

Ever since Independence, successive Indian governments have made some attempts to provide early childhood care and education (ECCE) to children below six years of age. A variety of schemes and institutions have been developed towards this end. Parallel and equally widespread have been the interventions of the 'private' sector in the field. Yet, both the understanding and particularly the practice of ECCE remain woefully inadequate.

This pioneering volume brings together macro and micro perspectives on the subject from distinguished specialists in the field and highlights some significant innovations in the last two decades. Mina Swaminathan points out in her introduction that while the government's efforts at providing ECCE were informed by comprehensive and holistic aims, the institutions that were set up often degenerated into mere feeding centres. The private sector, on the other hand, entered the field in a fairly big way but only to promote the downward extension of formal education in its narrowest and most oppressive sense. As a consequence, the crucial area of early childhood care and education remains largely neglected even today.

Between these two sectors—the government and the private—exists another small but significant sector, that of voluntary organisations. Part I of the book presents analytical accounts of eight such innovative grass-roots programmes. The concluding essay in this section draws lessons from these experiences, particularly from the point of view of replication.

Part II outlines the broader picture. The contributors explore a variety of issues including the historical framework and evolution of ECCE in India; training of concerned personnel, especially teachers; the complex interface between the intersecting needs of women and children; the vital area of costs and benefits; and the philosophical and cultural context of ECCE. The final essay explores the challenges and the issues confronting ECCE in India.

Overall, this important volume deals with a crucial but largely neglected area of vital concern to the nation's development in an up-to-date and refreshing manner. The unusual combination of case-studies and macro perspectives will make this book essential reading for all those involved with child development, education, women's issues, and development in its broadest sense.

Contributors: S. Anandalakshmy/Vrinda Datta/Vasudha Joshi/S.J.P. Karikalan/Venita Kaul/Margaret Khalakdina/Kashyap Mankodi/Anjali Mehta/Harshida Pandit/Adarsh Sharma/Jyoti Sharma/Frances Sinha/Rajalakshmi Sriram/Mina Swaminathan.

Mina Swaminathan is Honorary Director, Project ACCESS and GENDEAVOUR at the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation in Chennai.

Jacket design by FACET

Rs 450



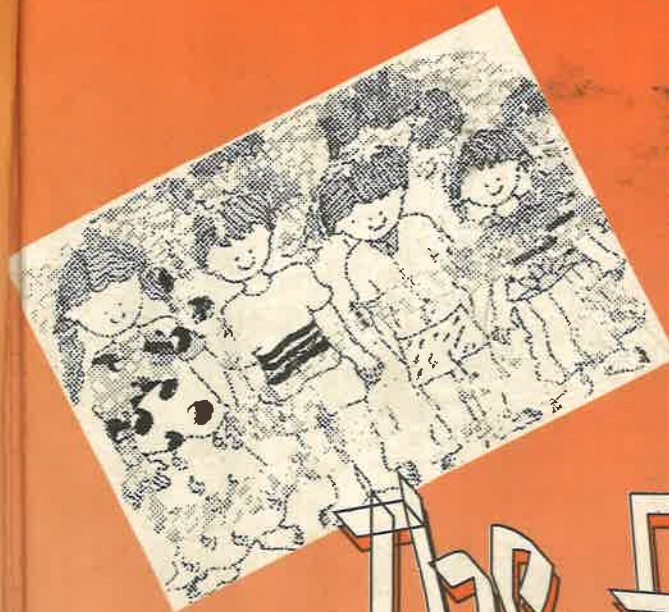
Sage Publications
New Delhi/Thousand Oaks/London



SAGE

THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

SWAMINATHAN



THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION IN INDIA

362.712 0954
FIR

Edited by **MINA SWAMINATHAN**

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deep and heartfelt gratitude to the following, without whose support and cooperation this book would never have seen the light of day:

