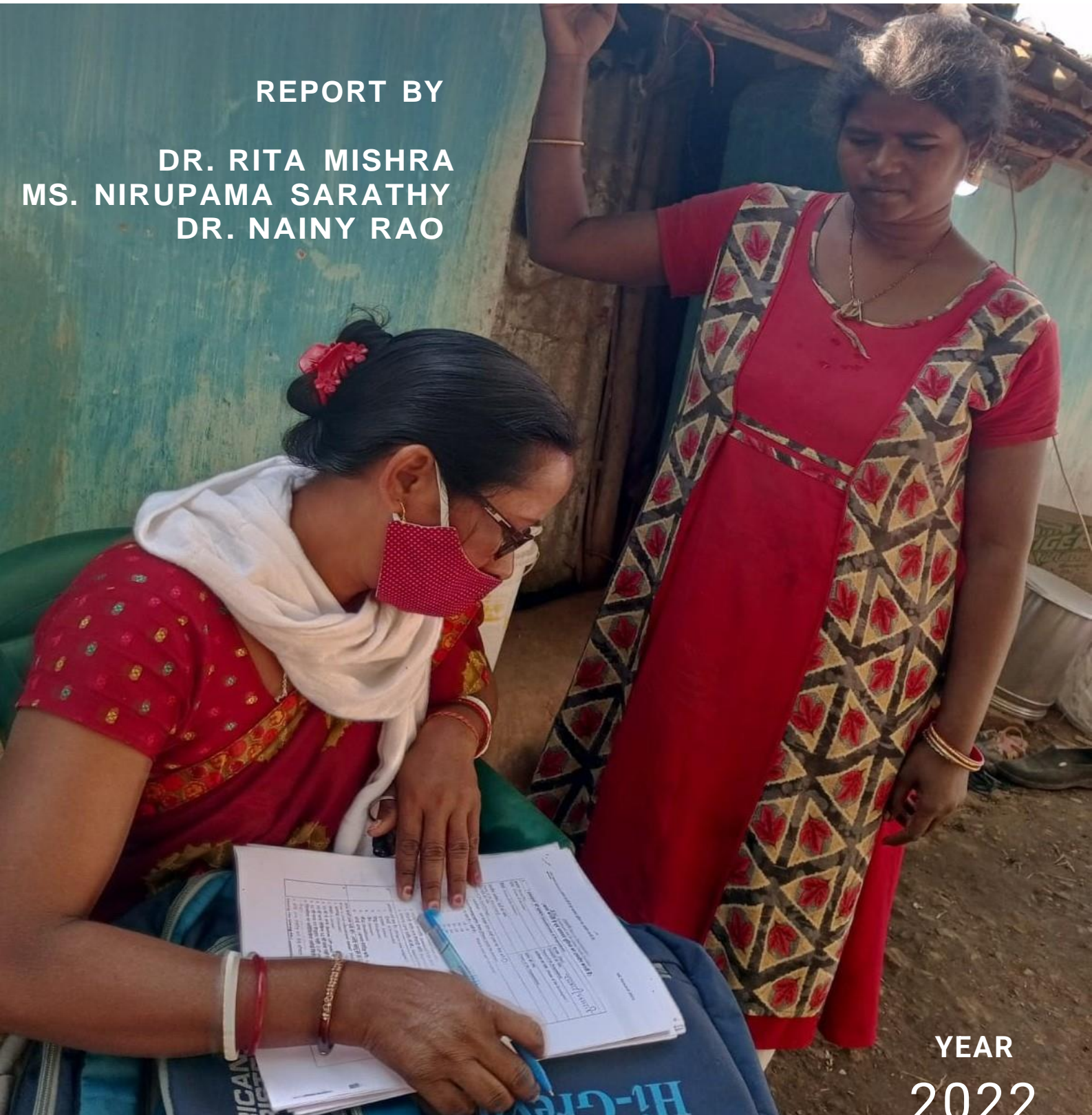


WOMEN NEED CRECHES

A synthesis of survey findings based on a national study
-Interlinkage between women's participation in paid work
and the nature of childcare arrangements in India

REPORT BY

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Article 41

The state shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education, and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want.



Abbreviations

ANM – Auxiliary Nurse Midwife
ASHA – Accredited Social Health
Activist
AWW- Anganwadi Workers
EAC – Employed and Availing
CrecheECD – Early Childhood
Development
EDI – Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India
ENAC – Employed and Not Availing Creche
FGD – Focused Group Discussion
FLFP – Female Labour Force Participation
FORCES – Forum for Creche and childcare
servicesGDP – Gross Domestic Product
ICDS – Integrated Child Development
SchemeILO – International Labour
Organization
ISST -Institute of Social Studies Trust
IWWAGE – Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the
EconomyKII – Key Informant Interview
LEADS- Life Education and Development Support
LFPR – Labour Force Participation
RateMC – Mobile Creches
MGNREGA – Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee
ActMUDRA -Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency
Ltd.
NCS – National Creche
SchemeNE – Not Employed
NGO – Non-Government
Organization NRLM -National Rural
Livelihood Mission
NSSO – National Sample Survey
OrganizationOBC – Other Backward Classes
OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PLFS – Periodic Labour Force Survey
PHRN – Public Health Resource Network
RGNCS – Rajiv Gandhi National Creche
Scheme
SC – Scheduled Caste
SDG – Sustainable Development Goals
SEWA – Self Employed Women's
Association SHG
ST- Scheduled Tribe
WCD – Women and Child Development
WIEGO – Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing

Codes Used

JH - Jharkhand

KA- Karnataka

GU-

Gujarat

OD-

Odisha U

Urban

R- Rural

Activity names are suffixed after State and urban / rural category to cite FGD data. For example, for a specific FGD activity in urban Jharkhand, the code used is JH-U-B4.

Executive Summary

BACKGROUND

Mobile Creches (MC) is a leading organization for Early Childhood Development (ECD) in India. Headquartered in New Delhi, it works across the country at the grassroots level for young children, under 6 years of age, with a focus on the most vulnerable children from migrant families and slum dwellers. The organization has developed high impact training resources to build capacities of early childhood care workers across government and non-government settings.

MC instituted a study to examine the need for creches in India from a women's rights' perspective to build evidence that would

support the need for a nation-wide campaign demanding creches for women from disadvantaged communities. This report is based on the study carried out in 4 states (Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka and Odisha) in India.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research had two overarching and integrally connected objectives:

- What are the perceived needs for childcare facilities and creches among women from the informal sector?
- What are the interlinkages between access to childcare, child and mother wellbeing, and women's ability to engage in paid work?



More specifically, the objectives were:

- To study the different types of childcare support accessed by poor women who engage in paid work in the informal sector
- To identify the perceived improvements in child wellbeing outcomes as articulated by the women accessing the childcare facilities
- To document the perceived personal and work-related benefits women experienced due to accessing the childcare facilities
- To assess the institutional childcare facilities required or demanded by the working women, and explore gaps in these facilities in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic
- To discern whether the availability of childcare support is a key determinant for currently non-working women to start engaging in paid work
- To assess the need for childcare facilities required by those who are not working

METHODOLOGY

The research used the stratified random sampling method to undertake primary research. Low rate of female labour force participation was the primary criterion for selecting states. Other considerations for selecting states were regional representation, presence of operational Creches and data collection feasibility.

In each state, two districts were selected for the research – one urban and one rural. All the respondents in this research were women having children in the age group of 0 to 6 years and were either in paid work or willing to join paid work. All women respondents were further divided into three categories — women not employed (NE), employed women but not availing Creche (ENAC), employed women availing Creche (EAC).

Different categories of women were assigned varying weightage considering the purpose of the research was to find out the interlinkage between childcare and work participation.

Therefore, maximum weightage (50%) was given to women who are currently not engaged in paid work but are interested in joining. Women who are already employed and use Creches were given the lowest weightage.

DATA COLLECTION

The study adopted a mixed method approach for data collection. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected using qualitative as well as quantitative tools. A questionnaire was developed to undertake a survey of women in the informal sector in four selected states.

Qualitative data was collected through FGDs and KIIs.

National orientation for the MC research was organized online in November 2021. Field investigators and consultants from all the selected states participated in this training. The national research team designed and facilitated a three-day long workshop, in each state, on the research objective, the sampling process, concepts used, and the tools. In each location, 8–10 field investigators underwent training. Survey data was collected from 1128 respondents in four states between December 2021 and February 2022. Altogether, 36 FGDs were conducted, including 4 FGDs with men.

KEY FINDINGS

1. MAJORITY OF WOMEN ARE FORCED TO ADOPT UNSAFE, COMPROMISED CHOICES FOR CHILDCARE

In this study, two categories of working women were identified. First, those who are working and availing Creche facilities (EAC); and second, those who are working but not availing Creche facilities (ENAC). The ENAC category was further divided into two sub-categories:

a) Those who had access to Creches but not using it

b) Those who had no access to such facility

It was found that over 61% (N=137) EAC women were using Creches operated by NGOs, followed by those run by the government which were accessed by 21% (N=47) EAC women. Additionally, employer-run Creches and community Creches cater to a small percentage of working women.

41% of ENAC women leave their children with an adult family member when they go to work. 59% (N=196) of working mothers (ENAC) are forced to compromise and adopt dangerous choices for childcare, adversely impact their children's wellbeing, and consequently their own mental health and economic productivity. This includes 11% ENAC women (N=37) who had to leave their young children —aged 0- 6 years of age— in the care of their older children, often their daughters, and 5% ENAC women (N=17) who had to leave their children alone at home. The ENAC women from both categories acknowledged that this arrangement has left them stressed, frustrated, and under immense mental pressure. 49.5% women (ENAC and NE, N=559) were not even aware of the existence of Creche facilities. The lack of awareness about Creche and its services is leading to an absence of demand from communities, resulting in the State not recognising the need for Creches. This is leading to Creche budget cuts year after year and weak grounds for negotiation by civil society members, which has led to several Creches being shut down.

2. CHILDCARE RESPONSIBILITY ACTS AS A BARRIER TO WOMEN'S ABILITY TO JOIN PAID WORK

The interlinkage between paid work and childcare responsibility was examined by asking women about their personal experiences and by seeking their opinions about women in the informal sector. The overwhelming response from women across the four states was that the burden of care work placed on women in general, especially the responsibility of care of young children, acts as a significant hindrance for women engaging in paid work. Almost half of the women belonging to NE category (48.6%, N= 271/558) were engaged in paid work in the past but gave it up due to childcare responsibilities. When asked if they would prefer accessing Creche facilities, a whopping 95.1% NE women (N= 529) said "Yes."

Overall, almost 89% of women (N=494) not engaged in paid work said that caring for the child was one of the main reasons they were not working. More than 96% of women are willing to leave their children in a good Creche and join work.

3. ACCESS TO FREE CHILDCARE SERVICES FACILITATES WOMEN JOINING PAID WORK

The study finds that 34.7% of EAC women (N =78) reported that they joined paid work only after they had access to a Creche. EAC women (68%, N=153) attributed free services at a Creche as the reason for using it. A whopping 95.7% women (N = 1079) shared that access to a Creche, or similar facilities would enable more women to start paid work. It was also of importance to see what other factors, according to the respondents, would enable women to start/continue paid work after having children. Of the total number of responses, 69.7% EAC women (N = 157), 89.7% ENAC women (N = 305) and 90.4% NE women (N = 509) felt that a Creche or similar facilities would enable them to join paid work.

Most of the women across working and non-working categories rated Creche services as essential. Of these, the highest percentage, 83.1%, of EAC women (N = 187), who had experienced the benefits of Creche facilities, considered such services to be very essential. The data suggests that there is a difference between the perceptions of urban and rural women in terms of considering Creche as an essential requirement. In each of the categories, the essentiality of Creche was rated higher by women situated in urban areas than those in rural areas.

Women across categories are ready to pay for services. In all three categories, the willingness to pay for childcare facilities was more among urban women than rural women. It should be noted, however, that the willingness to pay shows the desperation for childcare services rather than the capacity to pay for it. This is also reflected in the data collected; although 86% of women reported Creche to be essential for working women, only 28.6% (N=323) women were willing to pay for it. Therefore, it could be safely argued that free Creche facilities find incredible support among women from the informal sector.

Reasons for not accessing Creches were largely attributed to gender norms, cultural practices, and the quality of services provided. It was not because women considered Creche facilities inconsequential.

Creches are considered as a top enabler by EAC women for joining paid work. It is critical to highlight that a substantial percentage of EAC women, 86% (N =194), shared that access to a Creche or similar facilities, would enable them to start paid work. The above analysis corroborates with other research studies which establish that women perceive Creche as an enabler because it: a) allows them to be financially independent, b) shares their childcare responsibility and c) provides a range of benefits to their children.

4. CRECHE FACILITIES HAVE A FAVOURABLE IMPACT ON WOMEN'S WELLBEING, INCOME, RELATIONSHIP WITH FAMILY MEMBERS, AND CHILDREN'S WELLBEING

This study attempted to identify the benefits women attributed to Creche use. These were classified into two categories — those linked to women's wellbeing and those associated with children. Data obtained from EAC women, both through FGDs and surveys, revealed that creche facilities enormously impact women's wellbeing, income, child wellbeing, and relationship with family members.

Of the total 225 EAC women, 88% (N= 198) responded that their income level has improved after accessing Creche facilities. An interesting finding was that 34.6% (N=78) of the respondents started working only after using Creche. The range of income for these respondents, who joined work only after accessing Creche, was Rs.1000-6000. For the remaining respondents, the average increase in income was 108% (Jharkhand=50%, Gujarat=88%, Karnataka=83%, and Odisha=108%). Women shared that after availing Creche services, they felt less stressed, freer and more relaxed, and hence they were able to focus on work better than earlier. Availability of meals in Creches also makes them relaxed as they don't have to worry about feeding their children. However, some women from Jharkhand (Rural & Urban) pointed out that their childcare burden is only partially lessened as the Creches only look after children aged 3 months to 3 years, and there is no facility for children above 3 years of age (JR and JU -1A). The men also shared that there was an improvement in their home environment as "earlier [they] used to hit [their] children when they played mischief, but now such situation does not arise. There are fewer quarrels with [their wives] as well." (GR-1B). When asked about the activities which women are able to engage in after accessing Creche, the top 3 responses were that they were able to: go to ration shops/ banks/ hospital (78.8%), rest and relax (48.2%), learn new skills (35.1%), and attend the village or SHG meetings (35.1%). 89.3% (N= 200) of EAC respondents said that Creche was helpful in managing childcare responsibilities.

Availability of nutritious food at the Creche was one of the chief attractions for women in all the states. Women also shared that due to better food habits and the regular health check-ups, children are falling ill less often than earlier (JU-1B). 96.4% (N=216) respondents stated that their child's health had improved after joining the Creche. Across all the states, women believed children are learning good habits like respecting elders, maintaining hygiene, handwashing before meals, eating on their own (using a spoon in some cases) etc. in the Creche. Jharkhand rural men shared that, earlier, older children were engaged in paid work due to low family income, but now they can afford to go to school.

