



# Challenges in Implementing Early Childhood Care and Education in Anganwadi Centres: A Case Study of Rangia Sub District of Kamrup District of Assam

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## Abstract

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is essential for the cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional development of young children. In India, the National Education Policy (NEP 2020), along with the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS 2022), emphasizes the importance of providing quality ECCE through Anganwadi Centres to lay a strong foundation for children's overall growth and future learning. The study titled "Challenges in Implementing Early Childhood Care and Education in Anganwadi Centres: A Case Study of Rangia Sub Division of Kamrup District of Assam" examines the obstacles Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) face in delivering ECCE as outlined by NEP 2020. The research identifies key challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, a lack of essential classroom materials, insufficient indoor and outdoor play equipment, and irregular supplies of food and medical resources. Using a survey approach, the findings reveal that most AWCs in the Rangia Sub-Division are under-resourced, limiting their ability to provide the comprehensive educational experiences vital for early childhood development. The study advocates for targeted interventions, including better resource allocation, infrastructure upgrades, and improved training programs, to address these shortcomings and achieve the ECCE objectives set by NEP 2020 in the region.

**Keywords:** ECCE, NCF-FS 2022, NEP 2020, Anganwadi, Assam

## 1. Introduction

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is crucial for a child's holistic development. India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recognizes that over 85% of brain development occurs during early years, emphasizing universal access to quality ECCE for children aged 3-8 years as fundamental to lifelong learning and well-being. In India, Anganwadi centres, established under the Integrated Child Development

Services (ICDS), are the primary providers of ECCE services, especially for socio-economically disadvantaged children. These centres offer pre-school education, nutrition, and health monitoring. The NEP 2020 and NCF-FS 2022 proposes ambitious plans to enhance Anganwadi centres, including improved infrastructure, better-trained educators, and increased resources.

The National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS 2022) notes that Anganwadis often lack adequate educational supplies and infrastructure, and have few teachers specifically trained in early childhood education. As mentioned in NCF-FS, implementing these policy objectives faces significant hurdles, particularly in rural areas. This disparity between policy goals and ground realities is exemplified in regions like the Rangia subdistrict of Kamrup district, Assam. Here, the challenges of implementing effective ECCE are particularly pronounced, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to bridge the gap between policy intentions and practical implementation in rural and underserved areas.

The study titled "Challenges in Implementing Early Childhood Care and Education in Anganwadi Centres: A Case Study of Rangia Sub-District, Kamrup District" investigates the specific obstacles faced by Anganwadi centres in the Rangia Sub-District. Key challenges include the availability of basic classroom stationery materials, indoor sports equipment, food supplies, ECCE kits, teaching-learning materials (TLM), and pictorial books. By identifying these critical areas that require policy attention and intervention, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on improving Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in rural India. The findings seek to ensure that children from all segments of the community receive the necessary support during their formative years, thereby fostering equitable access to quality education.

## 2. Review related literature

Baliga et al. (2017) conducted a cross-sectional study by name "A study on knowledge of Anganwadi workers about integrated child development services at three urban health centres.". The study reveals that, The primary complaints reported by Anganwadi workers were inadequate honorarium (75%), lack of community support (14.28%), and other issues related to infrastructure, excessive workload, and record maintenance.

Nunhlimi Angie V. L. et al. (2019) shows in their study titled "Status and Problems of ECCE in Aizawl City" that, The buildings and infrastructure of Anganwadi centres in Aizawl's urban area were found to be insufficient to support effective ECCE implementation. A significant majority (73.33%) of centres did not enroll children with special needs due to infrastructure limitations. Furthermore, these centres were not disability-friendly, and workers had not received special training to address the needs of such children. Classroom areas in the centres were insufficient to accommodate ECCE activities adequately. Outdoor play materials and equipment were absent in the majority (90%) of the centres. Distribution of supplementary nutrition to children was irregular due to insufficient water and LPG supply. Appropriate toys for child development and materials to support literary, creative, linguistic, problem-solving, and mathematical abilities were not readily available. A majority (96.67%) of the centres did not follow the prescribed timetable or working hours. Learning/activities corners were not available, and workers were not familiar with the concept. All centres were found to be understaffed according to stipulated norms.

Kular (2014), in the study titled "A Study on Anganwadi Workers in Rural ICDS Blocks of Punjab," examined the profile, knowledge, and challenges faced by Anganwadi Workers (AWWs). Conducted across three ICDS projects in Barnala district, the study found that 80% of AWWs reported insufficient infrastructure facilities, and 73.33% cited inadequate honorarium as a major issue. These findings highlight significant challenges impacting the performance and motivation of AWWs in rural areas.

Chudasama et al. (2014) evaluated the ICDS program in Gujarat, revealing significant gaps in service delivery. Only 48.3% of children received supplementary nutrition, with 61.7% of Anganwadi centres facing supply interruptions. Pre-school education covered 100% of children in just 20% of centres, while immunization records were available in only 10%, and 76.7% had no such records. Regular health checkups were conducted in only 30% of centres, highlighting the need for improvements in service consistency and monitoring.

### **3. Objective**

To examine the specific challenges in implementing Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Anganwadi Centres within the Rangia Sub District of Kamrup District.

### **4. Methodology**

The research methodology utilized in this paper, titled "Challenges in Implementing Early Childhood Care and Education in Anganwadi Centres: A Case Study of Rangia Sub District of Kamrup District of Assam," is based on a descriptive research approach aimed at exploring the complex issues within this educational setting.

#### **4.1 Population**

There are total 410 Anganwadi Centres in Rangia sub division under Rangia-Kamalpur ICDS project which is considered as population for the study.

