in the media are already beginning to be seen with the discussions on the issues with the media personnel.

4. Child Care Needs of Working Women in Unorganised Sector

In the annual meeting of December 1994, it was informed that a new group is formed on child care needs of working women in unorganised sector. The members of this group are Kattida Thozhilalar Panchayat Sangam - Centre for Labour Education and Development, National Federation of Indian Women, United Federation of Indian Women, United Federation of Indian Women, Pennurimai Iyakkam, Project ACCESS.

The major activities were :

- For the construction of Asian Games village, out of 100 labourers 300 - 400 children were involved, brought from outside the state and kept in poor conditions of living - the mothers of these children were not paid minimum wages - a Memorandum was prepared on these issues and submitted to the Government.
- Government is a signatory in the UN Convention on discrimination against women, comments on the Women's policy were made in TN FORCES meeting stressing the inclusion of Maternity and Child Care Support Services and a resolution was sent to the government.

This sub-group has not been very active though there are lots of demands that need to be pushed. Some of the strategies suggested by the convenor are "Campaign among the women workers creating awareness on child care as a social responsibility"; Agitational programmes for minimum wages, equal wages, provision of creche in the Government Construction Works, Sensitising Trade Unions, Case Studies on Construction of Railway line, Telugu Ganga etc., child care is the prerogative of older girls / boys - Demonstration of these children with the babies on children's day.

In support of working on this issue, Project ACCESS has produced a 23 mt. video on Women, Work and Child Care (Ivargalin Kuzhanthaigalum Kuzhanthaigale) and also published research studies - child care strategies of women in unorganised sector (English and Tamil) and Women's Multiple Roles and Management of Breastfeeding in English (Titles of publications : Balancing Multiple Roles and At What Cost).

5. Pre-school Education

Formed in early 1996, this sub-group had the objective of exploring the possibilities of regulating the nursery schools, continuously mobilising the public, parents, administrators

and schools to sensitise them on these issues (in the context of the conducive climate created by the TV Campaign on play-way education by Project ACCESS with 10 video-spots on Doordarshan), orienting with managements and Teachers' Associations, developing suitable training courses with National Council of Teacher Education through Indian Association for Pre-School Education, promoting the development of alternate schools, circulating the guidelines on minimum standards of pre-primary education developed by NCERT among all concerned, to explore the possibilities of running self-financed inservice training in Summer.

The member organisations in the sub-group are Children's Garden School, Indian Association for Preschool Education, Women's Voluntary Services, Guild of Service, Indian Council of Child Welfare, Alagappa University and Project ACCESS.

The major activities have been :

- Voicing its concern to the government about the present position of pre-school education in the state for which a memorandum on pre-school education was prepared urging a separate directorate for pre-schools, submitted and discussed with the Minister of Education, Tamil Nadu.
- Planning and conducting a one month Summer Refresher Course in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) on an experimental self-financed basis, with the objectives of providing orientation to the practising teachers, gauging the demand for ECCE training and taking the issue to the Government again as a public demand for training in ECCE. This course was organised by four training institutions - Children's Garden School Society - Chennai, Vidya Vikasini Society - Coimbatore, Gandhigram Trust - Gandhigram and Alagappa University - Department of Education, Karaikudi.

The outcomes or the response to the Summer Refresher Course was overwhelming bringing out the existence of a strong demand for training in development appropriate play activities, child development and ECCE.

IAPE has taken the responsibility of publishing a series of articles in English on pre-school education in the HINDU newspapers weekly magazine section once a month, as a measure towards communication towards awareness and advocacy. Already five articles have been printed (since March 97) and there were a number of responses from the readers and in order to make it interactive, an article from the Secretary IAPE (TN) responding to the concerns of the readers has appeared.

6. Decentralisation of Child Care Services

In the context of elected local bodies in place and with increased scope for decentralisation of child care services which could be expected to result in quality enhancement and services suited to local needs. A sub-group is formed to work on the issue. The members of the sub-group are Satyamurthi Centre for Democratic Studies, Gandhigram Trust, Department of Social Work, Loyola College, LRSA and Project ACCESS.

The major activities have been

- A meeting with the State Finance Commission to learn the thinking of the Government on decentralisation of Child Care Services, prepared a memorandum to be included in the report of SFC.
- One-day interaction (March 97) with the woman councillors of Chennai Corporation on issues of Women and Children
- One-day workshop with elected women panchayat members to facilitate identification of issues of women and children (March 97) in Gandhigram
- One day workshop with women councillors of Alandur and Tambaram in July 1997

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- One day with women panchayat members at Alwarkurichi, Tirunelveli in July 1997
 - Supportive study materials on decentralisation of child care services, for use by panchayat members, NGO personnel councillors, women's groups, have been produced by Project ACCESS.

Sub-Network of TN FORCES - *Southern Regional Group*

The seed for the Southern Regional Group was probably sown with the visit of Mrs. Mina Swaminathan to the Community pre-schools of Palmyrah Workers' Development Society in Kanyakumari District and with the study of these schools by Mr. S.J.P. Karikalan an educationist and administrative officer of DATA (Development Association for Training and Technology Appropriation), Madurai as a part of the Suraksha Series. In June 1994 conscious efforts were made by TN FORCES convenor organisation to call for a meeting of NGOs to join the network. About 15 organisation attended and expressed concern about burden of books and importance of learning through play. Southern Regional Group was formed with two coordinators Palmyrah Workers Development Society and Nuthana Trust. The group followed up with a series of monthly meetings and decided on the theme of **Pressures on the Pre-school Child** (Burden on the Preschool Child). The need for training of trainers came up. A training programme was organised (December 1994) for child care workers, trainers, supervisors and managements of creches for developing appropriate curriculum and skills at Nagercoil. Play curriculum was introduced and some skills were developed. Managements committed support and a Resource Team was formed. There was a rigorous follow-up with lot of enthusiasm sharing experiences of training. Through a series of workshops upto January 1997 Association for Integrated Rural Development (AIRD) started off 10 pre-schools in their area. Training of these teachers was undertaken as an experiment and worked on successfully. All those involved were highly enthused.

At that time, the idea of campaigning on the issue of pressures of pre-school children was introduced by the Convenor, TN FORCES. An NGOs meeting with 22 NGOs was held - the idea was promoted through video cassette - 15 NGOs were ready to get involved. Kinds of campaign materials and modes of dissemination were planned jointly - handbills, posters, calendars, jingles, folk-media. DATA took up the responsibility of coordination. A media workshop was organised (July 95) at Reaching the Unreached at Kallupatti, Madurai district for developing resource materials for the campaign with the help of resource persons from the media. Six street plays and print materials (posters, slogans) were initiated. Following this in October 1995 a folk-media workshop was organised in AIRD at Mandapam again for developing resource materials for the campaign. Villupattu (Suvaiya, Sumaiya) on the theme was developed. A five-day street theatre training was given to AIRD community workers. Incidentally a video-documentation was made by chance and a report was also prepared.

More or less at the same time the Convenor TN FORCES, i.e., Project ACCESS produced and released by Secretary, Education in the presence of the Directors of Doordarshan and AIR five video spots, 3 audio-spots and two video films: A Dangerous Burden / Learning can be Fun (November 1995). Some of these films were made in Madurai and RTU Kallupatti. Meeting of the Southern Regional Group was again organised in August 1996 for finalising a proposal for a sustained campaign "Alternative Education by 2000" - a mass awareness campaigning for three years - implementation of play way education in all NGO schools, orientation to play way and low cost material production. Proposals were made and submitted. As no funding was coming forth, the campaign was dropped. Again in July 1997, a one day process workshop of NGOs was held and a minimum common campaign programme was drawn with major components of awareness workshop for Parents, Teachers and Managements, Training for Teachers, Action Group formation, Folk-media, Electronic Media, Innovative campaign ideas. 11 NGOs are to take responsibility a total budget of 3 lakhs and 25,000 for the three year period (Annexure 7)

Issue-focus through Individual Member Organisations of TN FORCES

Since the first annual meeting in August 1993, a joint decision was taken by TN FORCES network that events highlighting the issues focused should be organised by the member organisations. The identified days are :

8th March	Women's Day
1st May	Labour Day
11th July	Population Day
1st August	Breastfeeding Day
5th September	Teachers Day
8th September	Literacy Day
14th November	Children's Day
10th December	Human Rights Day

The reports of the events are being sent to the Network newsletter . "*Imma*". Of late the Newsletter provides the member organisations with strategies to focus on the issues identified. These events organised by the individual organisation keep the issues alive throughout the year.

Stage 3 : Consolidation of Participatory Process in Networking

The period from August 1996 to June 1997 marks the third stage in networking focusing on the consolidation of participatory process in networking efforts for further strengthening and sustaining the network in future.

Evolution of the Charter of TN FORCES

As an effort in consolidation of intensive networking, a charter of the TN FORCES was evolved providing guidelines for the future. In the annual meetings, discussions were held

about the membership criteria. The structure as it evolved is the experience of all the member-organisations who were active in strategising, mobilising resources and carrying out the activities. The experiences of the convenor organisation and the Secretariat helped in specifying their roles of the Convenor, the secretariat and guidelines for funding and maintenance of accounts. Charter of the TN FORCES is the consolidation of these experiences and hence it is evolutionary. A draft made of the charter was given to the core committee members, at the meeting of the Core-committee held on 12 October 1996, comments requested for and later finalised. The finalised charter was sent to the member organisations before the annual meeting of December 1996, when it was adopted. (Annex. 8)

Transfer of Convenorship

According to the charter, Convenor shall be chosen from among the members, at the AGM, for a period of three years and the office shall be held in rotation. This arrangement is made to avoid the network being identified with a single organisation and in the interests of its sustainability that Convenorship should be taken up by member organisations on a rotation basis. Apart from providing an opportunity for leadership, this change would also ensure that the network is constantly and dynamically evolving and benefits from varied professional experiences of the convenor.

A set of criteria was presented to the Core Committee members in advance for the meeting of Core Committee to discuss the same on 12 October 1996. The criteria suggested were the organisations professional capability to run the network, not involved in running programmes / services similar to that of the member organisations to ensure for the convenor to be non-competitive and hence enabling focusing on networking, should have the necessary infra-structure and willingness to shoulder the responsibility. Based on the criteria, names of few organisations which could take up the Convenorship were suggested. These institutions were contacted to ascertain their willingness and

Department of Social Work, Loyola College agreed to be the convenor. This was placed in Annual General Body Meeting in December 1996 and adapted. Project ACCESS will serve as co-convenor for a period of six months to help the new convenor to get a feel of the roles and to mobilise funding for the Secretariat. The informal process of transition that is taking place is smooth and the relationships between the two institutions are cordial. The informality in approach has been the key factor in enabling smooth transition.

In this whole effort at networking there are some important underlying features that need to be constantly kept in mind in the years to come for the network to sustain itself. They are the evolutionary nature of the process of networking, the democratic process inherent in the evolutionary process and the flexible and functional structure.

Collaboration with National FORCES

TN-FORCES is constructly collaborating with National FORCES on several issues of common concern. TN-FORCES has participated in Biennial National Consultations as well as in lobbying efforts at the National level. In May 1995, at the National Consultation, TN-FORCES made a presentation on the experiences of networking in Tamil Nadu - "An analysis of Networking - Efforts and Response" Tamil Nadu was the first state to launch the State level FORCES in 1992. In 1997, there are four more states which have their state level FORCES - Maharashtra, Gujarat, W. Bengal and Rajasthan.

In 1996, TN-FORCES joined hands with the National FORCES in lobbying and child care rights of the women labourers still continuing. In August 96, National FORCES met the Finance Minister to impress upon him for allocating more resources for child care, in which TN-FORCES again collaborated with the national level FORCES. In January'97, the convenor TN-FORCES participated in the National level Consultation jointly conducted by National FORCES and National Commission for Women. Efforts were made to draw attention to the plight of young children and plead for the inclusion of

child care services in the Minimum Needs Programme and larger allocation for the young child in the ninth plan. In September 97, TN-FORCES new convenor (Dept. of Social Work, Loyola College) and the earlier convenor Project ACCESS attended the third National Consultation of National FORCES. T.N- FORCES presented their role with reference to the child care issues in the State of Tamil Nadu.

A close look at the experience of TN-FORCES in collaborating with National FORCES brings to the fore the collaboration as an issue in itself. According to the Convenor TN-FORCES, in the initial phase, TN-FORCES tried to duplicate or reflect national concerns on of the watch-dog of the government schemes at the operational level. In the second phase, it become clear at the state level that the members were not for the 'watch dog' role and they were more for taking up issues of importance in child care and taking actions at the levels necessary. Accordingly, the state level agenda was accepted and passed (elaborated in this report). Still the convenor continued to make efforts in linking up with the national network TN-FORCES expected the National FORCES to play a strong supportive role to the state level FORCES especially in resource mobilisation, communication of relevant important information among members in different states, active participation and contribution at the state level seminars and important meetings. These expectations remained mostly unfulfilled as there was little or no response from the National FORCES, leading to a feeling of frustration.

In the third phase, with four state level FORCES in place, the need to collaborate is felt strongly by TN-FORCES and the possibility of horizontal networking is recognised and contacts are being initiated. TN FORCES is constantly collaborating with the National FORCES on several issues of common concern. In May 1995, TN FORCES participated in the Biennial Meeting of National FORCES and presented TN FORCES efforts and response in networking. The States of Maharashtra and Gujarat are planning to launch on their State FORCES. Strong lobbying was attempted in 1996 for the inclusion of the Maternity and Child Care rights of women labourers in the Agricultural

Workers Bill. In August 1996 members met the Finance Minister to impress upon him for allocating more resources for Child Care. In January 1997, the Convenor, TN FORCES participated in the National-level Consultation jointly conducted by National FORCES and the National Commission for Women. Efforts were made to draw attention to the plight of young children and plead for the inclusion of child care services in the Minimum Needs Programme and larger allocations for the Young Child in the Ninth Plan.

Major outcomes of the activities of the Network TN FORCES

The outcomes presented here under are those perceived by the member organisations as well as the reviewer.

1. Child care workers in the NGO sector in Tamil Nadu is beginning to feel that they are "teachers" of young children and that their role is important.
2. Public awareness on **Pressures on preschool children** is created
3. The seed for play-way education in early childhood is planted. Alternate education interest is there in the atmosphere.
4. The importance of quality training of teachers in play-way education is increasingly becoming clear to the NGOs; to the teachers and managements of pre-schools.
5. Need for lobbying with the government at different levels is recognised by NGOs and an atmosphere for dialogue between government and the network has been created
6. Awareness on triple roles of women and empowering women for breastfeeding is created among the health sector personnel and women's organisations

General Observations on TN FORCES

The general observations on TN FORCES network are based on the experiences shared, comments and suggestions given by the member organisations interviewed on various aspects of networking as well as the insights gained by the reviewer in the process of reviewing.

1. TN FORCES network is visible and has come to be seen as a force. It is active and growing in strength.
2. Issues related to child care are focused and given direction.
3. Member organisations have commitment and enthusiasm, have developed ability to mobilise the required resources, ability to organise things physically.
4. Participation in TN FORCES has influenced its member organisations in a variety of ways in developing skills in training quality teachers; streamlining their pre-schools; bringing out their talents in folk-lore for campaigning, widening their perspectives - becoming aware of the different dimensions of child care, women's triple roles, health of women and children as social responsibility developing faith in experimentation, raising funds for research study, production of books, audio-video cassettes as a support to campaigning.
5. Being part of TN FORCES seem to have created a sense of happiness, a sense of worth and a sense of pride in the member organisations and above all a sense of partnership.
6. The dynamism and intensive facilitation of the convenor organisation has been instrumental in the emergence of active network.
7. The production and use of variety of issue-appropriate materials at appropriate points have been notable in the whole process of networking in that they have played a substantial supportive role in contributing towards stimulating lot of interest in the member organisations in network activities. Events with the supportive materials have been the life-line of TN FORCES. The convenor had played a tremendous role in production and dissemination of these materials.

Observations on sub-groups and their activities

1. In general, the sub-groups have been active and the enthusiasm of the members is visible.
2. The involvement and enthusiasm of the members increase during the events organised on issues than at other times. The more the number and variety of events, the more the tempo.

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3. Events increase the frequency of meetings of the member organisations and builds in close working relationships among the organisations. The sub-group members do not have the time to spare for regular meetings throughout the year as they have their own responsibilities in their own organisations.
 4. Common programmes involving all the member organisations in all the sub-groups make the events all pervasive and the network visible.
 5. The level of involvement of sub-groups varies from one year to the other.
 6. The level of involvement of the sub-group members in the activities varies - a few assuming greater responsibility than others.
 7. The TN FORCES convenor organisation's representation in all sub-groups seemed to have served the purpose of enlivening of groups wherever there is slowing down of pace and activities, and also in supporting the group with a variety of appropriate materials for the activities.
 8. As a process of strengthening, the intensive facilitation by the convenor organisation is a requirement of utmost importance. Convenor plays a crucial role in promoting activism in the member organisations.
 9. Member organisations in the sub-groups or the Network have their own priorities and there is often a clash between organisational and network priorities creating a dilemma. Convenor needs to work on this through negotiation or matching the practices.
 10. Convenor has to be sensitive to the ego clashes of the members and handling such clashes with extreme care is a necessity.
 11. The sources of inspiration for the members in carrying out the activities seem to be arising from
 - a) the member organisations themselves their interest in the issue, their commitment to the cause, the strength of the leadership in the sub-group convenors, the time and energy spent with the group initially by the convenor.

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- b) the activities themselves - when the underlying issue is crucial to members, when they fulfil the organisational needs ; when it is a kind of novel experience, when they are contextual in the sense, they spring out of the major events that are changing the scenes in the society such as panchayat elections and local elected panchayats in place with a large proportion of women
- c) conscious experiential learnings from the activities carried out
- becoming aware of their acquiring new perspectives such as looking at enabling breastfeeding by women as a social responsibility as against the existing view of seeing it as a personal responsibility, looking at women from the point of view of the child to looking at the child from the point of view of women and her multiple roles.
 - becoming conscious of the feedback from one event leading to a series of events as in the case of child workers' convention leading to a seminar for Management of schools and a workshop for supervisors in the programme.
 - developing a strong sense of building up a data-base for actions to develop an understanding of the situation in order to influence those concerned as in the case of media group involving in studies
 - Gaining clarity in NGO-GO relationships in lobbying efforts as in the case of child health group with a series of lobbying efforts
 - becoming conscious of their own increasing capability in training, campaigning etc. as in the case of Southern Regional Network putting into practice in their own organisations the messages of campaign as in the case of four months maternity leave and 45 mts. nursing breaks for their own employees in Tamil Nadu Voluntary Health Association
12. Issue -appropriate supportive materials produced and used have played a big role in campaigning and issue-based sub-group activities.
13. The **focus** of the individual sub-group(s) regarding issue(s) is important or else it may create overlapping or duplication of activities in different sub-groups such as "child care workers' convention", "Preschool" and "Pressures on the preschool child" - as all the three at some point emphasised training of workers.

Shortcomings

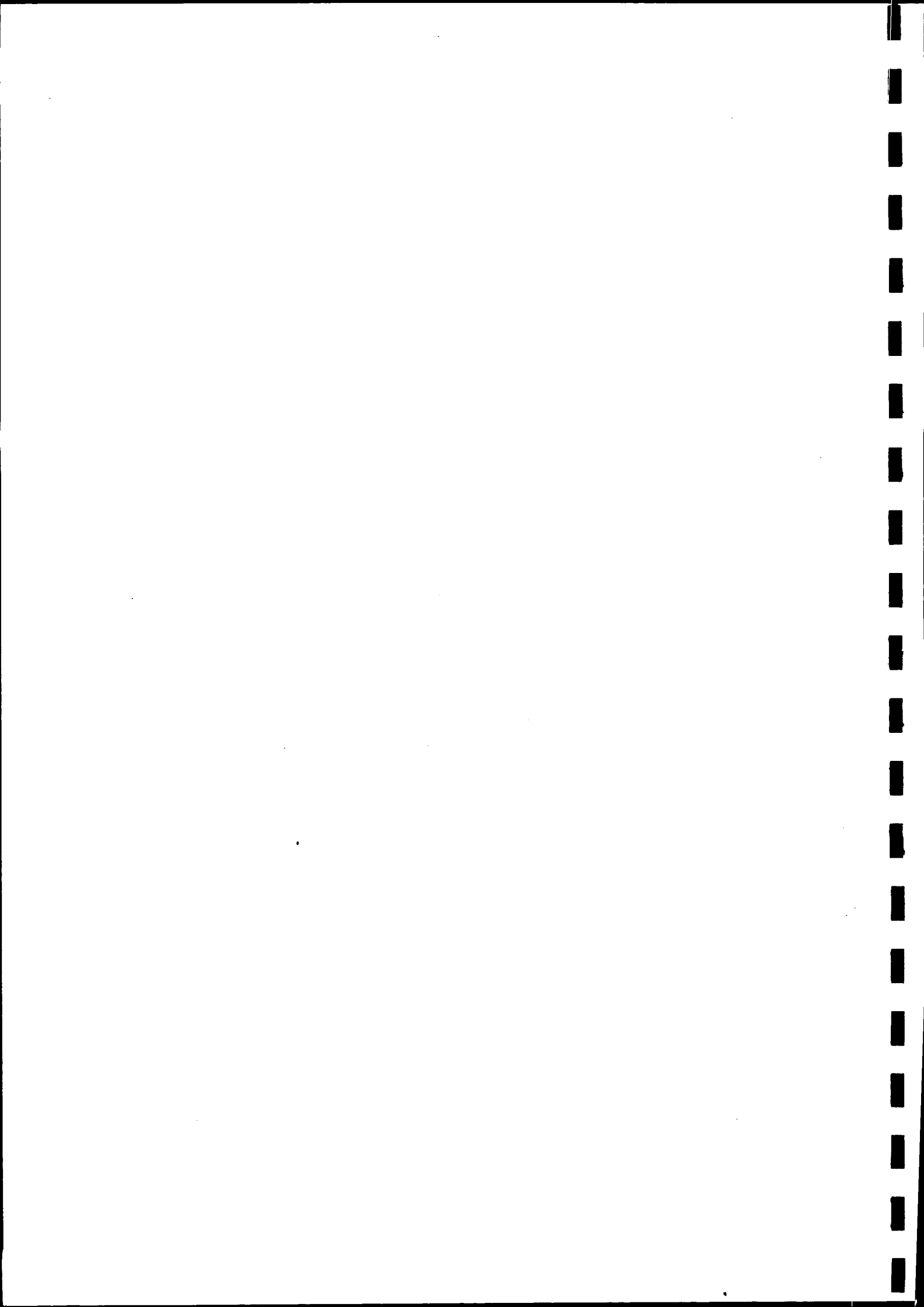
1. Though the geographical coverage of TN FORCES network has been quite impressive, the areas yet to be covered requiring intensive networking efforts are still as much as the areas covered.
2. Though care was taken to underline the "willingness to work" as a crucial membership criteria more than the mere number of members, there are still passive members making the network not as effective as it could have been.
3. The secretariat of TN FORCES in the convenor organisation of Project ACCESS though small has had the privilege of the other staff of the "Children on the Agenda" project sharing responsibilities of networking whenever necessary. Hence the suggested size of the Secretariat cannot be taken as optimal.
4. Though there is lot of appreciation of the convenor's role in the whole process of networking, apprehensions of one or two members on the following counts shows a kind of gap in the communication with the member organisations.
 - ⇒ Convenor's financial accountability to TN FORCES member organisations;
 - ⇒ basis of networking as "trust" rather than a system in place;
 - ⇒ suggestion for overcoming the two above mentioned shortcomings through registration of network which brings in a sense of permanency and democratic process of election ;
 - ⇒ giving due credit to the member organisations for their role in collaborative activities with the convenor
5. The *Imma* Newsletter though accepted as an important link among the network members, it is not as interactive medium as it was expected to be. The responsibility is indicated to lie more with the member organisations.

Pointers to the Future

1. The task of widening the network should be pursued on the basis of geographical areas to be covered as well as on the basis of issues. Suggestions of some of the members for networking at the district level could be considered.
2. Sub-networks, Regional / District, once initiated should be encouraged to form resource groups in the areas in support of the issues taken up.
3. Sub-network of Southern Regional Group should be supported to carry through their well planned common minimum campaign on the "Pressures on the Preschool Child" covering eight districts in the region.
4. For encouraging active membership there should be revalidation of members from time to time on the basis of the criteria specified "Commitment to Issues" and "Willingness to Work" and action taken accordingly.
5. The question of funding for sustaining the network as well as for important activities taken up by member organisations requires attention from time to time, which is related to the larger funding scene. At present the funding agencies seem to create a kind of a situation in which the convenor with the responsibility of networking, if not careful, can become a funding agency of sorts. This is ironical as it hits the very basis of the network, coming together for a cause can easily become coming together for funds. This requires lot of attention in terms of finding a solution with no compromises.
6. Convenors role in networking continues to be crucial as intensive facilitation promotes activism in sub-groups and it has to be kept up.
7. The sub-groups should be encouraged to organise a minimum number and in that a variety of events or activities in a year on the issues taken up.
8. There should be a minimum of two and a maximum of four common programmes, in a year, on crucial issues in which all the members of all the sub-groups are involved to ensure the solidarity of the organisations in the network which would also keep the network as a visible force,

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9. The "focus" of issues taken up by different sub-groups could be examined from time to time to avoid any duplication of efforts as well as to explore the possible effective combinations of groups.
 10. Convenors of sub-groups should be encouraged to ensure active participation of all the members through a process of group building.
 11. Conscious efforts in building the capacity of the sub-groups as pressure-groups to the level of "flying squads" (with abilities in articulation of issues, keeping the basic facts at finger tips, presenting the issues convincingly to those who matter) suggested by one of the members could be considered.
 12. The production and dissemination of issue-appropriate materials should continue with the same tempo as it has been in the past three years.
 13. The electronic media should be fully utilised for presenting the issues. To begin with the time specified for social messages could be utilised as much as possible.
 14. An Editorial Committee with some guidelines to enhance the interactive nature of the newsletter *Imma* should be set up. *Imma* could be expanded if possible.
 15. Apprehensions of a serious nature could be brought to the core group for clarification and discussion by member organisations themselves as this will ensure a healthy atmosphere in the network. Opportunities could be created for this if necessary.
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Annexure



Annexure 1

A brief note on Project Children on the Agenda

The experience of dealing with issues relating to women and young children through the network of TN FORCES was considered to be partly instrumental in drawing up project **Children on the Agenda**. The project is guided by a Technical Advisory Committee

The Major aims of the project are :

- To support, strengthen and Coordinate the TN FORCES network to act as a pressure group for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Tamil Nadu in general
- To cultivate a supportive climate for ECCE, specifically focusing on policy makers, the general public and media
- To improve the qualitative aspects of trainers' training and
- To conduct research and documentation to support the process.

The project has four broad areas of action :

- Network Development
- Advocacy and Communication
- Training and Instructional Materials
- Research and Documentation

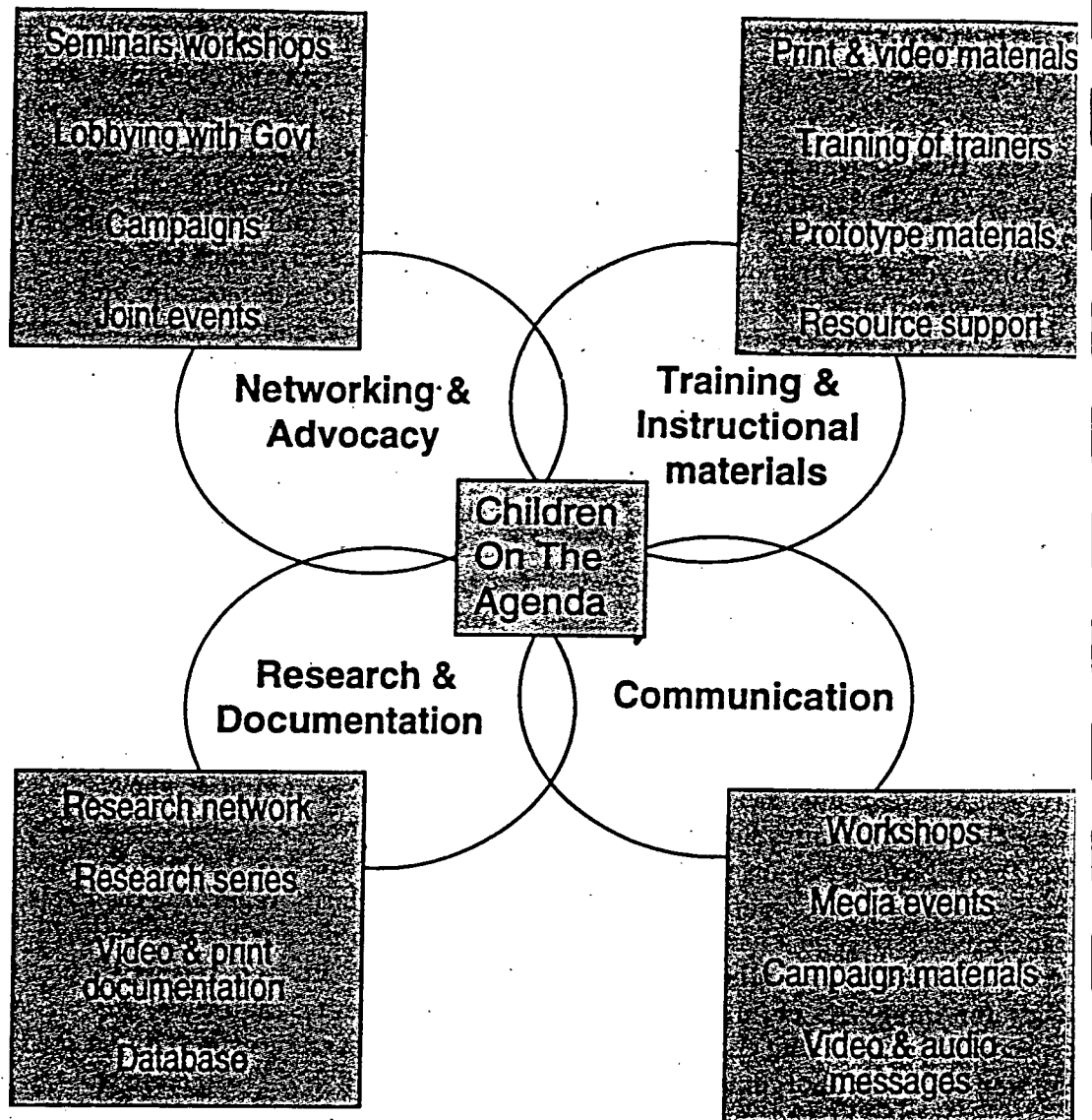


Fig. : Children on the Agenda

Annexure 2

**TN FORCES : A STUDY OF THE PROCESS OF NETWORKING
(Guidelines for Interviewing)**

I. Identification Data :

- 1. Name of the person interviewed
- 2. Name of the organisation
- 3. Position in the organisation
- 4. Organisation's major area of work

II. TN FORCES Network

Basic Information on Organisation's Participation

- 1. Type(s) of membership
 - General member - *Sub-group(s) member*
 - ~~Sub-group(s) convenor~~
 - Regional group member / convenor
 - Core group member
- 2. How did your organisation become a member ?
- 3. The 'themes' on which your organisation has played an active role
 - Maternity and Child Care Support Services
 - Burden on the Preschool Child
 - Gender Sensitisation
 - Decentralisation of Child Care Services
- 4. Sub-group(s) in which your organisation has been a part and year from which you have been in the sub-group

Issues

Year

- a. Maternity and Child health
- b. Creches
- c. Training
- d. Workers Convention
- e. Media Awareness
- f. Dialogue with employers
- g. Women in unorganised sector
- h. Preschool education

I. Southern Regional Group

III. Sub-group structure and functioning :

1. Number of member organisations
2. Names and type(s) of organisations in the sub-group at present
3. Have the members remained constant or has there been changes -- additions / drop-outs ? In general, how do you feel about the size of the group ?
4. What have been your major activities and what were you able to accomplish in your sub-group ?
5. Are there any concrete outcomes of the work of the sub-group ? What are they ? How do you feel about them ?
6. What has been your experience in

- (a) the level of active involvement of the sub-group as a whole in the issue taken up over the years

Years	Levels		
	Very active	Somewhat active	Not very active
1993 - 94			
1994 - 95			
1995 - 96			
1996 - 97			

What in your opinion, are the reasons for the level(s) of involvement indicated ? or what contributed to high / medium / low level of involvement ?

