

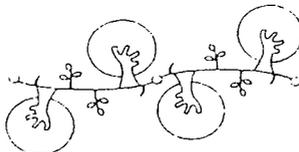
DECENTRALISATION OF CHILD CARE SERVICES

-- A DIALOGUE --

Report of the Brainstorming session held on 24th & 25 January 1997

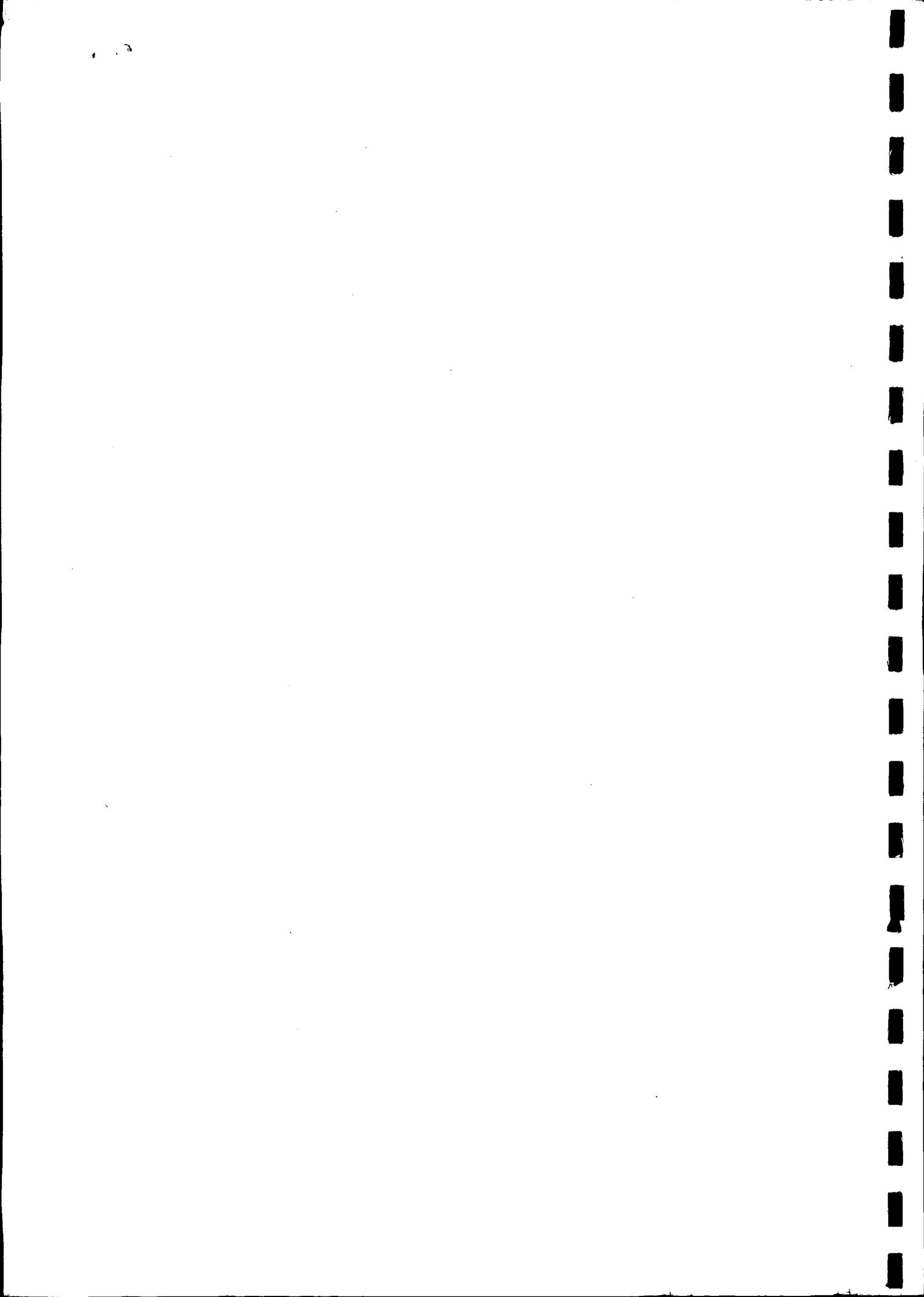
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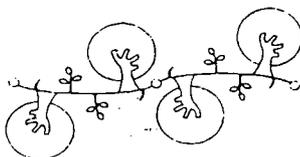
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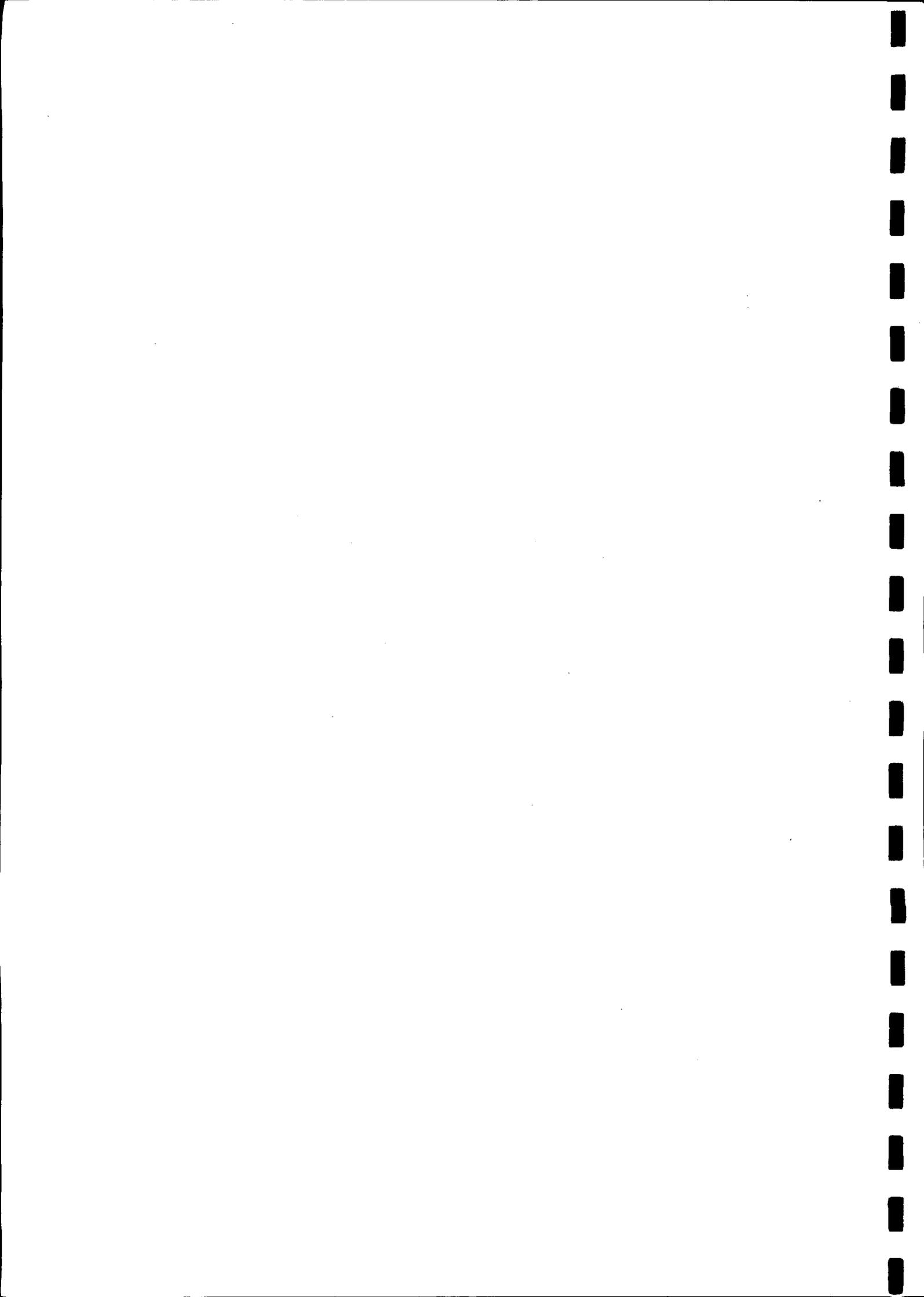
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1. About the Dialogue

A two-day workshop was organised on the 24th and 25th January 1997 on devising and developing programmes and strategies for decentralisation of child care services in Tamil Nadu, with focus on the strategies and action plan needed for the change. The participants for the workshop were drawn from various States including Delhi, Gujarat, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Since the States in India are at various stages with regard to the operation of the Panchayati Raj institutions, it was thought that the experience of the other states would be a valuable contribution in the conceptualisation of the idea.