#### **4.2 Sample and sampling technique**

In this paper, a carefully selected subset of Anganwadi Centres from the Rangia Sub Division forms the sample for analysis. The study employs a methodologically sound, simple random sampling technique was employed to ensure the selection is both representative and unbiased. This approach enables the extraction of meaningful insights into the challenges faced during the implementation of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS). For this study, a total of 85 Anganwadi Centres were chosen from the 410 available Centres.

#### **4.3 Tool used**

In the pursuit of understanding the "Challenges in Implementing Early Childhood Care and Education in Anganwadi Centres: A Case Study of Rangia Sub District of Kamrup District of Assam" this study employed a self-made structured close ended questionnaire designed to gather specific information of Anganwadi.

### **5. Result**

The findings of this study provide insights into the challenges faced by Anganwadi Centres in implementing Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in the Rangia Sub-District of Kamrup District, Assam. The results are presented based on key areas such as availability of classroom materials, indoor sports equipment, supply of food and teaching-learning materials, and the availability of books and educational resources.

**Table 1:** Availability of basic classroom stationery, materials, and equipment such as chalk, dusters, and blackboards.

Sl	Availability of basic classroom stationery, materials, and equipment such as chalk, dusters, and blackboards		
	Adequate	Inadequate	Not available
1	2(2.35%)	10(11.77%)	73(85.88%)
85			

**Table 2:** Availability of Indoor sports equipment

Sl	Availability of Indoor sports equipment		
	Adequate	Inadequate	Not available
1	15(17.65%)	43(50.59%)	27(31.76%)
85			

**Table 3:** Supply of food items including hot cooked meal, take home ration and fortified staple foods etc.

Sl	Supply of food items including Hot cooked meal, Take home ration and fortified staple foods		
	Adequate	Inadequate	Not available
1	18(21.18%)	56(65.88%)	11(12.94%)
85			

**Table 4:** Supply of ECCE Kit and other teaching learning material

Sl	Supply of ECCE Kit and other teaching learning material		
	Adequate	Inadequate	Not available
1	9(10.59%)	48(56.47%)	28(32.94%)
85			

**Table 5:** Availability of Pictorial books, Teacher handbook, Story books or Activity book

Sl	Availability of Pictorial books, Teacher handbook, Story books or Activity book		
	Adequate	Inadequate	Not available
1	10(11.76%)	25(29.41%)	50(58.82%)
85			

## 6. Analysis of the result

Table 1 reveals that a significant majority of Anganwadi Centres (85.88%) do not have basic classroom stationery, such as chalk, dusters, and blackboards. Only 2.35% of the centres have adequate resources, while 11.77% have insufficient supplies. This highlights a critical gap in providing fundamental teaching materials, severely impacting the quality of education and classroom instruction in these centres.

The data of table 2 indicates that 50.59% of the centres have inadequate indoor sports equipment, with 31.76% lacking such equipment entirely. Only 17.65% of the centres have adequate indoor sports equipment. The shortage of

indoor sports equipment could negatively affect the physical development and engagement of children in essential recreational activities.

Table 3 reveals that a significant proportion (65.88%) of Anganwadi Centres report an inadequate supply of food items, while 12.94% do not receive any at all. Only 21.18% of centres have a sufficient supply. This finding is concerning, as the availability of nutritious food is crucial for the growth and development of children, and the lack of an adequate food supply compromises the overall effectiveness of the program.

The data table 4 shows that 56.47% of the centres have an inadequate supply of the ECCE kit and other essential teaching-learning materials, and 32.94% do not have any such materials available. Only 10.59% of the centres report having an adequate supply. This shortage may significantly hinder the centres' ability to deliver quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), affecting learning outcomes.

According to the table 5, 58.82% of Anganwadi Centres lack any pictorial books, teacher handbooks, storybooks, or activity books, while 29.41% report having an inadequate supply. Only 11.76% of the centres have sufficient educational books. This shortage likely limits children's exposure to engaging and educational content, reducing opportunities for cognitive and language development.

## 7. Discussion

The study reveals significant challenges in implementing Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Anganwadi Centres of Rangia Sub District, Kamrup District, Assam, highlighting gaps between the provisions of NEP 2020 and NCF-FS 2022 and the actual resource availability. A striking 85.88% of centres lack basic classroom materials like chalk, dusters, and blackboards, limiting their ability to deliver effective lessons. Additionally, 50.59% of the centres have inadequate indoor sports equipment, hindering physical development activities, a core focus of play-based learning in the NCF-FS framework.

Food supply is another critical concern, with 65.88% of centres facing shortages, compromising children's health and overall development, contrary to NEP 2020's emphasis on health and nutrition. The inadequacy of ECCE kits and teaching-learning materials (56.47%) further weakens the centres' ability to deliver engaging and creative education, crucial for holistic development as outlined in NCF-FS 2022.

Furthermore, the lack of pictorial books and storybooks in 58.82% of centres significantly limits cognitive and language development, which are core components of both NEP 2020 and NCF-FS 2022. These deficiencies underscore the urgent need for improved resource allocation to align Anganwadi Centres with the policy objectives for quality early childhood education.

## 8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings suggest that while NEP 2020 and NCF-FS 2022 provide a robust framework for delivering high-quality ECCE, the practical realities in Rangia Sub District show a gap in resource availability. These inadequacies in teaching materials, physical development tools, nutritional support, and learning resources highlight the pressing need for focused interventions to bridge the gap between policy and practice. Addressing these challenges is critical for ensuring that Anganwadi Centres can fulfill their potential as effective providers of early childhood education and care, as envisioned by NEP 2020.

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