5. PREVAILING PATRIARCHAL NORMS INFLUENCE WOMEN'S ACCESS TO CHILDCARE AND THEREFORE DECISION TO JOIN PAID WORK

Gender, caste, and kinship factors were closely intertwined in creating a resistance to institutional childcare support. Availability of childcare facilities is not enough, women lack agency to decide what is good for them and their children and therefore, are not able to access the facilities. The gendered notion of woman's primary role as a caregiver has been internalized by women as much as by men through socialization. Therefore, despite seeing the value in leaving their children to Creche and fulfilling their desire to join paid work, many women are unable to do so and have to wait for approval from either their husbands or the elders in the family. Women are unable to imagine men in caregiving roles. There is lack of local role models for them to emulate. Similarly, though men perceive the benefits associated with women joining paid work, yet they are not ready to share the childcare responsibilities.

In nutshell, patriarchal norms and unfavorable gender attitudes continue to place a disproportionate burden of care on women, adversely affecting their access to paid work.

The gender norms governing what constitutes 'women's primary work,' and the patriarchal attitudes of 'not allowing women to go out to work' are significant barriers to women engaging in paid work.

The ENAC women who make alternate arrangements despite having a Creche in their locality largely expressed satisfaction with these arrangements. Though it did contribute to increased stress and strain on relationships, it was still the default option, and preferred over leaving the child with an 'outsider.' The belief that 'the home is the best place for the child,' 'nobody can take care of the child like a family does' dominate decisions around childcare. If factors at the workplace and in public spaces, including safety and costs involved in travel, can be taken care of, some of the factors hindering women's work participation can also be mitigated.

6. WOMEN WANT FREE AND GOOD QUALITY CHILDCARE FACILITY TO JOIN PAID WORK

Women underlined that the Creche facilities for younger kids can't be the same for older kids. More than 70% women want Creches to be free for women from the informal sector. They have clearly articulated their understanding of a good Creche. The seven critical areas emphasized by women are:

- i) Good infrastructure, including space to sleep,
- ii) Trained caregivers and discrimination-free safe spaces,
- iii) Facility must cater to younger and older kids,
- iv) Offer educational services,
- v) Ensure nutritious food and health services,
- vi) Involve parents in running Creches, and
- vii) Have a people-friendly location, timing, and subsidized / free services.

7. COVID-19 HAS IMPACTED WOMEN IN INFORMAL SECTOR IN MULTIPLE WAYS

Only 10% women (N= 19/1119) were engaged in some sort of paid work during the lockdown. 90% did not have access to paid work. The survey points out that more ENAC women than EAC women were engaged in paid work during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Out of 1128 women, 716 women (63.47%) reported that, during this period, no family member was working. More than a quarter of the respondents reported that food availability at home was insufficient.

In terms of the kind of support respondents and their families received during the lockdown period, 86% women (N=798) have reported that they have received cooked food, dry rations, cash, Covid-19 kits, etc. 14% women shared that they did not receive any support. Lack of food and lack of money to buy groceries would have had lasting, and in many cases, detrimental impact on the women's and children's wellbeing.

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted families in many ways. 716 out of 1128 women reported that no family member was working during the lockdown, forcing them to dig into their savings. Anxiety about the future was another major issue due to the prevailing uncertainty, as reported by 531 out of 1128 women.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: DEVELOP A NATIONAL STRATEGY ON CARE ECONOMY

Unpaid care work, including childcare, is closely linked to household production, market production, and public sector policies related to female labour force participation. The gender-based division of labour in the home and society poses several constraints and serious disadvantages to women in areas like earning income, skill development, participating in public and democratic life, and having rest and leisure time. Therefore, addressing care work must be a key policy priority to support women's economic empowerment. Time-use surveys that help to recognize and remunerate care work along with adequate policy and budgetary allocations can reduce and redistribute the unpaid care work done by women, thereby enabling them to play a greater role in the paid work arena.

RECOMMENDATION 2: ENSURE DECENT WORK AND WORKERS' RIGHTS TO WOMEN WORKERS ENGAGED IN PUBLIC CHILDCARE SCHEMES

The above recommendation on care economy also has linkages with the decent work agenda on the creation of sustainable, inclusive, and decent employment for women and the youth in care jobs. They are mostly in the informal economy and especially vulnerable to socio-economic and environmental exclusion. Recognition and professionalization of childcare cadre, collective bargaining for the job security of care workers, fair remuneration, ensuring social protection, decent working conditions, and worker's rights to the lakhs of care workers in India (mostly women) in government care schemes, would go a long way in supporting and boosting women's work participation. Decision-makers should take concrete action in promoting quality job generation in the care sector while ensuring their recognition and protection as workers.

This would have a twofold impact— first, directly benefitting the women workers in care work; and second, enabling other women to avail care and enter the workforce.

RECOMMENDATION 3: ADVOCATE FOR GENDER RESPONSIVE AND GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE POLICIES IN THE AREAS OF LABOUR, CARE, AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Gender transformative institutional policies related to labour, care, and social protection will have a strong effect on women's work participation. These include innovative and transformative practices to recognize and support the rights of women informal workers; addressing gender stereotypes and cultural barriers through increased investments and incentives for programmes promoting father's engagement in caregiving; programmes to develop responsive caregiving capacities of parents (Based on UNICEF's Family-Friendly Policies); targeted policy initiatives for gender-responsive recovery from Covid-19 impacts and its economic fallout; large scale public opinion-building for shifting social narratives towards valuing women's unpaid care work and economic rights and redistribute the care burden, etc.

RECOMMENDATION 4: AWARENESS-BUILDING EFFORTS ON INSTITUTIONAL CHILDCARE FACILITIES AND PROVISIONS IS CRITICAL TO CREATE AND SUSTAIN DEMAND FOR QUALITY CHILDCARE SERVICES

Large-scale information and public awareness programmes undertaken by the Government for better uptake and localized campaigns initiated by civil society are needed to create awareness and agency of women to demand for quality institutional childcare facilities as a public good, as a basic right for children and women, and as workers. A multi-pronged and broad-based civil society campaign involving multiple groups — women's rights groups and gender specialists, unorganized workers federations, trade unions and labour rights groups, youth groups, early childhood education, health, nutrition alliances, as well as anti-child labour groups, along with other activist groups — will bring their expertise and understanding of grassroots work for outlining advocacy directions towards pursuing the twin agendas of improved child well-being and women's work participation through institutional child care facilities.

RECOMMENDATION 5: ENHANCED PUBLIC PROVISIONING AND BUDGETARY ALLOCATION IS THE NEED OF THE HOUR FOR EXPANSION OF QUALITY CHILD CARE SERVICES

With both the ICDS and NCS schemes already poorly funded and with declining provisioning over the years, the number of Creches and number of children covered has seen a steep fall. The Covid-19 Pandemic has further dealt a big blow shutting down these essential services at a time when they are needed the most. This is a cause of serious concern needing urgent attention to address child well-being as well the needs of women. Both schemes meet a very vital need and fill a huge gap in support in the informal sector, especially for women who need to work to make ends meet and do not have any other option of hiring childcare support. There is an urgent need to increase government budgets, with separate allocations for full-day Creche facilities with trained staff and infrastructure.

However, given the immediate overwhelming need for creche facilities and women's readiness to get to work, multiple funding models may be explored to bridge the gap. Revitalizing the provisions of the existing schemes and adding a network of public and workplace Creches will be hugely beneficial.

Incentives and support for community-based and contributory models may be additionally explored, where possible, with private partnership.

RECOMMENDATION 6: DRIVING AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TOWARDS INCLUSIVE AND QUALITY CHILDCARE IS ESSENTIAL TO MAKE CHILDCARE A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

It takes a community to raise a child. Nurturance and care of children as the future generations, future citizens, future workforce, and nation-builders of the future is the collective responsibility of various elements of society, not just at an individual level, but also institutionally at various levels. Policies and programmes need to focus on the meaningful integration of parents and families, local communities and CSOs, as well as the market and media, local governance, and State, for ensuring quality childcare. Ground level work with community groups and local decision-makers would bring in contextualized innovations in management for quality and sustainability. These measures will not be successful without proper implementation of labour provisions and employers setting up childcare facilities at the workplace, with incentives, subsidies, and PPP with the government. New age entrepreneurs can be incentivized to come up with commercial and community-based models to pilot and scale up childcare support, specifically for women in the informal sector.



97%

women think
Creche is an
essential
requirement

59%

women in paid
work adopted
unsafe and
compromised
childcare
arrangements

89%

EAC women
reported
increase in
income after
Creche use



CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Mobile Creches (MC) is a leading organization for Early Childhood Development (ECD) in India. Headquartered in New Delhi, the organization works at the grassroots level across the country for young children under 6 years of age, with a focus on the most vulnerable children of migrant families and slum dwellers. MC has developed high impact training resources to build capacity of early childhood care workers across government and non-government settings.

MC instituted a study to assess the need for Creches in India from a women's rights perspective to build evidence for a nation-wide campaign demanding Creches for women from the disadvantaged communities. This report is based on the above study carried out in 4 states (Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, and Odisha) in India.

1.2 WHY ARE WOMEN IN INDIA MISSING FROM THE WORKFORCE?

India has one of the lowest female labour force participation rates among developing countries, and standing at 24.53% in 2018–19, it is well below the global average [1]. While most South Asian countries (except Afghanistan and Pakistan) have reported high women labour force participation rate, in India, the labour force participation rate of women has been declining over the period 1993 – 2016 [2]. Data from the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) indicates that FLFP in rural areas fell from 33.3% in 2004–05 to 19.7% in 2018–19. This is a sharper fall compared to rural men, whose participation fell from 55.5% to 55.1% in the same period, or urban women, whose participation fell from 17.8% to 16.1% [3].

Falling work participation rates for women in India has been the subject of debate and a major theme for research (Abraham, 2013; Himanshu, 2011; Kannan and Raveendran, 2012; Majumdar and Neetha, 2011) [4]. Some scholars argue that the decline in WPRs [5] is caused mainly by women and girls moving out of jobs to get education; others see it as a manifestation of an 'income effect', i.e., a withdrawal of women from the workforce because of rising incomes. Still others argue that WPRs have fallen because of declining work opportunities and measurement issues (substantially higher proportion of women attending to domestic duties).

A recent study by IWWAGE (April, 2021) [1] has delved deep into identifying the determinants of FLFP in India and states that women with young children are less likely to be in the labour force (Chaudhary and Verick, 2014; Chatterjee et al, 2015; Das and Žumbytė, 2017; ILO, 2018). Married women, and women with children in the household, perform more unpaid work than single women (Alonso et al, 2019; Oxfam, 2020). Raveendran (2016) finds that households with small children up to the age of 3 years saw a decline in labour force participation of women aged between 25 and 34 years, and the difference in women's participation between households with and without children was a significant 10% in 2011–12. Conversely, men's participation in the labour force was higher in households with young children (2.2%). **This clearly indicates that women from these households would have been in the labour force if not burdened with the disproportionate caregiving role, and the men are compensating for women's lack of participation.**

[1] Working or Not: What Determines Women's Labour force Participation in India?. IWWAGE, LEAD at Krea University, April 2021

[2] Where Are Indian Women If Not in the Workforce?. thewire.in

[3] Big Story: Making It Work for Women. Forbes India

[4] Abraham, Vinoj. 2013, 'Missing Labour or Consistent "De-Feminisation"?. Economic and Political Weekly 48 (31)

Himanshu 2011. 'Employment Trends in India: A Re-examination'. Economic and Political Weekly 46 (37).

Kannan, K. P., and G. Raveendran, 'Counting and Profiling the Missing Labour Force'. Economic and Political Weekly 47. 2012 (6).

[5] WPR – Worker Population Ratio

One of the key reasons restricting women from joining paid work has been the burden of unpaid care work including childcare (Banerjee, 2020[6], Mehrotra and Sinha, 2019, Policy Brief, WIEGO, 2016). Havnes and Mogstad (2011) in their study of the large-scale expansion of subsidized childcare provision in Norway highlight the strong positive effect of childcare provision on children’s educational attainment as well as women’s labour market participation (cited in Banerjee, 2020).

Studies show that childcare facilities enabled women from poor socio-economic backgrounds to join paid work and enhanced their productivity and income. In an impact assessment of SEWA childcare cooperative model (ASK, 2011) [7] it was found out that women who were sending their children to SEWA (Self Employed Women’s Association) childcare centers were able to work more hours during the day and work more days during the month, allowing them to earn a higher income and bolster their savings. The increase in income typically ranged from INR 500-1000 per month with some women’s wages increasing as much as INR 2000 per month. **Women also reported that having children enrolled in the care centers allowed them to concentrate on their work and seek better job opportunities.**

In an article published in *The Hindu Business Line* [8], the author argues that in recent years, government policies aimed at addressing the falling FLPR have mainly focused on launching employment programmes with special provisions to emphasize female employment such as MGNREGA, PMEGP, MUDRA; launching special skill training programmes; investing heavily in programmes that support education of the girl child, while also diluting protective legislation. However, the government has not done much to address the underlying social norms that compel women to be primary caregivers and disproportionately place the burden of care responsibilities on women. According to the NSSO, the proportion of women engaged primarily in domestic duties has only increased between 2004–05 and 2011–12 from 35.3% to 42.2% in rural areas and from 45.6% to 48% in urban areas. This article presumably argues in favor of addressing supply side issues to boost FLFP.

In another article, ‘How to ensure more women in the workforce,’ [9] the authors argue that “**Indian women’s labour force participation is more likely shaped by low and declining demand for female labour, rather than supply side constraints.**” They argue that gender–discriminatory laws with the intent to protect female workers further push them out of employment. In many cases, the supply side issues are also linked to prevailing social norms, and non-recognition by employers of the fact that, “paucity of women in the workforce [is] a problem and they need to be willing to implement solutions to alleviate the multiple demand-side constraints” [9].

Despite the extensive literature on the above themes, a glaring gap remains. There is scant research on the issue of childcare, the options before women, the access to childcare facilities, the role of the state in the provision of childcare, the performance of existing schemes, and most importantly the interlinkage between women’s participation in paid work and the nature of childcare arrangements in India. This study instituted by MC tried to explore some of these issues through primary research because it believes that “programmes to boost female employment without any arrangement for reducing the care responsibilities of women will only increase their burden” [9].

[6] Monika Banerjee, Women and their Childcare Needs: Assessing Childcare Provisioning in India through a Gender Lens. ISST Working Paper Series. 2020.