- ◆ The Canadian International Development Agency and The Aga Khan Foundation, especially Vijay Sardana, who suggested the idea of bringing out such a book, for the financial and moral support needed to develop the initial concept from its birth till it took the shape of a book.
- ◆ Harsh Sethi, who was at the time the acquisitions editor at SAGE Publications, for his very useful suggestions which helped give shape and form to a vague idea.
- ◆ L.N. Balaji, the mysterious anonymous 'publisher's reader', for the incisive, insightful and thoughtful comments which helped improve the shape, form and content considerably.
- ◆ Gita Gopalakrishnan, for the loving care, precision and professionalism with which the manuscripts were edited.
- ◆ All the contributing authors, not only for generously giving their time and expertise to write the contributions, but for their patience and magnanimity in dealing with my queries, referrals, requests for revisions and further revisions and sundry other nuisances.
- ◆ My colleagues at MSSRF for unfailing help and support and all kinds of assistance.
- ◆ And all at SAGE Publications, especially Tejeshwar Singh and Omita Goyal, for combining courtesy and kindness with speed and efficiency and bringing the project through to fruition.

Mina Swaminathan

Introduction

A book about ECCE is expected to begin with a definition of ECCE, and more so, of ECCE in India today, as well as to set it in depth in its historical and location-specific context in the country.

A simple definition of ECCE which may be widely acceptable now, would go something like this: a set of goals, attitudes and practices aimed at the total all-round development of the young child, including the physical, mental, emotional, social, aesthetic and spiritual dimensions. ECCE suggests the provision of an environment, activities and interactions that would foster each child's development and enable him or her to attain his/her full potential. But immediately we are in trouble, at several levels, for many different things seem to be implied and included within this sentence; and besides the content and meaning of the term have been gradually changing over time. What is the age-group we have in mind when we speak of the young child? What is the relationship of ECCE to conventional schooling, or elementary education? Does ECCE refer to a *system* of schools or institutions, or is it a *concept*? Can it be carried out only within the four walls of an institution? Could many kinds of practices and beliefs be accommodated within the definition? Is there a clear common core or set of attitudes that must be included to be defined as ECCE? So it seems that it is necessary to 'unpack' the concept a little, to arrive at a meaningful and clearly delineated term that would encompass the scope of the book.

Changing Concepts — The Early Years

The first formal institutions for young children were the kindergarten schools set up by Scottish missionaries in the closing years of the

nineteenth century, based on the philosophy of Froebel, and more such kindergarten schools appeared in the next twenty or thirty years. The native pioneers in this field — Gijubhai Badheka and Tarabai Modak — were influenced not only by the ideas of Montessori, Froebel, and other Western thinkers, but equally importantly, by those of the great Indian thinkers of that period — Gandhi, Tagore, Aurobindo, and later, Zakir Husain.

The focus was on nurturing and developing the abilities of children from three to five or six years of age, with a view to preparing them to enter the formal stream of education. What would now be referred to as the psycho-social development of children was at the heart of their thinking. The term 'child education' was commonly used, in all the Indian languages, and later, 'preprimary education', while words like Kindergarten or Montessori were used to describe the different approaches and schools of thought.

In the pre-Independence years, primary education was not widespread, and the concerns of the masses were still far from the plans of the educationists or the government. So the contradiction in talking of 'preprimary education' in a context where more than half of India's children had never set foot in an elementary school was still not apparent. The leading educationists, many of whom practised in rural areas, still thought and spoke in terms of an idealised picture of the 'child' and did not categorise children or look at their needs in a class perspective. The focus was very much on education, or child education as it was then called. (Early Childhood Education, an American expression, came into vogue much later.) Little attention was paid by the authorities to this aspect of education till the *Sargent Report* in 1944, which for the first time recommended the opening of preprimary classes in elementary schools in the public sector.

Enlarged Scope

Soon after Independence, concern for carrying such schemes into the rural areas, and to reach the less privileged sections of the people, began to emerge. The setting up of the Central Social Welfare Board in 1953 with the express objective of carrying welfare services to the underprivileged, and with a strong rural orientation, was the brain child of Durgabai Deshmukh. Under her dynamic leadership,

balwadis expanded rapidly in the rural areas, and the focus shifted to welfare of mother and child in the rural underprivileged setting. Nevertheless, the core concept continued to remain that of education, or psycho-social development, and preparing the child for entry into school.