- b. The levels of participation of constituent members in terms of sharing of responsibilities ? If varied, why ? If equally shared by all, how ?
- c. Keeping up the interactions among the member organisations -- what kinds of communication channel(s) were found useful for such interactions ?
7. What was the most exciting experience in your sub-group ? Specify ?
8. What are some of the problems faced in the work of the sub-group ? Can you specify a few problems and your experiences in overcoming them ?
9. Do you feel that your experiences in TN Forces sub-group have influenced the activities of your own organisation / other organisations in the sub-group in some way ? If yes, how ?
10. What do you visualise as the role of your sub-group

- (a) in the next three years
- (b) in the next decade

IV. TN FORCES Network in general

- 1. In general, what do you feel being part of the TN FORCES network /
- 2. What in your view, is the objective of this network ? Has it been able to achieve this ? How far ?
- 3. How strong, do you think, is the TN FORCES network at present ?
- 4. With your experiences of being a member of TN FORCES network, what are some of the features of the network that you consider vital in sustaining this network to serve as an alert, sensitive and responsive network to child care issues ? (A detailed discussion could be in terms of the following)

- a. Approach – Issue-based, Participatory, flexible
- b. Structure : Un-registered
 Non-fee paying membership
 Active convenorship (changing) with a secretariat to coordinate (facilities)
 Sub-groups working independently on specific issues based on their interest & experience
 Core-group constituted of sub-group reps. and others - guiding and establishing priorities

- c. Communication channels
 General Body meetings
 Sub-group meetings
 Core-group meetings
 Seminars and workshops
 Newsletter Imma

Any suggestions for improving the features that are vital or introducing any new features

- 5. What do you envision as the future of TN FORCES network
 - a. in the next five years
 - b. in the next decade

Annexure 3

Member Organisations Interviewed

1. Women's India Association
(Ms. Bargavi Devendra) 14.6.1997
2. Dept. of Social Work, Loyola College
(Dr. Shanmugavelayutham) 20.6.1997
3. Nutrition on Wheels, Guild of Service
(Ms. Saraswathi Gopalakrishnan) 24.6.1997
4. Dept. of Education, Alagappa University
(Dr. P. Prema) 26.6.1997
5. Vidya Vikasini School Society
(Ms. S.S. Jayalakshmi) 28.6.1997
6. Gandhigram Trust
(Dr. G. Pankajam) 28.6.1997
7. Tamil Nadu Voluntary Health Association
(Ms. Saulina Arnold) 11.7.1997
8. Kattida Thozhilalar Panchayat Sangam
Centre for Labour Education and Development 11.7.1997
9. All India Democratic Women's Association
(Ms. Brinda and Ms. Vasuki) 12.7.1997
10. Satyamurthi Centre for Democratic Studies
(Ms. Lakshmi Krishnamurthy) 15.7.1997
11. National Federation of Indian Women
(Ms. Gomathi Kannappan) 14.7.1997
12. Indian Council for Child Welfare
(Ms. Andal Damodaran) 15.7.1997
13. The Children's Garden School Society
(Ms. Shakunthala Sharma & T. S. Saraswathy) 29.7.1997

Annexure 4

FORCES STAND

We came together in 1989 because of a strong feeling regarding the inadequacy of the state's response to the needs and rights of the young child. We set out to build awareness and pressure for alternative strategies which would enlarge, amend and supplement the programmes like ICDS which represents the state's major response to the problems of the young child. We firmly committed to advocate certain demands on behalf of the young child. Seven years later, we have only inched forward with the government, though the establishment of National Creche Fund has been a small step forward however limited. However, during this period, we have grown in understanding of how the issues of the young child should be addressed. Through our Consultations and through discussions with members, a clearer picture has emerged. In the note which follows, the insights of members have been gathered into a coherent statement to assist all of us in our advocacy efforts and to guide new members when state networks are set up.

We hope that the common wisdom of our wide membership has been accurately reflected in this note.

How do we bring the young child to the center of development ?

The young child today is seen as the responsibility of the mother, the older sibling and, at best, the family. Sometimes, the family does not understand the importance of the early stages of childhood, or is unable to provide adequate opportunities for the health, physical and intellectual development of the child at this stage, which is the cornerstone on which its later well-being and capacity to learn is based. At the same time, the State has been unable so far to commit the resources needed to support the family in ensuring the survival, protection and development of the child. A child deprived of critical inputs in the first few years of life weakens both family and the community in the long run with wide implications for the quality of life and the productivity of the people. An urgent task ahead of FORCES is to develop understanding about this at all levels. FORCES therefore, seeks to promote holistic child care and development including health, nutrition and development through supportive measures appropriate to each age-group.

For the youngest, below 6 months

The right to mother's milk and close tending by her, implying not only nutrition and health support for pregnant and lactating mothers but a chance for the mother's temporary withdrawal from the work force.

For the under – threes

Informal neighborhood support and family day-care that will release the older girl child from the burden of child minding.

For the three to sixes

Safe, healthy, stimulating day-care, whenever its needed, through a variety of locally adapted models, and

For all groups

Access to health, nutrition, immunisation and education

FORCES believes that the task of nourishing the core and protecting it cannot be accomplished by the mother alone. Along with lobbying with the government our advocacy has to spread to men, women, employers of parents, and include gram panchayats, neighbourhood communities, the corporate sector, youth groups, educational institutions, and many more. Appropriate strategies need to be devised to reach out to all levels and the media must be called upon to act as a powerful tool for change.

Child Care Services as central to the girl child and women's empowerment.

There is a strong but still unrecognised connection between the situation of the girl child, the poor health, skills and low wages if women and the absence of childcare support arrangements. One of FORCES major tasks is to spell out the link between the woman's earning and learning capacity, the arrangements she has for child care, and the extent to which girls avail of education. In turn, child care services provide the components that stabilize child health and development. The malnutrition that sets in between the ages of 6 months to 2 1/2 years, is most often caused, not by lack of calories but by lack of a care-giver with time to feed the child appropriately. The chances of child survival are increased by child support services, and there is evidence that child survival leads to lowering of birth-rate. Improved Child health, the flowering of the birthrate, increased productivity of women, improvement in economic status, better educational access and attainment for girls are thus closely linked factors which build up the case for a national policy to provide child care. FORCES should aim to ensure that all policies for the girl child and women's empowerment take cognizance of these connections and

consequently include a policy for the young child as an integral part of the policy for women. Some provision of childcare support services should enter all development initiatives related to women, especially employment schemes.

Appropriate Legislation to bring the child centre stage

To support these initiatives FORCES will have to draw together all concerned people to formulate a POLICY FOR THE YOUNG CHILD. Several laws exist relating to the young child, passed at difficult times,,, often addressing single issues, sometimes in isolation, or clubbed with other needs, and even contradicting each other at times. Effective enforcement is sadly lacking. At the same time, India has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child but is still groping for a codified set of tools for implementation. There is need to bring these together in a comprehensive Maternity and Child Care Code, which addresses the issues of the survival, protection and development of the young child. Legislation will assist the process of committing more State resources to maternity and child-care, as well as raise the issue of child's rights with the wider community, employers and other groups, provide a base for the implementation of action plans and a standard by which progress can be assessed.

The Need for Funding

The number of children in need of child care services is very large. It is estimated that there are 6 crore children under six years of age, most of whose mothers work in the unorganised sector, who need various forms of child care services. The State Outlay of resources is meager. At present, 17 million children are reached by ICDS with some form of child care services, but not all are receiving the full range, while only 3 lakh children are reached with daycare/creche schemes. The ICDS programme does not provide creche/daycare except in the 10% anganwadis recently converted to Creche-cum-Anganwadi centres. In these Creche-cum-Anganwadis, the budget especially the remuneration for Workers is so low, that the scheme is doomed to failure unless there is drastic rethinking by the State and recognition of the there is drastic rethinking by the State and recognition of the remuneration required by a skilled childcare worker. Daycare requires responsible, skilled, continuous human power and cannot be based on the fragile base of volunteers. The State has made it clear recently that adequate resources are not available to invest in such schemes and that communities will have to raise their own resources. FORCES, while encouraging and believing whole-heartedly in community action and support, cannot accept a position where the State withdraws / limits funds to this vulnerable social sector.

FORCES also needs to question the nature of State approach to ICDS in the light of the stated policy to universalize ICDS. Keeping in view of the many limitations of the programme (See Annexure 2). Are we satisfied with ICDS ? Do we want more of the same thing? FORCES needs to push for State support for other childcare models, and more flexibility in response to the vast diversity of local needs.

Augmenting Resources

A constructive step on the part of FORCES to counter the move to limit state funds to this sector, will be to widely spread the idea that government must enlarge its resources for child care services through a variety of means. The meager 19 crore corpus (making available just 1.5 crores for Creches) with which the National Creche Fund has been started can be augmented in the following ways :

- imposing a cess for child care
- industry based contributions
- public contributions through tax exempt donations and
- permitting fees and charges at local level that are, at present, not allowed to agencies drawing grants from the National Creche Fund

Our task is to convince policy makers that communities can make a substantial contribution to child care services in financial, material and management terms but this should not be equated with self-reliance, permitting the state to limit its budget for the young child.

Full and high quality day-care is the expensive model, yet it costs only Rs. 5/- per day per child. This is not the requirement for all. But even if it was to be provided to all the 6 crore children, it would work out to less than 1 percent of the nation's GNP. The acceptance of strategies like the ones suggested above can release abundant funds for child care services, while decentralized services through a variety of models can keep costs much lower than the maximum.

How do we create value for the Child Care worker?

Today the term Creche Worker has the connotation of an unskilled, illiterate, mere baby minder. The responsibility for integrated child care and the skills it requires are not associate with the term 'creche worker'. Consequently, the present low remuneration is accepted as valid both by government and the public at large. Yet the reality is that the cost of child care is depressed to an artificially low level by the failure to recognize the value of the creche worker in monetary terms. FORCES needs to project the skills, the hours of work, and responsibility that she carries and call attention to the need for wages commensurate with work of this nature. At the same time FORCES is committed to upgrade the quality of services and to support

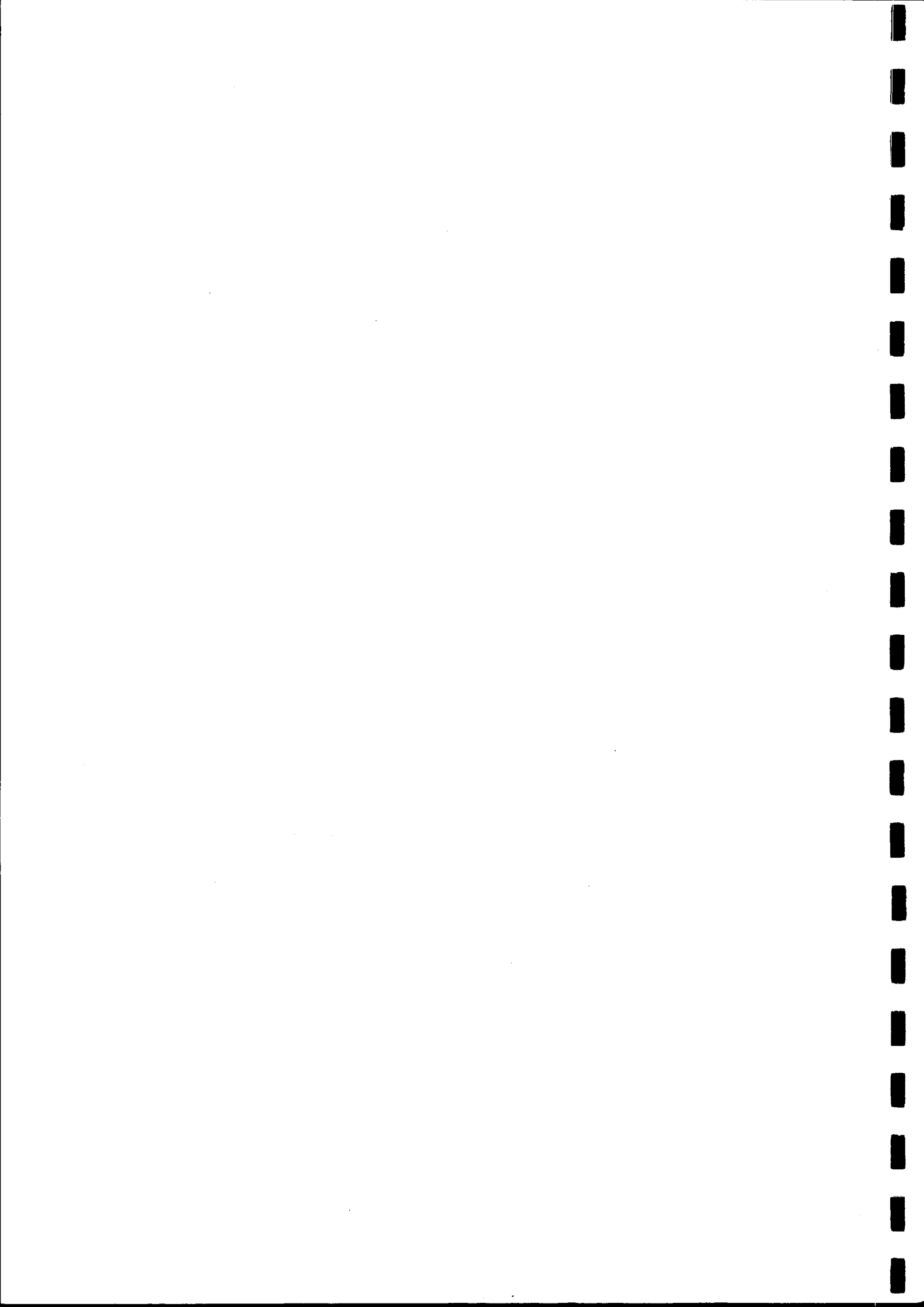
the creche worker, to equip her with adequate knowledge and skills through training and help her develop her own strength to fight against exploitation.

Management of Services

Looking at the vastness of the task and the geography of the country, and evaluating what government programmes have been able to do or what a bureaucracy can do and recognizing the reach of NGOs, FORCES realizes that support must be garnered for a multiple-pronged approach and a great opening of doors. The child can be reached only by government opening its doors to a wide range of groups - making its funds available to mahila mandals, gram panchayats, panchayati raj institutions. There must be space and encouragement for diversity of auspices. There must be space and encouragement for diversity of auspices, ranging from business houses, corporations, public sector and other employers at one end, to voluntary agencies, charitable and denominational groups, educational institutions at the other end also parents' groups, trade unions, cooperatives, local groups - all of whom can participate in a variety of ways. As FORCES we are seeking the involvement of all sectors in nourishing and protecting the young child, and at the same time need to persuade the government to commit resources and be flexible in supporting a wide range of models. This is an approach to the problem of numbers that needs to be imaginatively and constantly communicated.

Many NGO and other grassroots experiences, which have been documented show the variety of ways in which aware communities are approaching the problem of child care. Flexible responses are required to meet the needs of different geo-cultural, occupational and social settings. While ICDS can be seen as a minimal model, a base others can feel free to innovate and adapt, it should not be viewed by government as the only monolithic pattern available in a country of such diversity. Scope for experimentation and variety must be provided without threat of withdrawal of government funds. This flexibility, sensitivity and responsiveness to local needs can best be ensured by localisation of services which bring user and provider into direct face to face contact at the grassroots level. FORCES must therefore plead for a massive move to decentralization, letting the panchayats and informal local groups take over the management of services. Wherever NGOS are given this role, they must be given freedom both to adapt these programmes and to raise additional resources while adhering to the minimum standards laid down by Government. Only then can the strength of partnership be gained.

Can we as a Network affect this change in thinking? It is a goal worth striving for?



List of Members of TN-FORCES

1. Action for Community Organisation, Rehabilitation and Development, Nilgiris
2. All India Democratic Women's Association - TN
3. Allagappa University, Dept. of Education
4. All India Trade Union Congress, Women's wing - TN
5. Alternative for India Development
6. Altrusa Club of Madras
7. Association for Sarva Seva Farms
8. Association for Integrated Rural Development, Ramanathapuram
9. Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Learning for Women, Coimbatore
10. Bala Mandir
11. Balar Kalvi Nilayam
12. Centre for Action in Rural Development, Chengai-MGR
13. Centre for Rural Women Development, Thayamangalam
14. Children's Garden School Society
15. Christian Hospital Mini Health Centre
16. Centre for Indian Trade Union - TN
17. Community Action for Rural Development, Pudukottai
18. Community Action for Social Transformation, Tirunelveli
19. Community Services Guild
20. Development Association for Technology Appropriation, Madurai
21. Feminist Association for Social Action
22. Family Planning Association of India - TN
23. Gandhigram Rural Institute, Gandhigram
24. Gandhian Unit for Integrated Development Education, Walajabad
25. Guild of Services
26. Indian Council for Child Welfare - TN
27. Indian Academy of Paediatrics - TN
28. Indian Association for Pre-school Education - TN
29. Indian Red Cross Society
30. Institute for Social Sciences Research, Vellore
31. JBAS College, Dept. of Home Science
32. Kattida Thozhilalar Panchayat Sangam
33. Loyola College, Dept. of Social Work
34. Legal Resources for Social Action, Chengalpet
35. Swaminathan Research Foundation
36. National Council for Women in India - TN
37. National Federation of Indian Women
38. New Life Seva Samstha, Tiruchirapally
39. Nuthana Trust, Nagercoil
40. Gandhigram Trust, Gandhigram
41. Palmyrah Workers Development Society, Martandam

42. Penn
 43. Pennurimai Iyakkkam
 44. PREED, Madurai
 45. Preethi, Madurai
 46. PREPARE
 47. Professional Social Workers Forum
 48. Resource Centre for Peoples Education, Madurai
 49. Reaching the Unreached, Periyakulam
 50. Review Trust, Ramnad
 51. Rural Unit for Health and Social Action, North Arcot-Ambedkar
 52. Rural Development Seva Centre, Vandavasi
 53. Rural Institute for Community Education, Coimbatore
 54. Rural Welfare Centre, Tirunelveli
 55. Sankalp
 56. Satyamurti Centre for Democratic Studies
 57. SAWED Trust, Devadanapatti
 58. Society for Human Equality, peoples Health, Education and Rural development, Madurai
 59. Social Welfare Association, Neyyoor
 60. Stella Maris College, Dept. of Social Work
 61. Stree Seva Mandir
 62. Tamil Manila Kattida Thozhilalar Sangam
 63. Tamil Nadu Voluntary Health Association
 64. The Swallows in India
 65. Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Mandram
 66. VAGE, Dharmapuri
 67. Vidya Vikasini Society, Coimbatore
 68. Viswabarathi Vidyodhaya Trust, Nilgiris
 69. Womens India Association
 70. Womens Organisation for Rural Development, Salem
 71. Womens Voluntary Services
 72. Young Womens Christian Association - TN
-

Activities of COTA supporting TN-FORCES

Other activities of COTA

Activities with active
collaboration of memberActivities by COTA for
Themes

Events- 1993-1994		
National consultation on Maternity and Childcare Services - Sept 93		1. Research network meeting - Nov 93
		2. Training I for improved services for 0-3 years - Feb 94
		3. Module development workshop for play curriculum (3-6 yrs) March 94
	Products- 1993-94	
Maternity and Childcare Services	Video - Women Work & Child Care	Media study
	2 Audio Spots	

Events - 1994-95		
1. Interaction with legislators- May 94		1. Trainers, training in ECCE I - June 94
2. Interaction with trade unions- June 94		2. Research guides meeting- Aug 94
3. Regional network formation - June 94		3. Training II Improved services for 0-3m yrs- Aug 94
4. Breastfeeding day - Video release Aug 94		4. Research methodology workshop - Oct 94
5. Childcare convention - Sept 94		5. Writers workshop I - Nov 94
6. Regional training in ECCE I - Dec 94		6. Soft toys Orientation - Feb 95
7. Management of Creches April 95		7. Seminar on policy for the young child - Oct 94
		8. Writer's workshop II - Mar 95
		9. Trainer's training in ECCE II - Apr 95
	Products- 1994-95	
1. Every Child's Birthright	Video - Anguish	1. Soft toy kit
2. Chittu Kuruvi (4 issues)		

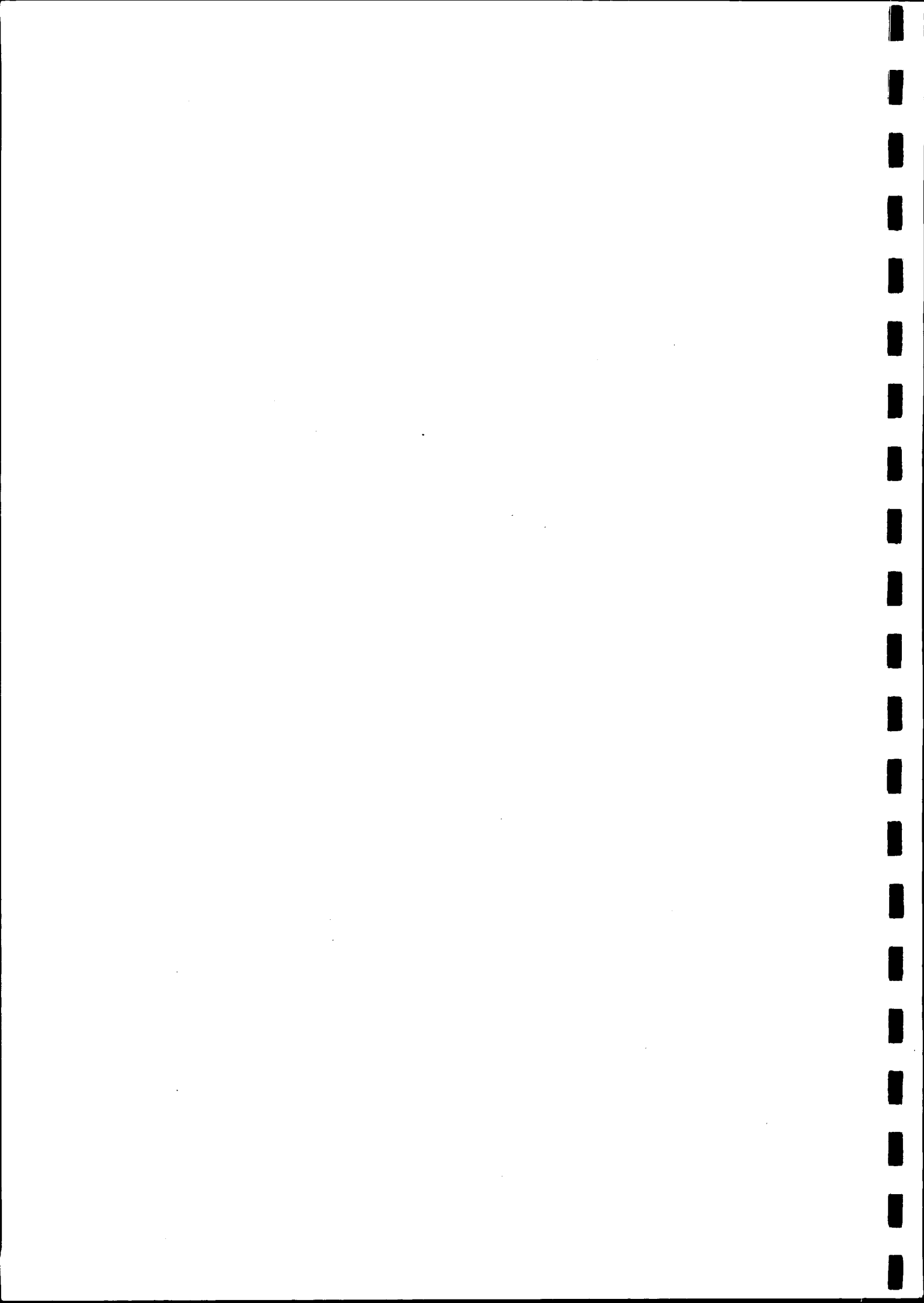
Events 1995- 96

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Media Workshop -
July 95 | 1. Release of video/audio
materials - Children's day
celebrations- Nov 95 | 1. Short story competition-
Jan 95 |
| 2. Traditional Media
workshop - Oct 95 | 2. Messages on DD -
Feb 96- ongoing | 2. AIR programme
executives Orientation
workshop - Feb 95 |
| 3. Core group meeting -
Oct 95 | | 3. Photo competition -
March 95 |
| 4. Seminar on NGO-GO
partnership - Nov 95 | | 4. Writers workshop III -
April 95 |
| 5. Release of memorandum
- April 96 | | 5. Research Orientation
course - April 95 |
| 6. Regional training in
ECCE II - May 96 | | 6. Dialogue on research
needs in childcare -
July 95 |
| 7. Songs workshop- Dec 96 | | 7. ECCE-DIET Training I-
Sept 95 |
| | | 8. Research methodology -
Sept 95 |
| | | 9. Multi-centric research
group - ongoing |
| | | 10. ECCE -DIET training
II- June 96 |

Products- 1995-96

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Election manifesto | 1. A dangerous burden /
Learning can be fun
(Video) | 1. Balancing multiple roles |
| 2. Suvaiya, Sumaiya (video) | 2. Five video spots | 2. Data base on Resource
Persons, Alternative
schools, Trainers,
Mailing list, inventory
etc. |
| 3. Women in Tamil Cinema | 3. Three audio spots | |
| 4. IMMA | 4. Ippadiyum Karkalame
(print) | |
| | 5. Design for partnership | |

SL.NO.	CAMPAIGN	TARGET	COMPONENTS	DURATION	AMOUNT	BUDGET Rs.	IMPLEMENTATION
1.1.	Awareness Workshop	Parents (40)	Hall, Travelling allowance, food, Resource fee, Public Address systems etc.	4 Meetings	Rs.4,000 x 4	16,000.00	Pre & Post test, PRA.
		Teachers (40)	- do -	4 Meetings	Rs.4,000 x 4	16,000.00	-
		Management	- do -	2 Meetings	Rs.4,000 x 2	8,000.00	-
1.2.	Training for Teachers	30	Food, lodging, TA, materials, Resource fee, Exposure visit, organising expenses	6 Days	Rs.45,000 x 2	90,000.00	Model Schools (5)
1.3.	Action Group Formation	Management, Teachers, Parents, NGOs and Government officials (25)	Food, TA, Meeting Hall and Meeting expenses. Linkage with other NGOs	3 years	Rs.6,000 x 3	18,000.00	Replication, Review and Development.
1.4.	Folk Media	General public	Villupattu, Street play, Stage performance, team expenses, travelling etc.	6 performances	Rs.6,000 x 6	36,000.00	Enrollment of children, play way schools.
1.5.	Electronic Media	Public	Hiring charges for TV, VCR, transportation Purchase of Video and audio cassetts	30 shows	Rs.250 x 30	7,500.00	Increasing enrollment of children. Qualitative methods of teaching
1.6.	Innovative campaign and idea.	Public	Utilising Panchayat TV, Cable TV sets, PRO Vehicles, propoganda through Cable TV, Bus etc.	-	-	6,000.00	
02.	<u>Coordination</u>						
2.1.	Project Travel	Staff	Travel for coordination and administration	36 months	Rs.1,000 x 36	36,000.00	
2.2.	Administration expenses		Stationary, postage, printing, audit fee, internal monitoring, telephone, auditing etc.	36 months	Rs.2,500 x 36	90,000.00	
					TOTAL	3,24,500.00	



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PARTICIPANTS LIST

SL. NO.	ORGANISATION
01.	CENTRE FOR SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION 26-A/1, BEACH ROAD, NEAR S.T. HINDU COLLEGE, NAGARCOIL - 629 002.
02.	THE COVENANT CENTRE FOR DEVELOPEMENT, 2/43 KOTTAI STREET, NAGAMALAI PUDUKOTTAL, MADURAI - 625 019.
✓ 03.	ASSOCIATION FOR INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPEMENT 1/1B-3-14, BHARATHI NAGAR, RAMNAD DISTRICT - 623 535.
✓ 04.	RESOURCE CENTRE FOR PEOPLE'S EDUCATION AND DEVELOPEMENT, 1A/1, PONMENI PERIYAVAR STREET; S.S.COLONY, MADURAI - 625010.
05.	SCIENTIFIC EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPEMENT FOR COMMUNITY ORGANISATION, ITTAMOZHI ROAD, SATHANKULAM, V.O.C.DISTRICT - 628 704.
06	RURAL EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPEMENT, 102, PETER'S STREET, IDAIYANGUDI (P.O) TIRUNELVELI - 627 651.
✓ 07.	REACHING THE UNREACHED, G.KALLUPATTI, NEAR BATLAGUNDU, PERIYAKULAM TALUK, MADURAI DISTRICT - 624 203.

08. ST. JOSEPH DEVELOPEMENT TRUST,
GENGUVARPATTI
PERIYAKULAM,
MADURAI - 624 203.
09. PALMYRAH WORKER'S DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY,
CRSTAL STREET,
MARTHANDAM - 629 165.
10. NAVA JEVAN TRUST,
JOTHI NAGAR,
ALANGULAM (P.O),
NELLAI DISTRICT .
11. CENTRE FOR DEVELOPEMENT AND ACTION RESEARCH,
C-94, VEERA RAGHAVA PERUMAL STREET,
NEAR 5TH STOP, TIRUNAGAR,
MADURAI - 625 006.
12. DATA

Annexure 8

CHARTER OF THE TN-FORCES

Article 1: Name

The name of the consortium shall be Tamil Nadu Forum for Creche and Child Care Services(TN-FORCES).

Article 2: Aims and Objectives

- i. To safeguard the survival, protection and development of the young child, particularly of the weaker sections of society, and with special reference to the children of women working in the unorganised sector.
- ii. To act as a watch dog to government policies and actions and work towards altering those that harm the interests of young children and their mothers, particularly of the poor.
- iii. To form pressure groups and lobby for policies and resources for holistic and development-oriented child care services for the young child in the country.
- iv. To create awareness about the criticality of the years of early childhood and the implications of neglect.
- v. To collect and disseminate information on the situation of the young child, focusing on problems as well as strategies to tackle the situation.
- vi. To liaise with governments, including the polity and bureaucracy, local bodies, donors, corporate sector and other agencies who are interested in child care in order to influence policy and implementation.
- vii. To provide advisory services in the field of child care planning.
- viii. To promote enactment of legislation and reforms in existing laws relating to children.
- ix. To identify, recognise and collaborate with NGOs and informal groups with similar objectives.
- x. Any other activity related to child care including promoting Research and Training related to child care.