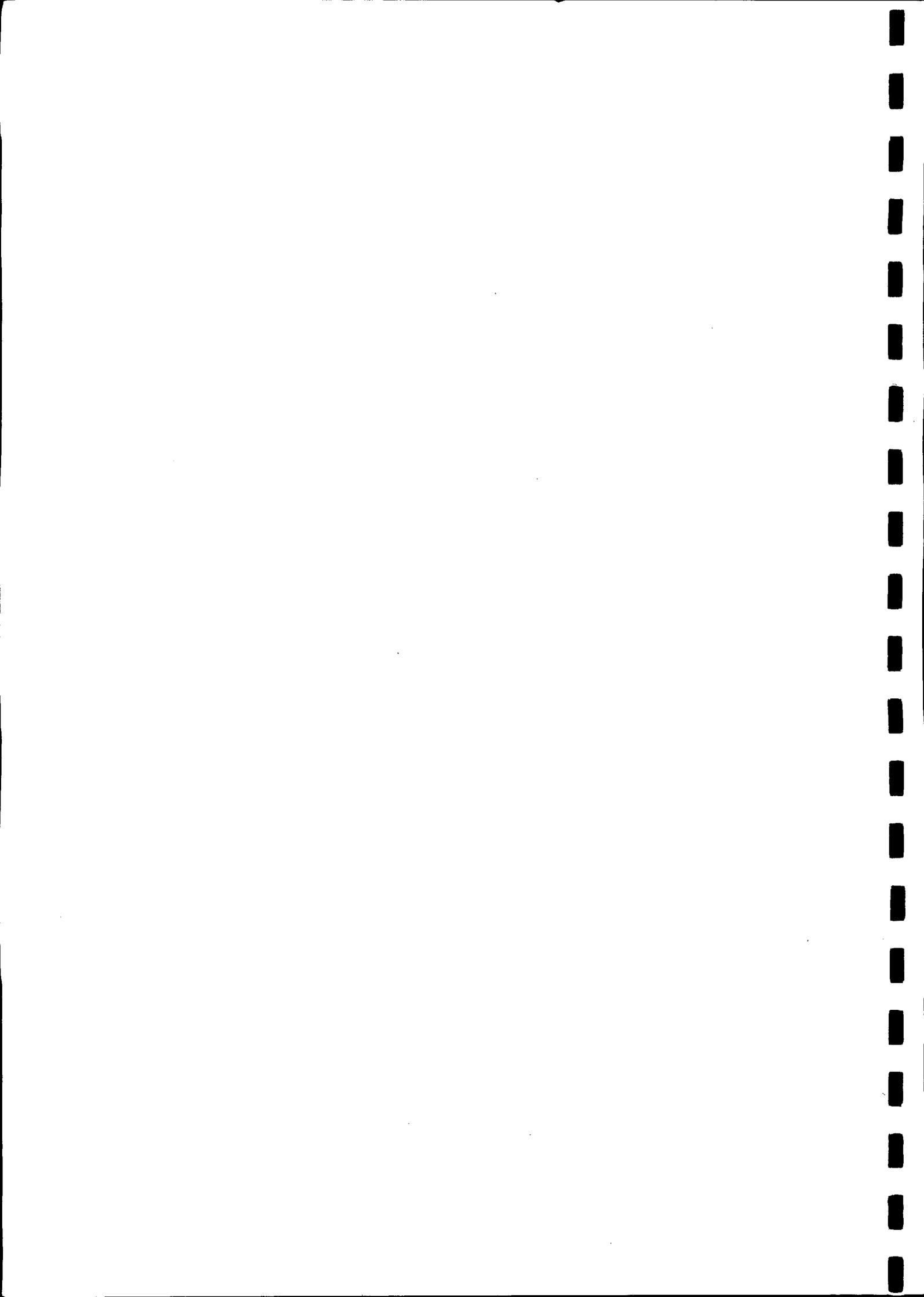
The State of Tamil Nadu has recently conducted the local bodies election after a span of nearly fifteen years, but this does not necessarily imply that the three main players -- the people, the government and the administration, are ready for the process of decentralisation. The local people may not yet be prepared to don the mantle nor the bureaucracy and the State government willing to let go the strings. Therefore it is necessary to think of the practical difficulties of such a process and be prepared for various possibilities. In this context, the session was both timely and useful.

The following issues related to Decentralisation, with particular reference to Child Care Service were included as discussion starters for the brainstorming session, along with a brief note on decentralisation and the purpose of the workshop.¹

1. Financial issues related to resource allocation and generation and legal issues in devolution of powers.
2. Organisational, political and administrative aspects of decentralisation, and the time frame required
3. Alternative local structures (other than Panchayati Raj bodies) for management of child care services
4. Training of elected members and functionaries, and supervision of services
5. Monitoring and evaluation of child care services by groups in the community
6. Implication of decentralisation on child care workers and their working conditions, career opportunities, training, security of service etc.
7. Role of parents and community, particularly women, in decentralisation
8. Role of NGOs in decentralisation of child care services
9. Gender sensitisation in relation to child care as a support service for women

These nine issues were grouped into six broad areas for the dialogue sessions, and are recorded here in that order. The last section deals with strategies for action and a plan to initiate the process.

¹ Annexure 1 : A brief Note on the Decentralisation of Child Care Services



2. Introduction

The Panchayat Raj system has long been a part of the Indian tradition, and there is no doubt that the country is now committed to the concept of local self-government. The concept of decentralisation, which is a broader term of reference, includes, but is not confined to the term "Panchayati Raj". The highly dispersed nature of the population and the immense diversity of our country makes decentralisation imperative; yet governance cannot be handed over to unprepared communities. The concept has to be understood realistically, since many hurdles, real and imagined continue to be a threat in the actual devolution of power to the local bodies. Tamil Nadu is a "latecomer" in the actual implementation of the panchayat elections, and in fact, has been the last State to actually conduct the local bodies elections. (The elections were held in October'96 and the elected representatives took office in November'96).

Ms. Lakshmi Pranesh, Secretary for Social Welfare, Government of Tamil Nadu, opened the proceedings with an account of the history and current status of child welfare services in Tamil Nadu. The earliest child welfare programme which involved the community was the Applied Nutrition Programme (ANP), started in the sixties and intended for children below five years. Some of the nutritional needs of the children like eggs and vegetables, were met through a common poultry farm and kitchen garden, and often, the space for the *balwadis* was provided by the community -- panchayat. During the early days the community considered the programme as a blessing and therefore there was a great deal of community involvement. Later the attitude changed as the community was sidelined and the programme became more centralised in its implementation. Though the programme later became defunct in the country, in Tamil Nadu, it was responsible for the establishment of an astonishingly large number of *balwadis* in rural areas.

The Directorate of Women Welfare decided to maintain the *balwadis* started during this period and subsequently, nearly 100 to 200 *balwadis* were started every year. By the year 74 -76 i.e. even before the ICDS was initiated, there were nearly 4344 State-run *balwadis* in Tamil Nadu, while in the rest of the country there were more child care centres run by the voluntary sector than by the Government. The ICDS programme in Tamil Nadu began in only 3 blocks (two rural and one urban). Later, in July 1982 the State-wide Noon Meal programme was started almost overnight by the then Chief Minister, Dr. M.G. Ramachandran, bringing the total number of child care centres, including the *balwadis* and ICDS to nearly 28,000.

The administration of this programme was under the BDO. The only element of local participation in it, was the appointment of the child care worker who was to be either a resident of the village, or residing within 1 km radius (later increased to 3km) from the centre. The Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Programme (TINP) children for below 3 years was later started with

the assistance of the World Bank. 12.5 lakh children (3-5 yrs.) and 13/14 lakh children (under 3 yr.) were covered under both the programmes in the State.

Some of the states that have rich experience in the administration and conduct of Panchayati Raj institutions like Kerala, West Bengal, Karnataka and Gujarat can provide important inputs in the process of decentralisation in Tamil Nadu. The experiences of West Bengal and Tamil Nadu for example, are different. The West Bengal experience is of a well-developed Panchayati Raj system, while Tamil Nadu on the other hand, is still in its very infant stage. But, the child care centres are very advanced in Tamil Nadu as compared to West Bengal. Tamil Nadu has also achieved a degree of decentralisation already with regard to the appointment of *anganwadi* workers.

