

Pre-school Education

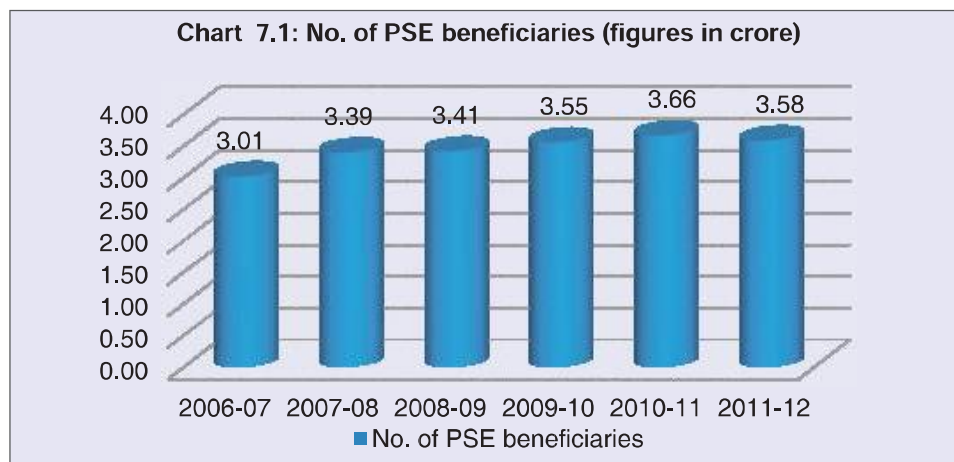
7.1 Pre-school education - Introduction

Pre-school education (PSE) is one of the crucial components of the the ICDS scheme. This aims at development of school readiness and a positive attitude towards school education among children of the age group of three to six years through non-formal and joyful play way activities at Anganwadi Centres (AWCs). The objective of the PSE is also to strengthen the goal of universalisation of primary education.

7.2 Coverage

The scheme mandates enrolment of all eligible children for PSE. The Hon'ble Supreme Court had also directed (December 2006) to universalize the PSE along with other services provided under ICDS.

The number of actual beneficiaries for PSE as per Ministry records at the national level during the period 2006-11 is depicted in the chart below:



Audit, however could not ascertain the extent of coverage as the figures of eligible beneficiaries were not available with the Ministry. This indicates inadequate monitoring of this component by the Ministry.

The Ministry stated (July 2012) that data on eligible beneficiaries under PSE were being maintained at the State, District, Project and AWC levels. The same would be maintained in the Ministry from 2012-13 under the revised Management Information System (MIS) formats effective from March 2012.

7.2.1 Coverage in the selected States

The State Governments are responsible for providing various services, including PSE envisaged under the scheme. Audit noted that there was shortfall in the coverage of beneficiaries for PSE in the selected States during the period of audit. Details of coverage of beneficiaries in four of the selected States are given in the table below:

Table 7.1: Details of PSE beneficiaries in states
(Figures in lakh)

| Name of the State | No. of eligible beneficiaries ¹ | No. of actual beneficiaries | Shortfall (per cent) |
|-------------------|--|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Andhra Pradesh | 98.65 | 93.38 | 5.27 (6) |
| Gujarat | 17.67 | 13.46 | 4.21 (24) |
| Haryana | 32.95 | 21.22 | 11.73 (36) |
| Meghalaya | 8.46 | 6.98 | 1.48 (18) |

In Odisha, the percentage of shortfall during 2006-11 was up to 13.64 per cent. However, there was an overall declining trend in the shortfall in the state as a whole from 13.64 per cent in 2007-08 to 8.56 per cent in 2010-11. In Rajasthan, the shortfall ranged between 28 to 39 per cent. In Chhattisgarh, PSE was not provided to the beneficiaries in 1,003 out of 36,103 operational AWCs. Similarly, in West Bengal, 7,460 out of 1,09,888 AWCs did not provide PSE for at least 21 days in a month.

7.2.2 Coverage of beneficiaries in the test checked AWCs

The position of coverage of beneficiaries in test checked AWCs of selected States is given in table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Coverage of beneficiaries in AWCs

| Name of the State | No. of beneficiaries enrolled | No. of actual beneficiaries | Shortfall (per cent) |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Gujarat | 31,379 | 22,578 | 8,801 (28) |
| Haryana | 22,726 | 18,242 | 4,484 (20) |
| Meghalaya | 25,357 | 21,811 | 3,546 (14) |
| Odisha | 28,326 | 23,281 | 5,045 (19) |
| Rajasthan | 40,689 | 31,505 | 9,184 (23) |
| Uttar Pradesh | 1,04,044 | 71,664 | 32,380 (31) |
| West Bengal | 36,782 | 30,647 | 5,635 (16) |

In Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Karnataka, PSE was provided in all the test checked AWCs.