In the 1960s, new knowledge about the possible effects of nutritional deprivation on children's development, wider awareness about the extent of malnutrition and poor health in children and the extent of poverty in the country, and the emergence of poverty alleviation as a goal of national planning, had a profound impact on the thinking about young children. This rising groundswell of concern for the plight of young children and its possible consequences resulted in a series of initiatives in the 1960s and early 1970s, such as the Supplementary Nutrition programme, the midday meal programmes and others, culminating in the launch of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme in the mid-1970s. In the ICDS, for the first time, the whole child and the development of the child came to the centre of the picture. A comprehensive package of services was developed, with emphasis on nutrition and health, which it was felt would stimulate and support this growth. The definition of the young child was now broadened to cover the age-group 0-6 years. Psycho-social development was still present, but was now described as 'non-formal preschool education' for the age-group 3-6; but it took a back seat, and there was still little awareness of how this term could be interpreted with reference to children below three years. With this holistic approach, encompassing both care and education, the term ECCE had arrived.

Growing Divide

The 1970s and 1980s saw the rapid growth of a variety of programmes and services for children, along with a sharp polarisation in both target group, content and approach. On the one hand, the ICDS, *balwadis* and other government-supported or aided programmes were targeted towards the poor, especially the rural poor, and emphasised, at least in theory, a holistic and comprehensive approach to the development of the young child. However, these programmes often degenerated into mere feeding centres, and the age-group 0-3 was relatively neglected. On the other hand, a vast,

unprecedented and uncontrolled growth took place in the private 'for-profit' sector. This sector, beginning in the urban centres and gradually spreading to the semi-urban, and today, rural areas, was the response of those catering to the aspiring, growing and rising middle classes who saw education as the avenue to success and upward mobility for their children. This kind of preprimary education, a downward extension of primary education, with heavy emphasis on formal learning and preparation for school, has grown very rapidly in the last two decades.

With no government regulation, standards, guidance or framework for curriculum, and few recognised training centres, this huge sector encompasses both the very best, in terms of quality, and the very worst, with most on the lower end of the scale. The terminology itself is vague — sometimes known as nurseries, or nursery schools, or preprimary or preparatory schools, and a diversity of other names which often mask the deadly uniformity of the content. This polarisation itself reflects the deep division in Indian society, and is also seen in the entire formal education system, with its division into the privately managed and government or govt.-aided schools catering to distinct social classes. A further contrast is in the objectives. While the mass programme at least pays lip-service to holistic aims, and is focused on the child, the private sector is clearly limited to education, interpreted in its narrowest and most formal sense, and geared towards institutions. While ECCE is the clearly stated aim of the mass sector, though achievement might be variable and deficient, the private sector defies such neat categorisation.

Sharp Contrasts

Polarisation is also reflected in contrasting attitudes towards day care. While the government has always been uncomfortable with this concept, restricting day care to a small handful of 'creches for the children of working women', since it is unwilling to take into account the vastness of the need for day care among women working in diverse occupational situations in the unorganised sector, the private sector has responded with creches for the children of middle class urban working women, again without any form of regulation or guidance from the government. These, uncounted and unstudied, also range from baby 'parking lots' to a few well-appointed and often fancy places, though most again are poor in quality, but thrive

by exploiting the needs of urban working parents. The needs of the youngest children, below three, are still least attended to. So this is an important query even today: where does day care for the children of working women fit into the overall picture of ECCE? Can it be included under the 'care' component?

The 1970s and 1980s also saw the rise of the third sector — the voluntary sector — which responded in its diversity of ways to the anomalies in the situation. A wide variety of different innovative small-scale programmes of all types — from model schools and educational institutions to creches and day care centres — in a variety of contexts, auspices and approaches have been thrown up; some have flourished, others have died out, and still others struggle on. The growth of new knowledge from these experiments is one of the most significant gains, far beyond the small size or scope of these programmes.