[7] Association for Stimulating Know How (2011), ‘SEWA Childcare: Impact Assessment Report for Year 2011’. Gurgaon: India

[8] How to Boost Women’s Workforce Participation. *The Hindu Business Line*

[9] *Hindustan Times*. 30th April 2022

[10] <https://www.hindustantimes.com/opinion/how-to-ensure-more-women-in-the-workforce-101651242000301.html>

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research had two overarching and integrally connected objectives:

- ♦ To examine the perceived needs for childcare facilities and creches among women from the informal sector.
- ♦ To examine the interlinkages between access to childcare, well-being of the child and mother, and women's ability to engage in paid work.
More specifically, the objectives were:
 - ♦ To study different types of childcare support accessed by poor women who engage in paid work in the informal sector.
 - ♦ To identify the perceived improvements in child wellbeing outcomes as articulated by the women accessing the childcare facilities.
 - ♦ To document the perceived personal and work-related benefits women experienced due to accessing the childcare facilities.
 - ♦ To assess the institutional childcare facilities required or demanded by the working women and explore gaps in these facilities including in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - ♦ To determine whether the availability of childcare support is a key determinant for currently non-working women to start engaging in paid work.
 - ♦ To assess the need for childcare facilities required by those who are not working.

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

With intensive secondary research in informal economy, unpaid care work, and childcare provisioning, an eclectic approach was adopted for the study. The overarching framework for the study was guided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ILO conventions.



SDG 5: ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

Target 5.4: Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.

Indicator 5.4.1: Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location.

The SDG features unpaid care work in SDG 5 - Gender Equality. This is the first time that the world has recognized unpaid care work as a gender issue and has set two targets for countries to achieve. It clearly mandates countries to recognize unpaid care work and value it through policies and programmes. It also intends to value and redistribute the unpaid care work responsibility within four institutions (emphasized by Razavi, 2007) — state, market, voluntary organizations, and families — and, in the process, address gender-based division of labour. This builds on existing international human rights treaties and conventions such as those on maternity protection (183) and workers with family responsibilities (156), which speak directly to legislation and labour practices that help workers access decent work while considering care responsibilities. Particularly significant for informal workers are the recent ILO Recommendation 202 on social protection floors and Recommendation 204 on the transition from the informal to the formal economy which recognize the need for childcare and maternity benefits as part of global social protection floors.

The ILO Domestic Workers Convention (189) sets out legally binding labour standards for the protection of domestic workers — who are amongst the most oppressed informal care workers (Policy Brief, WIEGO, 2016). This research aimed at examining the unpaid care burden on women, specifically childcare, and the facilities available and accessible to them. Therefore, it seemed logical to use a framework informed by SDG 5 and ILO conventions to look at childcare as a systemic issue and approach the research through a gender lens.

The research was designed to be cross cutting as it covered four fundamental human rights – labour rights, women’s rights, child rights, and children’s right to education. In addition to SDGs and ILO conventions, it used the 4R framework – Recognition, Reduction, Redistribution, and Representation (developed by Diane Elson) in conceptualizing and researching the study themes. Further, the four key elements of the 4R framework were analyzed using the Care Diamond Model propagated by Razavi (2007) and the human rights framework of 3AQ - Accessibility, Availability and Affordability and Quality.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The research followed stratified random sampling to undertake the primary research. Low female labour force participation rate was the primary criterion for selecting states. Additionally, the states were selected on the following basis:

- a) Covering both rural and urban areas in each state
- b) Having a creche programme (the NCS, creches run by NGOs and others)
- c) Ensuring regional representation as well as representation of tribal areas
- d) Considering feasibility of primary data collection in the context of Covid-19

In each state, two districts were selected for the research — one urban and one rural. In urban districts, two wards, having Creche facilities, were selected for the study. In rural districts, it was ensured that each block selected for the research had a Creche. Some of the challenges associated with these processes have been discussed in the limitation of the study section.

Following states were selected for the research:

States	Female (Rural)	Female (Urban)	Female Rural + Urban	Functional Creches*
Jharkhand	15.5	9.3	14.3	743
Karnataka	22.0	16.1	19.7	869
Odisha	19.2	18.1	18.7	569
Gujrat	19.3	13.5	16.9	1138
All India	19.7	16.1	18.6	21021

Source: Table 16, LFPR (in percent) according to usual status. Age group: All ages 0+ Annual Report –PLFS -2018-2019 downloaded on 26th August 2021
*Source: <https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files> downloaded on 14th August 2021

In each state, two districts were selected for the research – one urban and one rural. All the respondents in this research were women having children in the age group of 0–6 years and were either in paid work or willing to join paid work (women respondents not in paid work were from similar socio-economic backgrounds as the women in paid work). All women respondents were further divided into three categories — women not employed (NE), women employed and not availing Creche (ENAC), women employed and availing Creche (EAC). Different categories of women were assigned varying weightage because the purpose of the research was to find out the interlinkage between childcare and work participation. Therefore, maximum weightage (50%) was given to women who are currently not in paid work but interested in joining work.

Women who are already using Creche and in paid work were given the lowest weightage. The sampling procedure followed in each state is shown in the following page.

Table 1. Actual number of respondents – state wise and category wise

	Odisha			Jharkhand			Karnataka			Gujarat			Total
	R	U	T	R	U	T	R	U	T	R	U	T	
NE (50%)	80	63	143	80	60	140	80	60	140	79	61	140	563
ENAC (30%)	48	36	84	48	36	84	48	36	84	51	37	88	340
EAC (20%)	32	24	56	32	24	56	32	24	56	33	24	57	225
TOTAL	283			280			280			285			1128
Rural	160			160			160			163			643
Urban	123			120			120			122			485

1.5.1 IDENTIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS

After selecting districts and blocks (having Creches) the next task was to identify villages / areas. Once they were identified based on the guidelines discussed earlier, the field team accessed list of women from Anganwadi centers / ASHA workers. They shortlisted women having children aged 0-6 years and collected additional information such as currently working or not, interested in joining the survey, willing to join paid work etc. For each area (in urban location) and each village, the field investigators prepared a category wise list of potential respondents based on the above information. Post this exercise, they prepared the lists of potential respondents in alphabetical order for each category. Every 5th respondent from the list participated in the survey process. Teams were asked to cover at least 6 villages in a block and 6 areas in a ward. They were given the freedom to add more villages if required to meet the sample size.

1.5.2 DATA

The study adopted a mixed method for data collection. Data was collected both from primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected using both qualitative and quantitative tools. Secondary data: The purpose of the research being to generate evidence for childcare provisioning and linking it with labour force participation of women in the informal sector, the team accessed policy papers, academic publications, and national and international reports in this area and undertook a literature review process to get a critical perspective on the research theme. Secondary research was referred to while conceptualization of the research and finalizing tools, and to substantiate research findings. Primary data: This research is based on primary data. A questionnaire was developed to undertake a survey with women from the informal sector in four selected states. Data was collected from 1128 respondents. Qualitative data was collected through FGDs and KIIs.

No. of States	4 States
No. of Districts	8 Districts
No. of Blocks	8 Blocks
No. of Wards	8 Wards
No. of Localities (U)	56 localities
No. of Villages (R)	57 Villages
No. of Villages with Creche	17 Villages with Creche facility
No. of Localities with Creche	11 Localities with Creche facility

1.5.3 TOOL DEVELOPMENT

Survey questionnaires - Three sets of questionnaires, one each for NE, EAC, and ENAC were designed, piloted, and translated into four languages (Odia, Hindi, Gujarati, and Kannada) after receiving feedback from RAC members, field investigators, and other stakeholders.

Focused Group Discussions – Two sets of activities for each respondent category prepared and piloted. The activities were written with clear instruction for facilitators, along with documentation format.

Key Informant Interviews were conducted with caregivers, NGO functionaries, Creche in-charges, thematic experts, and government officials. For each KII, a separate questionnaire was prepared.

1.5.4 TRAINING

- National orientation on the MC research was organized online in November 2021. Field investigators and consultants from all the states participated in this training.
- State level training - The national research team designed and facilitated a three-day long workshop on the research objective, sampling procedure, concepts, and tools by visiting each state. In each location, 8–10 field investigators underwent the training. During the training, tools were piloted and a grounding on the experience of data collection was facilitated
- Training was provided to senior investigators on facilitation of FGDs during the state level training. Another round of refresher training was organized virtually bringing all facilitators together for practice and confidence building.
- Training was also imparted virtually at the national level on documentation of FGD activities through examples.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Though we wanted to consider Uttar Pradesh as one of the north Indian states with poor FLFP for the research, we abandoned the idea due to Assembly election and other technical issues.
- It was extremely hard to find functional Creches in many states. Most of the Creches were either partially functional or shut down. In many cases, they had been permanently shut down. In a few cases in Gujarat and Jharkhand, to meet our sample requirement, we had to interview women who had used the Creches in the past, when their kids were younger.
- As this research was undertaken during the pandemic—when most childcare facilities were either shut down completely or were partially operational—it is difficult to establish on what grounds the women preferred certain types of Creches.
- The study was conducted after the second wave, during the ongoing pandemic. During the data collection process, the surge in Omicron cases impacted the data collection process as most of the members in the data collection team got infected with the virus. It changed the team composition in certain states, delayed the actual data collection process, and resulted in a big lag between the training on data collection tools and the actual data collection process in two states.
- It was tough to find functional Creches in Odisha in urban districts. Therefore, Rayagada in Odisha was selected as the urban district having Creches under Rayagada Municipality.
- No strict definition for classification of rural and urban district was followed.
- Creches were classified as government, NGO run, or private, as per the understanding of the field investigators and the state consultants.
- A detailed policy review and budgetary analysis was not the mandate of this study, which is based more on primary data. However, for context and ease of understanding for readers, a brief policy section/national policy overview has been put together from secondary sources. It is not exhaustive; therefore, it should be considered as a limitation.

Concepts and Definitions

Informal work includes those working in the informal sector - that is, in all unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in the sale and production of goods and services, operated on a proprietary or partnership basis and with less than 10 total workers, as well as domestic workers, contributing family workers, casual day laborer, and workers in the formal sector with no social security and benefits provided by the employer

(Source: Women in the Indian Informal Economy. ISST, IWWAGE, Lead- Krea University, 2021)

Unpaid care work refers to all unpaid services provided within a household for its members, including care of persons, housework, and voluntary community work (Elson, 2000). These activities are considered work, because theoretically one could pay a third person to perform them.

Unpaid = the individual performing this activity is not remunerated

Care = the activity provides what is necessary for the health, well-being, maintenance, and protection of someone or something

Work = the activity involves mental or physical effort and is costly in terms of time resource

A Creche is a facility which enables parents to leave their children while they are at work, where children are provided with a stimulating environment for their holistic development. Creches are designed to provide group care to children, usually up to 6 years of age, who need care, guidance and supervision away from their home during the day. These include:

- (i) Daycare facilities including sleeping facilities
- (ii) Early stimulation for children below 3 years and pre-school education for children aged 3 to 6 years old
- (iii) Supplementary nutrition (to be locally sourced)
- (iv) Growth monitoring
- (v) Health check-up and immunization

Working woman refers to a woman involved in any income generation activity either at home or outside.

Women's well-being refers to

The impact on women's conditions of work (both formal/informal), hours of work, days of work, income, stress, mobility, choice of paid work.

How has the availability of childcare facilities impacted women's own health and well-being in terms of a) physical health, b) mental and emotional well-being, c) quality of relationships, d) rest and leisure (self-care) etc.?

CAN CRECHE BRING MORE WOMEN TO PAID WORK?

88.7% NE (N=499) women attributed childcare responsibility as the main reason for not joining paid work.

95.7% women (N = 1079) shared that access to a Creche or similar facilities would enable women to start paid work.



"When elder children go to school, it will be difficult to take care of the younger ones"
(FGD -KU-3A)

"ನನಗೆ ನಂಬಿಕೆ ಇಲ್ಲ, ನನ್ನ ಸೋದರಿ ಅಥವಾ ತರಹ ಮಗುವನ್ನು ನಂಬಿಕೆ ಇಲ್ಲದಂತೆ ಕಾಳಗ ಮಾಡುವುದು"
"I don't trust that my sister-in-law will be able to take care of my children the way my mother-in-law does." (FGD-KU-4)





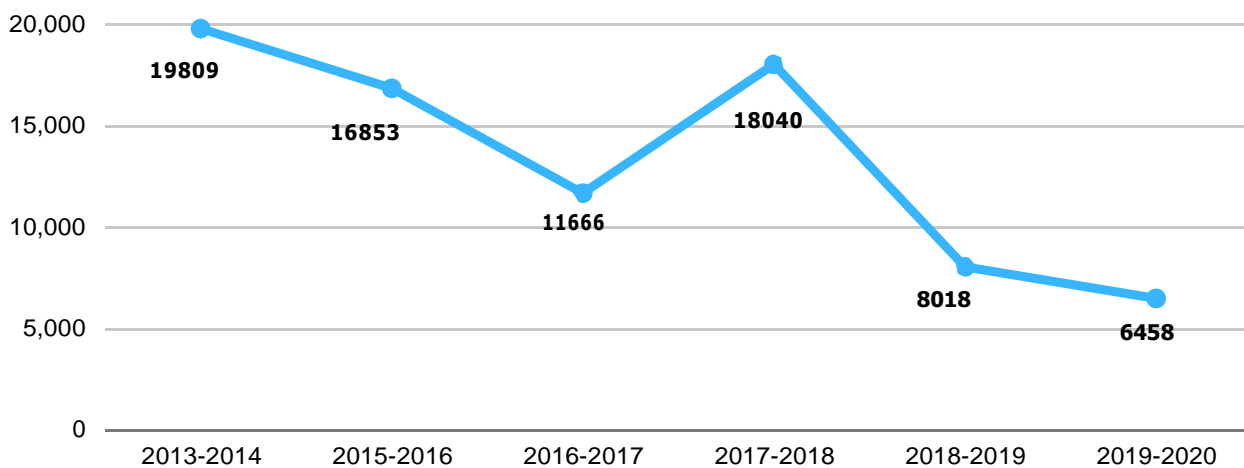
CHAPTER 2. CRECHE SCHEME: A REALITY CHECK

This chapter provides a brief analysis of the government run National Creche Scheme (NCS) based on secondary literature. A detailed analysis on childcare provisioning in India is available in the working paper series published by ISST in 2020 called 'Women and Their Childcare Needs.' In the working paper series, Dr. Monika Banerjee has provided a comprehensive assessment of childcare provisioning in India using the Care Diamond Model (Pg. 14-26).

2.1 NATIONAL CRECHE SCHEME: THEN AND NOW

The only scheme for establishing Creches in the country, the Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme (RGNCS) was launched on 1st January 2006. This was meant to provide day-care facilities to children—between 6 months to 6 years of age— of working women and other deserving women based on their net annual income. The scheme was later revised and made a centrally sponsored scheme called National Creche Scheme in 2017. The scheme now falls under the umbrella of the Integrated Child Development Services under the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The scheme has the twin objectives of empowering women (working mothers) by providing day-care facilities to their children, as well as promoting the holistic development of children. The scheme serves an important need of working mothers from poor & low-income families.