At the outset, it is necessary to clarify terms like *community participation*, *decentralisation* and *empowerment*, as these have various connotations. For the purpose of this report these terms have been defined as follows:

- **Decentralisation** -- the process of redesigning the decision-making and administrative powers in a hierarchical system so that policy implementation moves down to the level of the lowest administrative body.
- **Empowerment** -- achieving equality and equity among all social groups, including women and men, through the recognition and removal of all subordinating structures which restrict participation in political, social, economic and environmental policies, programmes and structures.
- **Community Participation** -- the involvement of all sections of the local people at different levels in policy evolution, resource mobilisation, programme planning & implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Whose Responsibility?

Whose responsibility is child care? Does it only concern the immediate beneficiaries? Recognising that the welfare of children is in the best interest of the community as a whole, a holistic perspective is essential and child care services must become a part of the community's agenda and not merely the women's agenda. This perspective should find a top priority in any agenda for sensitisation of local bodies, especially in the light of the reservation of seats for women in these bodies.

Child care today is not a priority because

- it is considered as women's responsibility
- its impact is not measurable
- its importance is not well-known
- it brings no financial gains

3. Financial and administrative issues

The first stage of decentralisation process, no doubt, is the conduct of the elections, but it is the next stage, that of *letting go the reins* which is more important, so that the local bodies could take care of their area programmes. In view of the lapse of nearly twenty years since the last local bodies elections, what is the time-frame required for the process? Especially, what should the community, the bureaucracy, the government and local bodies themselves now do to ensure the smooth transfer of power into the hands of the people? Massive changes are needed in terms of policy formulation, legislation, programme planning and implementation and most of all, attitudinal changes among all partners in the change process, though change may be unpopular among the bureaucrats and officials who have been orchestrating programmes so far.

Planning and Programme

A major expectation from decentralisation is of a qualitative improvement of services, and bridging the existing gap between people's needs and available resources. In the top-down approach in programme implementation adopted so far, there has been a gap between policy formulation and programme implementation. Over the years and after eight Five Year Plans and many short-term plans, it is obvious that most of the anti-poverty programmes and welfare schemes have not managed to reach the people for whom they were intended. Yet centralised programme planning has received the support of all sectors, since it is less threatening for all concerned. Simple, time-tested, involving implementation in a remote or detached manner, and accounting in financial terms, it fulfils bureaucratic needs.

The existing policies and programmes have to be critiqued to ascertain if they really meet the needs of people as a whole. The vast majority of programmes are top-heavy and bureaucratically governed and realistic evaluations can help to trim down expenditure. The bulk of the allocations for most programmes go towards infrastructure and salaries, and little really sifts down to the grassroots. The more localised the planning and control over the implementation, the more effective will be the services. Ensuring transparency in delivery services, which is lacking at present, is vital in bridging the gap between demand and services. A shift in approach from a bureaucratic service delivery pattern to a more people-oriented approach is part of the decentralisation process.

Demand assessment which proceeds planning and implementation must also get decentralised if the entire process is to be complete. A process has to be evolved to assess the quantity and quality of services available in the community, and to match needs assessment with services in the community.

The social and political structures required and the legal aspects also need to be considered. There is need to give the legislation sufficient teeth so that delays and postponements can be offset.

Sources of Funding

There are four sources of funding that the panchayat can draw on :

- Finances from the State or Central Government
- Finances generated and available with the local bodies through their own tax base
- Finances raised from the community through non-revenue sources including donation
- User contribution.

The state should provide the basic funds through its tax base, part of which should be devolved to the local panchayats. The memorandum submitted to the State Finance Commission (by TN-FORCES)² suggest that while the devolution of financial powers to the villages and block level continue, there should be sufficient allocation of resources for the local bodies to run the child care centres. It is not the best strategy to mandate from the State or Central levels the allocation of resources available for each programme. There is bound to be a close call regarding which aspect of the welfare programmes (health, nutrition or literacy) will be prioritised. The long-term strategy should be basically to orient and sensitise the community as a whole on the priorities with regard to their own needs. In Tamil Nadu there is an expenditure of about 3000/- per village per month (36,000 to 40,000 per annum). And the government has the largest commitment financially at present with regard to health and nutrition. In the devolving process, there should be an effort to push a portion of this allocation towards child care centres. There is the possibility of legislating that a fixed percentage of the funds available to the panchayat be devolved into a *core fund* for child care services.³

User Contribution

Should the beneficiaries to any welfare service be asked to pay for the service? There are two opinions regarding this. One school of thought spearheaded with active pressure from some international funding agencies, is that the user must pay, while others believe the contribution must be voluntary, and that the user as a member of the community should be involved with the decision - making process in the programme implementation. The user fee / contribution is still an ambiguous subject since very often it is the people from lower economic groups who already contribute through their labour or taxes, and so to tax the same group is both unfortunate and unnecessary. Further they need the services most, so the user fee may be both unethical and counter-productive.

² Annexure 2 Copy of the Memorandum drafted by the TN-FORCES submitted to the State Finance Commission

³ Annexure 3 Common Core Fund for Child Care prepared by Ms.Mina Swaminathan, Hon.Director, Project ACCESS

The argument in favour of charging the user is the belief that there is a positive correlation between the right to question and paid services. If a person contributes to the service, there will be an associated *rage* that would follow in case of non-compliance, a feeling which will never be expressed if there is no monetary contribution. It is this attitude of "claiming your rights" that is likely to influence or effect any improvement to the quality of service. In terms of overall expenses, the contribution may not be much, in fact, it would be only a minuscule amount. Nevertheless, this would shake the community out of its customary state of apathy, towards a free service.

Some others believe that up to a level, services should be free, after which, on a conditional basis, these services could be expanded, if there is a matching contribution from the community. Contributions from the community need not be in monetary terms alone. They could be in kind, through provision of space, services or materials.

Contributions in terms of user fee etc., should not be at the cost of the poor. If the burden on the poor is not reduced, with the structural adjustments in various programmes that are being evolved the poor are going to be even more marginalised than at present. Capacity to contribute should be the criterion and should exclude the poorest of poor. How much can be community of people living below the poverty line raise in terms of resources for programmes which are targeted to benefit them? Alternatives have to found to bridge the gap.

Raising Funds

A fear expressed is of the scope for misuse if Panchayats are allowed to raise their own resources without any form of accountability. At present, as per the provisions of the Tamil Nadu Act, there is limited scope for the local bodies to raise their own resources. It is unrealistic to expect the community to follow through on their own without statutory powers. Beyond the basic funding given to the Panchayats, the rest of it should be raised locally and the State should provide guidelines in these areas to streamline the process. The system need not be uniform throughout the country, but the exact modalities for raising resources locally have to be indicated. An in-built system of accountability should follow, with transparency in the income generation and expenses of any local body.

It is not feasible to reject contributions from individual donors who automatically become stakeholders in the programme, but care should be taken to ensure that such dynamics do not work against the best interests of the community. Income generation programmes should be developed, may be through certain Common Property Resources (CPR) which could be attached to child care centres for this purpose. Rural self-help groups (comprising of rural poor, especially the landless classes) may contribute to a common fund.

Some programmes which depend on user contributions have been successful, e.g. self-help groups, so the community may be willing to contribute for other activities that are equally effective. Clarity in communicating the needs of women and children is needed. Once the community understands the rationale and the financial implications involved - in other words the cost-effectiveness of the programme, they are more likely to contribute.

Contributions from the community, however small, are basic towards ensuring the rights approach in service delivery, and better quality, which will benefit all welfare programmes.

Political Support

Although today, politics may be driven by dividing factors like caste, class and gender, the need for child care services should cut across party lines. Often the ultimate objective of candidates is to climb the political ladder, the exercise of joining panchayats being merely considered as stepping stones or training ground for future political aspirants. The voting public by and large are cued to party politics and not to individual personalities - with a few exceptions. The legitimacy of political parties in panchayat elections is therefore very obvious.

Hence there is need to generate the interest of the political parties and local MLAs and MPs on such issues. Getting child care on the agenda of political parties should be one of the goals of decentralisation. Even in the case of bureaucracy, these are topics of low priority, being non-revenue-based. Political parties will respond once the demand for the service arises. The left parties are probably the only ones who are conscious enough to create the necessary impetus at the grassroot level, especially in relation to women's issues.