Audit noted that in Madhya Pradesh, none of the 280 test-checked AWCs provided PSE.

¹ State as a whole

7.2.3 Non- maintenance of records

Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) were required to maintain database of the PSE beneficiaries and necessary related records.

Audit noted that in six States (Bihar, Haryana, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Karnataka and Gujarat) database of the beneficiaries was maintained in all the test checked AWCs. However, in the remaining States 80 to 83 *per cent* AWCs did not maintain database of PSE beneficiaries.

Similarly, in 10 States (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal) records in connection with PSE were maintained in all the test checked AWCs. In the remaining States 22 *per cent* AWCs did not maintain records in this regard during 2006-11 as detailed in **Annex 7.1**.

In the absence of database and records, the extent of services provided under PSE could not be ascertained. This also indicates absence of monitoring by the Ministry and the States.

7.3 Shortfall in expenditure on Pre-school Education Kits

ICDS guidelines (July 2000) stipulated State/UT level procurement of PSE kits and distribution thereof to AWCs on yearly basis. The procurement was decentralised in order to streamline the process and make kits available in time to the AWCs. The Ministry provided funds at the rate of ₹ 500 per operational AWC (enhanced to ₹ 1,000 per kit with effect from 2009-10) to the State/UT for procuring the kits.

The Statement of Expenditure of 20 States available at the Ministry revealed significant under spending of funds on procurement of pre-school education kits during the period 2006-11. The details are given below (State-wise details are given in **Annex 7.2**):

Table 7.3: Shortfall in expenditure on procurement of pre-school education kits

| Year | States where shortfall was 100 <i>per cent</i> | States with shortfall of 30 to 99 <i>per cent</i> |
|---------|--|---|
| 2006-07 | Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand and West Bengal (4) | Delhi-98 <i>per cent</i> , Karnataka- 49 <i>per cent</i> , Bihar-83 <i>per cent</i> , Punjab-73 <i>per cent</i> , Kerala-31 <i>per cent</i> (5) |
| 2007-08 | Delhi, Goa, Haryana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab (6) | Manipur-36 <i>per cent</i> (1) |
| 2008-09 | Delhi, Goa, Haryana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand (8) | Karnataka-42 <i>per cent</i> and West Bengal-95 <i>per cent</i> (2) |
| 2009-10 | Bihar, Delhi, Goa, Jharkhand, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh (9) | Assam-32 <i>per cent</i> , Punjab- 56 <i>per cent</i> and West Bengal-99 <i>per cent</i> (3) |
| 2010-11 | Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Goa, Jharkhand, and Odisha (5) | Punjab-74 <i>per cent</i> , Uttarakhand-47 <i>per cent</i> and West Bengal-41 <i>per cent</i> (3) |

It can be seen from the above details that Jharkhand, Delhi, Punjab, West Bengal, Goa and Uttarakhand consistently did not spend funds on procurement of pre-school education kits during the period.

Audit test check in sample States further revealed shortcomings and delays in procurement of PSE kits for AWCs, as detailed in table 7.4 below:

Table 7.4: State-specific findings on procurement of PSE kits
(₹ in crore)