New Dimensions

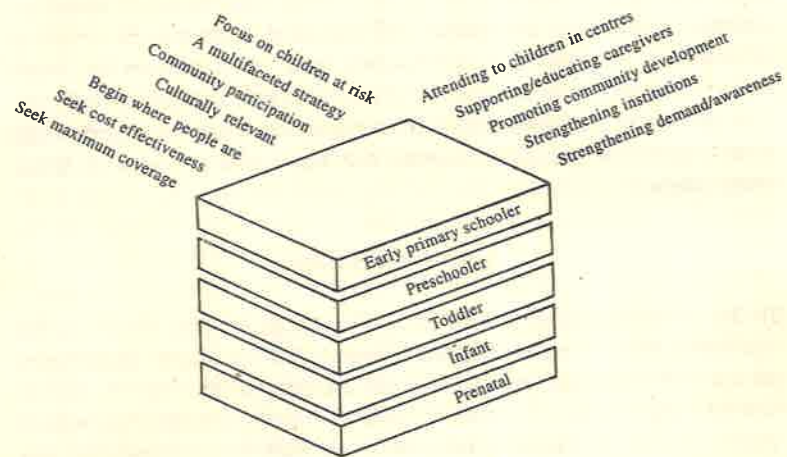
In the 1990s, the definition of ECCE is changing once more. On the one hand, there is increasing understanding of the critical importance of the 0-3 years age-group, and the dangers of its neglect. ECCE can no longer afford to confine itself to the conventional 'preschool years' of 3-6. It has also become clear that programmes for this age-group cannot be confined only to promoting health and nutrition, but that psycho-social development must take equal place. But how to do this? The realisation has come very slowly that the institutional centre-based or school-like approach is not the only one — that the child can be reached in several ways. A gamut of other approaches, family or home-based, or focused on education of caregiver or community, has begun to be talked about. A new terminology also reflects this broader approach. Now it is ECD (Early Childhood Development), which encompasses both the C and the E of ECCE (Care and Education) and which defines the age, not in terms of entry into institutions, but in the language of child development. ECD thus refers to the holistic development of young children, that is up to seven or eight years of age, and to the variety of approaches that can be used, singly or in combination, to meet the child's need for development.

To describe where we stand today and what is meant by ECD, the best illustration is the model developed by Robert Myers, which

identifies three dimensions of ECD: the child's developmental status at different age-levels, the complementary approaches through differing programmes, and the characteristics/guidelines of programme content. The term ECD thus could refer to any one or all of these.

Figure 1

Programming for Early Childhood Development: A Comprehensive Framework



Source: Myers, Robert (1992). *The Twelve Who Survive* (fig. 5.1, p. 84). Routledge, London and New York, with prior permission from the publisher.

Issues of Concern

Having 'unpacked' the concept of ECCE from its origins up to ECD, and had a look at what that box might contain, one can begin to consider the central issues in ECCE. The two dominating concerns in India today are related to the quantity and quality of ECCE at each level and to the possible contradictions between the two.

The poor reach of ECCE in relation to the magnitude of the need is indeed a cause for concern. In a country which (till recently at any rate) was committed to welfarist goals and a Socialist philosophy, even in theory, the basic question must be: why have we not been able to provide every child with ECCE, and how soon can this be

done? Yet this question must be seen in the light of the fact that even the guarantee in the Constitution of free primary education for every child has yet to be achieved. Does the Constitution then provide such a guarantee for young children? There are those who have argued that Article 45, which lays down that free, compulsory and universal education shall be provided to every child 'up to the age of 14' can be interpreted to mean 'from birth to age 14'. And that this would automatically include ECCE in all its variety. However, governments from 1950 onwards have clearly not adopted this interpretation and have insisted that the Constitutional provision relates only to primary education, which begins at six or five years of age. The same governments have also pleaded lack of resources as the main reason for their inability to take on the challenge of providing ECCE to all.

But it is not simply a question of matching resources with numbers. It is far more complicated than that, being related on the one hand to the existence of a dual system, right from the lowest age-group up to higher education, and quite obvious in terms of content and quality at every level. For the young child, for instance, one kind of programme is found in the state sector, which caters to the poor, poorer and poorest, and another in the private sector, which provides a wholly different menu, catering to the middle and upper middle classes, but now increasingly demanded by the aspiring poor and semi-poor.

As regards quality, it is again not simply a question of dilution of quality as numbers increase, whatever the desired programme content. It is that the issue of quality is in itself tied up with the confusion about goals and objectives. Is ECCE in order to get children into schools, or in order to take care of them while their mothers are at work, or in order to develop them to the fullest, or a combination of all these?

Thus, in the current context, three major issues arising from the quantity-quality debate run across the whole area of ECD:

1. the polarisation of services and trends and its implications,
2. the linkages with the formal educational system,
3. the extent of integration with the intersecting needs of women and the implications for day care as a component of ECD.