Policy Strategies

- Government should have a planned withdrawal policy from schemes to be decentralised, and different government schemes should be integrated
- Job responsibilities of CDPOs and supervisors should be redefined to build the capacity of community
- Minimum standards of child care services should be prescribed by the local body
- State level fund for child care should be created - allocation of funds on per-child basis
- Mechanism for a revolving fund for each anganwadi centre should be evolved
- Anganwadi workers should be locally selected
- Community should have the liberty to control and manage the centres
- Local committees should select the target children
- A maternity entitlements package should be evolved including wage protection for six months, workers' contribution for maternity insurance, and a State-level maternity fund.

4. Community participation and gender issues

Decentralisation itself has a connotation of community participation. Government, bureaucracy and people must have the confidence that the system will work, but this sense of preparedness must not be seen as a prerequisite for the process to begin or the wait will be indefinite. Yet one cannot, from a practical point, rush or force the pace. This implies that the government does not merely invite the community to participate, through forcible involvement, but recognises community initiative and works to sustain it.

Capability building exercises within a community should create an awareness among the people to accessing their rights without waiting for others to confer it on them. Groups may not come together for a cause on their own -- there is a need to create within the group an exhibition of their strength, to overcome the inherent fear about political processes which are visualised as working against them. People can have a direct influence more at the panchayat level than at the district or state levels. Interest in the programme will automatically follow resources and power, once demands and needs are prioritised.

Gram Sabha

The peoples' collective is the *Gram Sabha* and it is this organ of the decentralised set-up which should be built up. The 73rd amendment has down played the role of the gram sabha, emphasising only its constitution, but saying little about its powers. Ideally, the peoples collective (gram sabha) should be the forum for individual members to express ideas that could lead to change. But for this, the *Gram Sabhas* needs to be strengthened through statutory powers.

It has been assumed that the Gram Sabha can be become an instrument of change in the community. In the existing social milieu, it is far-fetched and naive to presume that the entire population will be identical in its view or opinions. The community as it exists in India today is divided by caste, class, religion, politics, etc. These divisions do not aid in promoting the formation of common objectives or goals. There is no doubt that the gram sabha can be influenced, but, this change should and come from within the community.

If, the village elders, who have the respect and confidence of the community, can be influenced, then social change can be made with the least possible resistance from the rest of the community.

To take a common example, often many of the services are duplicated because of the lack of solidarity in the community. Cooking food, serving and distributing it, is usually done by a non-harijan person at all child care centres in Chamoli area, and there is evidence of a similar pattern in many parts of the country. Often the ideological beliefs of NGOs are quite contrary to actual

practice. It is known that often NGOs as well as the government prefer to have a programme duplicated in both the harijan and non-harijan areas rather than risk alienating the entire community. The emphasis on having a local person as the anganwadi worker too can create a similar situation, since such persons can rarely go against the social mores of the group. Negative situations get reinforced and programme which is supposed to bring about change actually perpetuates unhealthy social practices.

To expect the Gram Sabha as a whole to be the agent of change in the light of such facts may sound at present. To expect traditional structures to provide progressive policy changes is highly unlikely but not impossible, if the motivation is there. Yet the Gram Sabha has to play this role since it has both backing of the community and the legal mandate, and outsiders cannot perform this role indefinitely. So along with strengthening the powers of the *Gram Sabhas* there must be techniques for integrating the needs of the community into policy initiatives, and initiating legislative support. The experience of empowering the gram sabha is new to Tamil Nadu, but in Kerala there are over 1000 gram sabhas formed which have started actively planning for the 9th Five Year Plan.

Women's Empowerment

The major recent change in the local bodies has been in the number and concentration of elected women representatives to the panchayats, more than 12,000 at all levels, but their role is still not clear. Most of the earlier nominated members were benami, but a recent study found that only about 50% of the elected women could be said to be benamis. Keeping in mind the low profile role played by nominated women members earlier, it may be difficult for either the panchayat, the women, the community or the administration to envisage a more active role for women. In view of the patriarchal nature of society as a whole and the tradition-bound rural scenario, the socialisation process ensures that very often women may be as patriarchal in outlook as men. They have to be made politically aware and emboldened to act.

Child care services can be in itself a road to women's empowerment. A quality child care centre should give women an avenue to realise their own potential by reducing the effort and time spent on child care. The responsibility that women feel with regard to child care will not be voluntarily given up unless there is a dependable substitute service that will give her the time and space for participation in community activities. This service traditionally has been provided by the immediate family, especially the larger family network. With urbanisation and the associated migration there has been a breakdown of the joint family spirit even in the rural household. Today the balwadi is resorted to mainly to meet nutritional needs, and the community essentially remains alien from the woman's needs. But of change agents enter the community with militant feminist ideas the process of sensitisation may be much more difficult. Understanding has to be created of how women's lives are structured and why such service, are needed.

From the point of view of women's empowerment, the rationale for child care services

- Overall development of the family as a whole
- Development of and welfare of women
- Poverty alleviation, since if women have to work they require child care services.
- Political empowerment of women, since if women who wish to take part in the political process

Hopefully women's involvement in public action and developmental programmes will itself assist in empowering them, without excluding other sections of the population from taking an active part in child care services. The burden of domestic chores has been constantly singled out as the reason for women's non-entry into the political arena. Significantly, reduction of time spent on domestic chores was one major activity launched by the all-women Panchayats in Maharashtra. This is one way in which can play a role in getting child care on the agenda of political parties.

Gender sensitive programme

From the point of view of delivery of services like distribution of food at the child care centres it has been found that girls often carry the food home for distribution among other members of the family, and in this process the girls are often deprived of their basic nutritional needs. So care should be taken to see that children eat the food intended for them at the centre itself. Gender sensitive issues like the timing, and location of the centres also need attention e.g. should child care be at a centralised spot or at the workspot itself? In view of the poverty situation and gender hierarchy with son preference, it is likely that boys rather than girls will have access to the child care services.

There are some limitations to gender sensitisation in the area of mobilisation and allocation of resources. Gender segregated data is required for gender sensitive planning, monitoring, and training. The major focus of such gender sensitisation programmes should be on the change agents -- in this case, the child care workers themselves. It has been the experience of the *Mahila Samakhya* in Gujarat that when the change agents were themselves marginalised or oppressed by the family (widowed, single or deserted women) they proved to be better at the process of bringing about change in the community.

Gender sensitisation for whom ?

In view of the patriarchal structure of society as a whole, issues related to women and children may be expected to take a back seat. A sustained effort or a campaign of sorts is needed, so that all sections of people are made aware of the gender issues like child care both at the level of formation of opinion and practical strategies. Another area which requires gender sensitivity is in reviewing the existing songs, stories and books to remove gender stereotypes. Such a campaign strategy has been followed in Rajasthan with certain messages evolved from community needs assessed by grassroots workers. A similar strategy of display of children's work at the pre-school level (*Balmela*) has also been used successfully.

Who else needs gender sensitisation beyond women, parents and the larger community? It should be an integral part of training of the bureaucracy, and NGOs, not merely at the conceptual level, but also in the managerial and technical aspects of programmes. When imparting such training there is also need to distinguish between the practical needs of women (timing, seasonality, location, health, sanitation) versus strategic concerns, or looking at gender relations as a whole (issues of female infanticide and foeticide, registration of births and deaths, alternative value formation among children to offset caste / class divides, male responsibility for child care, documentation of indigenous knowledge of women on child care etc.)

The experiences of various States like Kerala, West Bengal and Maharashtra could provide the stimulus for new initiatives. The control political parties exert over the candidates in West Bengal is far different from the rest of the country. The relative success of land reforms in West Bengal, which was responsible for empowering the people economically, may have made the difference. Since sometimes economic factors can overcome divisive forces like religion and caste. In Kerala, one strategy used successfully was widescale publicity on child care. The need for equitable, non-profit good quality child care supported by the state, was brought into the common man's conversation through a widely-publicised pre-election opinion poll. The success of this strategy may be related to the higher literacy levels in the state.

5. The NGO Contribution

Of late, there has been a tendency on the part of government to farm out child care services to the NGOs. Throughout the country, except in Tamil Nadu, a number of ICDS centres have been handed over to the NGOs. This experience has evoked mixed responses and difficulties have been expressed by all the concerned parties. On the one hand, the community has not been happy with the outcome in many instances, while in other cases the workers have not been satisfied with the working conditions and supervision. In yet other cases, the NGOs themselves have not had a positive experience with the government in relation to the style of the supervision, red tapism and bureaucratic functioning involved.

The state may use the NGOs to abandon its commitment to the social service sector, but the NGO sector cannot substitute for the government. The volume of the problem is so massive and widespread that NGOs cannot make a deep dent in terms of numbers or uniform spread. There are not enough NGOs to cover the half a million villages in India. While NGOs cannot and should not restrict themselves to operating just like a developmental department or merely executing governmental programmes, the government should not hand over its responsibilities to the NGOs.