30

Article 3: Membership

Secular organisations committed to improving the situation of the young child and believing in the aims and objects of TN-FORCES can be members. Individuals can not become members.

The network shall draw its membership from the following main constituencies:

- Child care institutions, or institutions running child care services.
- Trade unions
- Womens groups / organisations
- Research and academic institutions
- Education and training institutions.
- Other NGO's involved with women and children issues.

In addition, others may be invited to meetings, coopted on working groups, or informally involved.

- Business houses and employers associations.
- Funding agencies concerned with child care issues
- International agencies concerned with children

1. Membership may be expanded periodically by the Core Committee.
2. Membership shall be by invitation only. Applications for membership will be considered by the Core Committee and invitations issued after screening.

Article 4: Core Committee

The activities of TN-FORCES shall be guided by a Core Committee which shall be selected at the annual general body meeting (AGM) on the basis of active involvement and experience, and include representatives of all the main constituencies. The Core Committee may consist of not less than 8 and not more than 20 members.

Sub-groups, including coopted Resource Persons may be informally set up to plan activities in a geographical area and/or in each specialised theme which may be taken up from time to time by the network. The Convenor shall be a member of every such sub-group. The chairs of the various sub-groups shall be members of the Core Committee. The composition of the Core Committee may be altered at the AGM by the consensus. The implementation of activities shall be by the member agencies, singly or jointly, with the support of the secretariat. Whenever activities are conducted jointly by two or more members, or a sub-group, the funds shall be raised, provided, spent and accounted for by a mutually acceptable procedure to be agreed in advance, and with the knowledge of the convenor.

Besides actively furthering the agenda of the network determined at the AGM, the Core Committee shall :

1. Screen applications and invite organisations to become members.
2. Receive reports from the Secretariat from time to time regarding the various activities.
3. Share in planning strategies to be adopted by the AGM.

Article 5: Convenor and the Secretariat

Based on suggestions from the Core Committee, the Convenor shall be chosen from among the members, at the AGM, for a period of three years, and the office shall be held by rotation. The Convenor shall appoint a Secretariat comprising of the Co-ordinator, Assistant Co-ordinator and a Typist-cum-office Assistant and such resource persons/Consultants and other staff as may be required.

The Secretariat staff shall be located in the office premises of the Convenor and report to the Convenor and confirm to the rules and regulations of the organisation.

Functions of Secretariat:

1. To consolidate and strengthen the existing network and to enlarge and build it up further
2. To plan and strategies network activities in relation to stated goals and objectives
3. To provide logistic and programme support for network-related activities of members
4. To provide momentum and drive for network activities
5. To co-ordinate, maintain records, liase and relate to members
6. To provide a link and focus for communication among members
7. To collect, process and disseminate relevant information to network members
8. To monitor, document and evaluate network processes
9. To maintain links with the national and other regional networks

Article 6: Finances of the Secretariat

1. The Convenor shall be an honorary office and the convenor organisation shall not make any profit or benefit from the network.
2. The funds for running the Secretariat and its activities shall be raised by the Convenor organisation, in the manner deemed fit and appropriate to the organisation, and brought to the knowledge of the Core Committee.
3. The responsibility for maintaining the accounts and efficiently conducting the services by cost saving means shall be that of the Convenor organisation.
4. The funds received for the Secretariat shall be kept in a separate account by the Convenor Organisation and audited every year.
5. The audited statement relating to the Secretariat shall be available to the Core Committee.
6. For all activities of the network, expenses shall be shared by the members on an agreed basis.

References

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2. FORCES Stand
3. Swaminathan Research Foundation Centre for Research on Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development. Programme Area 400. Reaching the Unreached - Annual Reports
 - Second Annual Report 1991 - 92
 - Third Annual Report 1992 - 93
 - Fourth Annual Report 1993 - 94
 - Fifth Annual Report 1994 - 95
 - Sixth Annual Report 1995 - 96
 - Seventh Annual Report 1996 - 97
4. Children on the Agenda - A Mid-Term Evaluative Review - 1995
5. TN FORCES Network -An Analysis of Networking - Efforts and Response 1995
6. TN - FORCES Network : An Analysis 1993
 - TN - FORCES Network : An Analysis 1994
 - TN - FORCES Network : An Analysis 1995
 - TN - FORCES Network : An Analysis 1996
7. Minutes of the Meetings
 - Annual General Meeting November 1993
 - Annual General Meeting December 1994
 - Annual General Meeting December 1995
 - Annual General Meeting December 1996
 - Steering Committee Meeting April 27, 1994
 - Core Committee Meeting October 12, 1995
 - Core Committee Meeting October 26, 1995
(Identified Objectives for 2000 A.D.)
 - Core Committee Meeting March, 1996
 - Core Committee Meeting July, 1996
 - Core Committee Meeting October 12, 1996
 - Core Committee Meeting April 26, 1997
 - Sub-group Meetings
 - Media July 25, 1996
 - Organising Committee July 27, 1996
(Affinities for 1996)
 - Preschool February 20, 1996
(Activities carried out
Jan.- Dec. 1996)

8. Report on the Summer Refresher Course July 1997
9. Decentralisation of Child Care Services
 - Report of Seminar for Women Committees of Chennai Corporation, March 6, 1997
 - Workshop for Women Panchayat members at Gandhigram March 14, 1997
10. Correspondences
 - Letters giving information about Annual Meetings, Core-Committee Meetings
 - Letter from Bernard Van Leer Foundation dated 5, March 1997
11. Products
 - Memoranda
 - * An appeal to the Government of Tamil Nadu **Mothers Milk Every Child's Birthright**. Let us help working mothers (May 94)
 - * An appeal to All-political parties to include Women and Child Care issues in their election election Manifesto (March 96)
 - * Regulation of Pre-school education given to Education Minister, T.N. (July 96)
 - * Preparation of a Memorandum to be included in the State Finance Commission report (July 96)
 - * Rights of Women Workers (August 96)
 - Reports
 - * Report of the Child Care Workers' Convention held at Gandhigram September 3, 4, 1994.
 - * Chittu Kuruvi Supplements 91994)
 - * Ippadiyum Karkalame
 - * Consultation on Maternity and Child Care (August 1993)
 - * Policy of the young Child (December 1994)
 - * Design for Partnership (November 1995)
 - * Thirai Padangalil Pengan (Women in Cinema 1996)
 - * Messages that Move (1996)
 - * Balancing Multiple Roles (1995)
 - * Yethanai Kaigal Pengalukku (1996)
 - * Study Materials on Decentralisation of Child Care Services (February 1997)
 - * At What Cost ? (January 1997)
 - * Annaikku Adaravu - A Manual on Empowering Women to Breastfeed (May 1997)

- Videos

- * Anguish (Thavippu) (18 mts.)(Problems of Working Mothers in Breastfeeding
- * Women, Work and Child Care (23 mts.)(Ivargalin Kuzhandaigalum Kazhandaigale)
- * Learning Through Play (22 mts.)(Vilayattu Moolam Kalvi)
- * A Dangerous Burden (28 mts.)(Intha Bharam Thevaya ?)
- * Learning Can be Fun (22 mts.)(A..... A..... A Arivathil Anandam)
- * Suvaiya, Sumaiya /(Villupattu on tgh Pressures on the Preschool Child)

- Video spots

- * 7 video spots on Burden on the pre-school child(Nov 95)
- * 5 video spots on Gender Justice - Women and Children's Rights (December 96)

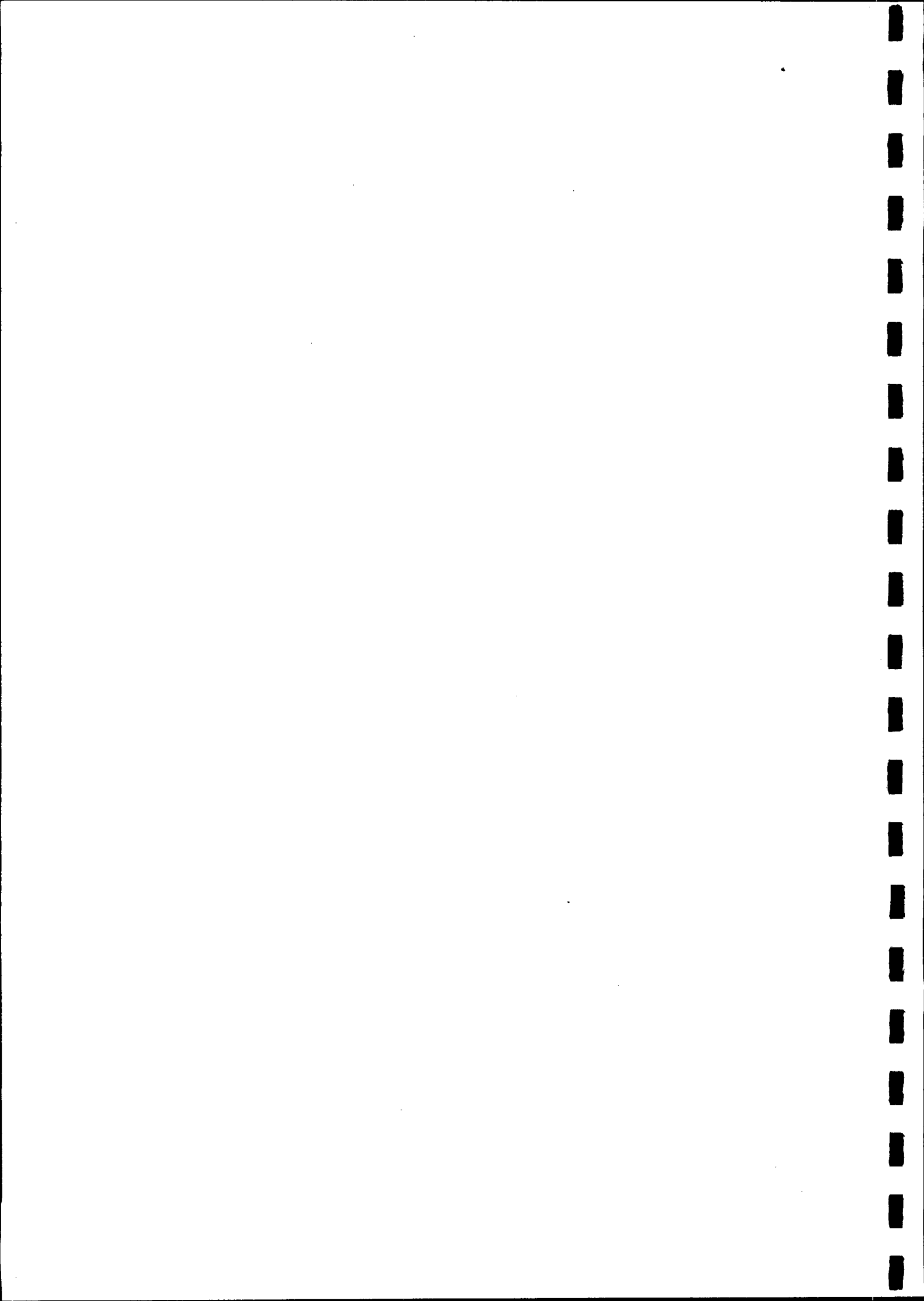
- Audio spots

- * 3 Audio-spots on the Burden on the Preschool Child (November 1995)

- Audios

- * Enga Patta Kelunga (November 1996)(Songs on Burden on Preschool Children)

- *IMMA* Newsletter (A total of 13 issues, January 1994 to June 1997)



Research Network

The Background

The need for generating relevant information which could be used as a tool for advocacy for childcare issues was felt right at the beginning when TN-FORCES came into existence. Sporadic research activities were taken up by one or two members of the network even prior to the emergence of the research network. The Alagappa University at Karaikudi and Gandhigram Rural Institute were investigating the childcare needs of women construction workers and the utilisation of maternity benefits by women, respectively.

With TN-FORCES identifying and carrying out several activities considered necessary for raising awareness regarding specific childcare issues, the need for filling up gaps in the available information was keenly felt. It was important that the needed information be collected, analysed and interpreted scientifically and systematically so as to have authenticity and reliability. This logically gave rise to the thinking that an important contribution which academic institutions could make to strengthen the role of TN-FORCES was to take up research activities the findings of which could be used by the rest of the network as a tool for advocacy.

Evolution

In this context academic institutions which were already part of the network and several others which were not yet members of the network were invited to attend an exploratory meeting in November 1993. In the letters that were sent out, the objective of setting up a network of this nature and the possible issues for research were outlined. It was suggested that those who were interested in undertaking the research could form a sub group within TN-FORCES; however they had to find their own financial resources. Those who did not undertake research could offer technical and logistic support while project ACCESS could host the joint meetings and workshops.

The exploratory meeting proved to be interdisciplinary in nature and the disciplines represented were: (1) Economics (2) Nutrition (3) Paediatrics (4) Child Development (5) Women's Studies (6) Education (7) Statistics (8) Psychology (9) Humanities and Social Sciences (10) Sociology.

The outcomes of a day's deliberation were as under.

1. Participants identified two broad areas in which information was needed, namely (a) services for women and children (b) maternity, breastfeeding and child health (difficulties, support services etc.)
2. The strategy to undertake research in these areas could be either (a) add on - to include a few extra questions to existing research (b) Students (M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.) could be encouraged to take up topics connected to the above issues. (c) Multi-centric research with several institutions collaborating and carrying out research on a topic after working out a common research design and methodology.
3. Since members of several institutions did not have enough background in childcare, its related issues and since it would have been difficult for everyone to meet often, a core group was formed to draft a concept paper and methodology for a wider study on childcare.
4. Follow-up action by ACCESS was envisaged as being secretarial with some inputs in designing studies and synthesising results. The participants agreed to explore the possibility of undertaking research in the above mentioned areas and send feed-back to ACCESS.

The Process

Project ACCESS took on the role of convenor to the overall network and provided both technical and secretariat support. A questionnaire to build up a background profile of the members was designed and sent out to all the participants. The concept paper developed by the convenor of the core group, was circulated to the rest of the members and the first core group meeting was convened in March 1994.

Deliberations of the core committee were as follows:

1. The statistics department of Madras Christian College which had done a study on the childcare centres in Tamil Nadu presented the information to the group. The department had used the "add-on" strategy (i.e.) it had added a few questions to a questionnaire which had already been drafted to collect information on voting preferences of the public all over Tamil Nadu. Yet another study carried out by Gandhigram was also presented.
2. Strategies for evolving common methodology and research designs were discussed.
3. Under the two broad areas of research already identified by the network, specific topics were discussed and revised.
4. The second network meeting was decided to be convened in April 1994.

Goal - setting

The second research network meeting included two distinct elements which were (a) the emergence of the research network as an entity (b) zeroing in on specific research topics and the modus operandi of the research activity. For the first time the overall goals of the network, both short and long term ones were discussed.

1. It was agreed that the short term goals were to undertake small scale studies on childcare with post graduate students, collate the results, develop and expand the database on childcare which would be used in the preparation of policy documents.
2. The long term goals were to stimulate research on childcare and improve the quality of research.
3. Two completed research studies were presented.
4. Twelve research topics to be taken up by eight different institutions were identified.

-
5. The strategies for research were also outlined. As a short-term one, post graduate students would be encouraged to select topics for research from the prepared list. Workshops on methodology to ensure comparability and collation of results and to promote the quality and utility of the studies would be conducted at 2 levels.
- a) One day workshop for research guides was to be conducted in mid August '94.
 - b) A two day workshop for M.Phil. students along with their guides was to be conducted in mid September '94.
6. The participants also set the agenda for these meetings and outlined the issues to be touched upon. These were
- a) concepts and definition in childcare
 - b) current status of childcare
 - c) use of quantitative and qualitative methods
 - d) preparation of research proposals and critiquing

Avinashilingam Institute of Home Science and Higher Learning for Women and Bhartidasan University came forward to host the two meetings respectively. ACCESS had the task of identifying the actual number of institutions / students who were willing to participate in the meetings and commit to undertaking the studies. Further since ACCESS had the needed minimum resources and facilities it had the additional task of maintaining the database. It was to be developed through studies with empirical evidence to affect policy.

Research Strategies

In the one day interaction of research guides the need for generating quantitative and qualitative data on childcare issues to impact policies was emphasised. This information was also needed for building up a status report on childcare services in Tamil Nadu. While discussing the *modus operandi* of research, participants felt that

with the use of holistic methods (i.e.) both qualitative and quantitative it would not be possible for one two individuals to study all the aspects that affect the variable under study. The team approach (i.e.) a group of students who would study the various aspects through both horizontal and vertical methods was suggested. One advantage in this method was peer learning in which students learnt from one another. However students needed orientation in the conceptualisation of the research theme and methodological aspects.

The two day workshop on research methodology held in October '94 had both input and output elements. Statistical methods, and use of qualitative methods in research were elaborated in a panel discussion during the first day. The next day, students presented a research outline which was critiqued by the resource persons and the participants. The range of student participation was mostly at Masters and M.Phil. level with only one Ph.D. candidate. The list of topics chosen for study is presented in Annexure -1.

Initial effort at impacting policy

The initial research endeavours of the network coincided with the release of the "15 point programme" a policy document of welfare schemes initiated by the then Government of Tamil Nadu which also included programmes for women and children. Except for one or two schemes such as the "cradle baby" scheme for prevention of female infanticide which was at that time a hotly debated issue and the "girl child education scheme", large scale opinion prevailed that there was nothing new in the policy statement of the Government. Project ACCESS took the initiative in organising a policy workshop in which representatives of NGO's and Government participated to discuss the policy document. Invited papers on emerging and untouched childcare issues were presented by representatives of three non governmental organisations one of whom was a member of the research network who had undertaken a study in the childcare needs of women in the unorganised sector.

The process of preparation of the policy document came under heavy criticism from the NGO side. The lack of people's participation, lack of consultation by the Government with NGOs and other sections of the public were highlighted. Serious concern was expressed over the credibility of the policy statement and the programmes to stand the test of time since the document was not released after being put to the usual legislative procedures. In the light of these arguments, a set of recommendations were evolved by the participants and presented to the minister of Finance and Social Welfare during the valedictory session of the workshop.

Monitoring

An internal review of the progress of the network and its activities during December '94 suggested that while a few topics and small scale strategies had been undertaken by the network, certain critical issues in which empirical evidence was needed were still left out. Two such issues were

1. The motivation, aspirations and job satisfaction of childcare workers
2. Women's multiple roles and their management of breastfeeding

While discussing strategies for conducting the research it was felt that the first ever childcare workers convention which was being organised at Gandhigram would provide a favourable field setting for gathering data on the first issue. Since only minimum inputs were needed and ACCESS had the capability to process the data, it was decided that ACCESS would collect and analyse the data on the theme of motivation of childcare workers.

The second issue namely, women's multiple roles and the management of breastfeeding was decided to be carried out as a multi-centric study in collaboration with several institutions after developing a common methodology and tool. ACCESS undertook to provide the technical support. Accordingly many institutions both academic and NGO were invited for preliminary discussions at the end of which seven institutions, six academic and one NGO came forward to participate in the study.

Mid-term Evaluation: A mid term evaluation of the project in February '95 suggested that the strategy for impacting policy could begin by including the Government right from the planning stage. Research priorities in childcare could be jointly identified by Government and NGO's and both could jointly pool the available resources to generate information on the needed aspects. As an outcome of this suggestion a brainstorming session was organised in July '95 in which both representatives of the Government and members of TN-FORCES as well as the research network participated. While a few research topics considered to be of value in policy preparation were identified an important issue raised was the mass of unprocessed data that lay with the Government. It was felt that analysis of such secondary data would save a lot of time and material resource that would otherwise be unnecessarily spent. All the student research which had been completed by then were presented by the students themselves.

Between July '95 and August '96 the ongoing multi-centric research was closely monitored, data scrutinised, processed with the help of a member of the network, analysed, critiqued and finally presented to the other members jointly by all the institutions which participated in the research study. During this period the core committee met a few times and out of the themes identified during the brain-storming session considered those concerning the status of the girl child, cost of child-rearing and care of 0-2 year old children to be the ones that needed priority attention. Within an year from then the major research endeavours and their findings were published, translated and modified into suitable material for different groups and disseminated at a wide variety of forums.

Discussion

The effort of Project Access to bring academic institutions into the mainstream of social activism through encouraging socially relevant research was largely if not wholly successful. Largely, since the enthusiasm shown by the participating institutions was tremendous, their concern genuine and their inputs numerous. However the

operational aspects involved several dimensions such as time factor, the distinct nature of activities that were quite different from those of other members of the network, the scale and level of dissemination etc. which had a lot of influence on the growth of the network and which as a result have still left the future of the network largely a matter of conjecture.

The birth of the network would not have been possible but for the existence of TN-FORCES. At the beginning, the research network was clearly envisaged as being a sub-group of FORCES. The need for information felt by FORCES was to become the springboard of action of the network. However the specialised nature of functioning of the research network and its members separated it from the rest of the group and made it into an independent entity with its own mandate and agenda (for example) FORCES activities were planned at an annual meeting which were then independently carried out by the organisations in their own areas. On the other hand research was a highly technical activity in which common strategies had to be refined and practised before implementation and in which other organisations without research base could not participate. In the current context, most NGO's do not see the link between research and action.

Further the academic calendar is very different from the NGO calendar which did not much encourage participation in jointly planned activities. In addition, after successive interactions with a group of members who attended fairly regularly, the perception about the future of the network started changing. The idea of developing the network into a full fledged interdisciplinary academic forum for childcare issues with attendant features such as publication of a journal on childcare issues and collaborative research ventures was mooted. Thus the network started functioning as an independent entity. Though initially efforts attempted at involving the research network with TN-FORCES the physical separation gradually took place along with changing perceptions about the network and its role. The network now clearly stands apart from FORCES. However it is not very clear whether the research network will have the necessary impetus if divorced from TN-FORCES since some of its activities were linked with those of FORCES (for ex)the study of the aspirations and job satisfaction of childcare workers were carried out during the childcare workers convention which was a FORCES activity.

The methodology of undertaking research was originally thought of as assignments given to several agencies with inputs from the academic community. However tentative efforts revealed that the expenditure involved would be enormous and far beyond the means of the project. Thus student research with supervision by the concerned faculty was thought of as the second best alternative to undertaking research on childcare issue. Though student research was initially thought of as an ideal strategy for generating information its limitations were numerous and other strategies had to be identified such as research by the faculties themselves of the concerned institutions. Moreover research itself meant spending much more time than what had been earlier envisaged since the preparatory work itself was time consuming. Except for student research which were carried out simultaneously at several places the other strategies on an average had an output of one research study an year.

One of the important strategies undertaken by the network was doing a multi-centric research study. Seven institutions, five academic and two NGOs, jointly conducted the research study on "Women's multiple work roles and the management of breastfeeding". The experience is recounted below.

The Multi-Centric experience

The entire exercise was carried out as a group work right from the outset of the study. The study was identified by the research network as a priority area of research amidst the several topics short listed by it in successive meetings.

Once the topic was identified the member organisations were invited to participate in a preliminary meeting to discuss the topic and to explore the possibility of undertaking a joint venture on a large scale. At the outset it was emphasised that the process of research and the participatory nature of the whole exercise were equally important and needed to be carefully documented. Both positive results as well as areas requiring greater attention if a similar exercise is repeated in future, have emerged.

Positive Outcomes

Forging of the network

One of the most important outcomes was the strengthening of the network itself as a result of this exercise. The interaction amongst members, sharing of experiences and ideas and the pleasure that the members achieved in such an interaction as evinced by their keen interest to participate in future endeavours, pointed to the fact that the network had the potential to emerge as a body promoting academic interaction for carrying out relevant research of social significance

Cost effective nature of the exercise

An exercise of this nature involving several institutions and personnel, would have been far more expensive than what was actually incurred, but for the fact that much of the resources of the participating institutions both human and material such as use of staff and students for data collection, use of computer facilities etc. were shared.

Areas requiring greater attention for future reference

Planning

While enough discussion was had on the conceptual and logistical aspects of the study, not much attention was paid at the planning stage to the analysis. As a result a lot of avoidable delays took place in coding and retrieving the information.

This led to an inordinate delay in data processing and required the employment of several people in processing and recording of data. Added to this were logistical problems such as non-availability of students continuously for a period of time to enter data, breakdown of computers etc.

Conceptualisation

The study covered too wide a range of concepts and variables and did not narrow down to a few specific, key concepts or issues. For example, women's work, child care exclusive breast feeding and their inter-relationship were themselves complex concepts and needed to be studied in depth. Further, the inclusion of all possible variables ranging from organised to unorganised sector, different socio-economic groups etc. finally led to fewer respondents in each of the segregated categories.

Methodological

Interview technique was used in the study and the questionnaire was too lengthy and took on an average about forty minutes for an experienced investigator to fill in. In spite of the training, some investigators had not understood certain concepts which affected the quality of the work. Studies which involve students need to be relatively simple and less complicated.

Further not all the trained investigators were available throughout the period of data collection, and the replacements had to be re-trained as and when necessary. The experience and knowledge of the investigators also varied widely thus rendering the group heterogeneous which was reflected in the quality of the data collected.

For future endeavours the network would have to strike a balance between the infrastructure framework available in terms of manpower and material to what can be realistically achieved. Alternate strategies have to be thought of in terms of methodology to improve and sustain the quality of research.

While only 50% of the members participated in network activities most of the time, the quality of participation was quite high and the output generated was enormous. The findings of some of the studies gave a lot of insight into the childcare needs of women and the management strategies that they adopted. Besides being useful as a tool for advocacy these were also used in addressing specialists and

professional bodies and in training programmes conducted by NGO's for grassroots level workers. The range and scale of dissemination was quite high. The generated information was incorporated into the charter of demands prepared and given to various political parties for inclusion in their election manifesto. They were published and disseminated to a large number of individuals and institutions. They were translated into Tamil and published in local magazines and dailies. Papers were presented at national seminars and conferences.

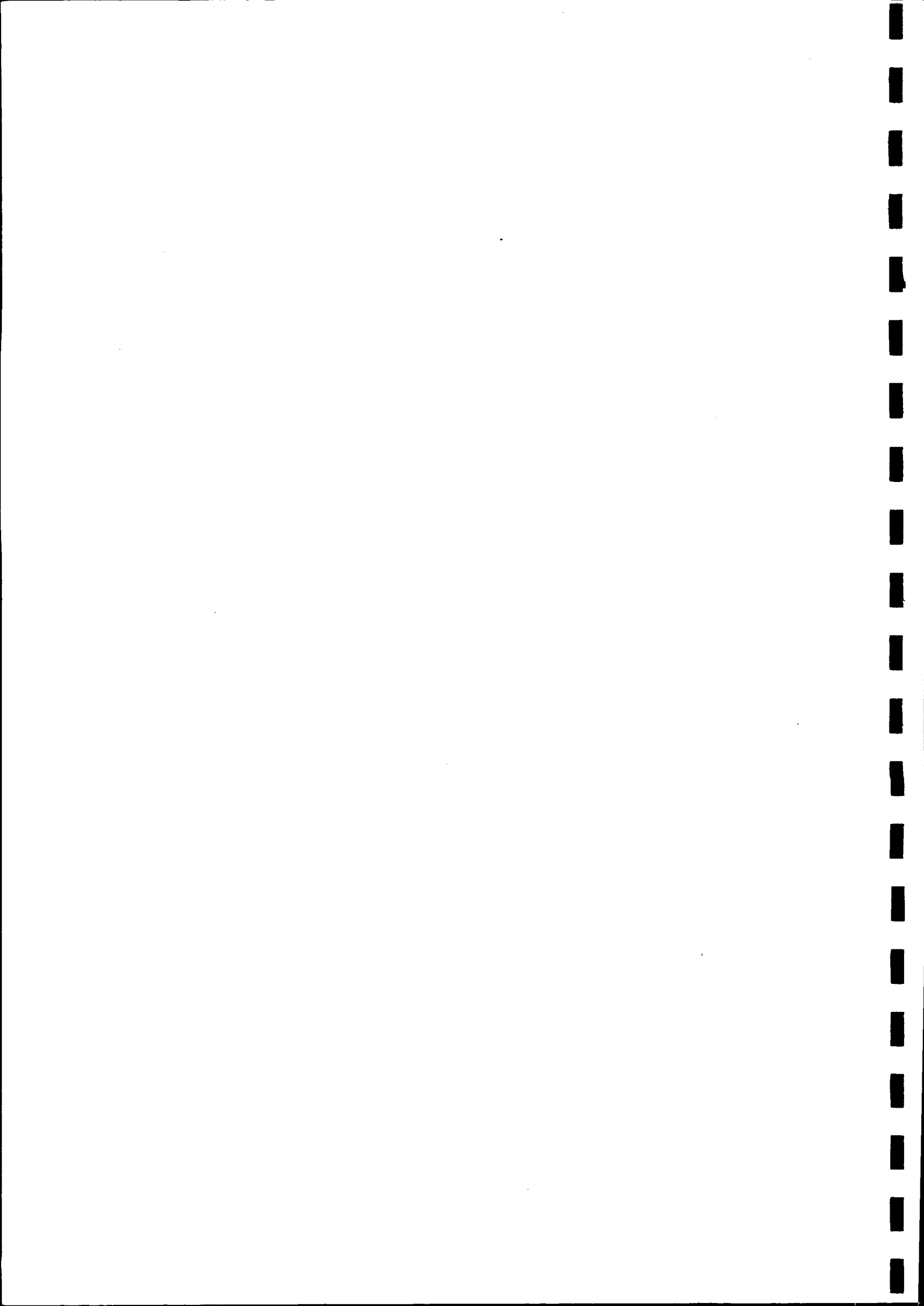
At the time when the project came to an end, the activities of the network as a group had practically ceased since the convenorship role played by ACCESS also ceased. However the interest created in the issues amongst the members sustained which resulted in several members taking up both micro and macro level studies on women and childcare issues. Though there is at the moment no communication from the members, publication of their work in the natural forums intended for dissemination is itself an evidence of this conclusion. (e.g.) the article on "female infanticide" and "health of the girl child" in "The Hindu".

With the transfer of convenorship of FORCES network, the role of the research network and its place in TN-FORCES has to be thought of.

Annexure - 1

List of topics chosen by students

1. Comprehensive study of balwadi attended and non attended children
 2. Pattern and utilisation of existing childcare facilities
 3. Need for crèche services in Karaikudi for working women in organised sector
 4. Childcare needs of mother in the organised sector
 5. Status and conditions of childcare workers in Balwadi
 6. Perception of rural mothers, fathers and grand parents of childcare needs.
 7. Impact of ICDS on mothers and children in rural areas
 8. Extent of utilisation of existing childcare services by rural mothers
 9. Childcare services in selected ICDS centres and aided voluntary organisations in Chennai city.
 10. Motivations, aspiration and working conditions of childcare workers.
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Instructional Materials

1. Database

Realising the importance of the role of resource materials in moulding the personality of the young child in its formative years, Project ACCESS felt the need for creating a ready reference of resource materials on the young child presently in use. All the organisations and institutions working in this area were contacted to know from them the resource materials available with them on ECE. Several were from

1. NIPCCD(National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development)
2. CHETNA Resource Centre
3. Agha Khan Foundation
4. Mobile Creches
5. ICCW(Indian Council for Child Welfare)
6. Training manuals developed by NCERT(National Council of Educational Research and Training)
7. A set of videos "Bal Vikas" by Dept of Home Science, Nirmala Niketan College of Home Science

A review of all resource materials collected showed the need for developing specific identified resource materials. Project ACCESS took up this work of developing instructional materials which would not only help in supporting the training provided by the project, but also as a way of building up alternative models and strategies for childcare.