Till the end of 2016, the RGNCS was essentially centrally run. The Center bore 90% of the cost while the NGO running the Creche contributed 10%. But all that changed in January 2017. A revised cost sharing formula makes it a 60:40 deal between the Center and the states; for the Northeast; for Himalayan states, it is 90:10; for UTs without a legislature, however, it's fully centrally funded. In this new arrangement, the Centre would now only contribute 60% of funds, meaning states would have to make up the 40% shortfall. The 40% includes 10% contribution by NGOs. Because of the change in the scheme pattern and the consequent changes in funding pattern, the number of operational Creches in the country have fallen from 19809 in 2013–14 to 6458 in 2020. The graph below captures how, over the years, the number of functional Creches under the National Creche Scheme for the Children of Working Mothers have seen a sharp decline.



Source: Times of India - 31st Jan 2019; PIB 09 Feb 2022, Release Id -1796835

The declining trend in the number of Creches suggests that this change in funding pattern did not work on the ground. According to officials, most of the Creches (around 21,000) under the RGNCS were run through a voluntary organization – Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW) – till December 2016. However, the ministry dissociated itself from ICCW. With ICCW out of the picture and the funding model revamped, the number of functional Creches has been steadily falling.

While there is no clear information available as to why states are not coming forward to proactively take up these Creches, the functionaries associated with the Creche system say the bureaucracy is awfully ignorant about the childcare burden of working women in the informal sector. Childcare, especially of young kids, is a big responsibility on a working woman's shoulder. Creches were a huge support system for these working mothers who were assured of their children's well-being. This apathy among policy makers, towards women in informal work, is reflected in their lack of motivation to mobilize / allocate financial resources (state share) for the scheme. Worse, many in the bureaucracy confuse Anganwadi centers as an alternative to Creche.

NOWHERE TO GO

Functional creches



In 2017, National Creche Scheme was brought under the 'ICDS umbrella' and revised cost sharing framework; ₹349.33 crore allocated from April 2017 to November 2018 for 23,555 creches

In April 2017, WCD ministry shared in Lok Sabha the details of the number of creches and beneficiaries:



Union Budget allocations for creche scheme

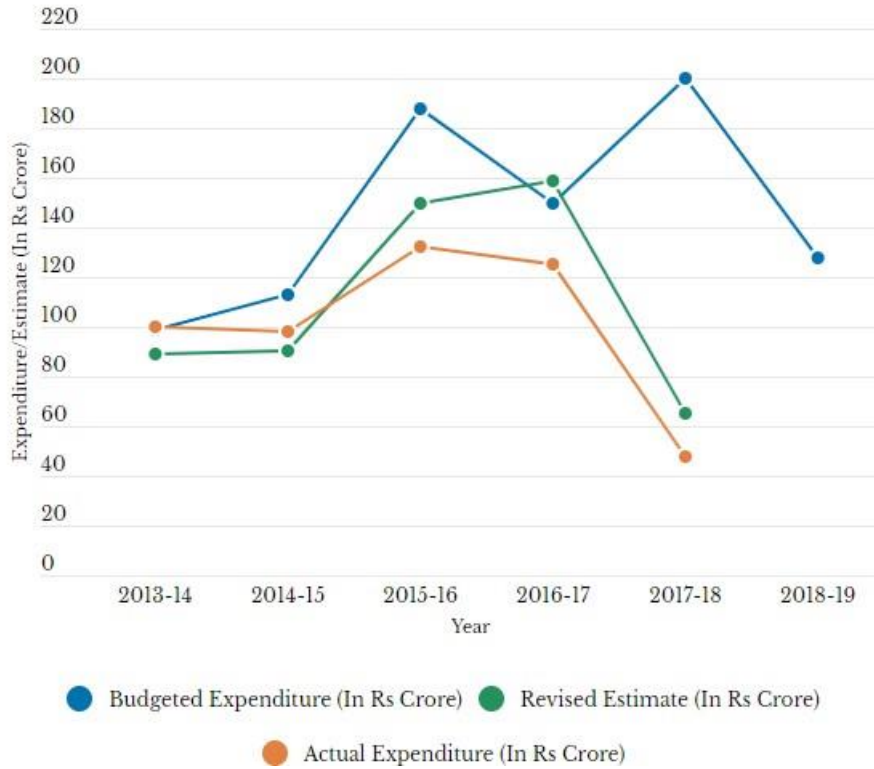
2018-19 BE	₹ 128 crore	2017-18 BE	₹ 200 crore
RE = Yet to come		2017-18 RE	₹ 65 crore

(Source: WCD ministry; PIB; Union Budget 2018-19; Parliament Questions)

Source: Why the number of Creches has dropped sharply since 2017, 31st Jan 2019, Times of India.

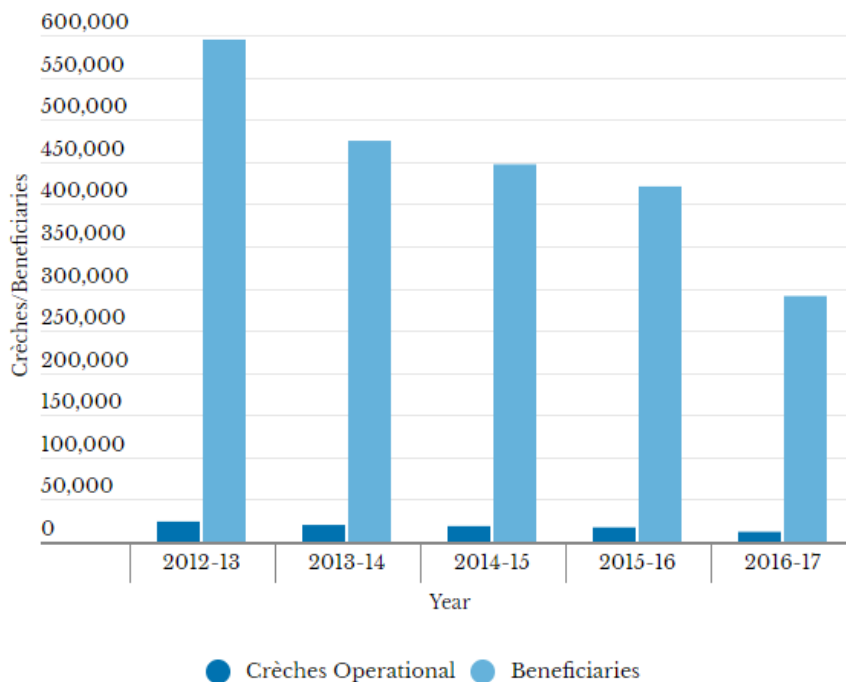
The National Creche Scheme (NCS) lays out specific provisions for working women but has suffered diminished government funding [1].

Union Budget: National Crèche Scheme



Under the erstwhile RGNCS, the Crèches covered a total of over 5.9 lakh children. Of these, more than 15,000 Crèches covering more than 3.78 lakh children were operating in rural areas. With the number of Crèches and the decline in funding, the number of children enrolled in these centers have seen a sharp downturn.

Crèches & Beneficiaries, 2012-13 To 2016-17



[1] Source: Tish Sanghera, Government Cuts Funding to National Creche Scheme, Crippling Lifeline for Poor Working Mothers. by India Spend, 12th Jan 2019



2.2 VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND CRECHE MODELS

Leading organizations in the country such as SEWA, Mobile Creches, Ekjut, PHRN, Aajeevika Bureau and others have designed, developed, and running highly impactful Creche models. Although all these organizations run Creches, each organization's aims are different. Some of them focus on women's wellbeing while others focus on child wellbeing. Some focus equally on childcare and women wellbeing. These organizations have demonstrated ways to address implementation gaps. They underline the fact that an inclusive approach is required to overcome implementation gaps in the Creche scheme.

Revitalizing the provisions of the scheme and adding a network of public and workplace Creches can be hugely beneficial. Public Creches can be operated at worksite clusters such as near industrial areas, markets, dense low-income residential areas, and labour nakas. Creches closer to the workplace allow for timely breastfeeding and attending to emergencies. This model has been tested successfully by Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) Sangini in some Indian cities.

Where work occurs at a single site, such as a garment factory or construction site, worksite Creches will help—as seen in the construction site Creches run by Aajeevika Bureau (Ahmedabad) and those run by Mobile Creches (Delhi). The construction sector is a case in point where the Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board (BOCW Board) mandates the running of Creches. The funds collected under the construction cess can be earmarked for running creches at construction sites. The successful Creche models and the impactful partnerships demonstrated by the NGOs across the country must be scaled up to meet the needs of women in the informal sector.

AWARENESS ABOUT CRECHE AMONG WOMEN

61%

women currently NOT in paid work were unaware of Creche facility

62%

women currently IN paid work were unaware of Creche facility



*“Chhua ku dekhibu ki kama ku jibu? Creche re chhadiba pare aamku adhika kama miluchhi”
(Should we take care of the child or go to work? We are getting more opportunities for work after accessing Creche)*

***Dio Meleka, Goiuri Mandangi
(Odisha (U))***





CHAPTER 3. PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

SAMPLE

Of the 1128 women surveyed across four states, 50% (N= 563) were not employed at present (NE), 30% (N=340) were employed but were not availing Creche (ENAC), and 20% (N = 225) were employed and availing Creche facility (EAC).

SAMPLE - KEY HIGHLIGHTS

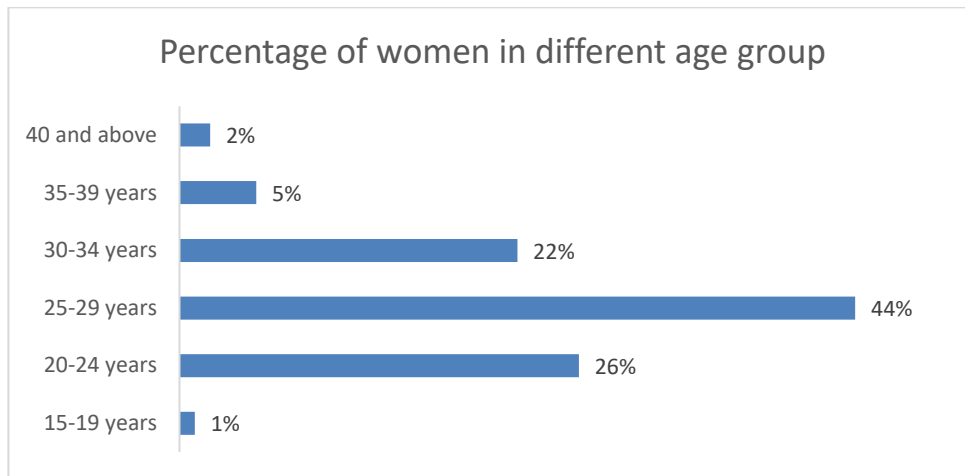
- One out of every two respondents have not completed secondary schooling
- Majority of the respondents belong to Scheduled Tribe, followed by Scheduled Caste.
- 12% women have identified themselves with *Sarna* religion.
- Six out of every ten respondents fall in 20 to 29 years age group.
- Representation of all dominant religions — Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity— has been ensured
- 43% of the respondents stay in small families, usually with two adult members
- Maximum number of respondents had atleast one child in the highly dependent age group (0–3years), followed by respondents who had children in moderately dependent (4–6 years).



AGE COMPOSITION

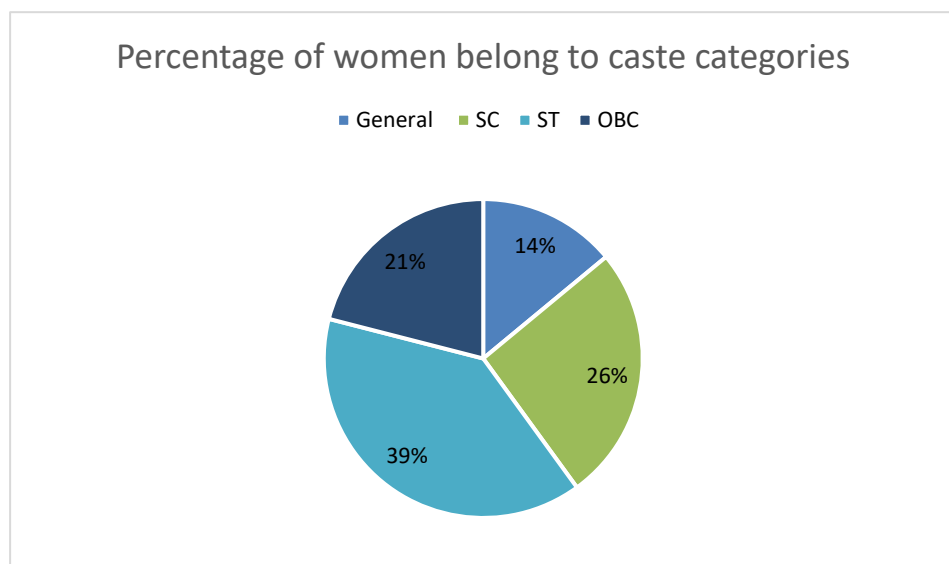
Maximum percentage of women (44%) belonged to 25–29 years age group, followed by 26% in the 20–24 years age group. Only 1% women were in the age group of 15–19 years of age. This shows that a smaller number of women are having children before the legal age of marriage.

This finding is consistent with the latest NHFS data which shows that more and more women are getting married after the legal age of marriage. Only 2% women were in the age group of 40 and above.



COMMUNITY COMPOSITION

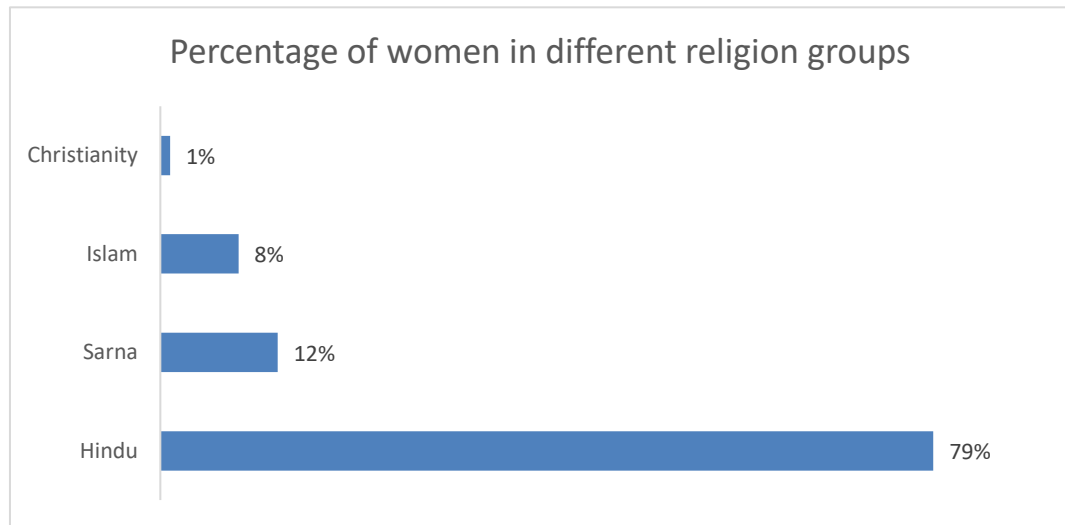
Women respondents belonged to all four communities – Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC) and General. Maximum percentage of women respondents (39%) belonged to ST community, followed by 26% SCs and 21% OBCs. Only 14% respondents belonged to the General category.