The government itself has not expressed sufficient confidence in the NGOs to deliver the service. In many instances the NGOs bring discredit to the very term. Approximately, one third the NGOs are found to be questionable. There is a need to consider legitimacy of NGOs, besides their track record with regard to the community. The elected bodies have the required social legitimacy to initiate action for the community, which NGOs do not.

In Tamil Nadu, the type of NGOs that function are the bilaterally funded NGOs at present and many of the externally-funded NGOs are slowly withdrawing from Tamil Nadu. Some of these NGOs are as patriarchal in structure as any Government departments. As long as vested interests play a role in programme implementation it will be next to impossible to do away with NGOs who are fraudulent but still supported by the state machinery.

Role for NGOs

There are a wide range of issues related to gender and child care that have been the traditional focus of attention of NGOs, and they have a big role to play, but this role cannot be the same as that of the local bodies or the community itself. NGOs and NGO -- initiated bodies can be roped in through women's groups and sanghams, for example The training of child care functionaries also could become a part of the NGO agenda, as well as articulation of the existing governmental programmes and dissemination of information to the community, especially success stories.

The major role for NGOs is to develop the community's skills, capabilities and awareness, especially regarding their rights and their capacity to manage their own affairs, meaningfully participate and develop programmes through their own initiative. There is a widespread belief that NGO participation should be based on genuine volunteerism not commercialism.

At an earlier seminar jointly organised by MSSRF and ICCW on the theme of partnership in child care services between government and NGOs, the discussions led to the insight that two more pillars were needed to make the partnership strong -- that is, grassroot-level community organisations and local bodies. There is need to distinguish clearly between the two. Merely handing over powers to the local bodies is inadequate since the local bodies are anyway part of the administration. The involvement of organisations that spring from within the community is necessary to complete the picture.

Demand creation

There is no mechanism to articulate demand from within the community at present. The community often has to be made aware of the need for a programme, or the value of a change. This is the first step in the process, perhaps the most difficult one. For the demand to arise, there must be effective leadership which will facilitate community participation and leadership from within. This is where NGOs can rightly come in - to create the demand, as well as the capability among the people to manage their own resources. Today there is an expectation that either the government or the NGO sector will step in to do the ground work. Rightly the process of decentralisation should not be initiated by the government, although there have been instances of the government filling this role. One such governmental effort initiative, which was conveniently confused with community participation, was a recent G.O. that all nutritious meal centres should be monitored by the Village Panchayat and the District Panchayat (each tier in Tamil Nadu is an independent body with no linkages between the Village level Panchayat and the District Panchayat Union). Such a step alone, without a series of other measures, cannot be productive. The initiative of running the programme should be left to the people following which there may be a need for a change in management style. Yet the government also cannot be sidelined entirely as an agent of change. The *Mahila Samakhya* experience should be considered as an example of a governmental programme which did bring about change.

6. Alternative structures for management

Developing alternative local structures for managing child care services and styles of management which would give members of the community an opportunity to participate in a meaningful manner, are two issues for consideration.

Group formation in the Community

Community-based groups at the village level, such as working groups for partnership, child care committees or councils, with representation from all sections of the community should be set up for monitoring, outside the panchayat structure. In Maharashtra there is the Village Education Committee (VEC) which monitors the education system. *Nari Vikas Samitis* of West Bengal and the *Mahila Samakhya* groups in Gujarat have also experience in handling monitoring and helping to create a demand for child care. In Rajasthan there is the village and district level *Balasevika Samiti*. If such structures exist, this will limit the various players to the roles they are intended to perform. These groups need not necessarily be formal groups or single-purpose ones. They could be groups organised for other reasons, such as local self-help groups (used at present by banks for channelling loans), political parties, industrial establishments etc. with additional roles to play. If there are multiple committees formed it may in fact inhibit the performance or delivery of services. On the other hand, to expect the infrastructural development committee to oversee the functioning of child care services is also farfetched. Women-exclusive committees should not be the end result when such specialised committees are formed. It should include all sections of the population, otherwise it will be self defeating. Maharashtra has women on all committees irrespective of whether it is service-related or not (70-30 combination).

The existence of women groups and catalytic change agents like NGOs should not be assumed. Nearly 90% of the villages in India do not have women's groups.

Caste-based groups have been used for political purposes and cannot be ignored at the panchayat level. There is need to promote non-religious, non-caste based organisations which have development as their ideology. Child care can be a common area since it will appeal to the sentiment of most sections of the population. Government policy directives e.g. start a women's group in 6 months time are far too stringent. These kind of reforms cannot have a fixed time frame. The input should be consistent and gradual. It is not possible to build community spirit on a government based time frame.

Group functioning

Role allocation for individuals and groups should be clear, so there is no overlapping of areas. Rivalry among different groups and political interference must be considered. Who decides in the group, who attends meetings, inter-village visits, practical solutions to problems must be

discussed. The approach should help the community develop its own resource base, prioritise and develop their own programme tailor-made to their local needs, and arrive at their own solutions.

Programme Design

Programme design must be evolved by the groups. There should be identification and prioritising of needs and resources. The general ideology may be the same but, the parameters for running the centres will be different for each village. Mapping the community, especially the clusters within the community with special reference to marginalised groups, is the first step. Caste, gender, religion and deprived individuals within the community must be taken into consideration.

Ensuring availability of resources, and deciding what are the parameters of quality follow. Rigid norms based on population should be avoided. Anganwadi centres should work in shifts with flexible timings. Alternative home-based child care models should be developed. Availability of materials, physical space, and time, the strengths, weaknesses and resources of the community have to be included in this planning exercise. There must be integration with other schemes and flexibility of planning, promoting linkage and avoiding duplication, while the services should be extended to cover the maximum possible clientele. There is presently a tendency to adopt a frugal approach with regard to the actual amount spent per child. The bulk of the expenses go towards salaries and other infrastructural requirements. Resources should be more equitably distributed.

Building the capability of the community to access available services and facilitating leadership at the local level is an ongoing process. Balancing the agenda will become a key role of the leaders. Implementation of the programme will include a regular interaction between the grassroots level workers, the people and the planners. Review of programmes is essential, along with monitoring the delivery of services. Mainstreaming gender in the overall agenda as well as in training programmes will be needed to maintain the momentum.

Decentralisation does not mean only devolution of powers. The latter can take place without a corresponding community involvement, in which case participation will be limited to the panchayat members and only the services prioritised by them will receive attention. In such a scenario, child care can easily get sidelined. Thus the alternative structures which give scope for grassroots organisations form a much needed counter balance to the powers of the panchayat.

7. Child Care Workers and Decentralisation

Child care workers, form a major group to be convinced on the need for decentralisation. At present, the top down approach is definitely preferred by the child care workers. This preference for the State government as the employers as against the local bodies, is based on the expectation that no extra demands are made on the employees time. An employer who is remote (State or Central) preferable to one that is more immediate (Panchayat). They also anticipate that service conditions may deteriorate. The workers have to be motivated to understand the value of the move towards decentralisation, and not feel that the transfer of power to the local level will in fact be a threat to them, or merely an attempt to control their functioning. Accountability of the child care workers should be to the Panchayat, but this must be ensured without trampling on their elementary rights.

Past Experience

The apprehension that the services of the local level/ village level workers will be misused by the elected members at the village level is another fear, with some basis in past experience. This has to be given recognition and importance since such apprehensions are very real. In some instances, the employees have been asked to assist in domestic work by the local elected representatives, or the families of the elected leaders have assumed that the powers vested in the leader also can be extended to them. The employees often end up in situations which they cannot handle except to yield to the pressure tactics of local politicians. Avenues available for them for redressal of their grievances are too remote to help overcome their immediate problems. Nepotism at the local level has resulted in the closure of the channels available to workers for redressal of their problems. The power networks after an election create barriers for healthy feedback, and workers are sucked into the quagmire of such relationships. These patterns of corruption often end up tightening the hold of the local leaders on the employees, though they are not the ones who pay their salaries.

Supervision

Duplication of supervision is a major hurdle in gaining acceptance for decentralisation. The supervisors appointed under the scheme at present visit the balwadi only periodically - not daily, while the most available resource for supervision is the Panchayat, which has no real powers to supervise. If the local bodies are entrusted with supervisory powers and the services are found to be inadequate, do they have the right to impose corrective measures?. At present, disciplinary powers do not rest with the panchayats, and there have been instances in the past, when the representatives of local administrative bodies have misused their powers. Yet it would be both impractical and counterproductive to have both the gram panchayat and the government-appointed supervisors trying to supervise the programme implementation.