2. Trainers' Manual on ECCE

One of the first initiatives undertaken by the project was the consolidation of training strategies in ECCE developed over the years by several specialists into the form of a guidebook or manual for trainers. As a first step, a brainstorming workshop was held with a very small group of experienced trainers in March 1994. It was then decided to conduct a trainers' training, as a practical demonstration and to field test some of the ideas suggested in the workshop and to base the manual on this experience. Accordingly a design for the workshop was worked out and a consultant appointed to conceptualise the manual. The first part of the workshop was held in June 1 1994 and included trainers from both Govt. (ICDS and TINP) and the NGOs. The second part of the workshop could not be held till April 1995, but work on the manual proceeded straightaway. The first draft was prepared by the consultant, circulated to a group of Resource Persons and critiqued by them. After this the revised version was developed, with inputs from several Resource Persons and the presentation format standardised. The materials in the revised manual were field tested during the second half of the workshop, while at the same time the work of editing, illustration and design was proceeding. The printed manual was available in September 1995.

200 copies were printed at first and distributed to a select group of persons involved in ECCE training, both at the Govt. and NGO levels. Responses were invited from all of them, but though several letters of appreciation were received, it has not been possible to get systematic and critical feedback about its usefulness and actual use as a handbook for trainers. However, there has been a steady demand for it, from both within and outside the country. It has been reviewed in the Bernard van Leer Newsletter and has found a place in the ERIC database and microfiche collection. It has also been regularly distributed as part of the kit of materials in all workshops/courses for trainers in ECCE conducted by MSSRF since its publication. Another 200 copies had to be printed, and there are currently only a handful in stock. More copies will soon have to be printed.

Institutions like NIPPCD and NCERT at the national level, and training institutions, Universities etc. at the State level were approached to ask if they would like to translate and use the document in Hindi and/or the regional/local language. The Deptt. of HDFFS of Baroda University has prepared a Gujarati translation and are trying to get funds for the publication. The Government of Tamil Nadu has expressed interest and it is informally known that the publication is being used, but no step for translation has been taken as yet. This may also be because the manual is addressed to trainers, most of whom are fairly proficient in English. It is known that the manual is being widely used and is popular but at the same time it has not been possible to collect systematic use about its use, or to obtain a critique which would be useful for purposes of revision.

3. Teachers' Periodical on Low-Cost-No-Cost Activities

Another early initiative was to reach teachers directly in the field on a mass scale with support for better classroom practices. A periodical directly addressed to teachers was the obvious answer, and it was immediately realised that the best way to go about this would be to capture space in a regular established periodical with a wide reach, in the form of a supplement or centre page spread.

Chittukuruvi, a periodical of the Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Project reaches a vast audience of childcare workers, numbering about 30,000. This newsletter addresses issues of children between 0-6 years, concentrating on pre-school education and care of the young child. Since this newsletter had such a wide coverage and reaches the maximum number of childcare workers, it was felt that a 4 page supplement focusing on effective use of low cost materials for activities and games for pre-schoolers would serve the purpose.

TINP was approached with this suggestion and accepted the idea of a 4-page centre page in every issue focussing on classroom practices in ECCE. In December 1993 a group of about ten specialists in ECCE were invited to a meeting

and requested to take up the responsibility for developing and writing the material for one issue. Six institutions responded and a plan was drawn for six issues for the year 1994, since the periodical appears once in two months. The topics to be taken up during the year were also decided and each institution indicated which topic it would like to handle. Guidelines for the length, language, style, were also prepared. COTA would undertake the responsibility for editing, illustration, design and lay-out and submit the camera-ready materials to TINP before the deadline. The programme went smoothly, though the amount of work turned out to be more than expected. Throughout 1994 materials in final form for printing (adhering to the print specifications of the periodical) were submitted well in advance of the deadline.

However, there were serious problems at the TINP end. The periodical did not come out regularly, and there were long delays and gaps between issues. The Jan-Feb issue came out in March, but after that each issue was delayed by longer and longer intervals, and the last of the six issues, dated Nov-Dec 1994 appeared only in January 1996.

Informal feedback from teachers/childcare workers at meetings, and workshops, letters and reports from supervisors indicate that the material, though delayed has in fact reached the hands of the field workers for whom it was intended. Though it is not clear how many have started using it, or how many keep the back numbers, many have responded enthusiastically and there was a demand for it to be put together in the form of a book. Accordingly, the six supplements have been reprinted and bound together in the form of a book entitled *Ippadiyum Karkalame* (Lets Learn Like This!). 1000 copies of the book were printed and 475 have been distributed. There is still a heavy demand for this publication .

In view of the difficulties experienced in bringing out the first six issues, the original idea of continuing the supplement as a regular feature was out of the question. In fact, the publication *Chittukuruvi* was itself suspended for over a year and has not yet resumed publication, though it is learnt that it is being revived.

4. Soft toys

Soft toys are considered an essential part of the equipment available in all childcare centres as they stimulate imagination and allow the child to role play in a range of situations. They also provide an outlet for both positive and negative emotions, help in language development and provide opportunities for group play and learning. However in most of the balwadis these toys are either absent or found very rarely. Even if they are available the children are hardly given a chance to play with them either individually or in groups. The major reason may be the ignorance about the importance of such play and the scarcity of such toys. Moreover the toys available at the market are phenomenally expensive as well as being highly westernised, thus being alien to the child in the rural urban slum setting.

Considering all these factors, this project took up work to prepare low cost prototypes of soft toys and play materials which would blend with the local cultural and traditional setting. It was also decided to undertake a study on the viability of using a specially designed set of low cost soft toys in the childcare centres. An advisory committee was set up with 7 experts. These experts met on 6 Dec'93 to discuss the objectives and various stages of the project, such as designing , preparing, field testing in selected balwadis and evaluation and promotion of large scale manufacture.

Some designing parameters for appropriate soft toys were identified. The emphasis was on the availability of the toys at low cost in all aspects;

the use of materials, replicability and local availability.

they should be safe and sturdy ,

should be durable and easily replicable

the children should enjoy playing with the toys

should be clear, attractive, culturally familiar and suggestive.

The various materials that can be used for the preparation were also discussed in the meeting. The advantages and disadvantages and the source of materials were highlighted. The time frame was also fixed. The designer had mentioned that the first sample set would be ready by the end of February 94. From the finalisation of the prototype set of soft toys a total of 8 months was estimated for the completion of the project.

The designer came out with prototypes of soft toys which blended with the rural, urban slum settings. 2 sets of 4 toys (mother, father, daughter & son) were prepared. The cost of these soft toys worked out to Rs.85/ per doll, as the materials and accessories used were quite expensive. These prepared prototype sets were evaluated on Oct. 19th 94 by 16 experts based on parameters like attractiveness, quality, compatibility, replicability and usability. Based on the evaluation some small changes were made in the specially designed soft toys. These toys were then given to 5 children between the age group of 2-6 years to observe their usability, attractiveness etc. The children enjoyed playing with the toys. It was observed that despite the rough handling by the children the toys didn't lose their shape or get ripped.

The next step was to field test the toys in selected balwadis to evaluate their utility, feasibility and other dimensions. 20 sets of soft toys were prepared for field testing. Letters were sent to various departments of child development requesting for abstracts on the evaluation of the toys and play materials which would be helpful in designing the study. After referring to some of the abstracts obtained, the study was designed with the following objectives - to evaluate by field test the soft toys in relation to their acceptability, usability, compatibility, and replicability,

- to study the use of soft toys by children as play materials in a classroom for mass distribution and
- to study the condition under which the toys could be most effectively used as play materials in the classrooms.

A questionnaire/interview schedule was prepared for the study.

It was decided that a few of the ICDS centres be selected at random from both rural and urban areas. Five centres from Egmore(urban) and 5 centres from Manamadurai(rural) block were selected for the training programme. The teachers in these centres would then be oriented in using the soft toys. This orientation course was conducted on March 1-2 1995 at Children's Garden School, Sholinganallur, Chennai - 600 096. The training emphasised the importance of playing with soft toys, their preparation and observation of children in the balwadis. Another 10 centres, 5 each from Royapuram and Sakottai) were selected as controls and the study was conducted in 20 centres altogether.

Some of the significant findings of this study were

1. All the teachers felt that these toys had also created curiosity in children - a first step in the learning process.
2. The teachers felt that the small number of toys given to each centre restricted their use for free play, though they could get little more leverage with the other accessories provided.
3. Teachers from all the 20 centres were unanimous in saying that these toys played a very important role in nurturing and enhancing imagination in children.
4. The teacher-child relationship had improved a lot as after the introduction of soft toys, the children seem to be approaching the teacher more often for help.
5. Most of the teachers were of the opinion that these toys actually became an incentive for the children to come to centres thereby increasing the attendance in the centres.

The report was prepared and submitted in June 96', the delay being due to various staffing problems. The results of the study made it evident that mass scale production of soft toys and distribution to the balwadis would stimulate the children to come to the centres regularly and also enhance their imagination and creativity. To bring down the cost of the toys to the minimum, it was planned that the tailoring societies of the Directorate of Social Welfare themselves could be trained in preparing

the toys and at the same time the waste materials generated at these tailoring units could be used for stuffing the toys. Another advantage of using the cotton waste materials as stuffing was that the toys became more softer to touch and play with. A proposal was submitted to the Directorate of Social Welfare highlighting the cost-effectiveness in preparing the soft toys on a mass scale. The proposal very clearly brought out the estimated cost of soft toys at the minimum. The recycling cost, where only the base material of the toy had to be changed after one year came to only Rs. 15 /toy. There was continuous correspondence and individual briefing with the Director, Directorate of Social Welfare, to convince him/her about taking up mass scale production of the soft toys. It was agreed that some of the tailoring units could be trained in preparing the soft toys.

One centre at Egmore was selected by the Directorate of Social Welfare to provide the training. Resource support was provided by MSSRF. Another centre from Women's Voluntary Services was given training in preparing the soft toys. It was a one-day training just highlighting the preparation of the soft toy. Both the centres felt that one more one-day training was necessary to prepare the toys more efficiently. These toys were evaluated and the cost of each toy was worked out. As there were more number of people and waste materials available with the tailoring unit of the Directorate of Social Welfare, the cost of the toys came to only Rs 35/toy. The Director , Directorate of Social Welfare, proposed that some tailoring units from Chengai MGR district could also be selected (as this would benefit the rural areas) for mass scale production.

The Director also requested for a proposal outlining the cost of production of the soft toys and its recycled cost . It was proposed that various tailoring societies under the Dept of Social Welfare could be used for making the toys, the waste materials generated at these units could be used as raw materials and the selected tailoring units themselves could be trained in preparing the toys, thereby making the whole process cost effective and mass production would bring down the cost of these toys even further.

A one day orientation programme in preparing the soft toys was conducted for the benefit of the tailoring society at Kancheepuram identified by the Directorate of Social Welfare . The orientation course was conducted by the Directorate of Social Welfare with Project ACCESS providing the resource support. The participants very enthusiastically participated in the preparation of the soft toys. After the training the women of the training society and the adolescent girls felt that one more orientation was necessary to get a better understanding in the preparation of soft toys.

The continuous changes at the Director, Directorate of Social Welfare has hindered our approach because each time a new Director comes he or she has to be oriented on the whole project right from the first thereby taking a lot of time. This sort of hindrances which are beyond our control have hampered our effort in working out the approach as planned. The next orientation and the beginning of mass production has yet to start.

Booklet on Soft toys

The reason for coming out with the booklet on soft toys for child's development was to provide some guide material for the teachers attending the orientation course given in using the soft toys in balwadis. The booklet emphasised the importance of using soft toys for the development of the child. It clearly listed out the different ways of introducing the toys, how the toys can be used, the role of teachers in making children play with these toys and the safety of the toys. The teachers at the orientation course found this booklet very useful. Though this booklet was prepared for the soft toys orientation course, it has found its use even in the training provided for the preparation of soft toys. The teachers/tailors after going through this booklet are able to understand the importance and the need for the preparation of soft toys and its distribution in balwadis. The teachers are able to design and use the toys in accordance with the stories that they might narrate. Copies of this booklet are made as when required and for the number of participants attending the course.

5. Guidebook on Indigeneous Colours

Drawing and painting are two important activities that nurture children's growth and development. It is through this medium that they are able to express their feelings and ideas effectively. It is thus an effective mode of communication for the 3 year olds who have not yet started using spoken language comfortably. Despite the immense educational value universally, it has always been seen as an urban phenomenon and an upper/middle class luxury. One of the major reasons for this could be the cost of the artificial colours and its limited availability in villages and towns.

Sensing the importance of indulging the children in creative activities like painting and our rich tradition of preparing colours from naturally available materials, using traditionally prepared colours in balwadis was explored. A few experts in the field of preparing natural dyes and colours were identified. The art of colour making was acquired from these experts. It was thought that documentation on the preparation of these colours would help the teachers in anganwadis to use the colours often .

The preparation of these colours was experimented several times. The natural materials were obtained from small shops catering to such clientele. Before the documentation was done it became necessary to give the specific procedure of preparation like the quantity of materials required , the variety of materials required for obtaining one particular colour, the intensity of the colour, etc. Several experimentations were done to be thorough with the whole process of its preparation and the type of colours obtained . It also became necessary to see the shelf life of the colours as this would give the teachers knowledge about how long these colours could be preserved and used to obtain the same lustre as on the first day of preparation. Ways of enhancing the colours like the type of mordant that could be used , which would improve the quality of the colours and at the same time not be harmful to the children, were also experimented with.

At first video documentation was planned. It was then thought that in the video format the teachers would have little access to it as they would not be able to follow the preparation and then prepare the colours and moreover as there would not be any video projector in each balwadi it would become difficult for the teacher to run the video. It was thus decided that a booklet on the preparation of these natural colours would be very handy. As and when the teacher required to prepare the colours she could browse through the booklet and prepare them, thereby making the process of giving such creative activities to children more frequent.

The booklet " Shades of Nature" gives in vivid detail the importance and the need for fostering creativity in children through such activities as painting and drawing. The booklet explains clearly the actual preparation of the colours, the various natural materials that can be used, the intensity of colours obtained , their shelf life and a few tips such as preparing brushes for painting at the centre, the effective use of available papers for painting. This book has been prepared in both Tamil and English in order to reach all the balwadi teachers throughout Tamil Nadu. The booklet has been well appreciated by the teachers and they found it to be very useful in preparing the colours as and when required. 700 copies of the booklet were printed in tamil and 300 copies in English. So far 100 copies in tamil and 100 copies in English have been distributed so far.

6. Training Videos

The major aim of developing resource materials in Early Childhood Education was to fill up the gaps in the available training and instructional materials. As a part of this endeavour it was planned to document activities actually being carried out at various childcare centres. These set of short films on specific topics would be able to give the creche/balwadi teacher a clear idea of how to go about an activity in the classroom setting and on what learning outcomes could be expected. As there were a lot of low cost materials that are not being used like ropes, worn out cycle tyres, sea shells, dried

coconut leaves and sticks, natural dyes etc. it was thought that the use of such materials for the overall development of the child would help in understanding the importance of such materials. Though there are resource materials emphasising activity based education, actual classroom situations where the pre-schoolers are doing these activities was lacking. Documentation of these activities would help the others in using them. As an initial step, the creches/centres had to be selected.

a. Indigenous crafts

At Chennai the ICCW which have a number of child care centres was approached in June 1996 with the idea of preparing a video on crafts using low cost indigenous materials. ICCW welcomed this idea. 4 centres were identified by the ICCW for us to work with. The teachers at these centres were already doing some of the activities, a little help was provided on the use of other such low cost materials. A lot of reference materials were browsed through to prepare the outline of activities and its effect on the development of the child.

The selected anganwadis were visited three to four times in the months of August and September to establish rapport with the teachers. Each centre was asked to concentrate on the materials that they could get locally to prepare different crafts, like the centres near the beach had picked up sea shells on which they could make a wide variety of activities. The children enjoyed doing these activities, they by themselves were picking up the materials available near their homes and asking the teachers what they could do with these materials. The teachers at these centres were quite convinced that through these activities the children are able to learn a lot of things and they were able to teach a lot like story telling, songs, introducing number concepts, etc. using the crafts done by the children. As these activities were an ongoing part of the childcare centres it was decided to video document these activities.

b. Sand , Clay and Water Play

Documentation of other activities using low cost materials was taken up. It was decided that a rural centre could be selected so that the people in the rural/ semi urban area would not feel that such activities could take place only in the urban areas. A NGO working on issues related to childcare was approached in December 1996, Reaching the Unreached (NGO) near Madurai district. Sand, clay and water play was the activity that they chose to take up. Enquiries were made if the centres had the facilities and equipment to carry out these activities. After their confirmation that they have all the materials required to conduct these activities and were already doing these activities at their childcare centres, a visit was made to the centres in December 1996. 4 centres were selected by the organisation itself. The teachers were introduced and an orientation was given as to what was the purpose of the visit , what the teachers are requested to do, and the objective of the documentation . The teachers were quite convinced that they play a major part in bringing out such instructional materials and this would help in improving the quality of early childhood education.

A separate corner for sand was already being maintained so that the children could play in it . There was a bucket of water filled close by the sand pit so that the children could wash their hands as soon as they finished with their playing. One of the centre selected had a potter nearby, thereby making it easy for the teachers to acquire clay for various activities. The potter closeby was amused by the number of articles the children were able to reproduce with clay. There was also separate provision for water play .

c. Science experiences

Science experiments have not been a major part of the pre-school education and there was very little hands on experience as how to introduce science concepts to children at such a young age. This was taken as a novel attempt at introducing science to pre-schoolers. Two persons are from the District Institute of Education and

Training (DIET) and the Mobile Team Instructress from the ICDS at Pudukottai, conceptualised and prepared a set of science experiences for the pre-schoolers. These people were approached in June 1996 to put theory into practice. They very enthusiastically agreed to the idea and opined that the ICDS centres at Pudukottai could be taken for this documentation as they would be able to closely supervise the activities at the centre. Letters was written to the Director , Directorate of Social Welfare in June 1996 stating the need for instructional materials in ECE concentrating on the science experiences for children. She was also informed that the DIET office at Pudukottai which has a resource centre would take up the task of assisting the teachers of the ICDS centres in science activities. It was also stated clearly that there would be no financial commitment from the Directorate of Social Welfare. Personal briefings were made to the Directorate on these issues. A letter was also written to the DIET Principal in June 1996 requesting Mr. Sivakumar DIET lecturer (Pudukottai) to take up the task of assisting the teachers of the ICDS centres. The Principal readily agreed to the suggestion. The Director, Directorate of Social Welfare welcomed such an idea and corresponded with the ICDS Office at Pudukottai requesting the CDPO to select 4 centres for us.

A draft outline of the proposed science activities was sent to us . Some corrections were made on the introduction of these concepts to the children, a few experiments were made simpler and some were deleted because they didnot relate to the 3-6 years age group. A final copy of the experiments were made and the DIET took up the responsibility of orienting the teachers of the selected ICDS centres on August 1996. After one month of orientation by the DIET a visit was made on February 1997 to see the progress in this area. Only after actually doing those experiments the teachers realised that the children could not follow some aspects. Such experiments were made simpler. The children by themselves had started to bring a lot of locally available materials and requesting the teacher to perform various activities. These teachers were closely monitored and help was given by the DIET lecturer.

During this period a director was approached to prepare this film. The script writing also started so that the director would be familiar with what he has to document. The script went through a lot of corrections. Care was taken to see that the script was in simple language so that the teachers could easily follow.

The centres at Chennai were ready for documenting during the month of August itself, but due to other programmes which suddenly cropped up during this period the shooting of these activities had to be postponed to November 1996. It was not possible to have the shooting during December 1996 and January 1997 because of the Christmas vacations and the monsoons. Therefore the offices at RTU and Pudukottai were informed that a visit would be made during February 1997 to decide the dates convenient to both the centres for documentation.

After a visit was made in February 1997 it was decided that the shooting at the RTU and Pudukottai could be clubbed together so that the costs of shooting equipment and the shooting unit could be reduced considerably. So it was decided that March 1997 would be ideal for documentation at both RTU and Pudukottai.

The centres were informed of the dates of the shooting which was from March 23-29 1997. The documentation at the other centres of Pudukottai and G.Kallupatti took one week for completion. Some new experiments and activities were also documented which emerged as the documentation was going on. The children came out with a lot of surprises, which were immediately documented. The shooting was completed by the end of March 1997.

d. Teacher- made toys and play objects

Activities for children should generate their interest in learning, trigger their imagination, emotions and foster creativity. The teacher's role here is more that of a facilitator who prepares the 'environment' for the children and guides them skilfully. There are a lot of teaching aids that can be prepared using low-cost materials like

animals, birds, vehicles out of clay, exercise books out of leaves, dolls out of coconut shells, etc. These learning aids after being prepared could be used in story telling, giving joyful exercises to children etc. Some of the teachers from the childcare centres where we had already been working for the above mentioned videos were very good and skillful in using some of these materials effectively as learning aids. It was thought that preparation of learning aids could also be documented so that the childcare workers/teachers are able to prepare their own aids. Each teacher demonstrated some teaching aids using locally available material. The teachers were asked to clearly show the step by step process so that this would help others to easily understand the process of preparing the aid. 10 teachers from 4 ICDS centres, 4 ICCW centres and one NGO were approached for this film.

e. Processing and release of the film

After watching the rushes of the shooting, some changes were made in the script and some new activities introduced. The editing took a long time as it depended on external factors like the prior commitments of the director, availability of the editing suite etc. As soon as the cassettes were ready, experts in the field of ECE were invited to preview the cassettes on July 1997 for their comments on the content, form and concept. Based on some of the suggestions made by these experts, the corrections were carried out and later finalised.

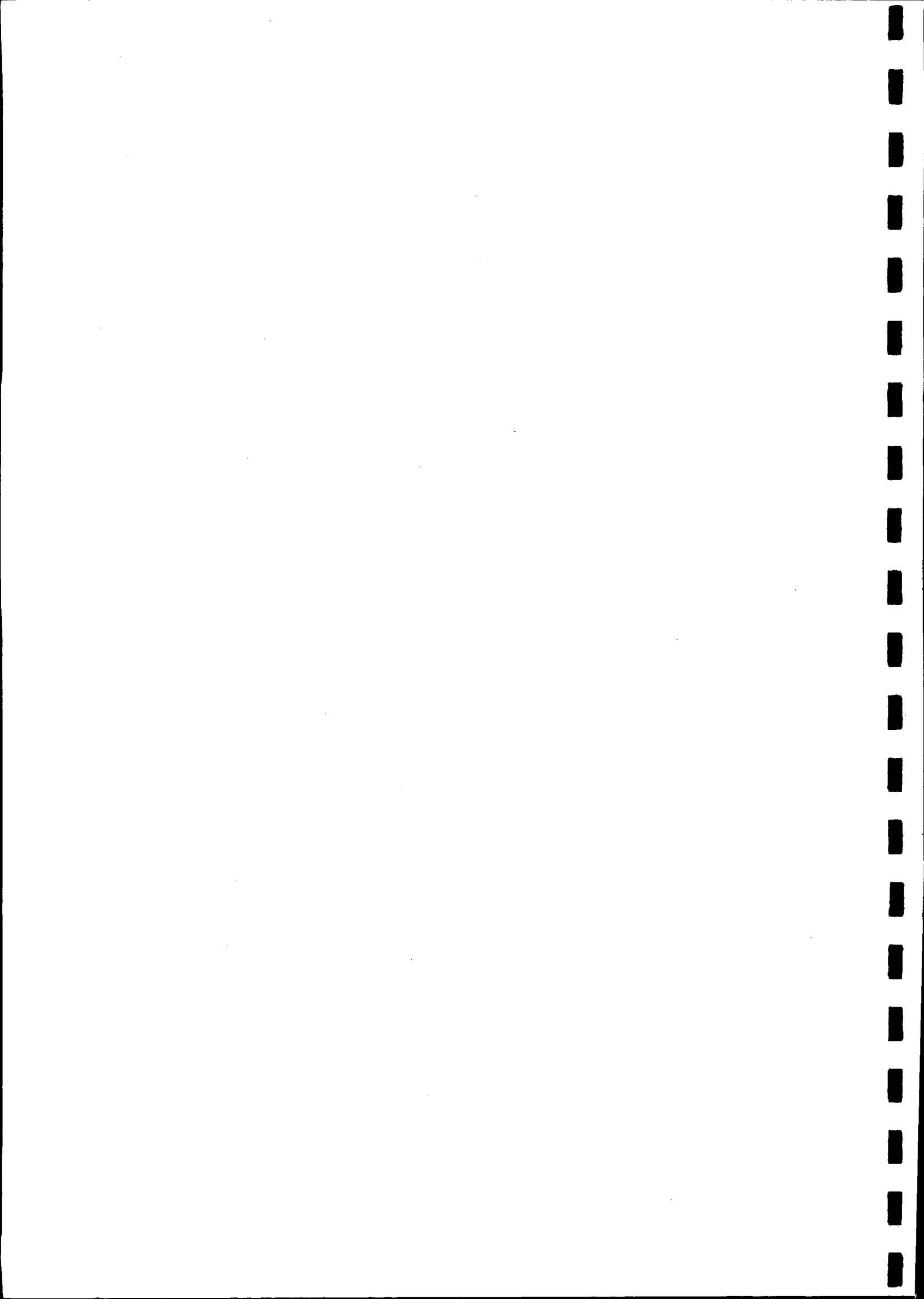
The cassettes were released for the Teachers Day (September 5 1997) as a novel way of honouring childcare workers. The teacher with the maximum years of experience in teaching pre-schoolers among the childcare centres selected for the documentation were asked to release the cassettes. Several experts in the field of ECE were invited to the release function of the cassettes. So far 30 cassettes have already been sold and there is a continuous stream of requests for these cassettes.

7. Stories for Children

As a way of popularising the local folklore of the various districts of Tamil Nadu, several stories for children had been collected from the teachers of childcare centres of the Tamil Nadu Nutrition Programme(TINP) throughout Tamil Nadu. About 400 stories were submitted by the childcare workers themselves with inputs from the local community. It was thought that these stories in a narratable form would help the teachers get acquainted with the stories and start using them in their daily educational programmes. These stories were collected by Ms. E.V. Shanta, at that time, nutrition specialist in TINP. As the stories required to be rewritten in order to put them in a narrative form with simple language using colloquial expressions, this was put off for sometime due to several other activities which cropped up during this period. This was raised in the Technical Advisory Committee as an important point for follow up. These stories were later taken up at the beginning of 1996. All the 400 stories were initially screened and 30 stories selected by two communication experts. These selected 30 stories were rewritten with focus on positive value, a certain amount of fantasy, humour etc.

A five member screening committee was set up comprising of educators, teachers and professionals. The screening committee and inhouse staff took the responsibility of sifting through the stories on the basis of the popularity of the stories, the morals and values and comprehensibility by the 3-6 yr. olds. Based on some of these parameters 20 stories were selected.

Dinamani, a popular Tamil magazine published three stories with due acknowledgement to the TINP workers in their special feature on Pongal for children. As these stories were collected from the TINP centres, it was decided that the TINP could be asked to publish these stories and copies made available to all the TINP centres. Project ACCESS was prepared to assist them in editing, illustrations, lay out, and design. The stories have been handed over to the TINP Project Co-ordinator (Communication). The TINP has agreed to publish stories as a series in its magazine "*Chittukuruvi*" but the issues are not yet out.



Capacity Building

I. Govt. of Tamil Nadu, Dept. of Social Welfare (0-3 years child)

Following a national level Conference on improvement of ICDS, DSW decided in 1993 to introduce a special programme for children below three, to supplement and enrich the ongoing ICDS programme. DSW were advised in Delhi to get in touch with MSSRF and accordingly approached us to conduct an orientation/training for their training cadre, consisting of all the members of the nine mobile training teams (about 33 persons in all).

Phase I

The orientation course was held in Coimbatore on February 21-25, 1994 and was attended by 35 persons, including 2 representatives of NGOs. The objectives were:

- To develop knowledge about the development of children 0-3 years.
- To create insight into process-oriented training strategies
- To develop practical training strategies for the next level of training
- To develop concrete action plans for implementation and
- To do all this in a joyful environment conducive for effective holistic learning.

The process was planned to evolve in stages, through receptivity and inputs, to analysis, reflection and internalisation followed by application and outputs, and conclude with evaluation. The course was in a participatory, process-oriented mode and was conducted with the help of several experienced Resource Persons. The output included identification of nine important messages and the development of communication materials related to them, and an action plan the central element of which was an innovative training strategy based on targeting mixed groups (vertical training) and spreading it over a period of time through a series of modules; developing appropriate communication materials in both folk and mass media, and basing these on the nine selected messages.

A follow-up meeting was held in June 1994 and the action plan was reviewed. The need for a cell with appropriate budget to develop the communication support materials, and a framework for monitoring and evaluation was discussed.

However, this plan was apparently not approved by DSW and sometime later, an alternative action plan was developed by DSW, with the intention to develop a home-based approach to development of children below three in one area only as a pilot project and to undertake this in four blocks of Nagapattinam District. A whole series of orientations for officials and functionaries was planned. The suggestions made at the orientation course and review meeting did not find a place in the plan. The project was formally inaugurated in December 1994, after a planning session in October 1994, at which some of the Resource Persons who had participated in the orientation were also present.

For the next year or so, no information was available about the progress of the scheme. However, it was informally learnt that a consultant had been appointed to develop instructional materials based on local cultural practices and forms, but no further details were given, nor was MSSRF involved. It was later also learnt that the consultant, who had been appointed for six months, submitted her report after about eighteen months, but the contents of this report have also not been shared.

Phase II

Meanwhile, in early 1996, after the Nagapattinam project had been going on for more than a year, MSSRF took the initiative to come up with a proposal for development of communication materials to support the kind of work being done in Nagapattinam project, which included a workshop with the Nagapattinam ICDS functionaries with a view to developing materials useful to them. Because of several changes of officials at the top level during this period, which also included elections and a change of Government, this proposal was approved only in December 1996, and the workshop was conducted in February 1997.

The Nagapattinam workshop included as participants village mothers, anganwadi workers, ICDS supervisory cadres at several levels, trainers and higher officials, and the Resource persons included folk singers musicians, a communication specialist, a film maker/ theatre person, and a graphic artist.

The outputs include:

- A folk ballad on the theme
- A series of eight songs in folk style
- A play suitable for radio or puppets
- A set of pictures for posters or calendar and
- Brief dramatic sketches for development into video messages

These materials were critiqued and revised at a second workshop held for some of the original participants in May 1997 with the involvement of other professionals, including TINP cadres, and then finally polished for production. The final products are:

- An audio-cassette featuring six songs on one side and the folk ballad on the other
- A set of four video spots on stimulation of the young child
- A set of pictures for a calendar or series of posters

The spots are now being regularly telecast by Doordarshan as well as being available on video for use in training. Both TINP and ICDS have ordered copies of the audio-cassettes for use in training as well as with parent groups and community groups. Production of the calendar is awaiting a sponsor-both ICDS and TINP have been approached. The radio(puppet) drama has not yet been brought into a form suitable for use. It is also intended to be broadcast as a radio play by AIR as well as made available on cassette for reproduction by amateur groups at parents meetings and community events.