Polarisation of Services

The 'dual track' is as evident in ECCE as in every other area of Indian life and society. While the government, with its stated objective of poverty alleviation and a welfare State, is busy trying to expand its grid of child care services, the ICDS, to reach every child in the 'vulnerable' sector, a euphemism for the poor, it has turned a blind eye to the frighteningly huge spurt in the growth of preprimary institutions which, amongst themselves, reach an equally large or larger number of children. The government was indeed caught napping these last 30 years, since no rules have been put in place to regulate the conditions under which these institutions operate and the services they offer, which often can be described as very far from 'education' in any sense of the term. Casual observation can vouch for the spread of innumerable such institutions, going by varying names, which are generally characterised by untrained teachers in ill-equipped classrooms, cramming the three Rs forcibly down the throats of unwilling children, while ignorant managements enforce inappropriate curriculum and methods of teaching, at the cost of parents who, ironically, often pay a fee they can ill afford for this dubious 'service' resembling torture. This statement is no doubt a sweeping generalisation, and many fine institutions offering high quality child education do exist, but they are but a drop in the ocean. Yet the deliberate blindness or turning away of government's attention has in turn meant, at the very least, lack of statistics. To put it bluntly, no one at present knows how many such institutions catering to young children exist or what they do and how they can be categorised, since there is no requirement for them to be counted, leave alone described or controlled. Perhaps it is thought that, if ignored, they will die a natural death. But alas, that is an illusion. For not only are they showing no signs of vanishing, they continue to thrive and also exert a pernicious influence on what goes on in the State sector, to which they have become a glamorous role model, a role which is not acknowledged openly, and hence cannot be countered openly. The looming presence of this 'invisible' actor has an unacknowledged yet powerful influence, yet to be untangled in full, on the nature and quality of the 'other'. This can clearly be perceived in the nature of the linkages with primary and later stages of education.

Linkages with the Formal Educational System

Popular perceptions, particularly among parents, tend to assume that ECCE is the first step in the educational ladder. That is how terms like 'preschool education' and 'preprimary education' originated, and such terms tend to reinforce the perception. Going a step further, it is also assumed that a 'good start' at this age, enables the child to acquire the skills and attitudes necessary for success at primary school, and this indeed was the justification of the original 'Headstart' programme in the US. But within this association lie many unstated, and unproven assumptions.

The apologists for ECCE within the government often draw upon the argument that ECCE will prepare children for school, and increase enrolment, attendance, achievement and retention at the primary level, both by socialising the child to school, and by providing the key cognitive inputs needed for school, summarised in the term 'school readiness'. The scheme of ECE launched with the technical support of NCERT in ten states in 1985 in fact specifically stated that the objective was to promote UEE (Universalisation of Elementary Education). ECCE is thus seen as an important step in tackling the formidable problems of reach, enrolment, wastage, stagnation and drop-out in the primary schools. Surely this puts too great a burden on ECCE. How much can it actually achieve?

Taking each one of these objectives in turn, let us consider enrolment and attendance. Can ECCE alone achieve higher enrolment and attendance at primary school? Is it the right tool, or the best one to do so? Is it even sufficient? What else is required? How good are the institutional linkages between the child care system and the formal educational system?

Studies carried out by NIPCCD and NCERT have indicated higher enrolment in Class I among children from ICDS centres than from areas where there is no ICDS, populations being comparable in other respects. Allowing for methodological flaws, this data may be true, within limits. But studies of the CARE feeding programme in Orissa in the 1970s and later studies of the Noon Meals Programme in Tamil Nadu have established that among poor groups, the provision of a school lunch is a far better way to promote enrolment and attendance at primary school (though even here, there are groups which are unable to come to school even when a free meal is provided).