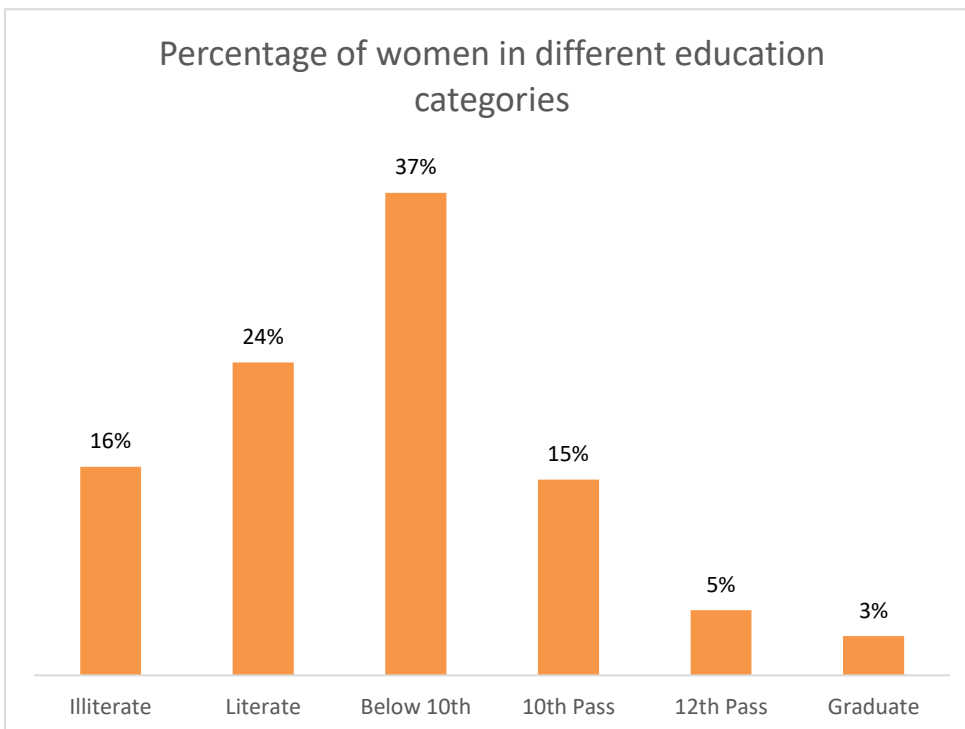
RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION

The respondents identified themselves as Hindus, Muslims, Christian, and Sarna. Maximum respondents (79%) were Hindus, followed by 12% Sarna. All women, who identified themselves as Sarna [1] belonged to Jharkhand. Only 1% respondents identified as Christians and 8% as Muslims.

[1] The followers of Sarna faith pray to nature. *The Indian Express*, downloaded on 4th April 2022



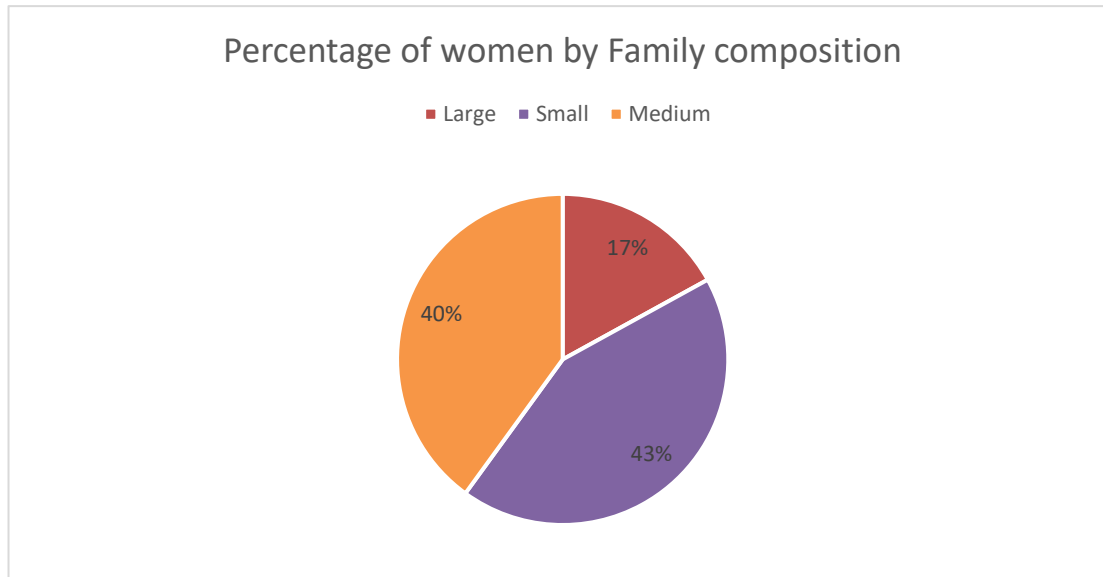
EDUCATIONAL STATUS



In total, 84% women were literate (includes those who have studied up to different grades and have received degrees), followed by 16% illiterate. Out of the 84% literate respondents, a whopping 37% were below 10th (matriculation) pass. 15% of them had completed secondary education, while 5% had completed senior secondary education. Only 3% of the respondents were graduates. More than 61% of the respondents had not completed secondary education.

FAMILY COMPOSITION

The families were divided into three categories - Small (Up to 2), Medium (Up to 4), Large (>4), on the basis of the total number of adult members. 43% of the respondents were part of in small families with two adult members, followed by 40% having more than 4 adult members. Only 17% reported having more than four adult members in the family.



COMPOSITION OF CHILDREN

On the basis of age-wise dependency on mothers, number of children were grouped as highly dependent (0–3 years), moderately dependent (4–6 years), less dependent (7–14 years), and least dependent (15–18 years).

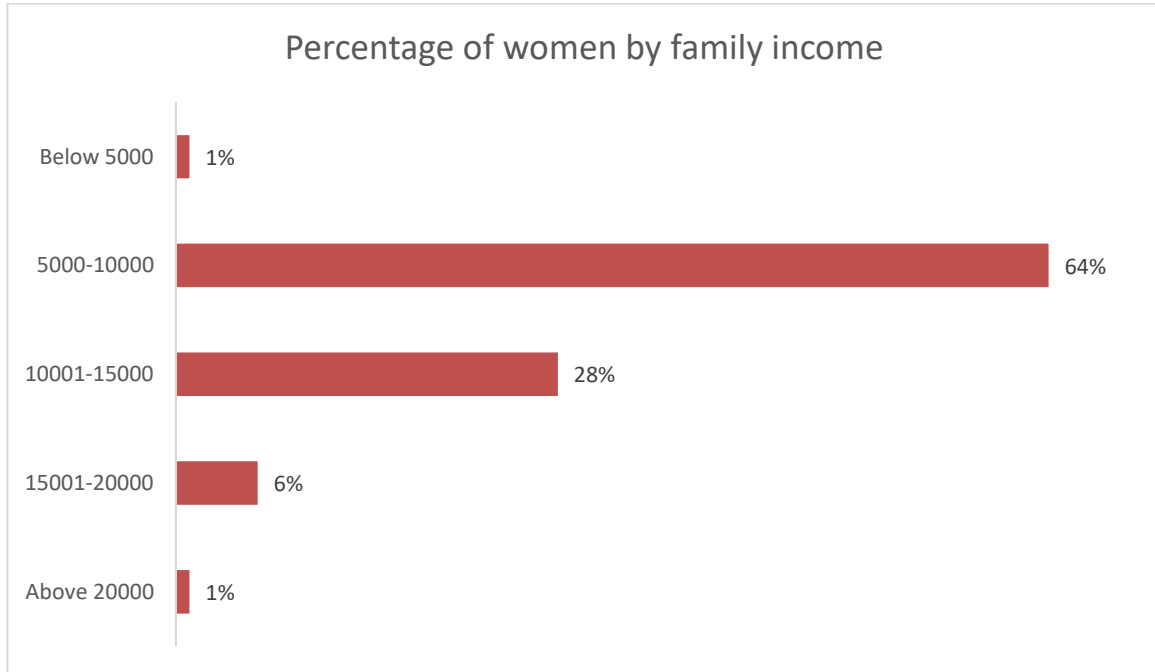
Maximum number of respondents had at least one child in the highly dependent age group, followed by moderately dependent, and less dependent children. In the following table, the maximum concentration of children happens to be in the highly dependent and moderately dependent cells. In other words, a significantly high proportion of respondents had children in the highly dependent (0-3 years) and moderately dependent (4- 6 years) age group.

Table -2. Children composition – number of children and levels of dependency

No of children	Highly dependent children	Moderately dependent children	Less dependent children	Least dependent children
1	743	639	289	51
2	98	125	92	25
3	4	16	7	6

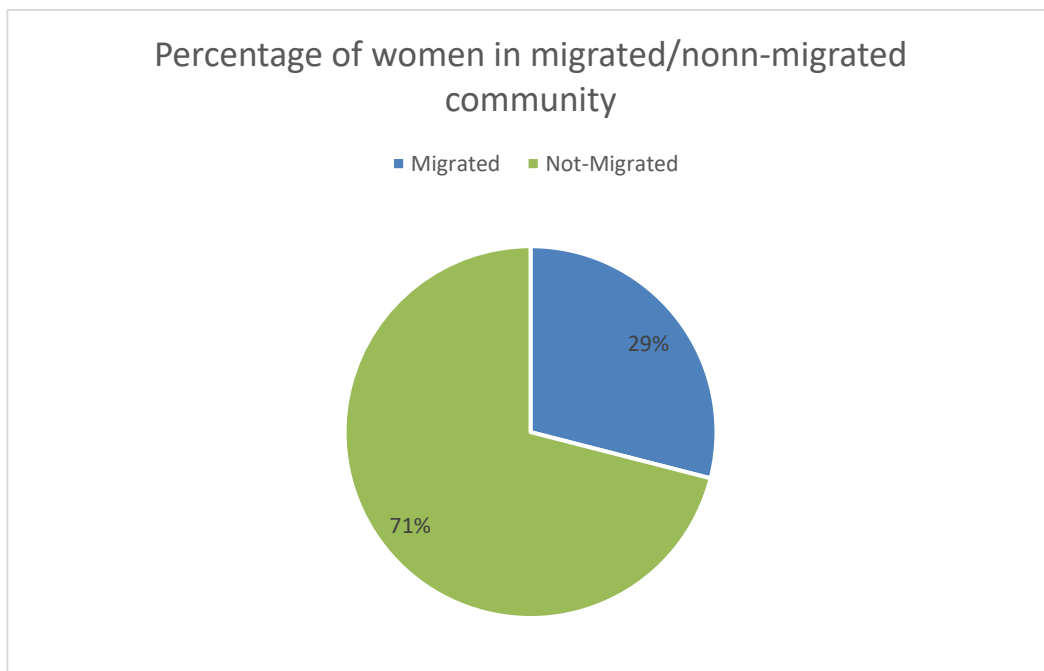
MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME

More than 64% women reported that the monthly family income is between Rs.5000/- to 10000/-. 28% families earn between Rs.10001/-to 15000/-. Only 1% reported that their family earned more than Rs 20,000/- a month.



RELOCATED /MIGRATED

Out of the 1128 women surveyed, 29% reported that they had migrated to the place where they currently stay.



ABILITY TO PAY FOR CRECHE FACILITY

95.7% women reported
Creche to be essential for
working women

28.6%
(N = 323) women were
willing to pay for Creche
facility



*"Creche ku jai ete gudae subidha
heipariba – ghara kaama kariparibu, pila
ku chadi rojagaar kariparibu, pila bhi
bahut jinisa sikhpariba "*

*Many benefits are associated with Creche
- Can do household chores, can leave
children and go to work, children will learn
many new things"*

(FGD OR-4-Group 1)





CHAPTER 4. KEY FINDINGS

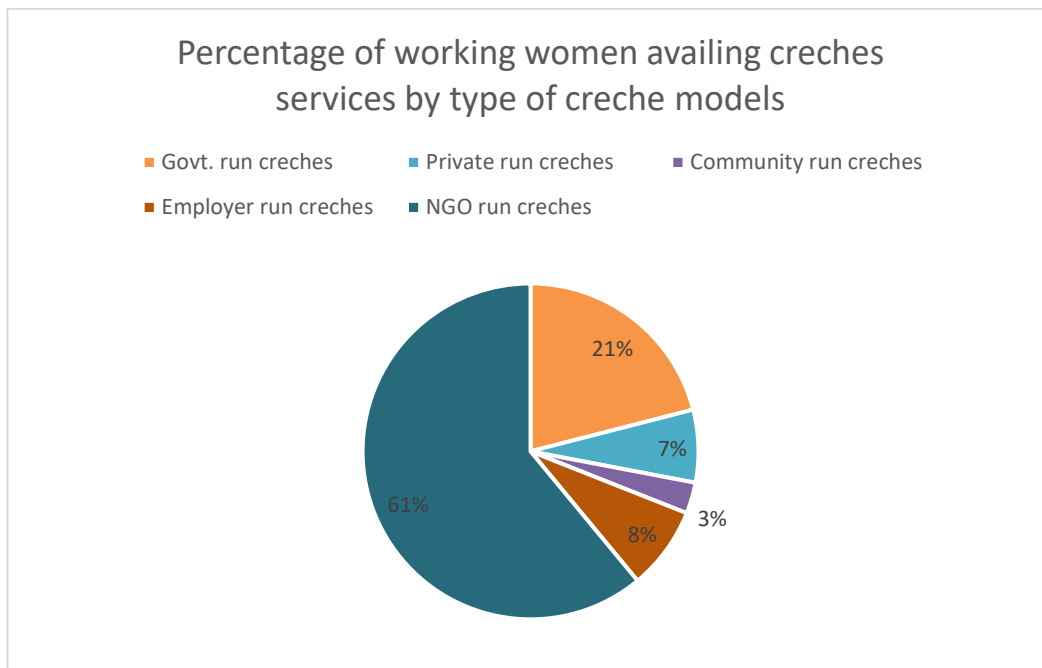
KEY FINDING 1. HOW DO WOMEN WITH YOUNG CHILDREN WHO ARE ENGAGED IN PAID WORK MANAGE CHILDCARE?