Discussion

The major outputs of this effort are

- first a sensitised and well oriented cadre of professional within the DSW and
- second, a set of communication materials

It is not clear whether the main original aim of implementing a new approach at the field level has been attained and this is beyond the scope of the present paper to discuss that aspect. What is clear is that there was mid-course change of policy by Government, and had to respond with a new and different strategy so that something could be achieved. These kinds of unexplained changes of policy, long delays and turnarounds, lost or misplaced materials, unutilised studies and reports, infructuous consultancies etc., and other factors beyond our control are often related to changes of key officials, personal dynamics, change of Government, pressures from external sources such as UNICEF and other unrelated events. They are a quite common, even regular feature of Government functioning, and as such have to be expected, prepared for, accepted and dealt with. A continuously evolving response strategy is required. Under the circumstances, the final output is far from unsatisfactory.

It is worth noting that, at the invitation of TINP who had heard about the course, a similar course was conducted in August 1994 for about 30 trainer cadre from TINP, with identical course content and procedures. However, this time the course was organised by TINP with MSSRF as consultants, and the report and follow-up was to be done by TINP. No report was prepared, and no information later was provided about the outcome, implementation etc. However, it is informally learnt that many of the ideas have been incorporated into TINP's training schedule in the past two years.

II. Government of Tamil Nadu (TINP and ICDS) - ECE

To initiate the process of working with the Government cadre of trainers, which was one of the basic objectives of COTA, it was planned to conduct a two-part orientation in **PLAY AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT** for trainers belonging to ICDS and TINP. A specialise in Child Development with experience in ECE training was appointed on a short-term basis, and a brainstorming workshop with a small group (seven) of skilled professionals was held in March 1994 with a view to developing an outline and conceptual framework for such a training, and for the course content, materials exercises etc. needed to transact it. It was decided to hold the course in two parts, with a gap of at least six months in between, to allow the participants to put some of their learnings into practice, and to base the curriculum for the second part on the feedback received from them after a few months. The brainstorming workshop also benefited from the recent experience (February 1994) of conducting a process-based participatory workshop for ICDS trainers on the development of children aged 0-3 years. It was also decided to include trainers from the NGO sector up to a maximum of one-third of the participants, to promote interaction and share experiences between Government and NGO sector.

Phase I

The first part of the course was held June 23-29, 1994 with the objectives of

- Orientation to a holistic concept of child development based on play as central to the child
- to create insight into various training strategies
- to develop practical training strategies for the next level of training and
- to develop concrete plans for further training.

The 29 participants included 13 from ICDS, 8 from TINP and 8 from the NGO sector, with one observer.

The main output of the course was a concrete action plan for training which included

- a one-year programme to incorporate play more widely throughout the system
- a three month orientation for fresh recruits
- a one-day orientation for administrators
- a five day refresher course for supervisors and
- a three day orientation for supervisors

Attempts were made to follow up on the course. Monitoring visits were made by the resource persons to three trainers in the field, with encouraging findings. After six months, all the participants were requested to send feedback about their experiences and difficulties on the basis of a questionnaire. Some responded, while others had been shifted to new positions. A number of attempts were made to hold meetings with higher officials in both TINP and ICDS to seriously discuss action plans and their implementation, but there were constantly postponed. No planned follow-up or assessment of outcomes could be done. Finally, it was decided to go ahead with the second part of the course.

Phase 2

The second part of the course was held April 3-6, 1995. Of the 22 participants who attended this course, 17 were those who had attended the first part, while five were new. 13 of the original participants were unable to attend. This was mainly because they had been shifted to new assignments during the intervening period, and in some cases, substitutes were sent. Surprisingly, this phenomenon also affected the NGO sector.

The objectives of this part of the course were:

- analysis and evaluation of training strategies in use
- acquisition and practice of new skills
- intensive planning

Again, detailed and comprehensive plans for action were made, including refresher courses for child care workers, institutionalisation formation of resource teams, working with NGOs, preparation of training manual and conduct of specialised advanced courses. Specific commitments were suggested for ICDS and TINP.

However, again, no specific commitments were formally made by either authority and attempts to hold discussion with senior officials on the type of follow up needed were not responded to. No Documentation of the actual outcomes was hence not possible.

Outputs

The major outputs are two. First the sensitisation and upgradation of skills of the trainer cadre, which was evident from their own evaluations, which have been recorded. Informal observations, discussions and meetings with this group of people over the last three years provide ample evidence that they are doing their best, and have to some extent succeeded, in incorporating much of what they have learnt into their own work as trainers. However, this has not been systematically documented for the reasons given above.

The second main output is the development and publication of the training manual **PLAYING TO LEARN**. The framework for this manual was created in the first brainstorming workshop, and the various parts of it implemented and field tested in the two orientation courses, thus bringing together a set of innovative participatory strategies which had been tried and tested in the field. The manual was subjected to a series of critiques and revision, and after final editing was brought out in September 1995.

The manual offers trainers a comprehensive child-centred perspective on training field workers in ECE, with emphasis on play-based curriculum. It consists of a series of structured exercises utilising innovative process-based and participatory strategies summarised in the acronym DEPTH. 200 copies were printed in the August 95 and in response to the demand another 200 were printed in September'96. Copies have been sent to most of the institutions concerned with ECE training. The Depth of Human

Development and Family Studies, M S University Baroda took up the responsibility of translating this manual into Gujarati. DSW, Tamil Nadu was approached for the translation of this manual into Tamil, as they have already translated and published two earlier manuals (by M S S R F) intended for field workers/teachers. After the review which appeared in the Newsletter of the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, there were several requests from universities and institutions outside India. It has also found place in the Eric database and microfiche collection. The manual has established its utility and copies have been distributed so far.

Discussion

From the evaluation of the participants, the observers, resource persons and organisers the course was a highly successful one, rich and full of learning experiences. There is also considerable informal evidence that the learnings have been well utilised and put into practice, with varying degrees of success from individual to individual. However, there has been no formal acknowledgment of its utility from the TINP or ICDS and no systematic attempt to institutionalise it. Apart from the usual reasons like change of officials, transfers of participants, bureaucratic lethargy etc., the main cause appears to be that the initiative came from MSSRF and not from the clients. The subsequent experience with demand based courses has been dramatically different. The lesson that demand must be created before or along with supply is an extremely valuable one for the purpose of future planning.

III. Government of Tamil Nadu, Dept. of Education - ECE

The District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) have been given the responsibility of introducing ECE in the teacher education programme since 1995. The DIET faculty have no orientation to ECE so the Department was interested in a training, the main objectives of which would be to enhance and promote overall knowledge about Child Development and ECE among concerned faculty members and help build a team of trainers in ECE. Some of the representatives of NGOs were also interested to have this kind of training, a need which emerged from visits made to various institutions by staff from project ACCESS, and from correspondence. DTERT had approached ACCESS to collaborate in conducting the Trainers' Training. It was decided to conduct a 12 day course in two parts.

Phase I

The first part of the orientation course of six days, was held in September 1995 for 21 DIET Lecturers and 7 representatives from NGO's

- to enable the participants to understand internalise and transact play-based curriculum for holistic development, and
- to develop and enhance skills of participants for teaching / training at cognitive and psychomotor levels of children aged 3-6 years.
- The methodology of the course were experiential, participatory, process- based and play oriented.

An outcome study was undertaken three months after the training through a questionnaire requiring information such as kinds of training carried out in the field, experiences gained during and after orientation, difficulties faced in field training etc. Some of the participants had conducted one-day orientation courses for Anganwadi workers and primary teachers. Many of them stated that they had been able to visit a few Anganwadis and conduct activities through playway methods to children. Many of them felt that though they were interested to conduct training courses, they were not able to do so due to the financial constrains and lack of support from the Government. Some additional topics were also suggested by the participants for further orientation during the second half of the course.

Follow up action- Phase I

Positive feed back was received from 10 DIET faculty members and from three NGOs six months after the training. One of the DIET trainers had conducted a three day in-service training programme on the playway method of teaching and preparation of low- cost teaching materials for teachers of classes I& II. Two DIETs had conducted one-day orientation for the primary school HMs on minimum levels of learning, reducing dropouts etc. These aspects had been included as a separate subject in two DIETs for the pre-service teacher training students. In one of the DIETs, students were given opportunity to visit nearby Anganwadi centres to observe the activities of pre-school children. Ten participants stated that they had gained experience in preparation of play materials, and skill in conducting training with a participatory approach on ECCE. Continuous monitoring and evaluation had also been done in the Anganwadi centres by some participants.

Phase II

Based on the responses received from the participants, and considering the urge and demand, the second and concluding part of the orientation course was held in June 1996

- to focus on child development and practical training strategies for teachers at the pre-primary and primary level,
- to enable the participants to put into practice what they had learnt in the first part of training,
- to work on strategies to deal with the practical difficulties in implementation,
- to utilise their experiences and needs and prepare concrete action-plan for implementation.
- A special feature of the methodology during both sessions was attention to providing living experience of an environment promoting active learning. Thus all aspects were carefully planned to create an overall environment to stimulate effective learning.

Action plan

- Each DIET agreed to adopt 5-20 schools (classes I & II) to introduce practical implementation of the play way and ECE methods in early primary classes.
- Plans were made to offer in-service and pre-service training to teachers of ECE and orientation training on the goals, objectives, curriculum and methods of ECE for HMS, DEOs, AEOs and principals of DIETS.
- It was decided to strengthen the library which already existed with materials, books, references, audio visual aids etc., and
- To prepare and bring out printed materials for classes I & II including games with special reference to language and mathematics.
- A handbook of simple science experiences to develop concept formation and thinking skills in young children (ages 3-8) would be developed and brought out.

Follow up action - Phase II

Feed back was received from four DIET faculty members and from two NGOs.

- DIET from Namakkal conducted a one-day orientation for in-house faculty, regular classes on importance of ECE for 98 students, and preparation of low cost and no cost materials for 200 primary teachers in 1996. A two day orientation was given to the HMs.(40) on participatory approach and teacher-child interaction in Dec.1997. Periodic visits also have been made to check the play way activities conducted by the primary teachers in the AW. Instructional materials distributed in the course have been given to 40 HMs to copy and distribute. The video (Learning can be fun) was given to a local Cable TV operator and broad-casted.

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- DIET from MGR District conducted one day session for 50 Block level officials of Social Welfare to discuss and suggest ways and means of providing linkage between primary schools and Anganwadi teachers. In Sep 1996, another two day orientation on School Readiness for 50 Primary school HMs was conducted, and in Dec. 1996.
 - DIET from Dindugul adopted 10 schools for practical implementation of ECE through playway methods in early primary classes. Experimental schools were selected based on categories like Rural, Urban and Tribal. The activities selected were action songs, stories, games, creative activity, puppets, role play etc. Those activities were developed by AWWs and a few primary teachers through discussion, group work, and implemented in the experimental schools from July 1996. Continuous evaluation has also been done. Pre-school education is one of the optional subjects for pre-service course, but greater emphasis was not given earlier on practical activities and field practice.
 - DIET from Coimbatore conducted five day in service training, two day orientation for the HMs and one day orientation for the CNIs.
 - On the NGO side a two- day workshop was conducted for in-house teachers on preparation of low-cost and no cost teaching materials, parents meetings were held to discuss about the ill effects of overburdening the children. Video film on 'Dangerous Burden was broadcast through cable TV and these messages reached more than five villages.

One-day meeting for the DIET participants was conducted by DTERT in December 1996 to review the progress in ECCE and to discuss the significance of playway methods of teaching in pre-schools. In the meeting it was decided to include 22 more DIET lecturers to orient them about holistic development of children and their education which could help to enlarge and strengthen the team for the future. DTERT approached project ACCESS to render resource support to conduct the orientation course for the new DIET faculty members, which is proposed to be conducted in 1998.

Discussion

In Tamil Nadu, there are no preschools attached to primary schools in the Govt. Sector, and ECE is part of the child care programme, which is under by the Department of Social Welfare. Training is handled by a well-qualified team of instructors. Hence, there is little direct access to ECE classrooms or teachers, and this seriously reduces the scope for them to acquire, practise, demonstrate and communicate practical skills in ECE. Given this serious limitation, there has been considerable effort at implementation, with some success, though there is variation both among individuals and DIETs in the degree and nature of effort and success. The plan to orient another set of lecturers from the DIETs reflects a realistic awareness of the difficulties and the need for new strategies to tackle them. However, attempts to bring about long run change by restructuring preservice training courses have not yet begun.

IV. Southern Region - NGO - ECE

To review the earlier orientation course on ECE held in December '94 a one-week residential course was conducted in May 1996. The course was originally designed for the trainers like supervisors of crèches who had already undergone the first phase conducted by ACCESS, to review the experiences gained in the first phase and to strengthen the resource group of Southern Region. Due to various reasons, several child care workers but very few of the supervisors could participate in the training. The entire programme had to be rescheduled to meet the interests and immediate needs of the participants with the major objectives to study the activities for overall development of children (3-6 years), to understand the participatory approach and methodology in ECE and to prepare a plan of action.

Major outcomes

Two months after the training, the participants were asked to come prepared for a review meeting. The participating institutions had created an awareness among parents about the pressures on pre-schoolers and the efficiency of the play-way method of teaching. In many of the institutions an in-house training had also been given by the trainers on preparation of teaching materials and activity-based education. It was refreshing to note that seven villages from one participating institute had come forward to establish balwadis, and out of these three had been already launched. Due to the effect of the in-house training many of the balwadi teachers had prepared communication materials like *villupattu* and street plays on the themes of burden on pre-school children and child-centred methods of teaching, which had been well received by the public. A resource group consisting of trainers from the participating organisations had been formed for training support, showing their active interest in these issues. These outcomes were presented at the review meeting.

Follow up action

As part of the ongoing programme for improvement and development of ECE in the Southern Region, a one day Resource Group meet was held on Aug. 1996

- to train an in house team on ECCE training,
- to prepare resource materials to be used by trainers and teachers, and
- to find out measures for monitoring and evaluating the programme.

It was decided that a two-day workshop for the in-house teachers would be conducted with expertise from related fields and trainers already oriented to generate more teaching and instructional materials, which would further help to give practical skills to the teachers, and enable the teachers for effective teaching. Four main pre-school components (games, creative activities, songs and stories) were identified by the group for an in-depth discussion and for material preparation. Four institutes initiated this effort to conduct the resource group meeting with the help of Convenor TN-FORCES, and Project ACCESS. Host agencies acted as logistics co-ordinators. The members of the network sponsored their own staff.

Material development workshop

The first material development workshop was conducted in Oct. 1996 with 16 supervisors and six experts from related fields. The objective was to identify the games already existing, sharing, teaching some new games and analysing them.

The group identified 50 games for all-round development of children. These games were taught in the classroom. Due to time constraints the compilation and preparation of a booklet on games could not be made within the specified period. With the co-operation

given by Project ACCESS, the second material development workshop was conducted in Jan. 1997, where 21 participants from various child care centres and four key Resource Persons participated. The agenda for the workshop was to learn and prepare innovative teaching aids using locally available, low cost materials. Tremendous response was received. The ideas were shared among the participants, they had a rich experience and acquired skills in developing many new teaching aids for pre-schoolers. All the products have been used in the classroom, and through this the teachers have improved their skills in teaching, as learnt from communications sent by the respective heads of the institutions. The next two material development workshops could not be held.

Discussion

Project ACCESS initially had taken painstaking efforts to identify the appropriate institutions working for the upliftment of children 0-6 years and the issues related to alternative teaching. After identifying these institutions, the first trainers training course was held to orient the trainers about child development, appropriate training methodology and play way method of teaching. Though the training strategies were very new, they were able to clearly understand about the concepts and methodologies, which shows their interest and involvement in the course. They also expressed their confidence in orienting teachers to these concepts. Many institutions requested Project ACCESS to conduct similar courses with depth in content for the trainers in future. It is important to note that the participating institutions have given participants the opportunity to put it into practice immediately whatever they had learnt. This also could be one of the reasons for the effectiveness of their programmes.

The first two material development workshop had received tremendous response and active participation. The other two workshops were planned but unexpectedly could not be carried out due to various reasons, such as lack of co-ordination, internal conflicts and lack of co-operation among the institution members, lack of fund flow, non-availability of time for the regular monitoring and evaluation by the experts and inadequate infrastructural facilities.

V. Summer Refresher Course in ECE

The Tamil Nadu Forum for Creche and Childcare Services (TN-FORCES) has been intensively working on the theme "Burden on the Pre-school Child. As a result of the continuous campaigning of TN-FORCES for creating awareness among the general public through TV, audio spots, celebration of special days, meeting elected representatives of the Govt. and articles on the theme in the press etc., there has been a rising swell of public opinion against the burden. As a part of the campaigning strategy, one of the sub-groups met the Education Minister in July 1996 to submit a memorandum to consider bringing in fresh rules to regulate pre-primary education and training of teachers. Though the Minister completely agreed with the basic objectives, he expressed his inability to support due to the lack of funds. As a way of building up alternative responses to the rising awareness of this problem a meeting was arranged by the pre-school sub group of TN-FORCES in Oct. 96 to discuss the strategies to strengthen the campaign. At the meeting it was decided to conduct an in-service refresher training course of 4-5 weeks duration for pre-primary teachers, balwadi teachers etc., during the summer vacations throughout Tamil Nadu, on an experimental self-financed basis with the following objectives;

- to provide orientation in ECE to practising teachers,
- to gauge the demand for ECE training,
- to take the issue to the Govt again as a public demand for training in ECE.

It was decided that various training institutes could conduct the training in their own areas. Of the 8 institutions invited to join the collaborative effort, only four institutions came forward while, the other four expressed their inability and hoped to be conducting the course in future. The course was run purely on self-finance basis and a common curriculum was followed. To reach a wider audience it was decided to place advertisements in the press and 1975 copies of brochures were distributed to various organisations and institutions. Approximately 400 application forms were sent out and 200 participants from various districts of Tamil Nadu and the neighbouring state of Andhra Pradesh finally participated in the training. Over 45 experts (regular in-house and from other institutions) in the fields of child development and ECE were involved by the four institutions for various sessions.

The curriculum was adapted to the requirements of the participants which was spelt out by them at the beginning of the course. The daily programme was a judicious mixture of theory and practical sessions combined with dramatisation of real life situations faced by the teachers. A lot of print materials and audio video materials were used to enhance the teaching / learning process.

Evaluation

In all the four institutes the participants attendance was nearly 98%. This itself shows the spirit and enthusiasm with which the participants attended the course. There were representatives from almost all the districts of Tamil Nadu showing the demand and need for ECE throughout the state. It was interesting to note that 61.5% of the participants were sponsored by the institutions themselves, clearly indicating their interest in joyful learning and activity based education. It also shows that parents have understood the need for quality education and have started demanding burdenless education to the children.

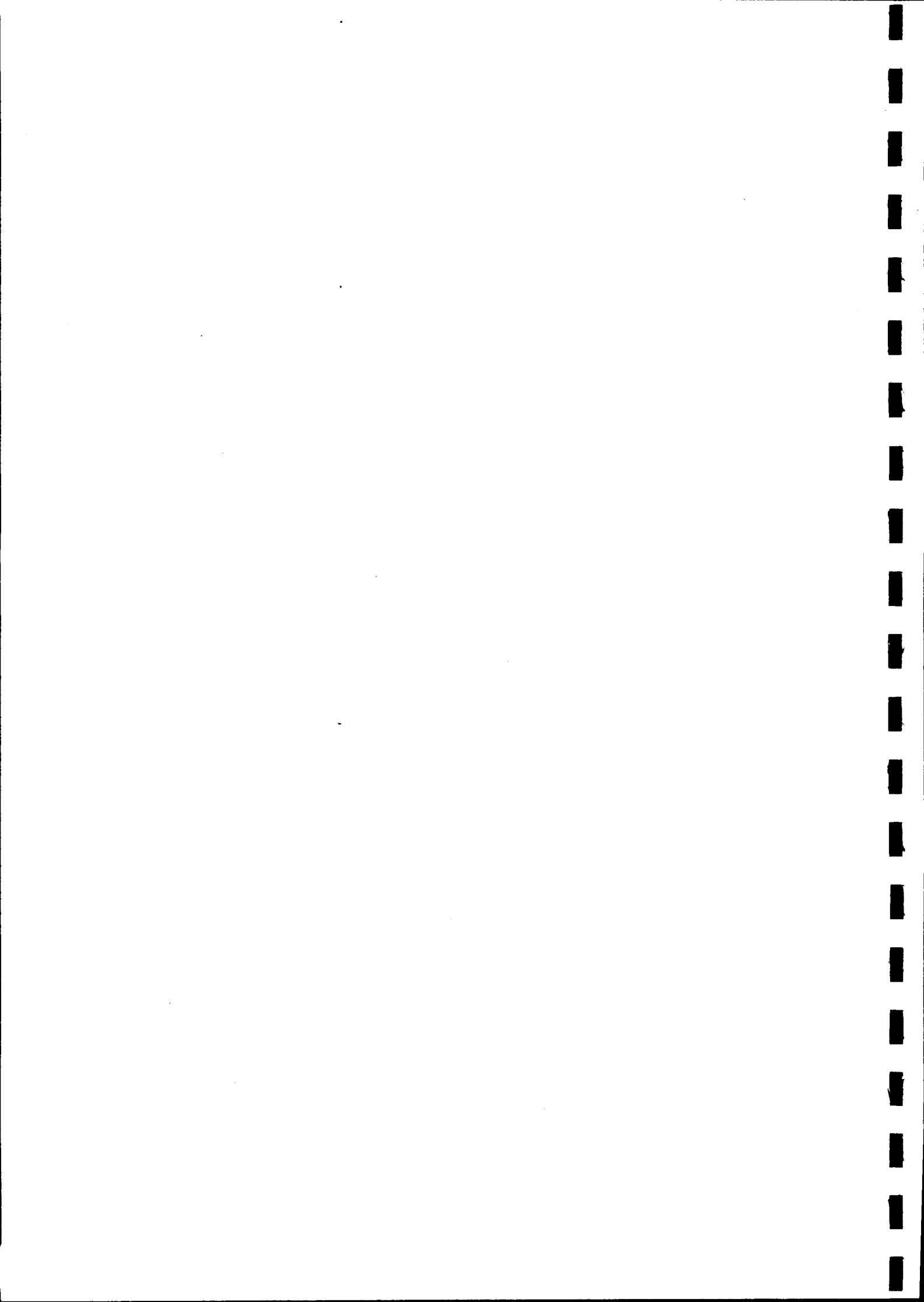
Some participants mentioned that though they were practising the play way method, they were not aware of the theoretical rationale for this method. Participants expressed that they had experienced great satisfaction in attending the course and were eager to make use of all that they had learnt in the course. They also felt that community and parent involvement was very important for a better understanding and functioning of the school. They also mentioned that course could be for a longer duration and follow-up workshops at periodic intervals would help considerably. Almost 90% of the teachers felt that if the course was carried out for minimum of one year they would be in a better position to understand and apply the acquired skills more effectively. The teachers after the training felt that now they could handle classes in a more lively and child centered manner. They realised the ill effects of rote learning and its impact on the children.

Follow-up action

To discuss the impact of the training and to work out the future plan of action a meeting of the pre-school sub-group of TN-FORCES was held in July 1997. It was suggested that some of the training institutes that conducted the summer refresher course could experiment with a one year self- financed training course on ECE, while others were planning to launch a two year training course. Based on the experiences and some of the difficulties encountered in the summer training course, it was felt that a trainers' training workshop would be help in orienting faculty as well as other training institutes, if a similar summer training course is to be held next year. The course will be held in January 1998. Members also decided to lobby with the Government for a three months orientation course in ECE which is essential for secondary grade teachers assigned to classes I & II. It was interesting to note that Madras Municipal Corporation has already launched 10 pre-schools in 1997, and also decided to start pre-schools in the entire district of Chennai in the next year. This is partly because of the continuous efforts taken on the issue of burden on the pre-schoolers. These issues need to be addressed further intensively and continuously to create effective impact through out the state of Tamil Nadu.

Discussion

Conducting this course through the four institutes has brought out the existence of a strong demand for training in development-appropriate play activities, child development and ECE. The successful completion of these training course establishes the need for other training institutions to take up such training courses. It also shows that training capacity has still to be built up on a wider scale. Valuable experience has been gained by this experiment which can give a thrust to future training programme in ECE. Many responses have also been received from the schools which participated in the training course, who have been approaching Project ACCESS for learning materials on activity-based education. They have pointed out that they are attempting to follow the new methods, and requested some more training courses of similar kind, as well as materials.



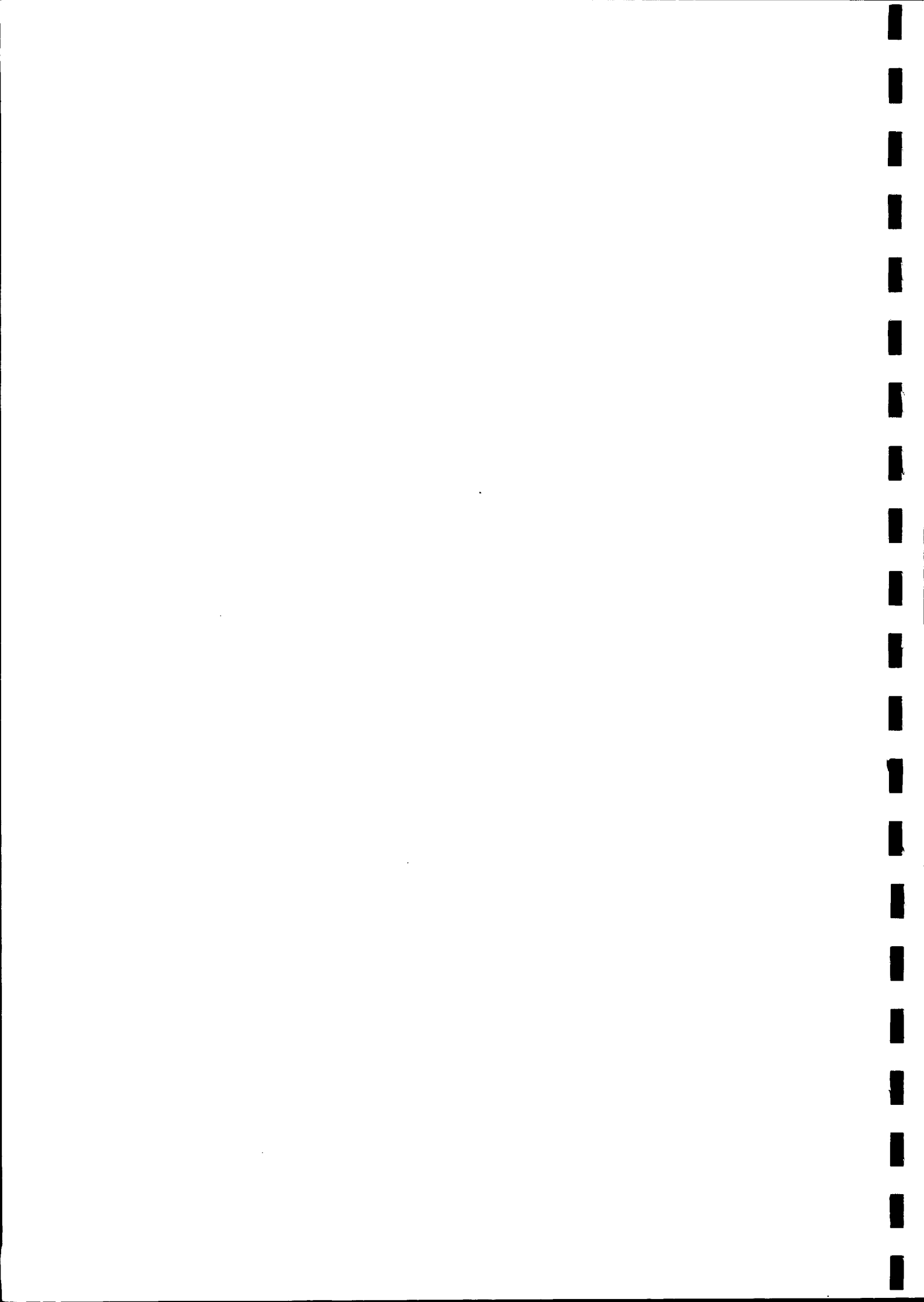
Trainer's Training Course (1994 -1996)

Sl. No	Date and Course name	No. of days	ICDS	TINP	NGO		DIET	Sub	Grand
			Trainers	Trainers	Trainers	CCW	Trainers	Total	Total
1.	22-27 Feb, 1994 0-3 years	5 1/2	33	--	1	--	--		34
2.	August, 1994 0-3 years	5 1/2	--	30	--	--	--	--	30
3.	23-29 June, 1994 Play	5 1/2	8	13	8	--	--	29	34
4.	3-6 April 1995 Play	4	4 2*	-- 11*	1 4*	--	--	5* 17*	
5.	13-17 Dec, 1994 NGO	4 1/2	--	--	6	21	--	27	41
6.	20-25 May 1996 NGO	5 1/2	--	--	6 1*	8 4*	--	14* 5*	
7.	4-9 Sep, 1995 ECE, DIETs	5 1/2	--	--	7	--	20	27	30
8.	17-22, June 1996 ECE, DIETs	5 1/2	--	--	2 4*	--	1 16*	3* 20*	
Total			45	43	31	29	21	42*	169

* Participants who have attended in both parts of (two-part) course.

• Participant who have attended part II only

The grand total includes all participants two courses are not included in the Grand total



Messages That Move

Introduction

One of the activities of the project Children on the Agenda (COTA) is to develop Project Support Communication to support and strengthen the TN-FORCES network for advocacy. In this context, COTA had decided to produce seventeen Tamil video spots and five audio spots for broadcasting on "Burden on the pre-school child, Gender Justice, The rights of Women and Children, Development of Child below Three" - after TN-FORCES selected as a theme of the year 1995, 96, 97 respectively. However, this report extensively deals with the impact of the video spots on Burden on preschool child.

The primary objective of these spots is to create awareness to evoke responses on the burden on pre-school children among the concerned groups, especially parents, and to suggest play-way method as an alternative solution.

The rationale behind telecasting in Doordarshan is that there are 17,254 television sets in Panchayats that telecast only DD and the reach of DD in Tamil Nadu is 22.9 millions which is more than any other private channel. Similarly, All India Radio(AIR) has a wide reach in both rural and urban Tamil Nadu.

Five video and five audio spots were formally released at a function on November 13, 1995 and presented to the Directors of Doordarshan and AIR respectively, both of whom graciously accepted to telecast/broadcast them. These spots are intended to be time - fillers, and the frequency of broadcasting can be increased at no cost. Another advantage of the filler is that it can be shown at prime time and on Sundays.

Regular telecasting of the spots on Doordarshan began in January 1996 and has been continuing since then several times a day several times a week. It is learnt from Doordarshan that the spots have appeared on TV more than 250 times already similarly, some AIR regional stations are broadcasting the audio spots, but information is not available about the frequency of broadcast, and since there is no attribution to MSSRF or AIR, there is no direct feedback from the audience. After Doordarshan started telecasting these spots many responses came in welcoming the ideas, suggesting more, criticising the content and form and asking for alternative schools. Consequently, a study was taken up to assess the impact of these spots. Only the video spots were taken up for study as it was not possible to follow the AIR broadcasts for the reason already mentioned.

Extent And Mode Of Responses

Several hundred responses have been received in the last few months. These include:

1. Persons known to MSSRF - colleagues at MSSRF, colleagues and friends, relatives, acquaintances, casual contacts, neighbours etc.,
2. Persons not known to us - from all over Tamil Nadu, by letter or phone or directly

These respondents must have taken the pain to identify the address and to locate the telephone numbers of the producer, since only the name of MSSRF appears at the end of every spot.

It is worth noting that persons figuring in the spot have been recognised and stopped in the streets, at bus stops, shops etc. by totally unknown persons and engaged them in conversation.