The staff are not likely to take lightly the panchayats control of the centres. Protests at the grassroot level are inevitable. A shift in the whole administration with emphasis on sustained motivation of the workers over a period of time is needed, and this may be difficult. The short-term motivation of the literacy campaign workers provide a classic example of the success of campaign strategies which may be harder to achieve in the long run. Nevertheless it is possible to bring about such changes with the right incentives. Attitudinal changes must start with the recognition that the local level bodies, as organs of the government elected through a democratic process, are the rightful authorities.

The worker's role

At present the role of the anganwadi worker is far too ambitious. It is Utopian to imagine that the low-paid anganwadi worker can influence the community in the manner expected in the ICDS programme. The worker is often from the same village, and her exposure to larger social issues may be limited. The NGOs equally suffer from the weakness of expecting too much from the grassroot level worker. While the chief functionary may have a progressive outlook, these aspirations cannot be expected from all those operating at different levels in the organisation. Without adequate motivation (both monetary and non-monetary) the grassroot level workers cannot be expected to function as agents of change and progress. To sustain a group and keep it together is difficult, when red tapism and paper work takes up a major part of their time.

Training

Training of child care workers should aim to bring about a consensus regarding the issue of decentralisation. There are block level training centres in the state - in the three specialities related to child care (health, nutrition and family welfare), staffed by Block Level Extension Trainers. In the new context, the training programmes must be revised to accommodate new areas of thinking and thrash out problems especially with regard to decentralisation. In Rajasthan and a few other states also is an effort to shift the responsibility for training to the block level, which can spearhead the new approach.

8. Management of Services

The issues covered under this broad title include training of elected members and functionaries, supervision of services, and monitoring and evaluation of child care services.

Not only the motivation and commitment to child care services, but the capability of elected members to supervise them, is essential for success. This stage will only be reached when people become aware of the worth of their contribution, and if there is a system for the development of skills necessary for such participation. The planning phase itself should use a bottom - up approach, for only then will there be true community involvement. Taking responsibility is different from making financial contributions. If elected leaders have to accept and fulfil responsibilities then committees must have sensitive people sitting on them, with powers and adequate staff to oversee. Decentralisation in fact, requires a more sophisticated level of management, becoming ever more complex, which government may find increasingly difficult to achieve.

Need for training

Since child care as such is not an issue, nor is it included in any of the core functions at the panchayat or district level, it is unlikely that the elected representatives will be very concerned with such intangible issues. Other issues like street lights, roads, earth works etc. are not only more obvious, but require extensive contracting, with appeal to the local vested interests. So panchayat members need orientation on issues of gender and children, and experience on how to handle issues hitherto considered unimportant. Training in such areas may be needed till the representation to elected bodies becomes more *representative* of the group.

Linking such issues to rights or to vote-catching mechanisms in the region may be a practical approach. Popular schemes of most governments have this basic concept in them (e.g. Mid-day Meal Programme of the late Dr.M.G.Ramachandran). The outcome should be a shift from mere service provision by the Government to response to a *demand* by the people. NGOs can play a significant role in training. There should be a wide dissemination of information regarding the 73rd and 74th amendments and the 11th and 12th Schedules which is lacking not only among the people but even in the NGO sector. Empowerment should be seen as a process of changing the existing balance in the power structure, and facilitating the formation of a structure in which people now without power will gain the power needed to function effectively. The training module should provide for simulated situations to clarify how it can help them in every day life. The content must include legal awareness as well as information on public services like the Public Distribution System. Officials can be manipulative and create situations where the villagers both men and women, are victimised, but there are instances as in Rajasthan when women have become more strident as a result of the training methods adopted.

Officials who have the upper hand may often manoeuvre to undermine the authority of the elected representatives. Information about their roles and responsibilities, as well as rights and powers, may not come to them from official channels, and disinterested third parties must help impart such information. Youth and women must be given the support not to be cowed down by older or more experienced members. Empowerment includes all these aspects and does not refer to mere information transfer.

Evaluation and Monitoring

The need for structures for monitoring and building the capability of groups has already been mentioned. Identification and training of key functionaries to facilitate leadership at local level is required. The training must enable the leadership to identify groups, their strengths and resources for partnership, understand the dynamics within these groups and within the community, identify individuals within them, and facilitate democratic leadership.

Monitoring of service delivery includes ensuring accessibility and coverage of various groups, physical space and materials, regular visits and timely interventions. Ongoing evaluation through regular interaction, and access to records and documentation has to be ensured. Decentralisation may require a more sophisticated level of management which is becoming ever more complex. But there is little the panchayat as a whole or individual members can do if monitoring and evaluation is done on a programme over which there is little or no control. Control over the finances must go hand in hand with supervision.

The dangers and pitfalls of monitoring and evaluation by local leaders are of two kinds. On the one hand, there are external factors like clash of interests, leadership clashes, financial constraints, lack of co-operation from other departments, rivalry among groups and political interference. On the other, at the programme level, the lack of linkages, a top-down approach, a focus on quantity not quality, and the poor feedback system could lead to problems.

Accountability and Transparency

For the families who benefit from the service, there must be a forum to represent their cause at the village level. The more localised the procedure for redressal of grievances, the better would be the quality of service. This can ensure that the procedural delays are minimised and the quality of service is maintained.

Transparency is needed at all stages of programme implementation, as the tendency to cover-up political and bureaucratic meddling and muddling creates a feeling of alienation. Accountability can be established not so much by disciplinary proceedings from a remote place as by making the individual immediately conscious of his/her negligence.

Panchayati Raj is still the best alternative since with an elected body, accountability is more definite and immediate, in case of misappropriation or deficiencies in services, making the system more desirable than a rigid and unresponsive bureaucracy.

Communication

The literacy mission succeeded to a large extent by the use of the *jatha* as a technique for the spread of the message. Skits, street plays and puppetry can equally be used to convey the importance of child care. Undoubtedly the message is easier with regard to literacy, since there is no dispute about its essential role in development. In the case of child care services, the message is not so obvious nor does it carry the same weight, since there is a still widespread belief that child care is a part of the woman's domain. But ignoring the child now leads to later spending crores on adult literacy programme, instead of the other way round. There is no alternative to an intensive campaign of political education to educate the masters at the local level.

9. Strategies for Action

Action could be initiated following levels to proceed towards decentralisation. The various levels offer opportunities for initiating different types of activities to move towards the goal.

1. GRAM SABHA

- Clarify role of Gram Sabhas with regard to powers and functions, going to the courts, if necessary
- Ensure transparency, once established
- Identify priorities for the community
- Grassroots planning
- Mobilisation of resources
- Set a time frame
- Make demands on State Government, hold government accountable
- Create political awareness
- Make gram sabha an agent of change

2. GRAM PANCHAYATS

- Initiate demands for decentralisation of child care
- Promote education of the girl child
- Develop standing committees – modelled on A.P./Maharashtra experience
- Insist on representation of women on committees – minimum quorum for making decisions
- Training and sensitisation of Panchayat members
- Set up village education council – to supervise and monitor

3. NGOs / RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

- Set up a collective of women's organisations to review the T.N. Panchayat Act from a gender perspective and child care perspective
- Develop training manuals on child care
- Develop gender-sensitive resource and training materials
- Compile available material for dissemination

4. POLITICAL PARTIES

- Educate MLAs and members of political parties
- Tap influential members for mass awareness programmes
- Work with leaders and opposition parties for acceptability of new approaches

5. BUREAUCRACY AND GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONARIES

- Sensitise middle-level functionaries on issues
- Promote a perspective in which all schemes are seen as parts of a whole
- Promote inter-sectoral co-ordination

- Take up gender sensitisation of different departments, such as roads, water supply, electricity etc. all of which may have a significant role
- Key departments like SIRD to develop curriculum and course content to train government personnel
- Develop alternative and multiple solutions
- Reduce gap between functionaries and people