This section analyses: a) the types of Creches women are using, b) how women who don't use Creche but are engaged in paid work manage childcare, c) their experience with the current childcare arrangement, and d) their level of awareness about institutional childcare facilities

Of the 1128 women surveyed across 4 states, 50 % (N= 563) were not employed at the time of survey (NE), 30%(N=340) were employed but were not availing Creche (ENAC), and 20% (N = 225) were employed and availing Creche facility (EAC).

1.1 WHAT TYPES OF CRECHES ARE WORKING WOMEN AVAILING IN DIFFERENT STATES?

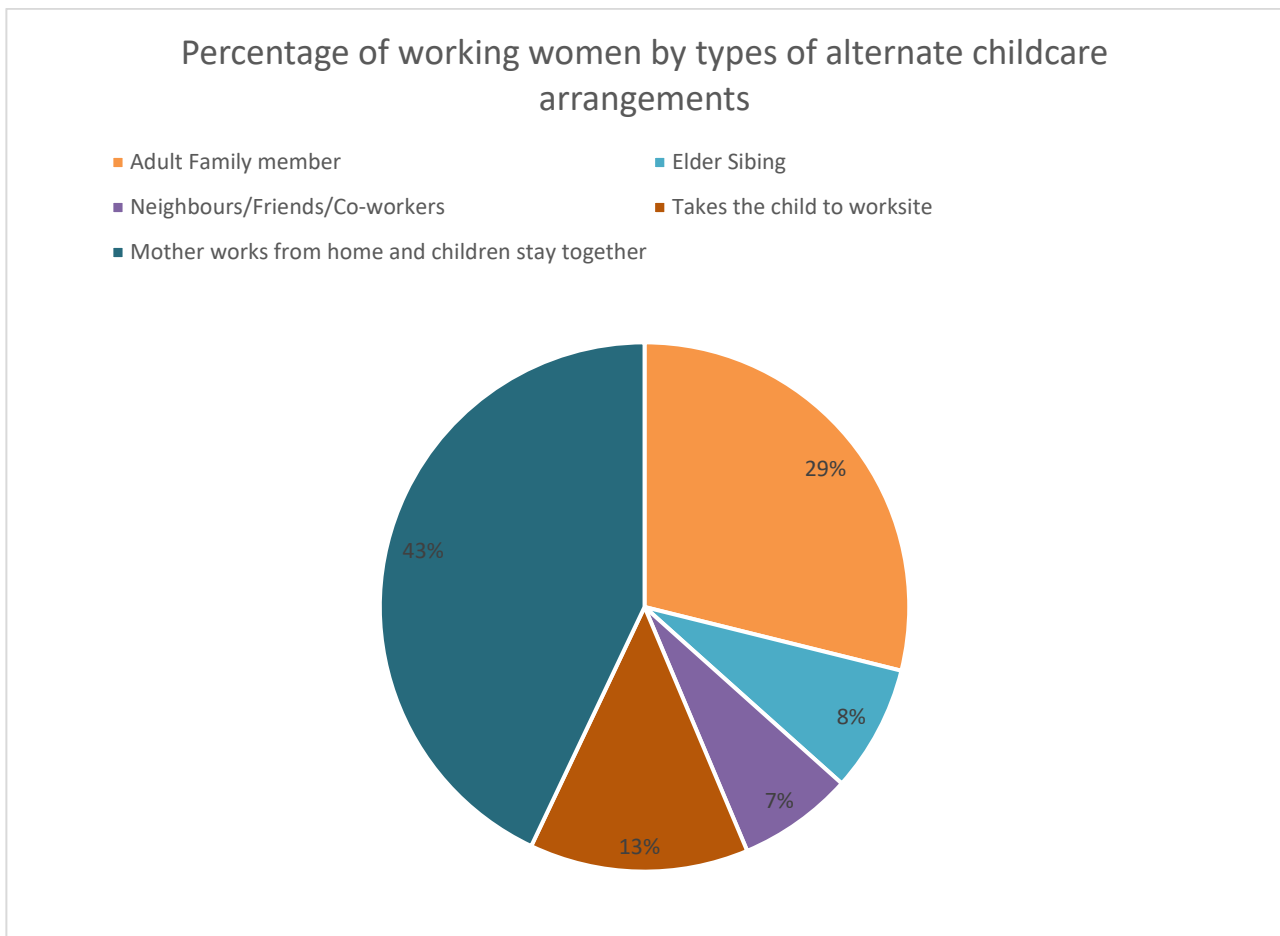
The survey shows that the need for institutional childcare facilities is overwhelmingly fulfilled by NGOs (61% or N =137), with the Government-run Creches* being accessed by 21%. It was also encouraging to note that 8% (N =18) of the women accessed employer-run facilities at the worksite (mostly in Gujarat), while 7% of women (N =16) also accessed private Creches. Those who accessed private Creches did so for free. Six respondents were sending their children to community Creches—two each in Odisha (District: Rayagada, Block: Rayagada), Karnataka (District: Bangalore, Block: Hebbala), and Jharkhand (District: Ranchi, Block: Gabhreyra).



*Creches funded by Government, either through NCS or other innovations, are defined as government Creches. For other Creches, the definitions were as commonly understood and interpreted locally.

1.2 WHO TAKES CARE OF THEIR CHILDREN WHEN ENAC WOMEN ARE ENGAGED IN PAID WORK?

The survey finds that there is a strong reliance on family support as most women (41%, (N=137) left their children under the care of adult family members. It is presumable that these would be other adult female members, who were considered both experienced and available at home to take care of the children. While 10% (N=33) left their children in the care of neighbors, friends, or co-workers, 11% (N=37) women left their young children aged 0-6 years of age in the care of their elder child, often their daughter. This implies that the quality of care of the young child may be inadequate, adversely affecting their health, while the older sibling is also deprived of her own childhood and education.



The following table represents rural-urban bifurcation with respect to family size for women who are employed and not availing Creche facility (ENAC, N=340). The proportion of medium and large families is higher in case of rural respondents.

Table - 3 Rural-Urban bifurcation with respect to family size for ENAC women (N=340)

Family size	Rural (N=195)	Urban (N=145)
Small	37.94% (N=74)	45.51% (N=66)
Medium	41.02% (N=80)	40.68%(N=59)
Large	21.02% (N=41)	13.79% (N=20)

It is very significant that almost a fifth of the women (19%, N=63) take their children along to the worksite. This is mostly true for small children (0-3 yrs.) whom their mothers take along to the workplace while older children (4-6 yrs.) are left at home under the care of family members [FGD]. This might seem like a small percentage but is a big risk as most informal workspaces are ill-equipped to house young children and do not even have basic amenities and safety protocols in place for adult workers, let alone young children. For children composition and split data for 0-3 and 4-6 years please refer to chapter 3 - Profile of respondents. Further, women who bring children to work are only offered informal or agricultural jobs and further face the disapproval of their employers who see their children as a source of distraction from work. Besides, the women are constantly trying to balance the needs of the work and the needs of the child. Add to this the 14% of women who take care of their children while working from home, and the data clearly shows that **almost 38% of women who engage in paid work, singlehandedly juggle childcare responsibility along with paid work responsibilities, with no support from family or institutions.** Given the informality of their occupations and the poverty that they live in, the 'doubleburden' is a stark but unavoidable reality for most working women with young children.

Lastly, what is most shocking is that **5% (N=17) of women reported that children aged under six are left alone at home.** This shows that both, earning a livelihood and caring for children, are critical for these women and **they are forced to make the unfair and impossible choice of prioritizing one over the other, or stretching thin themselves trying to do both.**

1.3 ARE WOMEN WHO ARE NOT USING CRECHES SATISFIED WITH THEIR CURRENT CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENT?

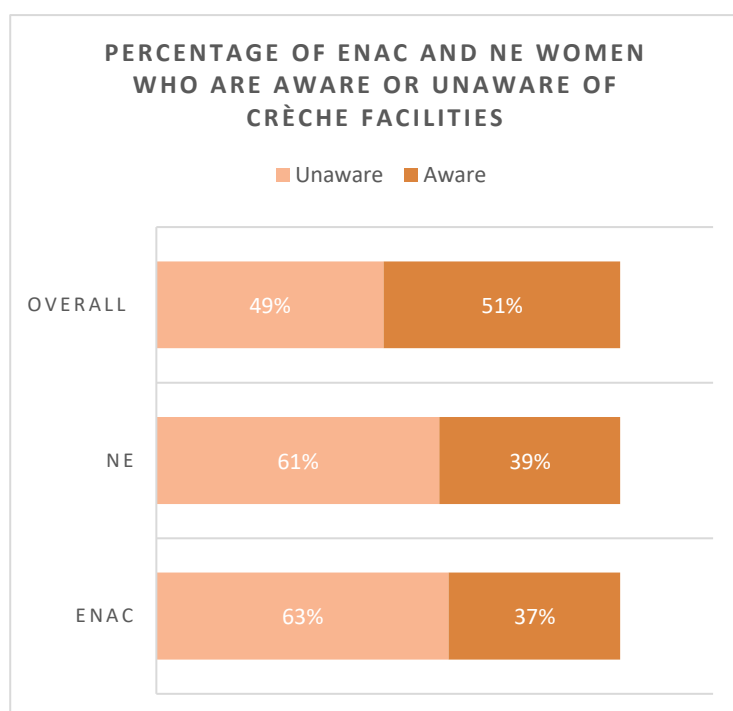
Probing deeper during the FGDs, the women who did not use Creche facility, despite having a Creche in their locality, said that they were **largely satisfied** with their alternate arrangements. However, in the localities with no Creches, the women said that neither taking their children to work, nor leaving them at home was a satisfactory arrangement, but they **had no other option** as there was no Creche in their locality.

It is significant that in both cases, however, the stress and worry about the child does not escape the women. Except for urban Gujarat—where children between the ages of 4–6 years attend Anganwadi, pre- school and tuition class (GU-3A— and rural Karnataka), women from all other areas who did not access Creches expressed dissatisfaction with their current arrangement. They shared that they felt stressed and worried about food and safety of their children and were unable to focus on work. Even those who did not use the facility despite its availability in their areas, acknowledged that their current arrangement has left them stressed, irritated, and under immense mental pressure. They also agreed that they are unable to work properly (OU-2A). **The women said that their children are neglected in the current arrangement, and they are always worried about them.**

This is also seen in the survey responses. Among the challenges faced by women in their current childcare arrangement, majority of the responses were related to the inability to look after the child and provide timely and nutritious meals, worries about the safety of the child when left unattended or with others, problem focusing on work when child is taken along to them to the work site, and difficulties faced by adult family members to provide proper care to the children, for example due to old age.

1.4 ARE WOMEN WHO DO NOT AVAIL INSTITUTIONAL CHILDCARE FACILITIES AWARE OF THE SAME?

Among working women not availing creche facilities, 62.9% (N=214) respondents stated that they were unaware of facilities such as Creches, while 37.1% said they knew about such facilities. When the latter women were asked about the childcare arrangements they knew of, 41.3% mentioned Creches run by NGOs, 31.9% mentioned Creches run by government, 16.7% mentioned private Creches. **Among the non-working women, 61.27% (N= 345) respondents stated that they were unaware of facilities such as Creche,** while 38.73% said they knew about such facilities. Among the ones who knew, 44.5% mentioned Creches run by NGOs, 35.3% mentioned Creches run by government, 12.8% were aware of Creches at the work site, and 11.9% mentioned that they knew about private Creches. **Overall, 49.5% (N= 559) women (ENAC and NE) were unaware of Creches.**



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

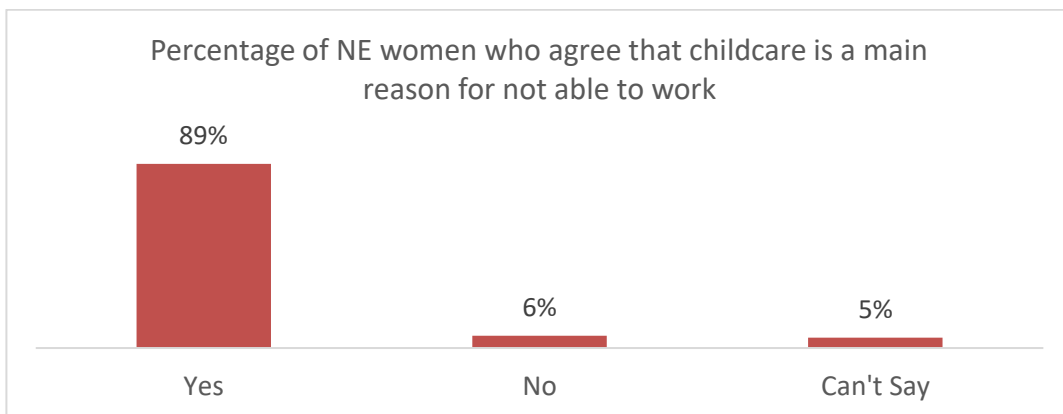
- **Poor availability of government creches for women in informal sector** is evident from the fact that around 80% women access Creches run by NGOs and other players. Among the working women using Creches (N= 225), an overwhelming 61% (N=137) were using Creches operated by NGOs while 21% (N=47) were using Creches by the government. There are some heartening examples of employer-run Creches and community Creches which serve the needs of a small percentage of working women.
- Our survey shows that 11% ENAC **women left their young children (aged 0-6 years) in the care of their older child, often their daughter**. This implies that the quality of care of the young child may be inadequate, adversely affecting their health, while the older sibling is also deprived of her childhood and education, as she stays back at home to care for the younger sibling and help with household chores. This reinforces the same restrictive gender norm of care work being the domain of female and reproduces the marginalization of girls being deprived of opportunities for education and skill building, and therefore being suited only for poorly paid informal work when they eventually enter the labour market.
- 59% (N=196) of **working mothers are forced to compromise and adopt dangerous choices for childcare**. This adversely impacts the child wellbeing and women's economic productivity and mental wellbeing. Even when 41% working mothers have family members to rely upon for day-to-day care, there is a need for closer enquiry into the informal caregivers in families, nature of informal care, safety, and stimulation needs of young children, pointing towards parenting/care giving support that is home-based to increase understanding about the early development needs of children for their holistic development.
- ENAC women—both, those who had no access to Creches, and those who had the availability of Creches in their areas but did not use the facility— acknowledged that **adopted alternative childcare arrangement has left women stressed, irritated, and under immense mental pressure**.
- **Resource poor families need state support to supplement childcare arrangements** – childcare practice, systems linkages, adequate nutrition, infant stimulation practices, and tools at home.
- Almost 50% of **women were not even aware of the existence of creche facilities**. Lack of awareness about creche and its services is leading to poor demand from communities, resulting in state not perceiving the need for Creches. This is leading to creche budget cuts year on year and weak grounds for negotiation by the civil society members, which has consequently led to several Creches being gradually shut down, as discussed earlier.