3. Persons as respondents to our questionnaire (500 questionnaires were sent out and 30 responses were received)

Except questionnaire, all the other responses are voluntary and initiated by the respondent.

Background Of The Respondents

The wide range of respondents, background tells about the good reach of the spots. School children, parents, teachers, principals, school managements, relatives and friends of the participants, scientists, lecturers, anganwadi workers, NGOs and grandparents are some specific categories of respondents. Respondents are from all over Tamil Nadu, rural as well as urban, and all districts.

RESPONSE CATEGORIES

1. Personal

Personal responses to the persons appearing in the spots by their friends and acquaintances are numerous. It is found that at first they are inclined to pay less attention to the content as their interest is more in the performer to begin with. However, after several viewings, some have responded on content. A number of strangers have made direct contact in public places, and recognising the performers and engaged in discussion on the topic.

2. Parents

This is the second biggest category and the most common response is increased awareness about the message and the issue. For several this was the first time that they ever heard or seen something on this issue. Most of the parents who have heard about this play-way method are in favour of it and have asked guidance about where they can get such education for their children and/or expressed discontent with what they are getting. Most of the respondents accept the message of the spots, but some disagree as they doubt the practical feasibility of this kind of education. Some parents had the impression that this type of education is elitist and scarce to access. For instance, **one parent has expressed limitations in the letter that he cannot take his children far from home and hence the child has to study in the usual kind of school which is near by.** On the positive

side, the effectiveness of the visual medium has persuaded some parents to accept this idea. It must be noted that media image setting has definitely played a vital role in creating acceptance of theme. **A parent has been persuaded to take his child out of the school where play-way method is not followed after watching "Oru petrora ketkiraar"**. A few parents have avoided sending their children aged 2-3 to the nursery school after viewing the spots. Several have asked for advice on how to tackle teachers and managements, how to cope, how to change the system. A few have stated that though the present system is hard on the child, it is necessary in the present competitive world. Several grandparents have expressed concern, even more than parents.

3. Teachers

Though most of the respondents appreciate the idea behind the spots, the teacher community differs somewhat from this general opinion. **One teacher has personally shared that these spots attack teachers and the CBSE system.** Several other teachers have expressed a similar feeling that they are under attack. One teacher thinks only legislation for pre-school education can force schools to comply with the norms of play - way method of teaching. Some teachers suggest that the spots should be more descriptive enough to justify the teacher's role in the present system.

4. School managements

School managements, heads and administrators - several personal visits and calls have been made by those who are eager to implement the playway and are seeking guidance. This is however a small group in relation to the total, but they are very sincere in their enthusiasm to do right thing, and seem to be hampered mostly by ignorance.

5. Children

Responses from children have been reported by some parents. **One unusual response was from a six year old child (class I) who commented that the 'patti' on TV (child is neighbour of the patti) was telling teachers not to trouble little children and how to keep them happy in school.** A father said that he had been informed by his children to watch these spots. Another child asked the teacher to help her to eat lunch as she could not manage on her own, and yet another questioned why the teacher was always telling the children to keep quiet.

6. General Public

These responses are appreciative in tone but vague on content. **There are many cynical responses from the educated urban middle class.** Their main doubt is if this method could be successfully implemented, and whether it is possible to meet the demands of the present competitive system of education without putting pressure on children.

Suggestions And Criticisms

Most of the respondents have not been able to remember the title of the spots. Hence the suggestions are general or about particular scenes. There are two types of suggestions, about a). content and b) technical suggestion that includes telecasting details. There are also action responses.

Content

Some parents have suggested to list the names and addresses of such playway schools at the end of the spots. Many have commented about the duration of the spot that it is too short to register in the mind. Other comments are it is too packed, (meaning too many details, characters, actions and dialogue etc.) for the time available, so that message is

not clear. In some cases, there seem to be several messages, which is confusing. One respondent from a rural area said many people have noted the spots and know they are about children's education but are unable to state what the message is. On "Oru kaalai kaatchi" one says the spot takes a negative view about the emphasis on a child's ability to eat or not by herself. The respondent has said "Instead of eating, the activity selected could have been tying a shoe lace. That would have had a double effect." The "double effect" would be to educate regarding the burden on the child and at the same time to change the parental and management, attitude about insisting on shoes to be worn by the young child. Another comment from a specialist in Child Development is that the spot contradicts the important pedagogic value of promoting self-reliance in the child in matters like eating independently.

Technical

The main technical suggestion is to telecast the spots at prime time especially in the evenings. Though some respondents have specifically mentioned that they had watched the spots before and after the Sunday movies and in the evening, general comments about the time, that it is unpredictable, are vague. It is not understood by most people that unsponsored spots have this limitation as they cannot claim priority before the commercials. Some have suggested to telecast the spots in private satellite channels also.

Action Responses

There is a great awareness about the concept and many are trying to put this awareness into action. Enquiries have come from the parents and teachers to know more about the concepts, to know more about such schools. **An Assistant Station Director of Doordarshan Kendra mentioned that he is receiving several calls enquiring about alternative schools.** There are many telephone enquiries from parents asking for alternative schools in their locality to admit their children. Some respondents have shown

interest in setting up a play-way method school. School managements have approached the Foundation requesting books and materials to follow play-way method and some school management asking for training for teachers. **A balwadi teacher has shared the information that a parent had changed the school of his children from a formal nursery back to the balwadi, after watching the spots. The parent had gone to the extent of consulting a doctor also about the likely impact on a child's health.** This is a solid proof that the spots have reached the people with a sharp message.

Another social worker from Palani who visited our MSSRF just for this purpose said ' **I have been campaigning along the same lines for years. But some of our people have at once come into an agreement with the play-way method after watching the spots on television.**' A Principal has asked for help to telecast similar programmes made by them on the burden on pre-school children.

There is strong evidence that a very large public across the entire State has been reached by the messages conveyed by the spots. Here the impact of the frequency of telecasting and the prolonged exposure must be noted. During the elections these spots were telecast more frequently than at the other times. This would have focussed the attention of both general public and politicians on these issues. **Undoubtedly, Doordarshan's powerful, uninterrupted and constant support for this awareness campaign, unanticipated. In its intensity, extent and duration is the most significant factor behind its impact.** But for this, "burden on pre-school child" would not be the household word it seems to have become, at least with urban middle-class audiences. The next task may be bringing the issue into the public forum and consolidating the awareness into action.

This was felt very important because *the responsibility of any catalyst doesn't end by merely saying what is wrong but also to provide information on alternatives, and how to access those alternatives.* Otherwise, the awareness campaign might become counterproductive and the credibility of the catalyst will be lost.

For example, once messages reached the targetted group sharply, the group wanted to know the list of schools following alternative or playway methods. Though, developing an inventory of alternative schools was not originally part of the campaign of COTA, the pressure from parents communities made us prepared the data base of Alternative schools in Tamil Nadu. COTA prepared this data base in order to meet the enquiries of Parents who phone almost everyday. For example, Ramakrishna English Medium School at Vizhupuram that has nearly 500 children studying L.K.G. and U.K.G. wanted to know more about communication materials on alternative curriculum. The letter was written by the Principal addressed to the Director, Doordarshan Kendra and later received by us.

Similarly, many school managements were interested in participating in some short training courses on alternative curriculum. When the idea was represented to Minister for Education, it was countered that there were no demand for such training. On the other hand, when summer course training for preschool teachers was conducted (for more details, please refer to Training report) there was a significant response from school managements and teachers. The video spots campaign not only created general awareness in the minds of concerned groups but also consequently led to the diversified activities of advocacy. Followings are the activities identified as follow-ups of the video campaign against burden against pre-school children.

1. **Developing** an inventory of **alternative or 'playway' schools** following healthy practices approaches to education at the ECE level (3 - 6 years) and disseminating this information
2. **Social mobilisation of parents** with the help of network members. Members can help in developing a strong parents movement, building up action groups of concerned school management on this issues, and creating a public platform with the help of academicians and concerned people to bring pressure on schools.

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3. Parallel to these activities, **legislation process** for regulation of ECE, as one of the ways to follow up on this awareness.
 4. **Working** more closely **with school managements** to improve the quality of education.
 5. Developing and **disseminating resource materials** and information and offering refresher training courses on alternative ways of education with the help of training institutions and professional bodies

It is clear from the responses that awareness has been created among various groups, and there is a powerful expression of desire for change. People have begun to question the existing system, encouraged by those seen as powerful "authority figures" because they appear on TV. At the very least, the topic is debated and discussed, at the household level. This is the most significant impact of the programme, since debate is the first step towards change. Due to the continuous broadcast of these spots by Doordarshan there has been other impacts in the long run as listed below.

Advocacy

- A Memorandum demanding Universal pre-school education and Raise the standards of pre-school and primary education was submitted to all political during 1996 general elections
- An assurance from one MLA has been received regarding action on the Memorandum sent to the Education Minister
- Personal lobbying has been made with MLAs, Party members for changes in legislation to ban the burden on the pre-school child
- Information gathered about the existing legislations on the burden issue in other States to backup the advocacy process
- Several school managements and many parents have shown interest in knowing about the playway method

- The medical profession has become a powerful ally in the campaign. Indian Academy of Paediatrics(IAP) - Tamil Nadu has taken as its theme for 1997
- IAP has organised a series of activities around the theme, 'Healthy primary and pre-primary education' bringing together the various stakeholders. IAP conducted a meeting in Erode in February called Mazhalayar 97 and released a souvenir. Similar meetings have been held in Kumbakonam, Pondicherry, Chidambaram and Neyveli
- NCERT commended the media campaign and its impact at a national meet on advocacy for ECCE
- A Memorandum was submitted to the High-level committee on the burden on the school child to draw the committee members' attention to the immense, damaging unjustifiable Burden on the Young Child. The committee has recommended to setup a special group to study the burden on the pre-school child alone
- Guidelines for Minimum specifications on Pre-school education has been drafted

Media

- A popular cartoonist who was sensitised by the campaign brought out a full page of cartoons on the theme in *Dinamani kadhira* (9th June 96)
- Doordarshan, Madras has broadcast the Villupattu *Sumaiya? Suvaiya?* more than 5 times. In addition to these, *Indha Bharam Thevaiya?* (Dangerous Burden) and *Arivathil Anandam* (Learning Can be Fun) have been shown several times both on Doordarshan and Vijay TV and Raj TV (For more details, please refer to Tamil Press/Journals in the Process of production of Communication materials)

Training

- Trainings have been conducted on requests received from school managements and NGOs for training in alternative methods of education
- Summer refresher course was conducted for Pre K.G., L.K.G., U.K.G., teachers to understand the link between child's development and early education

Brief of the spots*

Burden on the Preschool Child

General

As all the spots are being intended to be fillers, the duration of these spots has been confined to one minute each. All spots have the opinions of concerned experts following narrative and dramatic sequence. The expert's opinion is intended to convince the audience. Finally, every spot ends with a suggestion "Playway method is the most suitable for child's learning".

Oru Kaalai Kaatchi (A morning scene)

This spot begins with a mother feeding her daughter. When the child's father objects to it, mother justifies that the child's fingers are as yet not developed enough to manage. The question why a child is forced to write with a pencil when the muscles are not ready is raised at the end of the spot.

Oru Iravu Kaatchi (A night scene)

This depicts a fatigued child, preparing for her I standard entrance exam while her mother urges her to continue the preparation late into the night. At the end it warns of the dangerous burden on the pre-school children.

Appaavin kavalai (A father's worry)

A father's takes his young daughter who complains of pain tiredness to a doctor. The problem is analysed from the medical point of view. The doctor attributes the child's problem to lack of exercise and free movement and advises a playway school.

Oru petror ketkiraar (A father questions)

This spot is taken from the view of a parent. He is surprised at seeing a school that follows the paly-way method and suspects the quality of education. Later, he is convinced by the teacher, who explains the underlying basis of playway.

* All the spots were scripted and directed by Jnani

Thaathaavin akkarai (Grandfather's concern)

Two enthusiastic grand-fathers are interested in sending their grand-children to good schools immediately after the children learn to speak. Then the question is asked about the choice of their school. Will they send them to schools which make them sit still and keep silent? Will that help the children to learn to speak or move well?

Gender Justice, The rights of women and children

The tripe roles of women as workers, mothers and homemakers is rarely recognised. Yet, the need to carry these responsibilities has a direct bearing on the well-being of the women and hence the entire family, employer. State and society can support women and girls and enable them to enjoy their rights to live and develop as full human beings.

Titles: Leave wanted..

No more leave..

Just like that!(Summa)

Kamala's dream

Development of the Child below three

Starting from stereotypical scenes of family life, in the present-day social setting, the film shows how the day-to-day behaviour of adults and their interactions with children affect the development of the young child(0-3 years). Nurturance and Stimulation are as important for the child as health and nutrition. Men too can play a significant role in supporting the child's development.

Titles: Play, child, Play!

No Milk...,

You there!

Look! Look!

Print Media Advocacy*

One of the major activities of ACCESS was the undertaking of advocacy measures on women and childcare issues through the print media. The objectives of this exercise were twofold:

1. To sensitise the media, on issues of women and children and secure greater support and space for the same.
2. To generate greater awareness and mobilise public support for women and childcare issues.

It was felt that it would not be appropriate to begin the process without first analysing and understanding how women and children were currently being depicted in the print media. A small study on the portrayal of women and children in 52 issues of all the Tamil weeklies and monthlies published in December 1993 was undertaken as an initial activity.

Results of the Study

- In stories in which women were the central characters, they were depicted as those who had to satisfactorily fulfil their wifely and sisterly roles as well as being dutiful daughters.
- They were expected to be the embodiment of service and sacrifice
- Home making was a woman's job primary.
- Wives were depicted as being quarrelsome, antagonistic toward their husband's families and unwilling to do anything for them.
- Paradoxically women were also portrayed as patient creatures worshipping their husbands and never questioning their wrong doings. Moreover this was emphasised as the most important virtue.

* English summary of process documentation in Tamil

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- Rather than highlighting the fact that the woman's economic role is very important for the family, she was depicted as spending all her income on her appearance and toiletries with absolute disregard for another human being.
 - She is a sex object

Thus women were portrayed as tender and beautiful dolls who were weak and dependent on someone. In this existing scenario the big questions remained as to how to take different messages to the media.

The objectives in the fundamental of the project was to ensure that authentic messages about women and children would continue to get published even after the tenure of the project period, the activities towards this outcome had to be varied and at several levels.

- To sensitise the media into accepting the fact that the publication of information concerning women and children was necessary for the progress of the society and to motivate them to offer a permanent place for such issues according to changing social needs.
- To identify writers who would write articles, stories and poems for those magazines which are willing to publish such messages, to identify and encourage young and new writers:
- To provide them relevant information and statistics regarding the status of women and children.

The Difficulties

The next step was to deliberate on the approach to be adopted in order to carry out these tasks. This was complicated by the fact, that at that time most writers perceived women's problems as being dowry and sexual harassment. Though these are indeed burning problems, the day to day difficulties that women face while carrying on the triple burden of home making, child care and economic activity were never brought to light. There was no appreciation of the health problems (both mental and physical) that women faced due

to heavy work. These were never considered as problems in the first place, but as regular duties and were not considered as being burdensome.

Further even when there were depictions in which women raised questions related to their rights and status they were ridiculed and portrayed as being arrogant. Some other myths and debate that found place in the contemporary writings were

- Men lose career opportunities when women seek employment
- Women should give first priority to their childcare role rather than their worker role, in order to raise children
- Is employment essential for women?

There was no mention of sharing of household chores / childcare duties by men and women. While it was very clear that ACCESS had to set out to encourage young writers to write about the triple burden of women, the question remained as to how it could be done.

Workshop I

It was in this climate that ACCESS began its work. The time was not ripe to request magazines to undertake the task of identifying and sensitising young writers. We approached one of the weeklies which had conducted a short story contest on contemporary social problems and got a list of addresses of about five hundred writers who had participated in the contest. Out of this about 100 were shortlisted and invited to attend a two day workshop in November 1993. The selection of the writers was made on the basis of representation for all districts and for both men and women. About forty writers accepted the invitation to participate in the workshop. The objectives of the workshop were:

- To sensitise the writers on the triple burden of women
- To help them understand the craft of citing and strategies for publishing a written work through discussions with senior journalists and writers.

In the two day workshop that followed the writers were introduced to women's and children's issues through lectures and videos. The intricacies of the craft of writing were discussed at length by senior writers and journalists. Information, both statistical and descriptive was provided to the participants through a kit. After a day's input the participants were requested to write overnight articles, poems etc. on selected issues of their choice and submit them the next day of a review and discussion session.

A total of 9 short stories, 4 essays, 8 poems and 1 play were created by the participants. While they were being scrutinised the participants discussed three major issues in small groups namely.

1. Are women enemies to their own sex?
2. What do we understand by child development?
3. What is maternal role?

After an hour of discussion, there was a feedback session in which the submitted items were critiqued in a constructive manner. The major observations were:

1. The writers' concern was reflected in the given articles
2. However in some, this concern was couched in eloquent words and rhetoric. The art of subtle writing had to be developed.
3. There was no clear distinction between stories and essays.
4. There was some confusion on whole perspective the narration was based on.

In the evaluation that followed after the workshop ACCESS staff debated the following issues.

1. Was our approach correct/ Would it be fruitful?
2. What kind of result will emerge?
3. To what extent would these writers continue to express such concern in their writings?
4. Even if the writers wrote about these issues would editors be ready to print such material?
5. What is our role? Should we simply stop here taking the line of "We have done our duty" or should we continue?

Our decision to continue with such exercises was greatly due to the overwhelming response from the participants who were deeply appreciative of this exercise and who very clearly stated that they had been greatly motivated and benefited.

Workshop II

The first workshop experience gave us hope that it was possible to generate articles which were gender sensitive, with some inputs into the issues to be addressed and the craft of writing. We decided to serve as a link between the writers and the magazines, though we could not guarantee a 100% success in getting the articles published. This was also the time when the efforts of ACCESS were beginning to get noticed.

We planned to invite articles on the theme "Women are also workers" to coincide with May Day 1995 (May 1st) and approached a local daily to publicise the news. The fact that the daily came forward to publish it as a news item and not as an advertisement is an indication of the gradual recognition for the work of ACCESS. A total of 41 stories, as well as a few interviews and small anecdote reached us by March 15th. In the initial scrutiny 18 stories and 20 essays were selected. The writers of the articles were invited for a workshop.

About 26 writers participated in the one day workshop. The panel of experts who had selected the stories gave their reasons for selection and offered some constructive suggestions on how they could be improved. Both individual and group discussions were held. The criteria for the selection of the stories were as follows:

1. Is the story related to the give theme?
2. Does the story highlight women's problem without taking an ante-male stand?
3. Is the length of the story within specified limits?
4. Is there continuity in the narration?
5. Does the style need to be changed?

After the critiquing sessions the stories were re-written by the authors. Armed with these corrected versions, we approached several magazines, dailies etc. Most of them considered the effort of ACCESS as a novel and pioneering experience. However, there was some difficulty in getting the stories published because.

1. The deadline for receiving stories for May issue had expired in several magazines.
2. Some magazines looked for "sensational issues" such as dowry and sexual harassment.
3. Some magazines felt that the literacy merit of the stories were slightly below the standard since they were written to a specified theme.

However 5 stories out of 16 got published. Though the number was small it was a good beginning since the whole exercise helped in establishing a good rapport with the media and also brought overwhelming support from the participants. Most of them who write back to ACCESS mentioned that they were highly motivated, and had found the experience a very novel and useful one. This second workshop assured us that it was possible to publish stories on the triple burden of women and even if results were not immediately visible it was possible to influence young writers to develop concern-for-the-situation of women and children.

Story Competition

After the experience of two workshops, the third effort of ACCESS materialised in the form of a "story competition" conducted jointly with a popular weekly magazine which had a wide circulation but different level of readership. The announcement was made in November '95 and the story which won the prize was published in January 1996. The main objective of conducting in this competition was to find out whether there was any perception of women's problems and what the expectations were regarding women.

Out of the 650 stories received 3 were finally selected after several rounds of evaluation. The following observations were made.

1. The stories showed wide range and depth in portraying various work situations and problems concerning women.
2. They depicted the husband as expecting his wife to fulfil all his demands and needs. Most of them had mentioned that even if the husbands did not share the work they need not add to the burden.
3. Sexual harassment at the workplace especially while travelling in public transport was also mentioned.
4. In most stories women working outside the home were office goers or working in the organised sector.

Workshop III

After experimenting with different strategies it was decided to hold another workshop during May 1996, through inviting stories from prospective participants. Correspondingly a news item was released in a popular Tamil newspaper. Since our previous experience had taught us about the kind of work situation that was likely to be represented we specifically gave the insertion that we welcomed stories about women in the unorganised sector, and in jobs with no clear - cut time specification. Out of the 298 stories that were received, 40 were selected and the authors invited for a two day workshop. Thirty six writers participated in the two day workshop.

While resource persons from NGOs gave a glimpse of the issues and problems, journalists discussed with the participants about creative writing and the strength and weaknesses of each story. The authors were requested to submit the corrected stories at the end of the workshop. This made it easier for us to approach the magazines immediately after the workshop for publication. Out of the 40 stories 12 were published which had as their main characters domestic workers, agricultural coolies, quarry workers etc.

The outcomes of the third workshop are summarised below :

- The tremendous response to the endeavour of ACCESS with about 96% participation of those invited reflected the good opinion and esteem with which the participants held the previous workshops.
- The publication of 12 stories which came from a non-literary source like ACCESS is an indication of the acknowledgement that media gave to the effort of ACCESS in which the young writers played a very important role. But for the sincere effort of these writers the outcome would not have been possible.
- The number of magazines and journals that we could approach for the third workshop increased from the previous two workshops. There was also an increase in the number of stories that got published. This indicates the genuine concern of the media. In addition a lot of support was given by media to ACCESS for the celebration of special days such as Women's Day, May Day, Breast feeding Day etc.
- The All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) a member organisation of TN FORCES, came forward to jointly organise districtwise workshops for young writers.

Photo contest

The Tamil newspaper which published the news item about the short story contest joined with ACCESS in conducting a photographic contest. While publishing stories and essays the lack of appropriate photographs was very keenly felt. As also an exercise in collecting the addresses of good amateur photographers who could be later involved in workshops, the announcement was made. About 121 photographs were received out of which 6 were selected. These were published on March 8th (Women's Day) 1995 in the editorial section of the newspaper, and also added colour and strength to the news items of ACCESS.

A Shift

While the objective of ACCESS in raising women's and children's issues by working with the media was more or less getting realised, the project period was coming to an end. It was decided to undertake the task of inviting short stories and selecting the five best for publication without any workshop and without announcing any competition. Yet another magazine whose editor, who by this time was aware of ACCESS's efforts came forward to participate in the effort. However he pointed out that the publication was subject to the merit of the work. The announcement was subsequently made in three continuous issues and out of the 312 stories, 5 were ultimately selected after two rounds, and published in five consecutive editions of the magazine.

Poems

It was a pleasant surprise at this juncture to receive a call from another magazine for a similar venture. The magazine had earlier brought out a special edition commemorating Women's Day and encouraged by the response, wanted to do a similar exercise in the forthcoming year. Since the medium of short stories and essays had been tried enough it was decided to conduct a poetry contest on the said issues for Women's Day 1997. The time period was very short. The announcements were made in three continuous issues in February. An overwhelming response of 2000 poems were received (on an average of 200 - 300/ day!) and the process of selection began right away. The tremendous effort of the judges along with the help of ACCESS staff saw in a very short time the selection of 5 poems considered to be the best. The selected entries dealt with the problems of middle class women, rural women and daily wage earners, and were published in the March 8 edition of the magazine.

In evaluating the process, the following observations were made.

1. The quality of the entries was very high and selection was very difficult.

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2. Most of the poems touched issues such as the hectic domestic scenario in the mornings, the problems in committing difficulties at the workplace and demanding and unsympathetic husbands.
 3. The above issues were dealt with more by men than women.

The Resource Personnel

In all the above exercises the selection of resource persons was made using the following criteria.

- They should be in harmony with the live of thinking of ACCESS
- They should neither consider writing as a mere source of income nor be destructive in their efforts and should show sensitivity in reacting a social issues.
- They should be encouraging and supportive of the efforts of young writers.

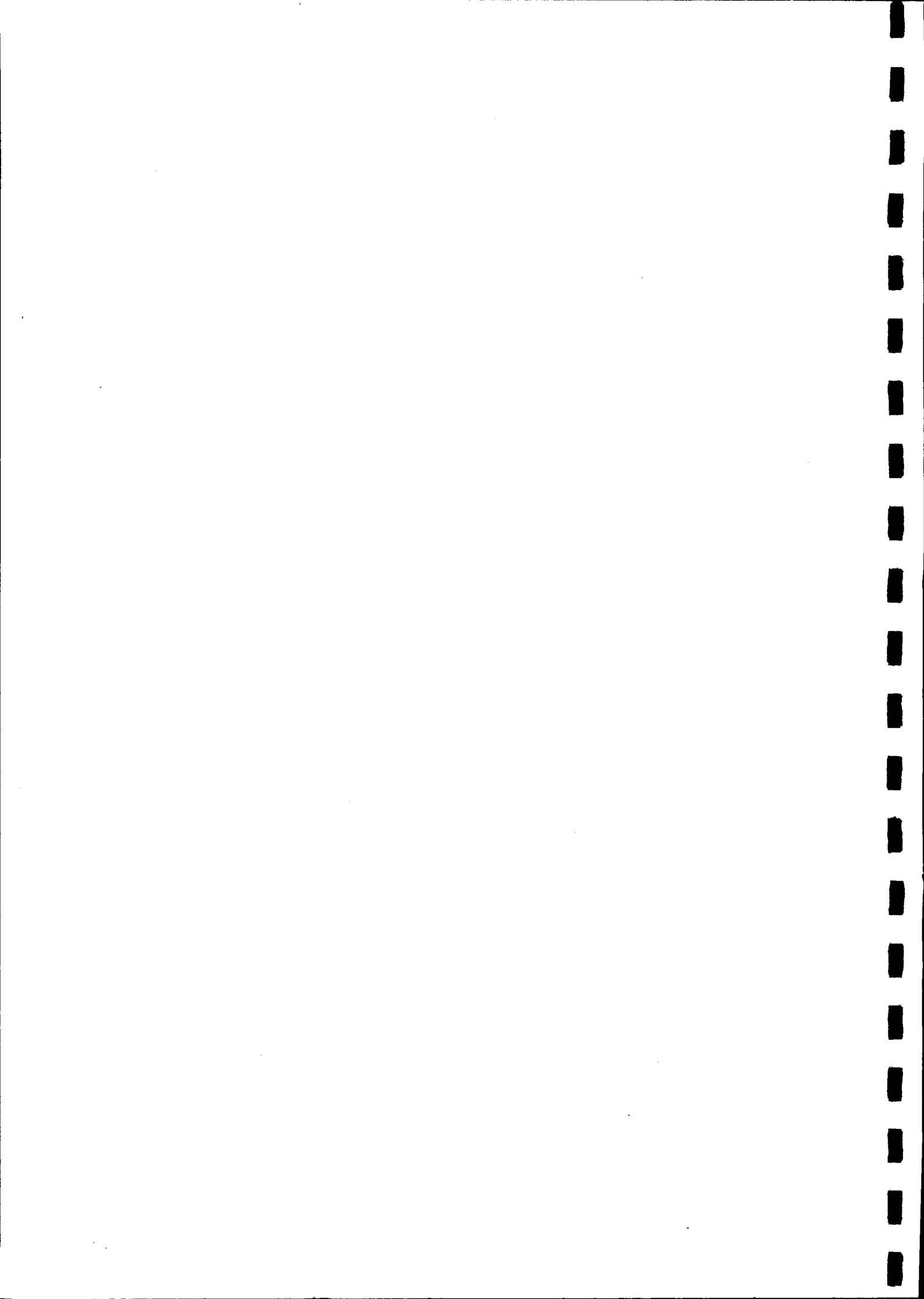
Professional journalists, as well as those who were writing for a long time were included since we thought that it would help young writers to get acquainted with various publications, their background and have face to face contact with professional writers.

The learning

As a culmination of our activities we invited an evaluation of our workshops, from the 70 participants. More than half responded. Most of them said that their horizon regarding women and their problems had indexed and made them appreciative of the depth of the issues. They also said that since attending the workshops writing became a matter of habit. They appreciated the fact that women faced triple burden and understood the need for generating awareness regarding women's problems. They also said that they were greatly benefited from the technical inputs with regard to the craft of writing.

Initially there was a lot of scepticism to the whole concept of identification of young writers and the organisation of workshops. Queries were raised as to whether two day workshops could transform people into writers. There was also the disbelief that an NGO could make a contribution to the literacy and journalistic world. While only those who had already had some acquaintance with writing were chosen for the workshops the following quote from the letter of a senior writer answer the queries raised.

"... I have been pleasantly converted to realise that even a creative pursuit if guided by knowledgeable people will produce results which would have normally take years for the person to find out for himself or herself. I was particularly struck by the very high quality of both creativity and missionary clarity and by the large number of people in the third short story contest."



Communication

One of the activities of COTA is to develop project support communication. Project support communication works with all possible media including print, radio, and visual medium. The success of communication depends upon 'who says what, when and how?' So, the primary task is a) to develop communication materials to spread the awareness b) to work out conditions for a conducive atmosphere to provide wider publicity about issues. The three specific objectives in project support communication are :

- a) *to develop needed communication materials*
- b) *to influence, sensitise, and orient media persons in giving wider coverage and publicity to create public awareness on the issues taken up*
- c) *to publish a quarterly newsletter IMMA*

This report documents the processes in developing communication materials and how these materials were used as tools to sustain the issues of COTA in media and to foster pressure group furthering effective advocacy.

Communication Materials:

Issues like Burden on Pre-school Children, Maternity and Child Care are not of very serious concern in the eyes of general public. Enough materials were not available to sensitise the targeted group including mothers, children, parents, teachers and school managements. So the need for producing communication materials was felt, to create awareness among various groups including parents, teachers, school managements, child care workers, and most importantly general public. So, a range of communication materials were produced targeting different groups. The materials included audio cassettes, video films, video spots, brochures and memorandum. Conducting workshops, sensitising the people and artists involved in producing the materials, form a part of production of these materials.

1. Songs

a) *Enga Patta Kelunga songs cassette:*

In September 1994, Project Access had a meeting with a small group consisting of TN-Forces members and resource persons at Reaching The Unreached, Kalluppatti near Madurai. They discussed the possibilities of bringing out Audio, Video spots/documentaries on Burden on Pre-school Education. Then a team of resource persons including communication experts, media persons, theatre persons, folk artists, creative artists, kindergarten teachers etc., were called up to create a concept and prior exposure to the issues concerned, was one criteria in selecting resource persons while experiences in creative fields and cost-effectiveness remain other factors. The other criteria while selecting resource persons was to take those who consider these issues very dear to his or her heart.

Two or three workshops and several small meetings were held between September '94 and December '95 to develop the songs. Then, COTA decided to produce songs on 'Burden on the Pre-school Children' - one of the issues of concern of TN- FORCES. It was also decided to shoot a video of the *Villuppattu* developed by the group Reaching The Unreached at G.Kalluppatti. Audio master was also created and recorded of *Villuppattu* along with the video shooting. However, it was later realised later that *Villuppattu* video(30 minutes) was not very interesting and visually entertaining to the audiences. But, it must be noted that Doordarshan Kendra, Chennai has telecast this particular programme more than 10 times under various slots. Then COTA resource persons and other workshop participants felt *Villuppattu* could have been better communication material in the audio form than a visual.