As to the phenomenon of drop-outs, it is related not only to external factors like poverty and the need for children to enter the labour force, but even more so to the quality (lack of) and perceived irrelevance of the curriculum and teaching methods adopted in the primary school. There is a growing body of evidence that indicates that there are powerful forces within the school which operate to 'push out' children, though this is often masked in the records as lack of interest, poor achievement, failure, etc. This shows that the linkage between ECE and primary education has to be conceived at a far deeper level, in terms of continuity in the strategies and approaches adopted towards children's learning, rather than in terms of socialisation to the habit of going to school. ECCE should become an instrument of reform in the primary school, helping teachers to use more child-centred, activity-based forms of education and bring into the school what has already become a cliché, existing more in theory than practice, 'joyful learning'. However, all the available evidence suggests that in fact the opposite tends to happen; closer linkage between ECCE and primary school has led in the past to the preprimary classroom becoming a mere downward extension of the primary classroom, with young children being expected to learn the three Rs, recite numbers and alphabets and be geared to enter Class I, in a very formal atmosphere unsuited to their learning needs.

As regards performance, again, studies by NCERT and MS University of Baroda have shown that children with a preschool background tend to perform better in Class I; but there are few Indian studies which have followed these children through to later classes. Again, it may be asked, what kind of preschool? And for what kind of primary school does it prepare them? How much continuity exists between the two? If there is a sharp disparity between the two, what implication does it have for children and their education?

Researches in other countries, notably the US, on the other hand, tend to show that the gains made by young children in the first two years of school as a result of exposure to preschool programmes, are rapidly eroded and that the attainment levels wear off by about Class IV, by which time there is little or no difference between those who did and those who did not attend preschools. In other words, it seems that ECCE is only part of a package of inputs which is needed to enable children to take best advantage of schooling, and one of these is a change in the very nature of, and approach to, education in the primary school itself. To quote Robert Myers again,

'It is no longer a question of making children ready for school, but of asking if the school is ready for the children'. At the pedagogic level, ECCE can make a great contribution in terms of modifying the current systems in operation in the primary school, but does not appear to have done so yet.

Coming to other broader concerns than mere academic achievement in later years, what impact does ECCE have on the child's development, and how does it affect the child's later life and performance? The Highscope study, which followed two sets of matched children through life, one with and the other without preschool education, but otherwise similar in all respects, found that the preschool input made an outstanding difference in terms of indicators like stability in jobs and marriage, staying away from crime, delinquency and drugs, higher educational level reached, quality of jobs, etc. Once more, it seems that it is the quality of preschool education provided which has made all the difference. While most practitioners would agree that the quality of ECCE, as reflected in both content and process, would be the most powerful variable influencing the child's learning, development and achievement, there are few studies in the world, and none in India, which establish this link empirically.

Another crucial question to ask in the Indian context, which unfortunately hardly any study has addressed so far, is to what extent the existence of ECCE provides opportunities to older children, especially girls, who have been acting as caretakers of their younger siblings, to benefit from ECCE by getting the freedom to go to school. Scattered examples from different parts of the country indicate that this indeed can be an important effect of ECCE, but it has been little studied so far.

The conclusion seems to be that the crucial factors which determine whether ECCE has a long-term impact or not are related to its quality. Thus it seems there is no getting away from the quality issue, which is intimately linked to the goals and objectives of ECCE. Even the limited objective of attaining UEE cannot be achieved unless the quality of ECCE is made superior.

Day Care for Children of Working Mothers

Another nagging question which refuses to go away, is the relationship between ECCE and the need of working mothers for some sort

of substitute care for their young children while they are away at work. How is this relationship to be visualised? Is ECCE no more than a baby-minding service, and is its role only to take care of women's needs? Can this be reconciled, and if so, how, with its other lofty objectives? How are day-care needs to be defined? Who needs them, and how many and where? These may seem like very mundane practical questions, but they have a bearing, not evident at first sight, on the issues of quantity-quality earlier mentioned — who are they for, and what should they be?

Here, it seems, is yet another hornet's nest (or Pandora's box). The history of day care, officially recognised and launched in 1974, shows a very slow growth, and failure to meet the needs of working mothers, in terms of extent, content and quality. Why is this so? There is overwhelming evidence today of the needs, not only of working mothers, but of girls as well, who, in poor families, need child care services to relieve them/their mothers of the triple burden of productive activity, viz., outside the home, home-making and child care. Of the 90-odd million women in the workforce, roughly 24 million are estimated to have young children in the age-group 0-6, years and to need some kind of child care support. Nearly 90 per cent of these women are in the unorganised sector, where the few mandatory provisions for creches which are found in our statute books do not prevail. Most of them are poor, and cannot afford the very few and limited creche facilities available in the private sector. The family is the mainstay, and often it is girls who have to carry the burden of child care, and thus remain deprived of their own chances for education and training. This not only places a heavy burden on women, but undermines the health, nutrition, development, education and survival of young children themselves. One would have thought the answer, that is, to develop various models of child care services, would be staring one in the face.