KEY FINDING 2. DOES CHILDCARE RESPONSIBILITY ACT AS A BARRIER TO WOMEN'S ABILITY TO JOIN PAID WORK?

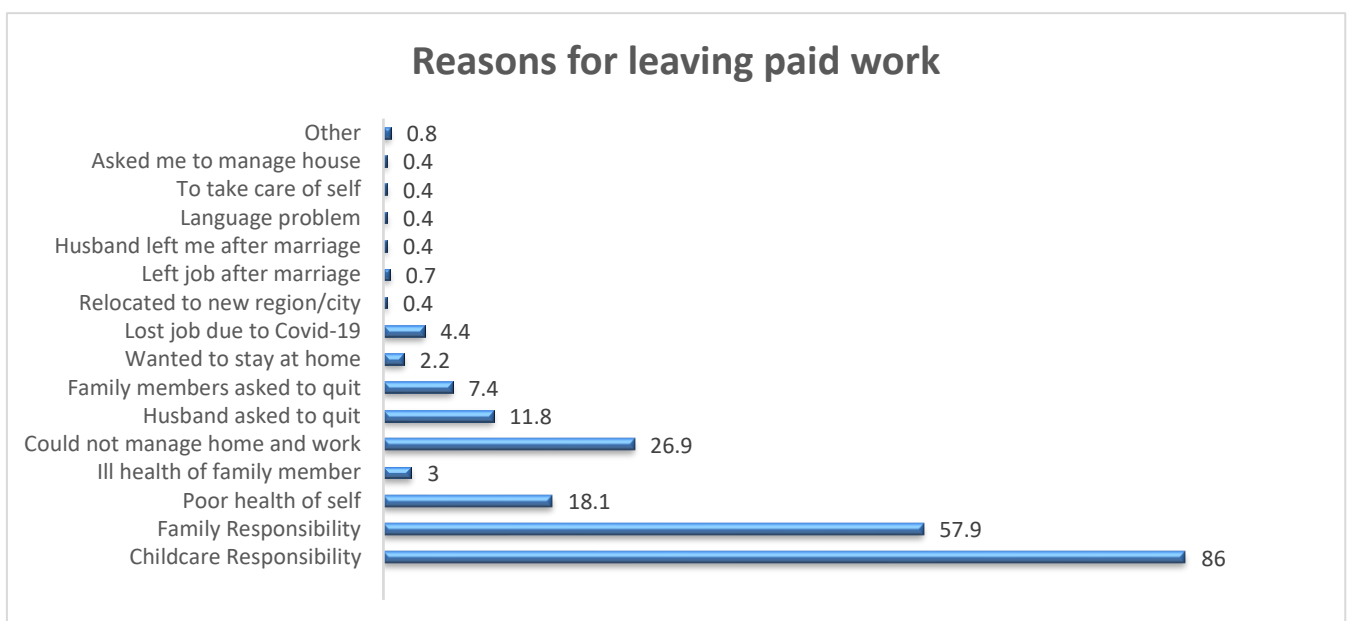
Guided by the objective of this research, that is to assess the interlinkage between childcare facility and women's paid work, this section tries to find out the role of childcare responsibility in influencing women's ability to join paid work. This section is based on the survey data obtained from NE women.

2.1 IS CARING FOR CHILDREN ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS WHY WOMEN ARE UNABLE TO JOIN PAID WORK?

Out of the 563 women surveyed across the 4 states, who are not currently engaged in paid work but interested in getting paid work (NE), **an overwhelming 88.7% (N=494/557) explicitly agreed that caring for the child was one of the main reasons for them not working.** Only 6.1% (N=14/557) NE women said childcare is not the main reason for not joining paid work.

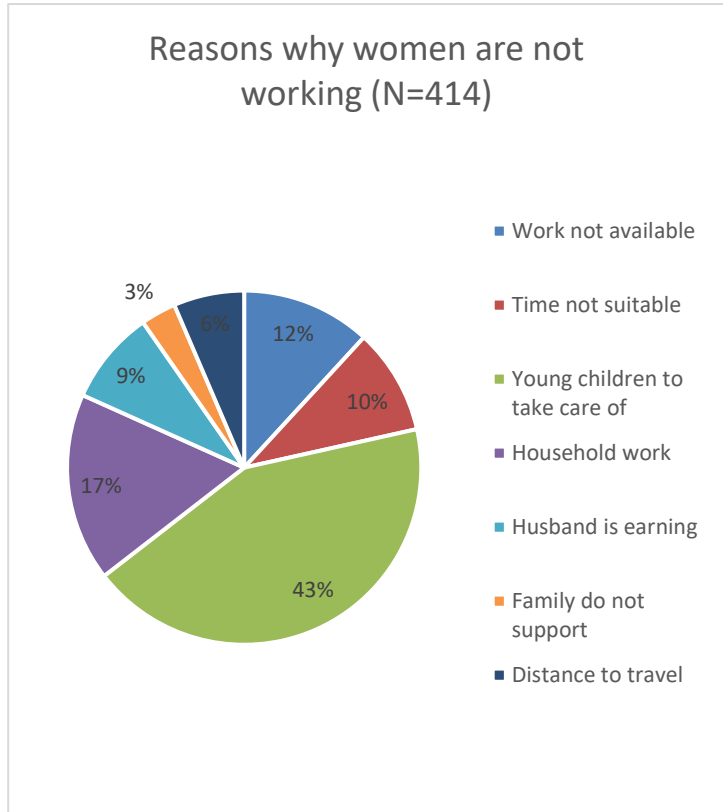


Reasons for leaving paid work(N=271)



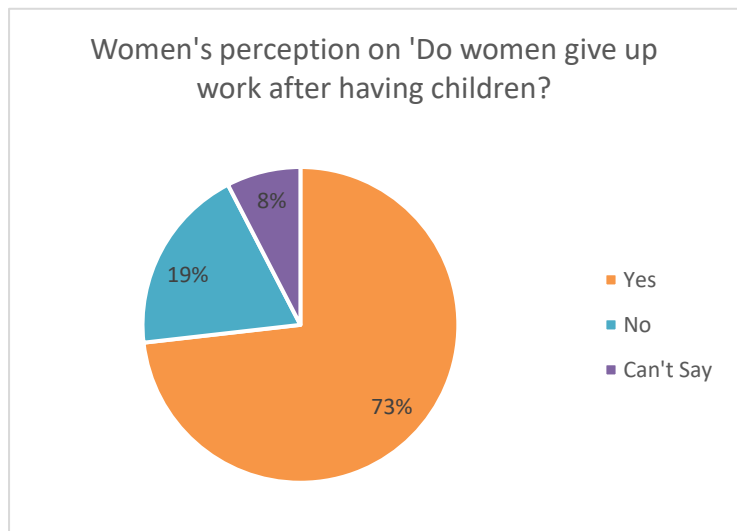
Unpaid care work, comprising childcare responsibility, family responsibility, and ill health of family members, accounted for the largest possible reasons due to which women discontinued paid work. As shown in the above graph, 86% (N=233) of this directly refers to childcare responsibility as the major reason for opting out of paid work. This is followed by other family responsibilities (57.9%, N=157), and inability to manage home and work (26.9%, N=73).

This is further confirmed by the responses to the question, "Why are you not working currently?", which was put forth to all the women currently not engaged in paid work, i.e., NE women, including both the women who had worked in the past and those who have never worked. The top three reasons they cited for not working were: young children to care for (40%), household work (16%) and work not available (11%). While the survey clearly shows childcare responsibility as a major barrier to accessing paid work among those who had quit or never engaged in paid work, the FGDs conducted with a similar profile of women showed unfavorable gender attitudes also acted as significant barriers.



Do women give up work after they have children?
N=556

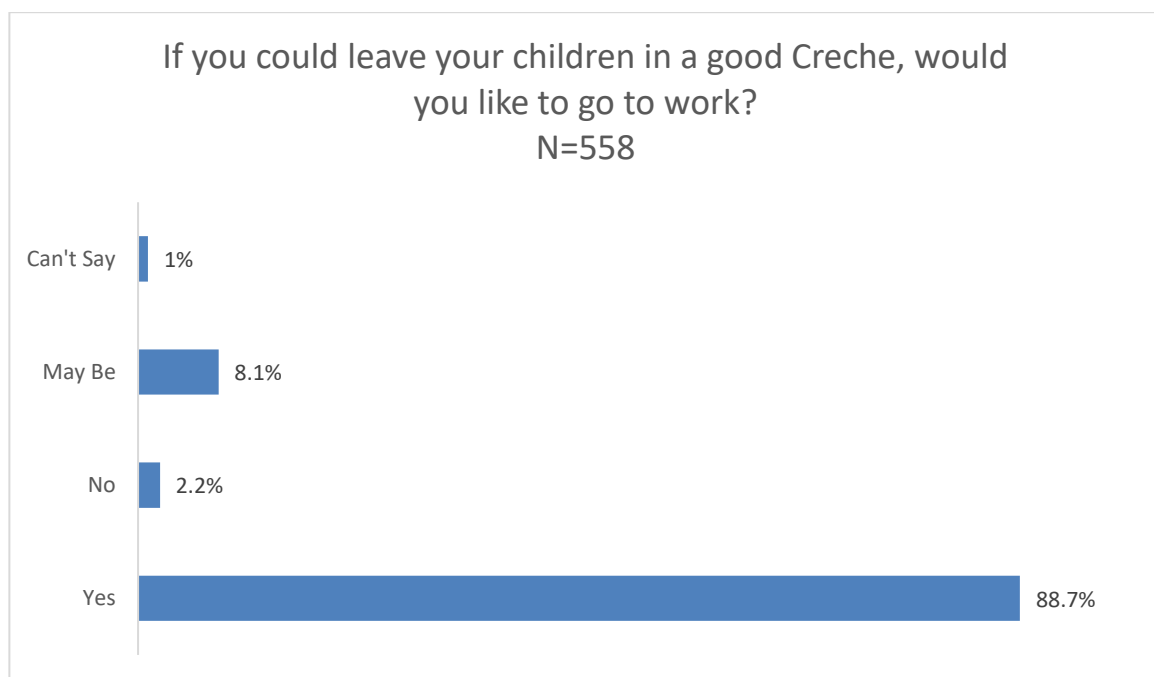
When asked, "Do most women give up work after they have children?", a large percentage of women said "Yes." **407 women out of 556 NE women said birth of a child does push women to give up paid work.** 107 NE women do not think that women give up work after they have children.



2.2 ARE NOT EMPLOYED WOMEN READY TO ACCESS CHILDCARE FACILITY AND JOIN PAID WORK?

Almost half of the women belonging to NE category (48.6%, N= 271 /558) were engaged in paid work in the past. When asked if they would prefer accessing creche facilities, 95.1% (N= 529/556) of NE women said "yes."

When women were asked whether they would like to go to work if they could leave their children in a good Creche, 88.7% (N= 495/ 558) of NE women said "yes" and 8.1% (N= 45/558) of them said "may be." **Therefore, it could be argued that 88.7% NE women are willing to join paid work if provided with institutional childcare facility.**



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The care burden placed on women in general, specifically the responsibility of taking care of young children, acts as a significant barrier to women engaging in paid work.
- Almost half of the women belonging to NE category (48.6%, N= 271) were engaged in paid work in the past but gave up their paid work due to childcare responsibility. When asked if they would prefer accessing creche facilities, 95.1% (N= 529) of NE women said "yes."
- Patriarchal norms and unfavorable gender attitudes continue to place a disproportionate burden of care taking on women, adversely affecting their access to paid work.
- The gender norms governing what constitutes 'women's primary work,' internalized by both men and women, and the patriarchal attitudes of 'not *allowing* women to go out to work,' are significant barriers to women engaging in paid work.
- More than 88% women are willing to leave their children in a good creche and join work.

KEY FINDING 3. DOES ACCESS TO CRECHE ENABLE WOMEN TO JOIN PAID WORK?

This section is based on the experience of women who are working and using Creche facility. It examines whether Creches are perceived as an enabler by women or not. It also tries to establish the degree of essentiality of creches in a working woman's life, specifically those associated with the informal sector. Additionally, it looks at the function of accessibility and quality of creche on women's decision to avail the facility and the decision to join paid work.

3.1 DOES CRECHE ENABLES WOMEN TO JOIN PAID WORK?

One of the key findings from this survey is that creches have enabled women to join paid work. During this survey, it was found out that **34.7% (N=78) of EAC women joined paid work only after they had access to a creche.**

Table 4 - Do you think having good creche facilities will bring more women to join paid work?

	NE (N = 560)	ENAC (N = 340)	EAC (N=225)	Total
yes	95% (532/560)	96.2% (326/339)	98.7% (222/225)	96.6% (N=1080)

Note: Based on Q41 (NE), Q51 (EAC and Q43 (ENAC)

We asked all our respondents, both working and non-working, a direct question, "Do you think having good Creche facilities will bring more women to join paid work?" **A whopping 96.6% women (N = 1080) shared that access to a creche or similar facilities would enable more women to start paid work.**

It was also of importance to see what other factors, according to respondents, would enable women to start/continue paid work after having children. Of the total number of responses, 69.7% (N = 157) EAC women, 89.7% (N = 305) ENAC women, and 90.4% (N = 509) NE women felt that Creches or similar facilities would enable them to join paid work.

This factor was followed by "availability of work opportunities near home." 7.1% EAC women, 2% ENAC women and 1% NE women said that availability of work opportunities near their home would enable women to join paid work.

Family support was also identified as an important factor (4.9%)—both by EAC (N=11) and ENAC women (N=13), followed by 3.3% NE women (N=19)—to join paid work. Women also reported that having their children enrolled in the care centers allowed them to concentrate on their work and seek better job opportunities.

3.2 HOW ESSENTIAL CRECHE IS FOR WOMEN TO JOIN PAID WORK?

As a follow up question, when asked "Do you consider such facilities are essential/useful for the working women having young children?" overall, 73.4% (N=806) women considered Creche services to be very essential, and 24.6% (N =294) considered them to be essential for working women. There is a slight difference between working and non-working women in their response in considering Creche as an essential requirement. **In total, 97.8% working women (EAC and ENAC) and 96.9% not working women (NE) reported creche facility as an essential requirement.**

In the survey, one question was asked to assess the degree of essentiality of Creche for working women in the informal sector:

Are Creches useful or essential for the working women with youngchildren?

The options given to them were a) very essential, b) essential, c) not essential, d) do not know.