The final workshop held at M.S.S.R.F chalked out main themes as concepts for songs including :

- Playing is important as a developmental activity for children
- Children learn from experiences and surroundings that help them form their conduct and characters
- Understanding children is very important
- Children should be encouraged, stimulated and guided
- Parents can help the children learning informally even before the children going to school

Once the theme for lyrics were finalised, then resource persons wrote lyrics for songs keeping above concepts in mind. The lyrics for songs and script for *villuppattu* were critiqued by in-house and outside resource persons during the winter 1995-96. Though nearly ten songs were written only seven was selected as those were in line with the objectives of our theme. The lyrics were written from the children's view and from adult's view. And it was decided that lyrics should not be compromised to the tunes. As far as *villuppattu* was concerned the final script was received from Mr. Elango dated 22nd July 96 and critiqued. As suggested by our resource persons Mr. L.Vaidhyanathan, the popular musician was approached to compose songs. Resource persons oriented the musician and explained the need for the theme and the expected output. The M.B.S. Srinivasan youth choir was approached to sing the children's songs. The singers were so devoted to the cause that they were paid only conveyances. The audio cassette was released by the Minister for Social Welfare SP. Sarguna Pandian at a function held on Children's Day '96 (November 14).

b) Thaayum Seyum

Project Children on the Agenda had discussed ways in which it could be of help to the Department of Social Welfare in strengthening training and communication for the betterment of child care services. Following this discussion, a proposal was developed to

strengthen Project Support Communication for the project "Improved Services for 0-3 years Children" which the Department is undertaking on a pilot basis in Nagai Q.M.District. COTA sent the proposal to the Director (Mr. R. Kuppaswami), which involved no financial commitment (letter dated 1st March 1996). Ms. C.K.Gariyali, the then Secretary to Govt., Dept. of Social Welfare conveyed the Govt. approval to the proposal to strengthen project support communication by preparing communication aid using folk media. It was further conveyed that we could utilise their human resource available in the communication wings of Tamilnadu Integrated Nutrition Project and Swedish International Developmental Agency (SIDA) in various districts.

Songs, Drama, Villuppattu, Harikatha, Street plays, Puppets, Folksongs and Calendars had been identified as some communication aids using folk media to propagate the theme. Though the initial process was fast, bureaucratic delays and usual government red tape which were beyond our control delayed the processes of production. So, it was possible to resume the work only in the month of February '97. A letter was sent to different resource persons covering all areas of communications aids as identified. Also the government sent a list of child care workers and mothers as resource persons to contribute the core concept to the theme. The range of resource persons included communication experts to mothers which helped, improving messages. This increased the sense of '*ownership*' of the finished materials among the participants and scope for wider dissemination of products.

Followings are some main themes decided in the workshop to develop communication materials :

1. Child development starts from the day of conception
2. Suitable environment, chances to use opportunities, and interaction with adults will help children's development
3. Children learn by sensory experiences and
4. Family, Community, and Government support services are very essential for the mother to care the child

In the workshop, 9 resource persons and 32 participants (including 8 Child care workers, 6 grade I supervisors, 3 mobile team Instructors, 2 Special Team Trainers, 2 Child Development Project Officers and a Programme Officer, a Cartoonist, a Programme Executive from All India Radio, a Journalist, Educational consultant and 3 Mothers) participated. About 17 crucial messages regarding 0-3 years children were isolated and packaged into 6 different media (*Villuppaattu*, Songs, Radio/Puppet play, Drama, Pictures and Video spots) since the workshop was intended to elicit these responses, these presentations were not ready to be produced immediately. It was decided to conduct another workshop in the month of May '97 to have a detailed critique and refine them further for final production.

The second workshop was conducted at Communication Training Centre, Taramani on 8th and 9th of May 97. Twenty six participants in the related fields participated in the workshop. Their participation proved to be invaluable and they were able to suggest ideas to refine the communication materials. Eight folk songs, one *Villuppaatu*, 5 video spots, one puppet show and 12 calendar messages were finalised after a detailed critiquing session. Gender perspective, Family support services, Positive approach, Accuracy in health and child development facts and other scientific details and data, Social, Community, and Government participation and support services were some important guidelines used to critique the communication materials. 6 songs, *Villuppaattu*, 5 video spots were produced and released on August 7, 1997 by Doordarshan Director and All India Radio Director (a communication strategy to familiarise our products so as to air the materials frequently). Mr. L. Vaidyanathan has taken up full responsibility of bringing out the product right from arranging the singers, booking the studio and other logistics which is not the common practice of any other music director. He also showed keen interest on using popular voice like Pushpavanam Kuppaswamy (a well known folk singer) who kindly accepted to sing with a very less remuneration. COTA has produced all materials as discussed in the workshop except puppet show and 12 calendar messages. It was felt that the puppet show script should be improved and was given back to the script-writer for polishing up which is still pending despite several reminders. The calendar messages have been prepared and rough sketches were made by the cartoonist. As soon as sponsorship becomes available, the final artwork will be completed.

An important point is that in the course of this experience, the number of persons involved as participants in the process of development of materials has increased a lot, from a handful in the first workshop to several dozen from different categories in the last case. This has not only enriched the content and quality, but increased the sense of 'ownership' which has led to more intense use by various people as well as wider dissemination.

Dissemination of Audio cassettes

The targeted audiences for *Enga Patta Kelunga* are teachers, school managements, professionals, parents, public. The audio cassette is produced to create awareness on *Burden of the pre-school child* and consequently create a conducive climate for effective advocacy for policy change in this regard. About 174 cassettes have been sold in the first year. The buyers were NGOs, child care workers, and other interested people. The cassette was used in many meetings and workshops at intervals as a strategy to spread this issues. The cassette sleeves were distributed as a brochure to campaign against burden on pre-school children. Though the concept was very clear and the targeted audiences were clearly defined, lack of marketing strategy in disseminating cassettes resulted in limited dissemination.

But after the release of *Thaayum Seiyum* audio cassette, a new strategy was adopted. A child related pharmaceutical company, who came to know about the cassette decided to take up these issues, both Burden on Pre-school Education and Improved services of 0-3 years children, to their clients (Paediatricians) throughout Tamil Nadu. A set of cassettes has been disseminated to 350 paediatricians in 5 months time. This assured that our messages have reached 350 paediatricians and hopefully, through them to parents who come to their clinics and can listen to songs in the waiting rooms. Similar dissemination were made at Egmore Children's hospital(Govt.) with the help of Paediatricians. A workshop for interested Paediatricians is planned so that they may lobby for young children. This support is in addition to the support of Indian Association of Paediatrics on our issues.

Another strategy to disseminate these audio cassettes was supplying these materials to Programme Executives of All India Radio who have already been oriented by us in two days workshop on issues related to women and children. Many programme executives have done programmes using these materials in their programmes and picked up themes from songs. Though AIR is using the materials, no proper monitoring could be done so far to measure the frequency of broadcasting our materials.

Video Spots

a. Burden on Pre-school Education

The general idea of producing audio and visual materials came from the informal meeting of Resource persons along with TN-Forces members at Reaching The Unreached, Kalluppatti near Madurai (September 94). Based on this two films were made on Burden on pre-school education (Dangerous Burden, Learning can be Fun). It was simultaneously decided to produce video spots on this issues to a) sharpen and focus the messages b) to reinforce by frequent broadcasting c) to create public awareness on this issues. Mr. Jnani, the resource person who has been with the activities of COTA right from the beginning undertook the production from script writing to the finished product. The script was critiqued by resource persons before shooting and the spots were critiqued again before final mixing took place. Five spots were ready by September '95 as most of the general footages drew on the earlier two documentaries. It must be noted that the entire seven spots with post-production work took a month and the spots were formally released in November 95, on the eve of Children's day.

b. On Gender Justice, Rights of Women and Children

After the successful campaign against Burden on Pre-school Children the idea became obvious to produce video spots for the Gender sensitisation campaign, the theme selected for the year 1996. A brainstorming session was conducted by COTA to work out themes to produce spots. Media sub-group of TN- Forces, Project staff, outside communication experts participated the session. Followings are the outcome of the session:

Males cast in spots should be positive characters in gender sensitivity which will help targeted (male) audiences to identify with them

The message should be equitable and not seen as a threat to males

The need to monetize the household work of women and its recognition by men at home

To attack the popular myth that only the female is responsible for girl child

To convert the existing audio spots on crèche and deprivation of girl child's education into visuals

Mr. Jnani, with these outlines wrote the script for the 5 spots. As usual these scripts were critiqued before production and mixing, for further refinement. These spots were produced and released on December 96, on the eve of Human Rights Day to highlight the rights of women and children.

c. On Development of Children below 3

This is one of the outcomes of workshops conducted to strengthen Project Support Communication for the project "Improved Services for 0-3 years Children" which the Department is undertaking on a pilot basis in Nagai Q.M. District. The process of making video spots is the same as the process of developing audio cassettes which has already been detailed. These 4 spots were released on August 7' 97 and are currently on air.

d. Dissemination of video spots

The targeted audiences for Burden spots were parents, teachers, school managements, general public and professionals; for the Gender spots students, teachers, youth, women's groups/ organisations, trade union, professional groups and the mode of reaching them was through telecast on Doordarshan. The spots received peak telecast again and again during the period between January '96 to May '96, when State Legislative Assembly

elections were going to take place. These spots were non-controversial during the time of elections was one reason for frequent telecast, according to one Doordarshan official. After it's regular airing on DDk, many school managements, NGO's contacted Project ACCESS and bought these spots (for a detailed study, refer "Messages that Move" - a feedback study report on these spots on Doordarshan). But, gender spots were not so frequently telecast by Doordarshan like 'Burden and Development of Children below 3' spots which still continue to be telecast frequently. Reluctance to accept gender concerns could perhaps be one of the reasons for less broadcasting of gender spots. Also, 'Burden and Development of Children' below 3 were common and non-controversial issues and need not be threatening to any family. Some family may not have children of this age group. But, when it comes to gender the issue becomes too personal to everyone in the family, and sometimes is seen as a threat by males(see box in the next page).

That the Central Government has no pre-school centres with burdensome curriculum and holds same views and opinions on Child development issues could be another reasons for frequent broadcasting. However, Doordarshan's co-operation could not be underestimated in this regard.

Gender spots have had excellent reception whenever these were used as discussion starters in any meeting, workshop or in public gatherings. This has been done by the project staff in more than 50 gatherings, so far, ranging from international meets to rural women's groups and the other organisations are also using this strategy. The spots always provoked some men and encouraged many women to speak out and set the conditions for real brainstorming. This particular strategy was found useful, and implemented for other spots too.

Voices against gender concerns

'*Summa*', the popular video spot which monetises women's household labour and adds value to women's household work. The spot ends with a man's change in his attitude. But, the same concept was negatively used by a famous Director SP.Muthuraman in his popular serial *Nimmathy Nimmathy Ungal Choice*, which comes every Thursday on SUN TV. In this serial, the wife tries to monetise her work because everyone in the family curses her because she earns nothing. This monetisation provokes her husband. He warns his wife to be obedient and not to become Xanthippe by asking such questions. Yet the wife was stubborn. So at night, the husband decides to sleep outside their bedroom and not with his wife. When asked for the reason he says, "Having monetised all your duties in the family, I wouldn't be surprised if you charge me for sharing a bed with you. So, I don't want to sleep with you in the bedroom". Then the wife repents for what she had done and promises her husband she will be a *good housewife*. This particular episode came to about 15 minutes and was clearly an attempt to distort our message. It also reveals the present situation in the media with which we have to work when it comes to gender issues.

Another unique communication strategy in '97 was telecasting these spots at Railway stations. This strategy required only good public relations to approach Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) of Southern Railways which was met. The Additional Principal Information Officer of Press Information Bureau was approached to request CPRO to telecast these spots on the available slots. The regular telecasting started from 16 May 1997. All the spots are being used both as video and television.

The last series of spots on Development of Children under 3 is regularly coming on Doordarshan Kendra. The remarkable achievement is telecasting these spots mostly at prime time, showing the growing strategic relationship with the Doordarshan Kendra. These spots are frequently on air at 7 p.m. and 8.30 before the news, and after the Sunday movie in the evening.

Audio Spots

So far, five spots have been prepared. All audio spots theme were decided and critiqued mostly by in-house staff and some outside resource persons. Two 32 seconds audio spots (*Mother's Milk and Kamala's dream*) produced in 1993, one on the need for child care centres, and on girl child education were being regularly broadcast on FM radio. These spots were released on the occasion of International Women's Day (8 March, 1994). Later, both were converted into visual form also to reach wider audiences. The second set consisted of 3 spots (*A mother's anxiety, Salt for sale, All work and no play*) on the theme of Burden on pre-school education was again an in-house production, released on Children's day in 1995 following the workshop held at Reaching the Unreached in September '95. These spots were later used in video spots. The link between audio and video is deliberate to reinforce the messages of each other. Also, because monitoring the audio spots was not easy. Hence, video spots were produced.

Though these were regularly being broadcast by FM radio, the reach did not extend beyond Chennai. However, this problem was overcome after a workshop was conducted for all All India Radio Programme executives in Tamil Nadu on issues related to women and children. After orientation, they have produced many programmes using the materials both in content and form.

The latest set of 10 audio spots (all converted from earlier video spots) were prepared by a team of resource persons and Media sub-group of TN-Forces and submitted to the FM Director, Chennai. This was the result of the media monitoring carried out by Media subgroup during the period 21st September to 29th September '96 in the morning between 7 and 9 am. This monitoring was based on the AIR memorandum that every 9 minutes of advertisements should be followed by 1 minute social advertisement in all FM commercial programmes produced by private producers. Though many producers met the requirements formally, there were no constructive messages due to lack of social messages. There were instances where even common proverbs were used as social messages. This was highlighted by the Media Subgroup and TN-Forces agreed to generate messages for 10 audio spots. As discussed, scripts have been submitted to AIR and follow-up action is going on. Broadcast is yet to begin.

Brochures

Brochure is another type of important communication material used by the project extensively to disseminate general information on the issues and backup the communication materials. Brochure becomes an easy material to orient the targetted group and readily available information makes the task easier for wider dissemination. Most of the brochures were prepared by the in-house staff and made within the office. This has proved to be cost-effective though preparations consume reasonable time. These in-house brochures are photocopied and kept ready for distribution at any given time. An exclusive set containing 6 brochure have been prepared for the Panchayat women members on the issues including health, girl's education, the need for maternal and child care support services. These brochures have also been sent to other NGOs to train their local Panchayat women members. Similarly, OHP transparencies have been prepared for talks at various platforms on the issues. This is possible due to the constant effort of preparing OHP transparencies on various issues related to women and children. This has helped the process of advocacy in terms of giving talks, lectures at any given time.

Tamil Press/Journals

Issues like Burden on Pre-school Children, Maternity and Child care are not generally covered by media, as they are popularly categorised as 'soft issues'. A media study conducted by Media Group on Portrayal of 'Women and Children' in weekly and monthly magazines (52nos.) in December '93 confirmed this fact. So, it was felt that media should be oriented to the hard facts of these issues to help them move away from the myth of 'soft issues'.

As the project is limited by 3 years, it is a stupendous task to orient all media persons and make them publicise our issues. So it was felt to find out a new strategy to sustain some space in the media.

The following strategies were adopted for working with Tamil press/journals to capture a space for the issues.

- a) Conducting Competitions
- b) Dissemination of Resource materials
- c) Conducting Workshops
- d) Celebration of Special days

Competitions

In Tamil mass media, conducting competitions is one of the strategies which is common to all print and visual media. For instance, *Rani* weekly (widely read by lower middle class and rural people) could not have taken up these issues, but for the competition conducted by us. In all competitions COTA took the responsibility of sorting of stories, photos or poems as the case may be and distributing prizes for the best participants. This made the job of magazines and weeklies easier, providing only space in their magazines. So it was decided to have competition in different magazines to sensitise various type of readers on our issues. Competitions have been conducted in two different magazines and in a daily newspaper. *Kungumam and Rani* are two weeklies and the newspaper is *Dinamani*. While *Kungumam* covers urban middle class and is run by the son-in-law the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, hence politically biased, *Rani* is a very popular magazine read by lower middle class and rural people. *Dinamani* newspaper is a very respected regional language newspaper, known for its integrity and the circulation in the Chennai city alone is 1.5 lakh copies per day. Thus we have tried to address our issues to urban, rural and literate people. Another benefit of competition is that the issues get attraction at a bigger level as the sponsor medium has to advertise the issue of the competition.

Resource Materials

In these years, some of our core issues have been highlighted by the Tamil press very effectively. For instance, media portrayal of working women is always urbanised, and they are depicted as arrogant while the fact remains 89% of working women in the unorganised sector for survival. This was unearthed by our research (*Balancing Multiple Roles*). This book has been widely circulated. The statistics appeared in 'Dinamani kadhira' and received many responses from the readers. Also there were cover stories on Gender and Children (*Dinamani kadhira* 25.8.96, 1.9.96, 1.6.97) of which one was the portrayal of insignificance of women's work and monetising the work (the author also produced the popular video spots on gender called 'Summa'). Similarly, a popular cartoonist sensitised by our campaign on burden on pre-school children, brought out one full page cartoon (*Dinamani kadhira* 9-6-96).

In the long run, the Project support Communication has developed a strong relationship with Tamil press. Followings are some indicators:

The 'poem competition' jointly conducted by Dinamani and ACCESS for the special issue on International Women's Day was in fact a voluntary invitation from Dinamani editorial office to ACCESS.

Requests for material come in from the press, as result of friendly relationship established.

The following table shows the number of items published about the issues during the project period.

Types of publishing in Print Media

<i>S.No</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Details</i>
1	Editorial articles	12 articles in <i>Dinamani</i> , 2 articles in other magazines
2	News items	10 news items in Newspapers, Weeklies, Journals
3	Reviews	Almost all our books, materials and other products have been reviewed by various magazines, newspapers as the case may be
4	Stories	Through competitions and workshops more than 20 stories have been published. These writers continue to write on these issues
4	Poem and Photo competitions	Conducted competitions and published in <i>Dinamani</i> special issue on the occasion of International Women's Day
5	Cartoons	Outcome of our orientation, published in <i>Dinamani</i>
6	Independent articles by media persons	This includes a cover story in <i>Dinamani Kadhir</i> highlighting the issues and other news items appeared in weeklies

Workshop for Programme Executives at AIR

AIR is still a powerful medium and has a reach to 90% of total population. Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry have 9 All India Radio stations and each station has an exclusive Programme Executive (PEX) working on Women and Children. Orientation given to these PEXs on our issues would mean many programmes. The general public become aware of these issues hence a climate for a change in policy could be possible. This was the rationale behind conducting the workshop.

Though the workshop was to have been sponsored by us, the then Director Mr. Vijaya Thiruvengadam's made a big contribution to carry out the event successfully. He stood by the proposal to get the acceptance from the Director General of AIR, Delhi. It was held in 16th and 17th February of '96.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- to analyse problems of women in the context of multiple roles
- to create awareness on the need for avoiding gender-biased messages
- to focus on issues related "Pressures on Pre-school Children" based on the guidelines of the Government of India constituted Prof. Yeshpaul committee report
- to examine problems related to young children like Girl child, Child labour etc., that may be brought to focus through media

Sixteen PEXs participated in the workshop from nine stations. They were divided into four groups. When asked to narrate an incident and critiqued through discussion to improve, participants realised that a message could have various forms.

Then, came resource persons with lots of inputs that included:

- to cast men as friendly, understanding towards women's problems
- to promote gender equality messages
- to carefully avoid traditional messages like "Women are their own enemies"
- to disseminate play way education as the best alternative method
- to campaign against burden on pre-school children.

Some responses...

Mr. Athiyaman, former PEX Pondicherry and presently in-charge of Vividhabharathy (govt. owned popular commercial broadcasting station) of Chennai AIR, has conducted many programmes on women and burden on pre-school children and children's rights. This includes a panel discussion on burden on pre-school children in which a paediatrician from JIPMER participated who latter became involved with the issue.

Mr. Senthamizh Selvi, PEX, AIR, Thiruchirapalli used our audio cassettes several times as *salangai kadhigal* (fillers). Field interviews on child labour, with mothers in the unorganised sectors are some of her other programmes.

Mr. Sakthi Srinivasan PEX, AIR, Chennai has also produced programmes on burden on pre-school children including talks and play.

These are some feedbacks received from participants and hope to receive many more. Most importantly, the workshop has made us familiar with respective PEXs, and the project theme is no alien concept to them. This has increased the scope for working together. There are many instances when PEXs contacted us for resource persons regarding women and children's issues. And these contacts helped us to work out other strategies such as celebration of special days which has been discussed below.

Celebration of special days

A key communication strategy of COTA the use of celebration of special days to create awareness on issues related to women and children. Though this strategy has been followed through out the project period, the particular strategy was emphasised from '96 onwards because the response for the issue is better when called on special days than other times. So, ACCESS shared this unique strategy in Imma, the quarterly news letter with other TN-Forces members. There were four occasions of celebration of special days in 1995-96 and 5 occasions in 96-97. We received a good amount of responses from our members that the strategy proved to be useful.

Similarly, every medium wants to prove it's concern to the society atleast on special days. For example, the print medium may want to remember Gandhian ideas atleast on his birthday. So, publishing topical articles on special days has been one such strategy for the media to display their concern. In attempting to cash in on celebration of special days, ACCESS has been successful. On Teacher's day, Children's day, Women's day, Labour day and Women's health day articles have been brought out either by project associates or by our resource persons.

The following table shows the number of Celebrations on special days:

<i>Day</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Strategy</i>
International Women's Day '94	Panel Discussion on problems on women in the unorganised sectors. Release of 23 minute video film on the issue entitled Ivargalin Kulanthaigalum Kulanthigalthane	To reach out to more people on the issue when released on Women's day
Breastfeeding Day '94	Group Discussion between mothers and experts Video release - 18 minute film on problems of working mothers in breastfeeding	Wider publicity and to advocate support services to enable working women to breastfeed
International Women's Day '96	Conducted Photo competition- State of working women in the unorganised sector	to sensitise public, identify photographers concerned with this issue, and to develop a photo archive
Children's Day '95	Release of video film on Burden on Pre-schoolers- Two documentaries and five video spots	Released by Doordarshan Kendra Director so as to air telecast frequently and launch of video sales
Children's Day '95	Three audio spots on burden on pre-schoolers	Released by All India Radio director- one way committing himself to air these spots
Teacher's Day '96	Celebrated with the support of Social Welfare Board. Guidelines issued to network and other members through <i>Imma</i> to hold functions on the day in line with TN-Forces' objectives	Much support and cooperation came from members when govt. took initiative and more than 40 organisations wrote to us about their celebrations

Children's Day '96	<p>Like Teacher's day similar strategy was adopted and all network members were informed about the Children's Day.</p> <p>Release of Audio cassette <i>Enga Patta Kelunga</i> on Burden on Pre-schoolers by Hon'ble Minister for Social Welfare and Director, All India Radio</p> <p>Release of the book <i>Balancing Multiple Roles</i> on Child care services strategies</p>	<p>Response was relatively low as this was organised without the Govt. support.</p> <p>To familiarise the product and for frequent airing in All India Radio.</p> <p>To reach out to more people and for wider dissemination</p>
Human Rights Day '96	Release of video films on <i>Gender Justice- women's and children's rights</i>	Director, Doordarshan requested to broadcast these spots regularly
International Women's Day '97 (I)	Conducted Poem Competition in Dinamani special issue on Women's Day	To create awareness on the issues
International Women's Day '97 (II)	Conducted short story competition on Women's multiple roles	To disseminate the core issues in the popular form
Teacher's Day '97	<p>Release of Training videos on <i>Activity Based Education</i></p> <p>Release of <i>Shades of Nature</i> (both Tamil and English) on using natural materials in making colours</p>	<p>Released by Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Programme Project Coordinator, communications.</p> <p>About 6 blocks each consisting of 100 centres bought these cassettes to reach out more people</p>

Another successful outcome is that popular Tamil magazines *Dinamani*, *Dinamani Pongal Malar*, *Theekathir*, *Vellimani*, *Kungumam* brought out special issues related to women and children to sensitise the public and other concerned groups.

Imma

Imma is a quarterly newsletter, a platform for TN-Forces to exchange information about members' activities and sharing mutual concerns and planning about issues of concerns. This newsletter is prepared and edited by Project Associate (Communication). Being a convenor of TN-Forces, *Imma* gives high priority to issues related to Forces mandate. The major strength of the newsletter is exchange and sharing of information and to be aware of member's activities and national developments.

The content of *Imma* includes news items on FORCES activities, Communication and Training materials, Research series, Audio and Video cassettes and other useful materials. However, there had been some difficulties in getting information from members related to TN-Forces mandate. On special occasions, there were too many messages to find a space of all members' activities. For example, January'97 issue carried only two most important items a) Report of Annual General Meeting of TN- Forces b) Guidelines to celebrate International Women's Day(both in Tamil and English). These items doubled the usual size of *Imma* to 8pages. These have restricted some space problems. However, due care has been taken to cover members activities to the possible extent. For example, the immediate issue to the January '97 detailed all the organisations who celebrated Women's day and how.

Many times, members gave information about their general activities which fall out of Forces mandate. Sometimes members were indifferent even to inform their change of addresses. In some cases, Change of some member's address is noticed only when *Imma* is undelivered. Nevertheless, *14 issues of Imma* have been brought out during the project period. The circulation of *Imma* is not a fixed number and it varies according the nature of issue it carries every quarterly.

The average circulation is 400 copies and maximum circulated was 800 copies including TN-Forces members. The readership includes TN-Forces members, Legislators, Trade unions, Women's organisations, Educational Institutions, Primary schools, Research Institutions, Teachers, Paediatricians, Gynaecologists, Activists, Media persons, Indian Association of Preschool Education (IAPE) members, etc., *Imma* has been displayed in many meeting, workshops and seminars for further circulation. Manytimes readers have requested us to send materials, once it is published in *Imma* which is one of the indicator of readership. Particularly, materials relating to Preschool education always received significant enquiries. Otherwise, normally members don't respond to the issues dealt in the Newsletter.

When *Imma* carried guidelines on how to celebrate special days especially Teacher's day and International Women's Day, many responses came from members. *Imma* issued guidelines (November '96) on how to celebrate Children's day, a theme that has taken up by TN-Forces, with the support Social Welfare Board. Nearly 40 organisations responded on how they held functions on the day. Similar strategy was adopted without the Govt. support and guidelines were issued to members on celebrating the International Women's Day. The response was relatively low though some NGOs enthusiastically celebrated the function. But, this clearly showed that the degree of responses was high when govt. took the initiatives and the need for NGOs to work with govt. to reach out to more people.

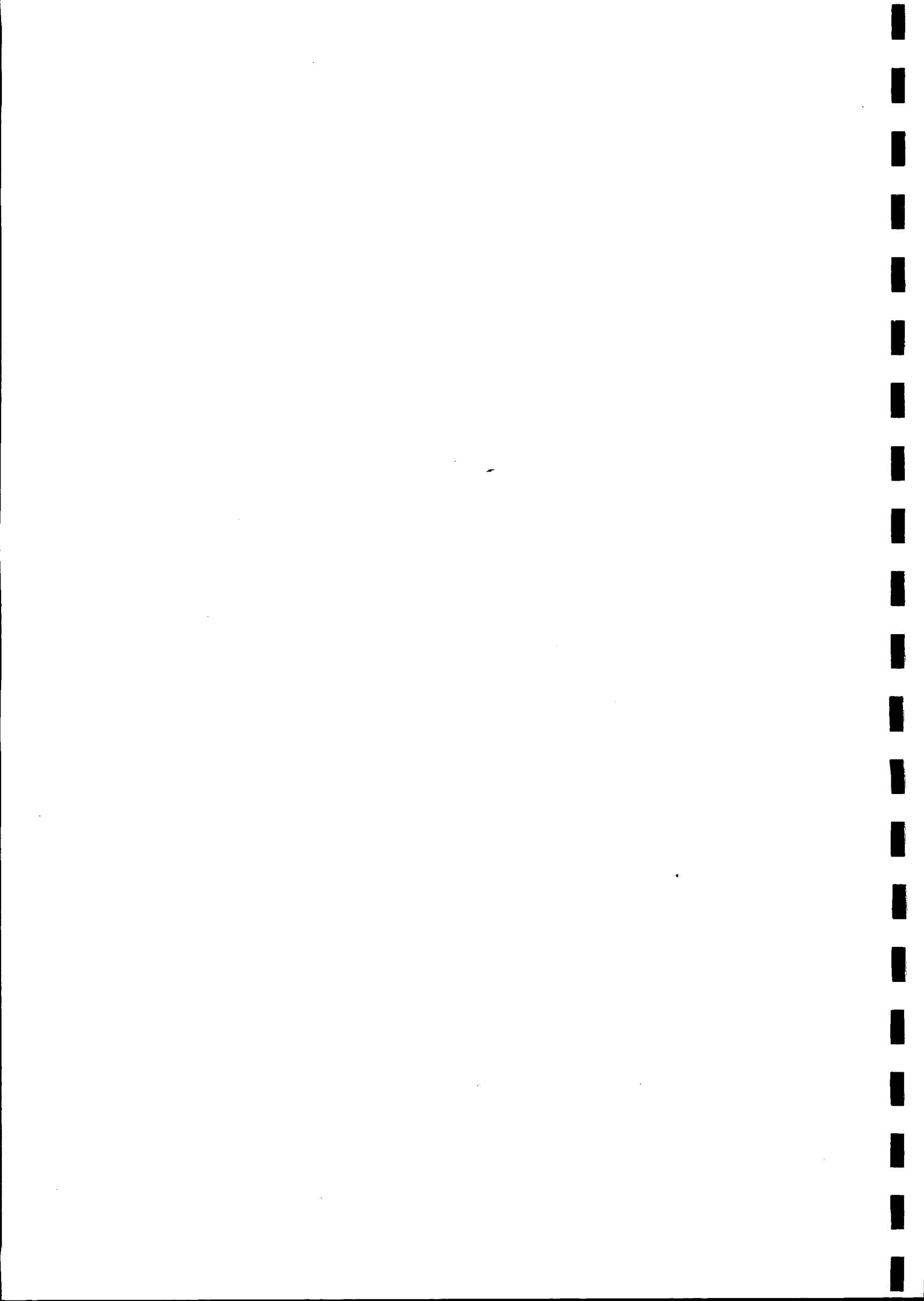
Lessons

During the process of, developing and disseminating communication materials; sensitising the media; other concerned groups; and accessing space in the media the following lessons were learned.

In the beginning, the Project did not have any in-built component to meet the demand that arises from the dissemination of communication materials. For example, video spots on Burden on the Young Child were made keeping 'awareness generation' as a single objective. The process did not take into account how the demands will be met once the awareness is created. Asking details for alternative schools, enquiring curriculum for play way education and training the teachers were the immediate demands from the concerned groups for which the project, frankly, fumbled to react appropriately. This is mainly because the video spots were produced on the assumption that awareness on this issue is most important as many parents, teachers, school managements don't consider burden as "as issue". In reality, many people are concerned about the issue and wanted an immediate solution to this problem.

The targetted audiences for any communication materials should be well defined before the production of materials. Similarly, methods of dissemination, feedback of the materials should also be strategised. As far as audio cassettes are concerned the dissemination was at the low key upto the Project found the corporate partner. While dissemination of 174 Enga Patta Kelunga cassettes took nearly 10 months, Citadel Pharmaceuticals (a child related pharma. company) distributed 350 sets of Enga Patta Kelunga and Thaayum Seyum to Paediatricians within 5 months. These Paediatricians have now been targetted to work for this issue. A preliminary meeting has also been conducted with the Citadel field personnel (on April 9 '98).