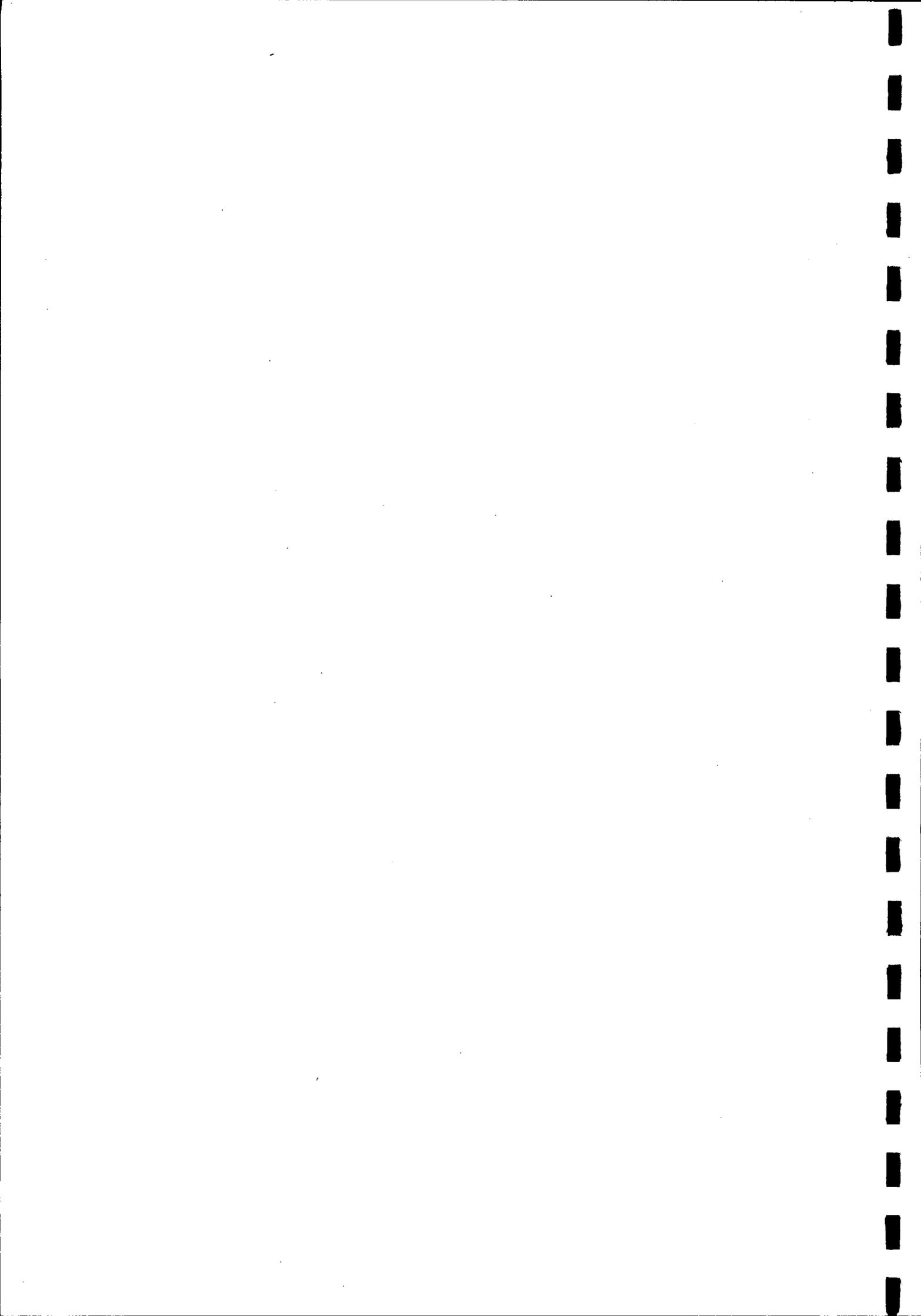
Some of the following groups can also find important roles in working towards decentralisation

- Unions—irrespective of political affiliation
- Service clubs and organisations
- Associations of child care workers
- Professional associations
- Women's groups and organisations
- Student groups and unions
- Schools—teachers, children, Parent Teacher Associations
- Media
- Medical profession
- Business and corporate sector

For a long time to come the State will continue to be the major contributor towards child care services in Tamil Nadu in both urban and rural areas. How then, and from where, can the process of decentralisation be initiated? Obviously, all the major players must simultaneously initiate actions at different levels, nibbling away at the rug, as it were, from different corners. The following may be crucial starting points for action.

Ten starting Points for Action

- Strengthen village groups and initiate need-based planning
- Clarify roles and responsibility of the various sectors by wide-ranging inter-sectoral discussions
- Develop mechanisms for communication between sectors
- Initiate monthly review for feed back and planning at community level
- Build perspective of government functionaries, from the highest to lowest levels
- Widely disseminate minimum specifications for ECCD
- Develop indicators and checklists for monitoring child care services and qualitative reporting
- Set up inter-departmental co-ordination committee at official levels
- Make district authority answerable for progress review on decentralisation
- Develop mechanisms for supportive supervision



*Annexure 1***DECENTRALISATION OF CHILD CARE SERVICES****A Brainstorming*****Background***

The advent of governance by local bodies has opened up new vistas of participatory development. This has implications for one of the core areas of development - care of the young child. The issue of child care is addressed through a variety of services for the young child and the mother. These services are essential:

- for the health, welfare, protection and development of young children who represent the future of the nation, especially the 6 crore children below the poverty line
- as a support service for the 9 crore working women most of whom are in the unorganised sector and need support to handle their triple roles as producers, mothers and homemakers
- as a support service to enable girls, who are otherwise engaged in care of their younger siblings to benefit from education, health, training and future employment.

Tamil Nadu is unique in the country in having a network of about 30,000 centres, providing almost universal coverage, through three linked schemes, namely ICDS, TINP and NMS. About 80 lakh people, of whom about 22 lakhs are pre-school children, receive a free noon meal every day. In addition, Tamil Nadu has the largest number of creches, balwadis etc. providing child care services in the voluntary sector.

While these services are spectacular in their scope and reach, and an impressive infrastructure has been built up over the years, there are still serious deficiencies and weaknesses in the programme, if evaluated from the standpoint of the three objectives just mentioned. Very briefly, these can be summarised as follows; lack of flexibility and responsiveness to diverse and localised needs; leakage and wastage of resources; high cost; low quality of services; lack of community participation; lack of accountability; not meeting parent and child needs; and lack of worker motivation. Numerous studies and evaluations have documented these failings, most of which can be traced to the large-scale, bureaucratic and impersonal nature of management.

Most of the problems stated above could be easily addressed and tackled by decentralising the functioning of child care services and involving local bodies in the day-to-day running of the services. Hence it is important to explore how child care services can be decentralised and local communities become more actively involved in their management.

Rationale

Instances of local body governance, its problems and prospects have been documented extensively. However it has been observed that several of these experiences relate mostly to issues other than child care and focus mainly on the suggested core concerns of local bodies. There is also documentation on the functioning of child care services under NGOs and other groups. However, clear patterns of linkages between child care services and local bodies are yet to emerge and stabilise as models to be replicated. Thus the whole process of decentralising existing child care services is not very well defined as of now. The various dimensions such as finance, administration, legal aspects, role of significant groups etc. that have a bearing on the process of decentralisation with particular reference to child care are yet to be understood.

A clear understanding and delineation of the whole process is essential to firmly move forward and press for a decentralised system of child care. This clarity would be of good stead when action groups take up advocacy for decentralisation. Comprehensive guidelines and clearly charted out details of decentralisation would also enable elected representatives, policy makers and bureaucrats to 'see' the whole process, understand the implications and take responsible decisions. Hence it is proposed to bring together experienced minds and examine the problem in all its dimensions to put forth a concrete and comprehensive plan for decentralisation of child care services.

Objectives

The primary objective is to work out the exact modalities of a decentralised pattern of functioning of child care services. In pursuing this the following would be attempted:

- Detailed analysis of financial, legal and administrative aspects of decentralisation of child care services
- Spelling out implications for training of functionaries, monitoring and evaluation
- Exploring alternative structures that have been experimented with elsewhere, including alternative community structures that can be synergised with the local body system
- Examining the role of significant groups such as parents, women, community and unions as well as other sectors such as NGOs and the industry

Outcome

Based on the presentations and suggestions made by the participants and with the active help of a small drafting committee from among the group, a process paper will be developed vividly spelling out the whole process of decentralisation of child care services in Tamil Nadu. This paper will then form the basis for advocacy and to open dialogue with the Government and the political system.

Participants (25-30)

- Academicians
- Government officials
- Chief executives of NGOs, Training institutions and consultants working on this issue
- Union representatives

Annexure 2

A MEMORANDUM ON PANCHAYATI RAJ AND CHILD CARE SERVICES IN TAMIL NADU FROM TN-FORCES

TN-FORCES (Tamil Nadu Forum for Creche and Child Care Services) is a non-political platform and loose network of organisations set up to advocate for the cause of the young child of the poorest sections of society. Its membership includes NGOs, child welfare and educational institutions, women's organisations, trade unions, professional associations, and academic and research institutions.