| State | Audit observation | Amount |
|----------------|---|--------------|
| Andhra Pradesh | <p>Pre-school kits were procured by the department for all sanctioned AWCs without taking into account the previous stocks available leading to excess procurement and rendering it unusable reportedly due to change in syllabus. As a result 9,263 excess kits worth ₹ 48.38 lakh were lying unused in the godowns (March 2012).</p> <p>The Department stated (March 2012) that the Pre-school kits were procured for all the sanctioned AWCs presuming that all the sanctioned AWCs would be operational at any time during the year. The reply establishes that procurements were made without proper assessment.</p> | 0.48 |
| Gujarat | Funds were provided at the rate of ₹ 2.36 crore to selected districts during 2008-11 for purchase of PSE kit in the AWCs. Test check in 16 projects revealed that PSE kits were procured once in two to five years. No procurement was made by two projects. While five project offices did not provide expenditure details on procurement of PSE kit. Non-procurement of kits resulted in parking of Government funds amounting to ₹ 11.38 crore (2008-11) in Personal Ledger Account (PLA) of District/Block Panchayats. | 11.38 |
| Haryana | Despite drawal of funds in advance during 2006-11, substantial delays of 11 to 28 months were noticed in the supply of kits at the AWCs. The delays were attributable to delayed processing of the cases by the Directorate and delay in printing of the kits by the suppliers. No kits were procured during 2008-09 due to delays in finalization of the contents of the kits by the Directorate. | |
| Jharkhand | Funds amounting to ₹7.65 crore were provided during 2006-11. However, no purchase order was issued till the date of audit (February 2012) and no PSE kits were distributed among AWCs during 2006-11. This resulted in the non-delivery of PSE components of the scheme. | 7.65 |
| Uttar Pradesh | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the years 2006-07 and 2007-08 orders were placed for supply of kits in excess of operational AWCs². This resulted in excess procurement of 2297 and 6026 kits respectively during these years leading to avoidable expenditure of ₹ 38.57 lakh³. Despite excess procurement, no kits were supplied to 50726 AWCs and 14686 Mini AWCs operational during the year 2010- | 0.39 |

² Operational AWCs:2006-07: 119538 and 2007-08: 119595

³ Avoidable expenditure: 2006-07- ₹10.01 lakh and 2007-08- ₹28.56 lakh

| State | Audit observation | Amount |
|----------------|---|--------|
| | <p>11.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreements for supply of pre-school kits were executed mostly at the end of the year viz. in January 2007 and January 2008 during 2006-07 and 2007-08 respectively. This resulted in transfer of unutilized funds to the PLA of <i>UP Samaj Kalyan Nigam</i>. • Supplies were delayed in all the years (2006-11) which ranged between three to nine months. | |
| Meghalaya | An amount of ₹ 68.94 lakh was drawn by the Directorate in March 2010 for procurement of PSE kits but transferred to '8443-Civil Deposit'. Audit noted that the kits were procured during August 2011 after a lapse of 17 months. Similarly, an amount of ₹ 71.97 lakh was earmarked for purchase of PSE kits for 2010-11 but the kits were not procured till March 2012. | |
| Madhya Pradesh | PSE kits were not provided to AWCs during 2007-10 despite provision of the required funds for procurement of PSE. | |
| Odisha | Against the requirement of ₹ 18.52 crore for procurement of 2.45 lakh PSE kits, ₹ 6.04 crore only was provided during 2006-11. This amount was sufficient for procurement of only 1.21 lakh kits leading to shortfall of 1.24 lakh kits. | |
| Rajasthan | During 2008-09 work order for supply of 48,363 PSE kits was issued (February 2009) for distribution to AWCs in 32 districts. However, only 42,838 kits were supplied by the firm in March 2009. This resulted in non supply of kits in 5525 AWCs. In Alwar district no kits were made available in 2575 AWCs. | |

The fact that the State Governments failed to procure the required number of PSE kits despite availability of funds indicated that this important intervention was not implemented earnestly and deprived the beneficiaries of the intended use.

The Ministry stated (July 2012) that the States/UTs had repeatedly been asked to furnish reasons for not incurring expenditure on procurement of PSE kits. The issue had also been taken up during review meetings and State visits/inspection. It further stated (November 2012) that from the year 2012-13, the entire cost of programme components including the PSE kit had been included in the second instalment of the grant to enable the States to make procurement accordingly instead of procuring these items in a staggered manner.

7.4 Non-availability of Pre-school Education (PSE) kits in selected Anganwadi Centres (AWCs)

The failure of States to procure pre-school kits on annual basis had a direct bearing on availability of the same at AWCs. Audit found that in Jharkhand and Gujarat PSE kits were not available at any of the test-checked AWCs throughout the period of audit. Further in Madhya Pradesh, 40 to 217 out of 280 test-checked AWCs, Odisha, 97 to 160 AWCs out of 200 test checked AWCs; Rajasthan, 11 to 30 out of 240 test checked AWCs and in Uttar Pradesh, 29 to 130 out of 309 test

checked AWCs PSE kits were not available during the period of audit. The State-wise details of availability of pre-school kits in test checked AWCs are given in **Annex 7.3**.

Positive development

In Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Karnataka, Meghalaya and West Bengal PSE kit was provided and used in the entire test checked AWCs during the audit period.