Accessing space in the print and visual medium should not be a problem with the emergence of more number of newspapers, magazines and Doordarshan & private televisions. But the trend is, popular medium provides space to popular and sensational stories and not to the developmental issues. However, the Project during its period, have used many untapped space to sensitise women and children's issues, introduced such space to other organisations. The project has also been successful in getting space in print media including popular magazines, when needed. An excellent rapport has been built by all Project Associates handled 'Project Support Communication' with media persons.



Advocacy Activities

The advocacy activities of the project have been carried out with a view to cultivate a supportive climate for ECCE and other intersecting needs of women and children in the State, specifically focusing on policy makers, the general public, media and other critical groups to influence opinion and ultimately policies. A supportive climate where both the 'suppliers' and the 'users' of services are aware of the implications of the services, is considered essential to impact policy. A wide range of strategies such as networking, dialogue, sensitisation, campaigning, to name a few, were adopted to create this supportive climate and put children on the agenda. The issues addressed by the advocacy efforts included:

- maternity and child care needs
- burden on the pre-school child
- support for breastfeeding
- gender equity
- development of the young child
- women's multiple rôles and
- decentralisation of child care services

The choice of these issues was based on the yearly themes of the network as well as the need to address emerging issues as they come up. This section of the report takes a look strategy wise, at how these issues were advocated, and what the outcomes were.

Origin

The initial efforts on advocacy were taken in 1992, when Project ACCESS was planning and had launched to a limited extent its intervention for young children at three levels - micro, intermediate and macro. The macro level intervention was thought of as one that would be broad based with the objective of impacting the whole gamut of Government policies on child care. It was felt that this would involve opening up of a dialogue with the Government and parallel work with other players in providing/using services. This led later on to the formation of the network as a platform for working with all players including the Government.

The first initiative in this direction was taken when a seminar was organised in 1991, involving both governmental and non-governmental agencies on the theme 'Child care services in Tamil Nadu : Maximising the potential of the noon-meals scheme'. Though this focused on a particular scheme, the discussions culminated in the drawing up of a strategy for improvement of child care services explained in a paper entitled '*Improvement of child care services in Tamil Nadu - A blue print for Action*'. Though it was received positively, the Government gave no indication of whether it is going to take up the suggestion or how. This was the point where the need for advocacy and campaigning was keenly felt - the need to move opinions and subsequently policies in favour of better child care services. It was realised that for such advocacy, a broad based non-political front would be required which resulted in the formation of the network. The initiation of this network marked the first step in the advocacy efforts of the project. From this point onwards a steady stream of advocacy activities were launched both through the network and otherwise.

In the beginning, advocacy was mainly carried out through papers such as '*The continuum of maternity and child care*', '*Women, work and breastfeeding*' presented in conferences or otherwise disseminated. These papers formed good advocacy material as they take a close and comprehensive look at one particular issue. Later on a wide range of strategies were adopted for advocacy. This section takes a look at these strategies* .

Memorandums

- a) The first major advocacy activity was the presentation of a memorandum to the State Minister for Social Welfare in 1992, on the need to improve child care services in the State. Nothing much came out of this as the Govt. did not respond to any suggestion on the follow-up. This was before the formal launching of Project COTA. In May 1994, following a meeting with legislators and based on the network theme for the year, a memorandum on 'supporting working mothers to breastfeed their children' was

* Communication is dealt with in a separate report

submitted to the Govt. Four important demands were made in the memorandum:

- Extension of maternity leave from 3 months to four months from the date of delivery
- Two nursing breaks with a minimum of 45 minutes a day
- Sufficient increase in the cash benefit under Muthulakshmi Reddy Scheme from Rs.300 to Rs.1600
- Removing the income ceiling and restrictions on number of children for obtaining benefits

The memorandum apart from being widely circulated among legislators, women's organisations, trade unions and in conferences, was also reproduced in newsletters and magazines of network members. Sustained campaigning on this issue by COTA and the network members resulted in two concrete benefits when the following was announced in the budget speech for 1995 - 96:

- Six months maternity leave to women workers in the unorganised sector
- Extension of noon meals to pregnant women and lactating mothers for 6 weeks

A good opportunity to influence politicians came up during the eve of the elections to the State Assembly in early 1996. A memorandum on inclusion of issues related to women and children in the election manifestos of political parties was submitted to all major political parties. It was a good occasion for advocacy, as the manifesto draft committees who were looking for ideas to be packaged into promises, picked up points from the memorandum for inclusion in their manifestos. Three major parties included some of the issues in their manifestos, while all the parties agreed that these are important issues. Two parties published the contents of the manifesto in their party organs, which were picked up by party speakers and raised in pre-election campaign meetings. The memorandum was also sent through partners to several districts for distribution to party cadres at the local level. Simultaneously, the memorandum was released to the press and due coverage was given both by the English and the vernacular press. This also ensured that the issues were on the agenda at the political level as well as the public level paving way for a continuous debate on the issues. Seeing the same issues appearing in the press reinforced the importance of considering them seriously.

It was later on distributed along with other materials to elected members of the Assembly. Though, pre-election campaigns are possible once in five years only, the potential to generate awareness they possess is enormous.

c) Another memorandum submitted to the State Finance Commission called for decentralisation of child care services to the panchayat level and adequate resources to the panchayats for managing the services. Advocacy on this issue goes back to 1992 when a methodology note on 'parent mobilisation and decentralisation' for strengthening of child care services in Tamil Nadu, was widely circulated. This was revised in 1997 in view of the elections to local bodies in the State. The chairperson of the Commission assured that the memorandum would be included in his report to the Govt.

d) Some of the other memorandums are as follows:

- A memorandum on the inclusion of child care services in National Women's Policy, submitted to the Dept. of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India.
- A memorandum calling for a separate directorate for pre-schools submitted to the Education Minister, Govt. of Tamil Nadu
- A memorandum on the rights of women workers including maternity benefits, child care services and equal pay, submitted to the Labour Ministry, Govt. of India
- A memorandum on the burden on pre-school children submitted to the Govt. constituted high level committee on reducing the burden of school curriculum (In this case advocacy was necessary even to include pre-school in the terms of reference of the committee as they had been asked to take up only from the primary level)

As it is seen this form of advocacy mainly targets bureaucrats and politicians in their capacity as policy makers. Memorandums have been fairly successful in gaining their attention as well as orienting them on the issue. Memorandums have also been used for multiple forms of advocacy. They are part of training kits, conference materials, meeting

handouts or more plainly as an information note on the issue. The process of preparation of these memorandums merit a few words here. The first step is the preparation of a brief outline of what could be included in the memorandum. This is circulated following which extensive discussions are held with partner organisations before the memorandum is finalised. In some cases the thinking of the Govt. on the issue is also sought before the memorandum is finalised, as was the case with the one submitted to the State Finance Commission.

Research / Publications

In COTA, research has always been seen as a tool for advocacy. Hence the research component of the project was designed to provide a firm base for advocacy. The creation of the research network was also aimed at providing a steady stream of facts that could support advocacy*. The findings of research have been used in various ways in different forums to highlight the issue. Usually advocacy efforts start immediately after the preliminary findings are compiled.

Balancing multiple roles: The preliminary findings of this first study in the research series, were released before an audience of several Govt. officials and NGO representatives. Those who responded commented that the findings were an eye opener. A series of presentations were made subsequently at various forums consisting of policy makers, politicians, academicians/students, heads of NGOs, etc. both within and outside the State. The results were published and widely disseminated. To reach a wider audience it was translated into Tamil and widely circulated, particularly through women's organisations that had a state-wide presence. The feedback received from readers have been very encouraging. Extracts of the findings have been published in the vernacular print media as popular articles. The findings also formed an important base for the memorandum submitted to political parties on the eve of elections in the State. Apart from this the results find a place in a training manual on empowering women to breastfeed.

* More information on the research network is available in a separate report

At What Cost? : The experiences of advocacy with the earlier study were also applied to this study on the multiple roles of women and management of breastfeeding. There was a series of presentations at professional forums and other gatherings apart from wide dissemination. Based on the findings, two video spots highlighting the importance of supporting the mother to breastfeed were prepared and are now being frequently telecast in the state television network carrying the message to millions. Some of the key findings fed into a whole range of communication materials such as songs, folk media, radio plays/scripts etc. on development of the 0 - 3 yr. children. The report has also contributed to the preparation of a training manual on empowering women to breastfeed.

Empowering Women to Breastfeed : This training manual was a product of attempts to advocate the findings of the above mentioned studies. The need for a manual was felt while the results of *At What Cost?* were being presented before various forum, particularly those consisting of NGO workers. The need was even more acutely felt when analysis of existing training on breastfeeding revealed an emphasis only on certain aspects of breastfeeding and its importance, while wholly neglecting the need to support mothers for breastfeeding. Hence this manual was designed as a radical departure from the conventional approach to the issue, with a full emphasis on empowering mothers and viewing it from the woman's perspective. This manual has become the most widely disseminated of all the COTA products. About 5000 copies have gone out so far. The advocacy value of this manual is considerable as this has been picked up by organisations with a massive presence in the State - TNVHA which has more than thousand members, TINP and ICDS which have a large network of about 30,000 centres and the Directorate of Public Health which again has a huge network of health centres.

Other Studies

The two published studies on aspects related to female infanticide are being followed up in a similar manner. However, apart from dissemination, a different advocacy approach has been adopted. The studies clearly brought out the gap between the causes of infanticide and the measures aimed at tackling the issue while also highlighting the key role

communication plays in the whole issue. Based on this major insight, steps are being taken to initiate a network of NGOs at regional levels to address the issue. The studies have also been translated into Tamil for wider circulation. Similarly, *Services That Matter*, a status report on child care services in Tamil Nadu is used as an advocacy paper. The advocacy value of this booklet arises mainly from the analysis of the lacunae in programmes and suggested directions for future. This has been widely circulated through the National FORCES and at the consultation of ICCW - TN apart from regular dissemination particularly to Members of Parliament, State governments and UNICEF branches all over India.

A study on the portrayal of women in cinema conducted by the media sub-group of TN FORCES turned out to be another major tool for advocacy. Immensely popular with the readers, the findings of the study were widely disseminated. The main channel of dissemination was AIDWA which circulated the booklet throughout the state and picked up points from the study for its meetings at district and panchayat levels.

The booklet also formed an important part of the kit on issues related to women and children given to MLAs, Ministers and media personnel.

Consultations

The activities under this broad heading include seminars and workshops. The objective of these were to orient, to generate awareness and take into confidence the key players in issues of young children and women. Apart from providing a good direct platform for advocacy, the reports of these consultations serve as excellent material for further advocacy, particularly as inputs for policy-making. An important factor for the advocacy potential of these consultations is the opportunity it provides for the participation of government officials, who may be more inclined to listen to what is said here, than when they are met personally amidst their busy working hours.

Seminars

The first in the series of seminars was the one on *Structural Adjustment Policy and the Child in India* held in December 1992. The participants included senior officials of the State Government, economists, social scientists, trade unionists, journalists, women activists and social workers. The seminar report had aroused widespread interest and demand. The consultation in 1993 was on *Maternity and Child Care Services*. As a result of the consultation and pressure from TN FORCES and other NGOs, the National Commission for Women set up a fourth legal panel to review "labour legislation and social security for women". This was followed by a seminar on this issue organised by the NCW with UNICEF and another one by NIPCCD.

In 1994 a seminar on the *Policy for the Young Child in Tamil Nadu* was conducted with the objective of bringing together NGOs, professionals and policy makers to critically review policies and identify strategies for change. The State Plan for Action for Child Care was reviewed in particular. There was a great reluctance from the Govt. side to take cognisance of the lacunae in the plan. However, as a result of this seminar, members of TN FORCES were involved in several government initiated consultations later on.

Another important seminar was on *NGO-Government partnership for child care* held in November 1995. What started as a discussion on a two-sided partnership ended up with the delineation of a four-cornered partnership including the local bodies and the community apart from the Government and the NGOs. The report was widely disseminated. The ideas from the seminar assumed a renewed significance after the recent panchayat elections in the State.

Workshops and Meetings.

From time to time workshops and meetings have been conducted for different groups of people with a view to advocate issues related to child care and encourage the participants to take up advocacy for the child. These meetings held all over Tamil Nadu often in partnership with network members, are good examples of the snowballing effect of advocacy campaigns. A case in point is Indian Academy of Paediatrics (IAP) picking up the campaign against the burden on the pre-school child. In this case, the year long campaign of TN FORCES, including half a dozen meetings in different parts of Tamil Nadu, supported by COTA materials was the motivational factor. IAP took up the theme and worked on it for a year in the form of various consultations / awareness programmes for parents and managements.

Workshops and meetings proved to be particularly effective with groups such as panchayat members and union representatives. This has ultimately resulted in building up alliances to tackle issues - alliances with groups like professional associations, networks, unions, legislators, political parties and panchayat members.

A large number of such meetings have been held all over the state, both by COTA and the network members, especially through the sub-groups. For instance, in May 1994 the health sub-group members had an interaction with legislators to orient them on the need for change in laws and schemes relating to maternity and child care. Similar interaction was held with Trade Union leaders on the same issue.

An important series of events were workshops for elected women panchayat members. Four workshops have been conducted so far. The objective was to orient members to child care issues and encourage them to take up advocacy and action on these issues at the panchayat level. Interestingly, this turned out to be an uphill task as the members had other crucial issues to take up, than issues related to child care, though they agreed that these are also important.

Dissemination

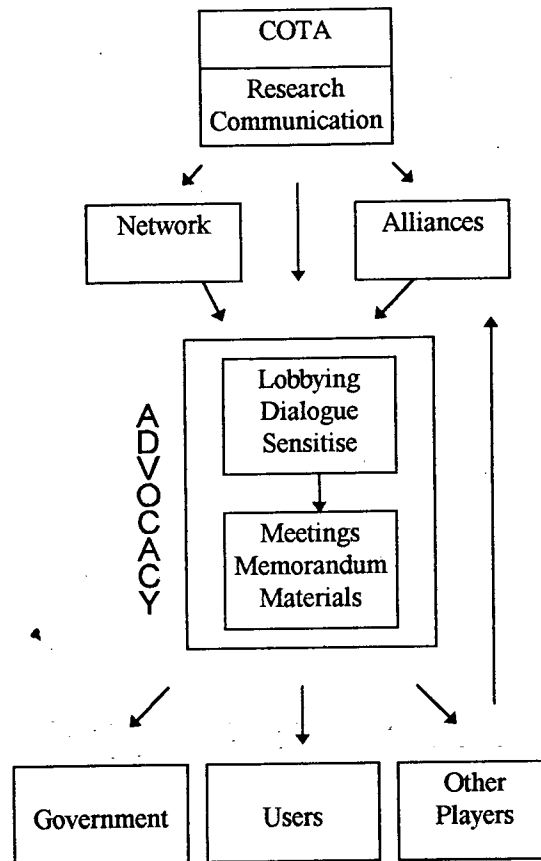
This strategy of advocacy has been consistently used, by the project. A wide range of materials are regularly disseminated both to network members and to other groups, potential allies and partners. New materials are sent to the significant groups as and when they are produced. Kits containing materials have been given to legislators, Government officials, Union representatives panchayat members, media executives, writers, NGO heads, leaders of political parties, professionals such as doctors, lawyers, social workers, research/academic institutions, donors, UN agencies, documentation centres etc.

Dissemination of videos on the issues of child care and maternity, breastfeeding and burden less education has been an important strategy for advocacy. Videos have great advocacy potential as they could continue the work long after a campaign has waned. For instance several school managements had acquired the videos on burdenless education exclusively for parent awareness, which they intend to use year after year.

To a great extent personal communication such as letters, personal meetings, phone calls have also been used for advocacy, mainly to provide information and alert partner organisations. For instance the first part of the campaign for the inclusion of the needs of women labourers in the proposed agricultural Bill was carried out through personal communication with the concerned Minister, Secretary of the Department and some key Members of Parliament.

Lessons

The process of advocacy in the project could be summarised in the following chart.



1. The project's research and communication components generated the tools and material for advocacy. This was made use of by the project, the network and the alliances created within and without the network. These partners used strategies such as lobbying, dialoguing and sensitising through activities such as meetings, presentation of memorandum and dissemination of materials to bring about the change in the perception, knowledge and attitude of Government, users and other players and ultimately impacting policy. The advocacy efforts are intended to directly affect the 'supply' side of services (i.e.) government by trying to reach them with the message directly and indirectly affect the 'supply' side again through working with the 'demand'

side (i.e.) users who could pressure the government policy to change. Advocacy with other players is essentially to make them allies and pull them into sustaining the pressure.

2. Advocacy in the project has progressed from sporadic activities in the beginning of the project to a sustained campaign made in the 3rd and 4th years. This indicates the continuous evolution of the process of advocacy and improved skills and strategies. While networking was the focus of the project in the earlier years there was a shift in the 3rd and 4th years when advocacy became the focus and networking became the tool or strategy.
3. An important aspect to be observed in the process is the multi-pronged and multi-level strategies and activities adopted to tackle one particular issue. This is important to sustain the momentum of the campaign. Using all possible opportunities to get across the message is a key strength of the process. In the process a wide variety of strategies have been field-tested. For instance, involving Govt officials in any activity and inviting them has proved fruitful. Govt. officials may be wary to commit anything in a formal seminar, while they do respond if they are invited to release some product and speak a few words. Experience has also been gained on appropriate occasions for advocacy with politicians e.g. pre-election time or when the assembly is in session (when all are in Chennai) or when there is a council meeting where advocacy materials could be distributed and so on.

Another factor to be appreciated is the wide range of critical groups the advocacy effort have touched - from policy makers to end users. This also contributed to another major strength - that of building alliances. These alliances particularly with association and networks had a snowballing effect. In the long run these could make the process of advocacy sustainable even after the project has reduced its inputs in the issue.

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4. To reach a large audience and to get wider public support for these issues the support of the media is crucial. Working with the media - print, radio and television - has been a great strength for the whole process of advocacy which involved creating a space in the media and then giving appropriate inputs on the issue. The gains made here are an understanding of the media perspective on various issues, orienting media personnel, packaging issues in specific formats to reach different target groups and developing resources/resource persons for the media. Taking the media into confidence over these issues also has a major spin-off in terms of enormous savings in money which would otherwise be required to get space in any of the media.
 5. Another important lesson has been the usefulness of research findings as tools for advocacy. Research supported advocacy improves credibility of the issue and also enables us to move forward with conviction. A related experience has been an understanding of the multiple ways in which the findings of a study could be communicated for advocacy purposes.
 6. The process of advocacy has had a considerable impact on the issues taken up by the project. Issues such as maternity support, child care services and burden on the pre-school child were almost non-issues in the NGO scenario in Tamil Nadu. The very fact that all these issues have been brought to the fore and kept alive abreast with other 'popular' issues, speaks volumes about the impact of advocacy. However, messages on not so popular but crucial themes do take an enormous time to sink in. For instance the rights of the new-born child does not get due attention while the issue of the rights of the 3rd child threatened by the '2-child norm' provokes hostility. Visible action and changes in policy in these issues is a slow process. Signs of impact are visible in some cases such as a campaign against the burden on the pre-school child, which has precipitated a wide variety of responses* ranging from requests for more information from general public to action by the government which has recently issued an order for all nursery and primary schools to register themselves with the government. In some other cases like gender sensitisation, impact is not so visible, as

* A detailed presentation on the response to the campaign is in a separate report

possibly gender issues may be seen as more threatening to the more conservative sections of society.

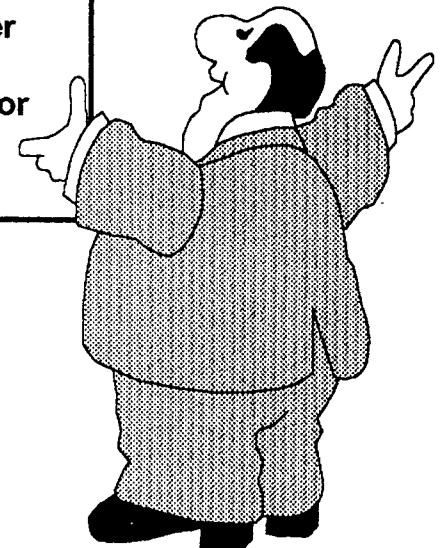
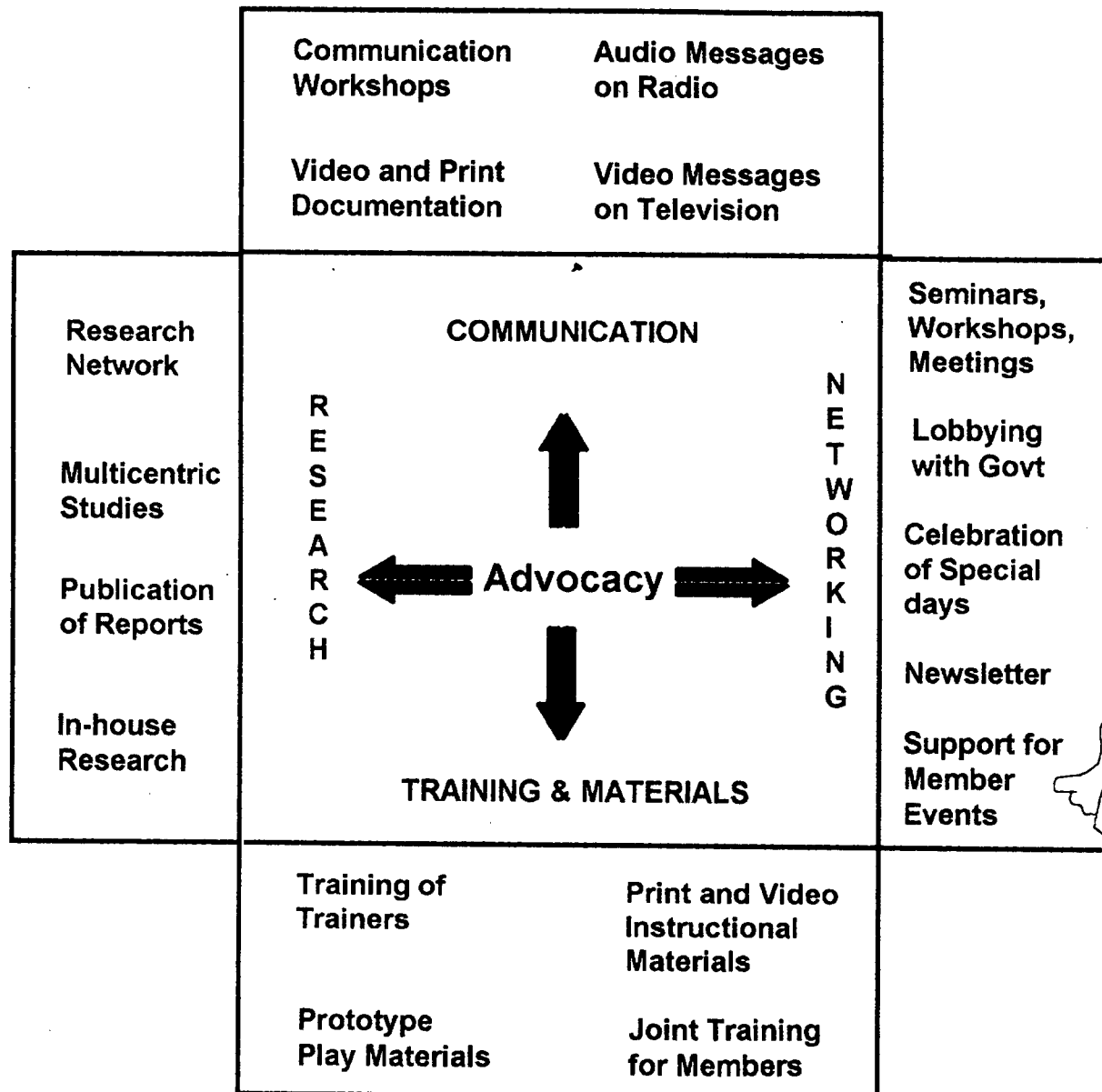
7. It must however be admitted that it has been tough going trying to work directly with the Government. Frequent shifting of officials breaks up months of advocacy efforts forcing to a start from scratch with a new official. Politicians also prove to be elusive as they are

always busy. A marked lack of political interest on these issues could also be a damper. This sometimes causes a slump in the campaign. This should make one think whether advocacy efforts should more and more concentrate on the 'demand.' side of any issue, using influential partners and allies.

A doubt that lingers in the mind is whether we have spread ourselves too far and too thin. Would the impact be better or at least measurable if one issue is tackled at a time with a clear plan of sustained advocacy? The efforts appear to be a little scattered so that some issues gained prominence while the others went to the back burner. This may be due to the tendency to concentrate on issues where some kind of a progress is visible.

Moreover the progress depended on the response and co-operation of a wide range of groups connected with the issue. The remedy may be to prioritise activities in terms of maximum impact and critical coverage and focus on them with definite goals - several short-term and a few long-term. The other alternative could be focusing hard for a fixed period of time on building up alliances to tackle a particular issue and then moving on to other issues.

Activities of CHILDREN ON THE AGENDA



Children On The Agenda

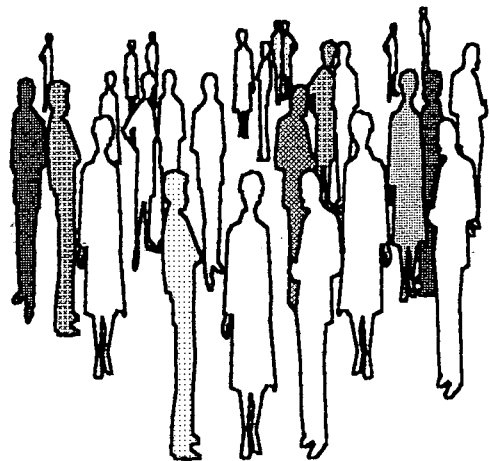
Main objective - *bringing attention of policy makers and all concerned to issues related to the care of the young child in Tamil Nadu.*

The project has four components

- 1. Networking*
- 2. Communication and Advocacy*
- 3. Training and Instructional Materials*
- 4. Research, Documentation and Dissemination*

Networking

Project ACCESS initiated and functioned as the convenor of TN-FORCES (TN- Forum for Creche and Child Care Services) a network of NGOs, trade unions, womens' associations, academic institutions and others, working towards improved child care services for young children.



Strategies

- *advocacy*
- *information sharing*
- *capacity building*
- *joint activities*
- *working through sub-groups*

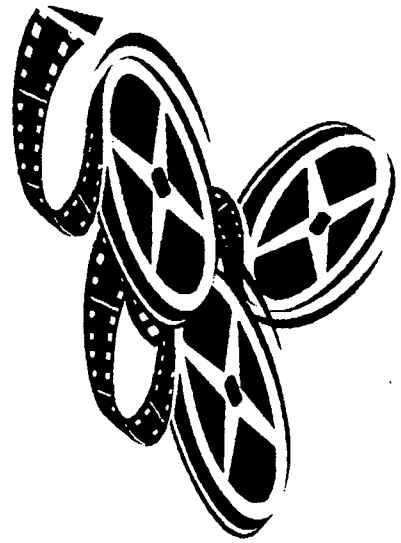
Communication



Works with all the possible channels of communication including radio, television and print medium to create awareness on issues related to women and children

Strategies used

Celebrating special days, conducting competitions, workshops, dissemination of resource material and sensitisation of media persons to create a conducive atmosphere for social mobilisation and policy changes.



Training

*Building the capacities of trainers
in NGOs and Govt. to deal
effectively with Early Childhood
Education and Care Training*

Preparation of Training manuals

- Playing to Learn*
- Support for Breastfeeding*



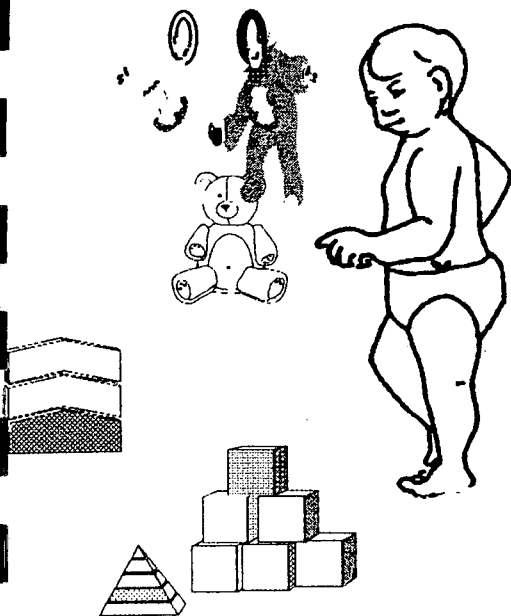
Instructional Materials

Soft Toy kit

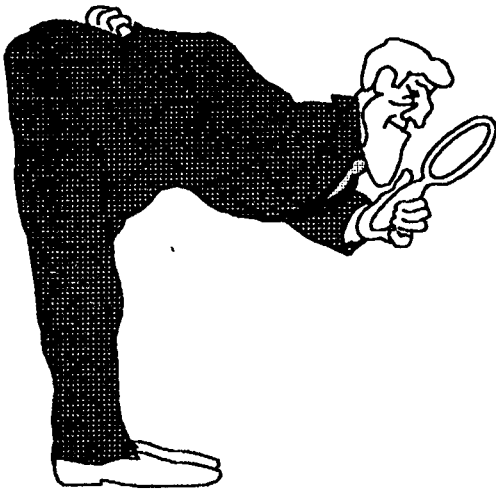
Let's learn like this

Shades of Nature

Activity based Education - Video



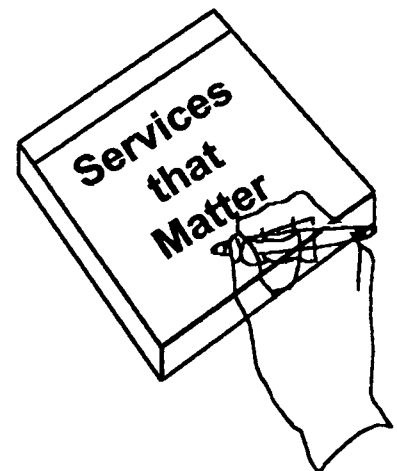
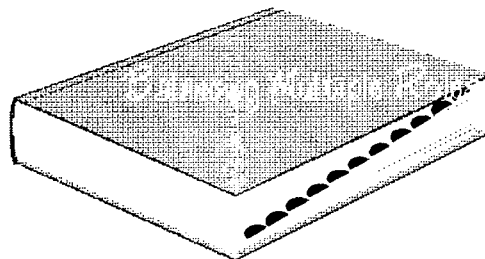
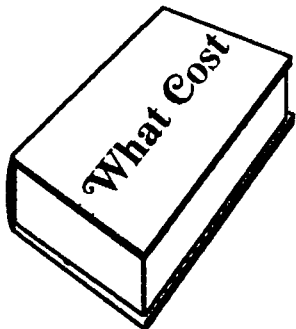
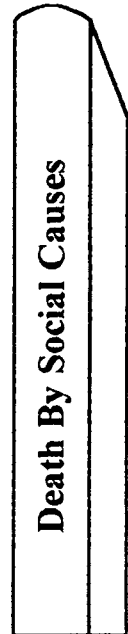
Research



addresses the gaps in information on issues related to the young child.

Our Research Series :

- Balancing, Multiple Roles
- At what Cost ?
- Death by Social Causes
- Watering the Neighbour's Plant
- Services that Matter



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