Yet this has not been the response. Day care, of course is expensive in terms of human resources, and is mind-boggling, no doubt, especially when the magnitude at which it is needed is considered. With the low priority already given to social services such as health and primary education, it is not surprising that day care has been given a back seat.

But this is only part of the story. One could go further and explore deeper the reasons for this neglect of a crucial service, to which even lip-service is not paid. Policy-makers often tend to shy away from

discussion on the subject, or react emotionally rather than rationally, and this reaction in fact gives the clue as to why day care is given low priority. The reaction is based on deep prejudice at two levels, that of gender and that of class. The gender prejudice, or a deep sense of threat at what is perceived as a special privilege for women, is shown by attempts to deny the productive role of women in the economy, or the double burden borne by women. It is often perceived or expressed as a threat to Indian culture, with arguments about the traditional role of Indian women as nurturers of children and home-makers, and the sacred role of the family. Romantic views about the joint family and the Indian mother are usually advanced in favour of such arguments. On some occasions, the very concept of 'day care' has been attacked as being a Western import, ill-suited to the realities of our situation.

But this is not only a male viewpoint. It is also tinged by class perceptions, and opposition to day care thus comes also from people (both men and women) belonging to the educated urban middle classes, from whom policy-makers are largely recruited. The limited exposure to and understanding of, the lives of the rural and urban poor among this group of people, and the natural human tendency to draw generalisations based on one's own experience, makes the need for day care little appreciated by policy-makers. Gender and class prejudice have combined to drive day care for the children of working women off the national agenda.

And this is one of the reasons why the discourse about ECCE has remained focused on the age-group 3-6 years, in spite of the rhetoric of ICDS, because the youngest age-group (0-3) years would come to the forefront of the discussion if day care were the issue, and the whole question of content — what should ECCE be about, and how — would have to be reexamined afresh. But for how long can this explosive issue be kept under wraps?

What this Book is About

These, then, are some of the issues and concerns underlying this book, which is an attempt to examine, in some depth and detail, the state-of-the-art of ECCE in India today, from both a micro and a macro perspective.

Recognising the significance of the 'third' sector, Part I takes a look at the tiny but meaningful voluntary sector, squeezed between

the governmental and the private. It is a series of vignettes of small but significant programmes (each condensed from an earlier series of published case studies) held together by an analytic overview which aims to draw lessons from these experiences. This is the micro perspective, the close and loving look at detail, but which touches on most of the key issues, though indirectly.

Part II provides the macro perspective, and attempts to draw the broad picture through a series of essays examining different vital aspects of the current situation in ECCE in the country. The first chapter in this section, by Margaret Khalakdina, provides the broad historical framework, tracing the development of ECCE in all its variety from its early beginnings till today and introducing and elucidating the various dimensions and developments which it has undergone. The second chapter, by Venita Kaul, does the same in relation to the most critical element in education — the teacher — tracing the development of, and describing the present state of training of personnel for ECCE. These two chapters provide most of the solid factual background against which specific issues are discussed.

The third chapter, by Frances Sinha, looks at the vital area of costs and benefits, suggesting ways in which they can be measured and the relationship between the two is studied. The fourth chapter, by Rajalakshmi Sriram, deals with the complex interface and the intersecting needs of women and children, and looks at much of the same materials again, but from a different angle, drawing also on the case studies in Part I. In the fifth chapter, S. Anandalakshmy attempts to place ECCE within its philosophical and cultural context, and the manner in which it has been adapted to Indian needs as perceived by those who have participated in its growth.

In the last chapter, Adarsh Sharma draws the threads together, summing up the whole section and looking forward to the challenges and tasks for the future.

It is hoped that the book will give a rounded and comprehensive picture of the state of ECCE in the country today.

Reference

Myers, Robert. 1992. *The Twelve Who Survive*. Routledge, London and New York.