Recommendation

- ***Besides the release of funds for procurement of pre-school education kits to States/UTs, the Ministry should monitor progress on timely utilization of funds and adequate supply of these kits to AWCs.***

7.5 Activities under Pre-school Education (PSE)

The scheme prescribed a charter of duties to AWWs for achieving the objective of non-formal pre-school education by exposing the beneficiaries to various activities which include:

- Exercises for physical and motor development, language development like pre-conversations, story-telling, vocabulary building,
- Development of creativity and imagination, group activities, pre-writing activities like drawing and pattern-making, developing pre-number concepts such as differences between more and less, thick and thin, far and near, and
- Playing with dolls/toys, role play and sharing his/her possessions with other peers, personal hygiene, identification of objects etc.

Test check at 2699 AWCs revealed the following shortcomings in the implementation of the PSE:

- 575 to 819 AWCs did not organise the mandated activities while imparting PSE to the beneficiaries. The absence of these activities was predominant in Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh (in all the sampled AWCs) whereas, in Uttar Pradesh the activities did not take place in more than half of the sampled AWCs.
- 787 AWCs did not have prescribed curriculum for PSE. In Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand no curriculum in the entire test checked AWCs was prescribed. However, in the states of Haryana, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Karnataka and Gujarat the curriculum was prescribed.
- Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) of 467 AWCs located in Jharkhand, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh had not been trained for conducting the activities prescribed under pre-school education.

The state wise details are given in **Annex 7.4**.

7.6 Mainstreaming of beneficiaries for formal education

The key objective of imparting PSE to the beneficiaries under ICDS scheme was mainstreaming of the children after completion of non-formal PSE. The Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) were required to ensure that all the children from the AWC joined the formal education after completion of PSE. The Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) were also required to co-ordinate with the local primary school so that the transition of the Anganwadi pre-school children to the primary school was a natural process.

The AWWs were also required to maintain data/records pertaining to school ready children joining formal school.

Positive development

In Meghalaya and Gujarat all the eligible children joined the formal education

However, in selected States shortfall in the number of eligible PSE beneficiaries joining the formal education was noticed as explained in the succeeding paragraphs:

- In five States shortfall in the number of children who actually joined the formal education during 2006-11 ranged between seven and 30 *per cent*. The details are given below:

Table 7.5 Shortfall in beneficiaries joining formal education at the test checked AWCs

| State | Eligible to join formal education | Joined formal education | Shortfall (<i>per cent</i>) |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Andhra Pradesh | 45119 | 38184 | 6935(15) |
| Chhattisgarh | 8932 | 6705 | 2227(25) |
| Odisha | 7063 | 5610 | 1453(21) |
| Rajasthan | 7909 | 5500 | 2409(30) |
| Karnataka | 16977 | 15728 | 1249(7) |
| Total | 86000 | 71727 | 14273(17) |

The analysis of the state-wise data revealed that the maximum shortfall was in Rajasthan (30 *per cent*), Chhattisgarh (25 *per cent*) and Odisha (21 *per cent*). The position of beneficiaries joining formal education was slightly better in Karnataka which reported a shortfall of only seven *per cent*.

In four States (Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Karnataka) the information on the beneficiaries joining formal education was available at AWC or Project level. However, the information was not available at District Programme Office (DPO) or state level in these States.

Case study: Discrepancy in the number of PSE beneficiaries joining formal education in Karnataka

The State Nodal Department as well as the DPOs at Bellary, Chickmagalur, Mandya and Uttara Kannada did not maintain the data of eligible children in AWCs joining formal education. The AWCs in Mandya, Chamarajanagar and Uttara Kannada districts reported 100 *per cent* achievement in eligible children joining formal education, while information furnished by AWCs in Belgaum, Chickmagalur and Raichur showed huge mismatches between number of eligible children and those actually joining formal education. In these districts, the number of children joining formal education was either far in excess or far below those eligible to join formal education. The benefits of pre-school education component could not be assessed due to absence of linkages between the Anganwadi and the primary schools and non-maintenance of basic records under this component.

In the remaining States of Bihar, Haryana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal no related records or data on eligible and actual beneficiaries joining formal education at Anganwadi, Project, District and State level were available. In the absence of these records or data, mainstreaming of children after completion of non-formal PSE could not be ascertained in audit.

Recommendation

- ***The Ministry should examine and address the reasons for deficit in mainstreaming the Pre-school Education beneficiaries in the formal education. It should also augment the expenditure to the prescribed norm where shortfall was persistent and ensure transition of pre-school children to the primary school.***