The Background

Child Care Services for young children 0-5 years are an essential social service:

- for the health, welfare, protection and development of young children who represent the future of the nation, especially the 6 crore children below the poverty line
- as a support service for the 9 crore working women, most of whom are in the unorganised sector and need support to handle their triple roles as producers, mothers and homemakers
- as a support service to enable girls, who are otherwise engaged in care of their younger siblings, to benefit from education, health, training and future employment.

Tamil Nadu is unique in the country in having a network of about 30,000 centres, providing almost universal coverage, through three linked schemes, namely ICDS, TINP and NMS. About 80 lakh people, of whom about 22 lakhs are pre-school children, receive a free noon meal every day. In addition, Tamil Nadu has the largest number of creches, balwadis etc. providing child care services in the Voluntary sector.

Need for Decentralisation

While these services are spectacular in their scope and reach, and an impressive infrastructure has been built up over the years, the following problems plague these services as documented by numerous studies and evaluation.

- lack of flexibility and responsiveness to diverse and localised needs
- leakage and wastage of resources
- low quality of services
- lack of community participation
- lack of accountability
- not meeting parent and child needs
- lack of worker motivation

The advantage of a decentralised system of management of services of a permanent nature in which substantial resources are invested are as follows:

- flexible and adapted to local needs
- responsive to needs of mothers and children
- use of local resources and reduction of overheads
- community participation
- community monitoring
- local accountability
- reduction of leakage and waste
- access to human and material resources

Hence, TN-FORCES is of the view that the best way to improve and sustain these services is to hand them over to the local bodies. NGOs and professionals have been thinking along these lines for more than a decade. Therefore it is felt that efforts should be directed to :

- Decentralise the management of child care services to the level of elected local bodies in rural and urban areas of Tamil Nadu
- Include child care services in core civic services

Recommendations

For effective decentralisation of the child care services, it is felt that the following actions must be taken

- Provide for the transfer of all existing child care services for 0-6 year old children to the local bodies by providing the necessary funds.
- Provide for sustained financing by setting up a State-level Child Care Fund which can be accessed by local bodies. This may be a statutory fund with contributions from the corporate sector, tax-exempt donations, special cess, and a matching grant from the Government.
- Ensure maintenance of specified nutritional norms and enhance quality
- Provide for elected local bodies to raise resources locally in whatever possible manner, to augment allocated resources, especially for quality improvement and flexibility
- Provide for the training both of the elected representatives and functionaries at all levels on the various issues related to child care, working women and delivery of child care services, etc.

Modalities

Though the Government has not mentioned aspects of implementation, it is felt that the transfer of the child care services to the local bodies may have to be done in stages. As a first step, local committees including the elected representatives may be encouraged to monitor the services. The subsequent stages and implementation modalities may have to be gradually worked out. TN-FORCES would be most willing to collaborate in any initiative related to this.

*Annexure 3***CORE FUND FOR CHILD CARE SERVICES****1. Extract from note on Special Fund for Child Care Services prepared by FORCES (Forum for Creche and Child Care Services) in 1989****Decentralisation**

In the past, the sheer magnitude of administrative responsibility -- of managing the Fund and making the services available at the field level to millions of women and children had appeared as insurmountable. In today's context, with the decision to adopt a decentralised approach in such matters, the problem appears to be more manageable. For both the issues, (a) constitution and management of the Fund and (b) provision, management and supervision of the services, decentralisation emerges as the main strategy.

Fund Management

The collection and management of the Fund has to be at three levels : (a) local bodies i.e. municipalities and Panchayat Raj institutions, (b) State Governments and (c) Central Government. The first should be empowered to mobilize resources from the community that it serves. The main sources for the State and Central government will be the levy on employers and allocation in their own budgets in different sectors. Provision for child care must be automatically built into the budget estimates of all government activities in different sectors which generate employment-- Plan or non-Plan. A national responsibility cannot be relegated to any single agency or department of government, or a single sector, otherwise it becomes marginalised.

However, the issue of inequality in the resource base of different States / regions / local bodies, will have to be kept in mind. A formula for allocation of Central funds to States should be worked out by the Finance Commission on the basis of the following suggested criteria : (i) size of population below poverty line, (ii) size of population below 6 years, and (iii) resource mobilization capacity and infrastructure of the States.

Provision of Services

The decentralised approach does not favour the adoption of a uniform model of services. Flexibility is necessary to meet situation - specific requirements. Emphasis must be on outreach and quality at the field level. This implies accepting the main child care worker as a skilled worker, who must then be ensured reasonable remuneration which should not be below the level of minimum wages prevalent in that region. Analysis of various current programme structures indicates that (a) a high proportion of the programme budget is spent on supervisory and monitoring staff and (b) there is little or no involvement of the community or the beneficiaries themselves in their planning or implementation.

The alternative approach suggested is for day-care centres organised for an identifiable group of women and girls in a village or an urban neighbourhood, to be (a) managed and supervised by an organisation of parents/ local persons, (b) assisted and supported by locally available functionaries (PHC, educational institutions, *gramsevikas* etc.) and (c) funded by the local body. Accountability and resource channelling can be the responsibility of the local body. Not only will this reduce supervision and monitoring costs, it will also bring in the participation and involvement of the local people, from the women's organisations to the Panchayats/ municipalities.

**2. Extract from Memorandum submitted to Government of Tamilnadu by
TN-FORCES in 1992.**

Decentralisation

The involvement of the community on a mass scale is essential if such a large scale and diversified programme is to succeed. It would be possible only with decentralised management and decision-making with accountability to the local community. The management of the child care centres which are able and willing to handle the job, for example, unions, voluntary agencies, educational institutions, social clubs, business houses, charitable trusts and other community-based organisations according to local circumstances. The State may provide the minimum shelter, food and workers' salaries, leaving it to the local management to raise additional resources to improve and develop the programme. Such a policy has already been visualised in the government directive to hand over the management of some ICDS projects to selected voluntary agencies.

Special Child Care Fund

A special fund for creches and child care should be set up by the government to finance the scheme. Contributions to this Fund may be from several sources, such as :

- a cess on all employment, regardless of the number and gender of workers employed
- welfare funds, labour welfare funds and other benefit funds
- insurance schemes, such as health insurance, LIC and ESI
- parents' contributions
- tax-exempt corporate and individual donations

Examples like the Employment Guarantee Scheme in Maharashtra can offer useful lessons in this matter.

Annexure 4

Brainstorming Meet
on
Decentralisation of Childcare Services in Tamil Nadu

24-25 January 1997

Asha Nivas, Chennai

PROGRAMME
 24 January 1997 (Friday)

Morning Session**10:00 a.m.***Chair: Dr.V.B.Athreya*

Welcome & Introduction : Ms.Mina Swaminathan

Dialogue

- Financial issues related to resource allocation and generation and legal issues in devolution of powers
- Organisational, political and administrative aspects of decentralisation, and the time frame required.

Chairperson's remarks

Afternoon Session**2:00 p.m.***Chair : Dr. Regi Chandra***Dialogue**

- Role of parents and community, particularly women in decentralisation
- Role of NGOs in decentralisation of childcare services
- Gender sensitisation in relation to childcare as a support service for women

Chairperson's remarks

Post - tea session**4:00 p.m.**

Consolidation of proceedings in groups

Brainstorming Meet
on
Decentralisation of Childcare Services in Tamil Nadu

PROGRAMME

25 January 1997 (Saturday)

Morning Session

9:30 a.m.

Dialogue

Chair : Dr. Paul Appaswamy

- Alternative local structures (other than Panchayati Raj bodies) for management of childcare services.
- Implication of decentralisation on workers and working conditions, career, opportunities, training, security of service etc.

Chairperson's remarks

Dialogue

Chair : Dr. E.V.Shanta

- Training of elected members and functionaries and supervision of services
- Monitoring and evaluation of childcare services by groups in community

Chairperson's remarks

Afternoon Session

2:00 p.m.

Group Discussion

Chair : Ms. Mina Swaminathan

Consolidation of the proceedings

Presentation of group reports

Annexure 5

BRAINSTORMING MEET ON DECENTRALISATION OF CHILD CARE SERVICES IN TAMIL NADU

24,25 January 1997 Chennai.

List of Participants

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