Table - 5 Do you consider Creche facilities essential/useful for the working women who have young children? Working women and non-working women bifurcation

	Working (N=565)	Non-working (N= 560 NE)
Very essential	83.1%+ 68.2% (75.65%)	69.1%
Essential	16.9% + 28.5% (22.65%)	28.4%

Table - 6 Do you consider Creche facilities are essential/useful for theworking women who have young children? Category wise response

	NE (N = 560)	ENAC (N = 340)	EAC (N=225)	Total
Very essential	69.1% (387/560)	68.2% (232/340)	83.1% (187/225)	73.4% (N= 806)
Essential	28.4% (159/560)	28.5% (97/340)	16.9% (38/225)	24.6% (N= 294)

Table - 7 Do you consider Creche facilities are essential/useful for the working womenwho have young children? - Rural and Urban bifurcation

	EAC- R (N =129)	EAC-U (N = 96)	ENAC-R (N=195)	ENAC-U (N = 145)	NE-R (N = 319)	NE-U (N = 244)
Very essential	80.6%	86.4%	62.5%	75.8%	65.2%	73.3%
Essential	19.3%	13.5%	32.3%	22.7%	30.7%	25%
At least essential	99.9%	99.9%	94.8%	98.5%	95.9%	98.3%

Most of the women across working and non-working categories rated Creche services as essential. Of these, the highest percentage, 83.1% (N=187) of EAC women were women who had experienced the benefits of Creche facilities and considered them very essential. **This data suggests that there is a difference between perception of urban and rural women in terms of considering creche facilities as an essential requirement. In each of the categories, the essentiality of creche was rated higher by women situated in urban areas than those situated in rural areas.**

However, it is important to mention here that one of the reasons for difference in **essentiality rating among different categories of women could be due to poor awareness about the concept of creches and their services among women**. Most of the women who are not using Creches were not even aware of the existence of institutional childcare facilities – among ENAC women, 62.9% (N=214) and 61.27% (N= 345) among NE women were unaware of them. (Note: During the training, field investigators were given an orientation about Creches and their functioning and were requested to explain these to women during the survey).

3.3 ARE WOMEN READY TO PAY FOR CRECHE FACILITY?

Although 95.7% women reported creche to be essential for working women, only 28.6% (N=323) women were willing to pay for it. The willingness to pay and the range of how much money they were willing to pay differed across states, as depicted in the following table.

Table - 8 Are you willing to pay for a childcare facility?

	NE (N = 231)	ENAC (N =338)	EAC (N = 199)
Yes	43.3%	45.6%	61.3%
No	50.6%	44.1%	34.7%

Table - 9 Percentage of women ready to pay for childcare services (state-wise)

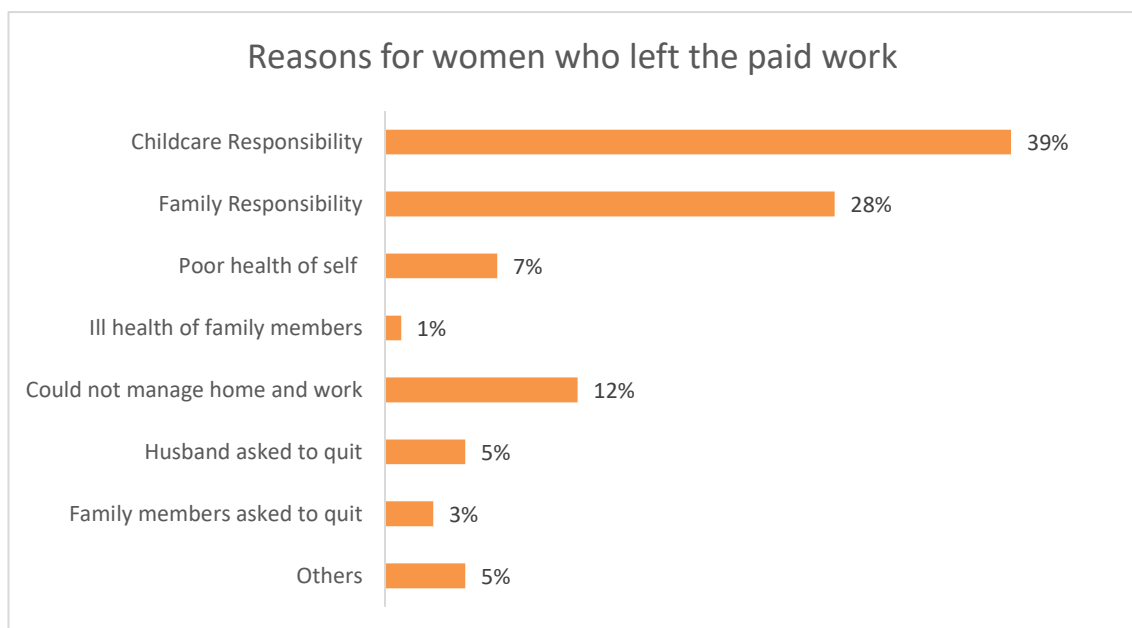
State	Jharkhand	Gujarat	Karnataka	Odisha
Ready to Pay	37.85% (N =106/280)	43.85% (N = 125/285)	19.28% (N = 54/280)	13.4% (N =38/283)
Amount willing to Pay monthly	50-500 (Average= Rs. 191.19)	30-500 (Average= Rs. 112.46)	100-2000 (Average=610.37)	100-1000 (Average=276.92)

The data shows that Gujarat had highest percentage of women who were willing to pay for the services, followed by Jharkhand. Only a small percentage of women (13.4%) from Odisha are willing to pay for the services. However, it must be underlined that the amount that they can pay ranges from INR 30 to INR 2000 per month. **Therefore, it could be argued that the willingness to pay is not coming from capacity to pay as much as from the desperate need for childcare facilities. This data, when juxtaposed with the percentage of EAC women who have opted for Creche due to free services (67%), further reinforces the argument that there is a clear need for free Creches to enable women to join paid work.** Only 47 respondents said that they were currently paying a token amount for using the Creche facilities. Out of these 47 EAC respondents, 36 EAC women were paying INR 50/-. **The willingness to pay for availing Creche facilities by a significant percentage (28.6%) of women could at best be interpreted as indicating the usefulness of Creches in their lives.**

3.4 COULD CRECHE OR SIMILAR FACILITIES HAVE PREVENTED WOMEN FROM QUITTING PAID WORK?

There is a need to read essentiality of Creches in relation to women's reasons for quitting paid work. During the research, it was found that **48.6% (N=271) NE women were engaged in paid work in the past but had to quit. Two key reasons for this were childcare responsibility (39%), followed by inability to manage work and home and other familial responsibilities. Both contributed to their decision to leave paid work.** What is clear from the graph is that childcare responsibility pushed women to leave paid work. **88.7% (N=499/563) NE women shared that childcare responsibility is one of the main reasons why they are unable to join paid work. When asked if they (NE women) would prefer accessing such facilities, 95.1% women responded "Yes."** and only 4.9% women responded "No." When probed further, the women who had answered in the negative gave the following reasons: they felt it was their 'duty' to care for their children (51.4%), they believed home is the best place for their child (27%), they had family support (20.3%), the elders in their family do not allow them to access Creches (12.2%), distance to the Creches is too much (10.8%), and facilities are not good (10.8%).

Why did you leave paid work?



3.5 WHAT IN CRECHE INFLUENCES WOMEN'S DECISION TO AVAIL IT AND JOIN PAID WORK?

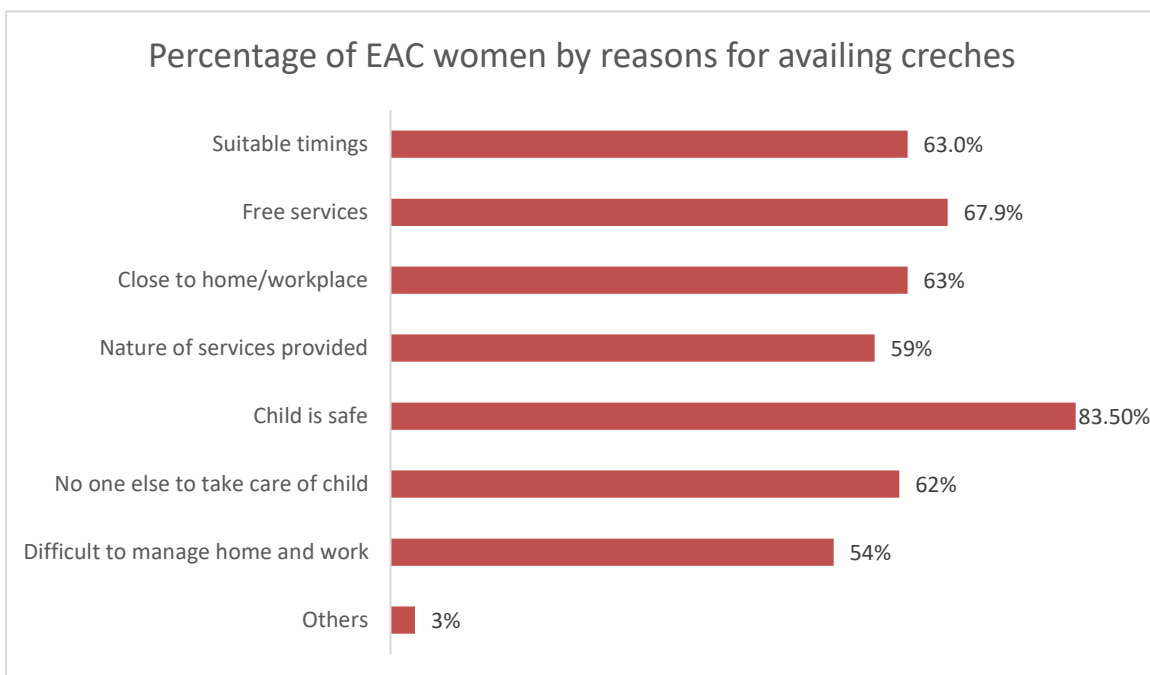
The top three reasons which EAC women (N=225) attributed to using Creche facilities were: a) children's safety (83.5%), b) availability of free services (67.9%), c) timings (56.3%), 64.9% EAC women rated their Creche facility as "very good", 31.6% rated it as "good", and 3.6% rated it as "average". Therefore, together, more than 95% EAC women have rated the Creche experience as good. **When ENAC women were asked if they would prefer accessing Creche facilities, 87.3% (N=296/339) women responded "Yes", 8.6% women (N=29/339) responded "No," and 4.1% (N=14/339) said "can't say."** This clearly establishes that women in paid work value Creche facilities. Through FGD activities, an attempt was made to find out what NE women (who are currently not working but are willing to join paid work) think about accessing Creche facilities. These women could clearly see the interlinkage between Creche and paid work. They said it would help them become financially independent as they could join paid work by sending their children to a Creche. Women from Odisha (urban) shared that using the Creche facilities would free them up to do both household chores as well as outside work. Proper care of children will be taken in the Creche, and that was another reason cited for accessing the Creche facility.

Reasons for not accessing Creches were largely attributed to gender norms, cultural practices and quality of services provided, rather than to women not seeing the value of Creche facilities. Reasons for not using Creche were attributed to factors such as:

- a) Refusal of family members, specifically in-laws
- b) Ignorance about Creche facilities
- c) Lack of faith in Creches, and the belief that home is the bestplace for care and safety of a child.

Few women responded in the negative regarding accessing Creche facilities because they could not trust the caregiver (GR-4, Grp 2), could not overrule family decision, could not put the child in Creche without permission from their husband and elders of family, and believed it was mother's responsibility to care of her child (GU-4, Grp 2).

Reasons for using Creche (EAC)



Quality of services and apprehensions around them such as poor hygiene, poor quality of food, discrimination based on caste etc. also influence the decision to access Creche facilities (OU-4 - Group2). On being asked whether women would use Creches if they had access to it, a majority of women responded in the affirmative saying that they would be able to join paid work ("ghara kaama kariparibu,rojagaar kariparibu pila ku chadi,pila bhi bahut jinisa sikhpariba Creche ku jai ete gudae subidha heipariba," "can do household chores, can leave children and go to work, children will learn many new things, many benefits are associated with Creche," OR-4-Group 1), become financially independent, children would get nutritious food, proper care and education.



"Creche facility has reduced the burden to an extent and also provided an opportunity to raise the income, but childcare is the ultimate responsibility of a mother and thus she is the one who has to sacrifice in case of emergency. Elder members of the family are there but we cannot rely on them much because of their age and

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Overall, 86% EAC women (N=194) reported access to Creche or similar facilities as the top enabler for women to join paid work
- A whopping 95.7% women (N = 1079) shared that access to Creches or similar facilities would enable more women to start paid work.
- 68% EAC women (N=153) attributed free Creches and its services as the reason for using Creches
- 34.7% EAC women (N =78) reported that they joined paid work only after they had access to a Creche.
- In total, 97.8% working women (EAC and ENAC) and 96.9% not working women (NE) have reported Creche as an essential requirement.
- 88.7% NE (N=499) women shared that childcare responsibility is one of the main reasons for being unable to join paid work. When asked if they (NE women) would prefer accessing such facilities, 95.1% women responded "Yes," and only 4.9% women responded "No."
- Women across categories are ready to pay for services. In all 3 categories, the willingness to pay for childcare facilities was higher among urban women than among rural women. However, the willingness to pay shows the desperation for childcare services, not the capacity to pay for it.
- Reasons for not accessing Creche were largely attributed to gender norms, cultural practices and quality of services provided, rather than women not seeing the value of Creche facilities
- Although 95.7% women reported Creche to be essential for working women, only 28.6% (N=323) women were willing to pay for it. Therefore, it could be safely argued that free Creche facility is an overwhelming need among women from informal sector.
- There is a difference between perception of urban and rural women in terms of considering Creche facilities as an essential requirement. However, it is important to mention here that one of the reasons for difference in essentiality rating among different categories of women could be due to poor awareness about the concept of Creches and its services among women.
- 48.6% (N=271) NE women were engaged in paid work in the past. 88.7% (N=494/557) NE women shared that childcare responsibility is one of the main reasons why they are unable to join paid work. Therefore, it could be argued that childcare responsibility pushed women to leave paid work.
- The above analysis is in alignment with other research studies which establish that women perceive Creches as enablers because: a) it allows them to be financially independent, and b) it shares their childcare responsibility and provides a range of benefits to their children.
Childcare responsibility is critical to all young mothers, and they perceive that Creches share this responsibility.

KEY FINDING 4. POSITIVE OUTCOMES ASSOCIATED WITH ACCESSING CHILDCARE SERVICES

In the previous section, it has been established that several women joined paid work after they could access the Creche facility. There were multiple questions in the survey to gauge the benefits experienced by women after using Creche. Additionally, two FGD activities were facilitated with EAC women and EAC men (men whose children were going to a Creche). Through these activities, the effort was to examine how life has changed for the women in terms of impact on the child, work life, self and relationships (within family, at work, and in neighborhood) after availing creche facility. The responses received from both men and women, whose children are availing Creche facilities, are presented below.

IMPACT ON WOMEN'S WELLBEING

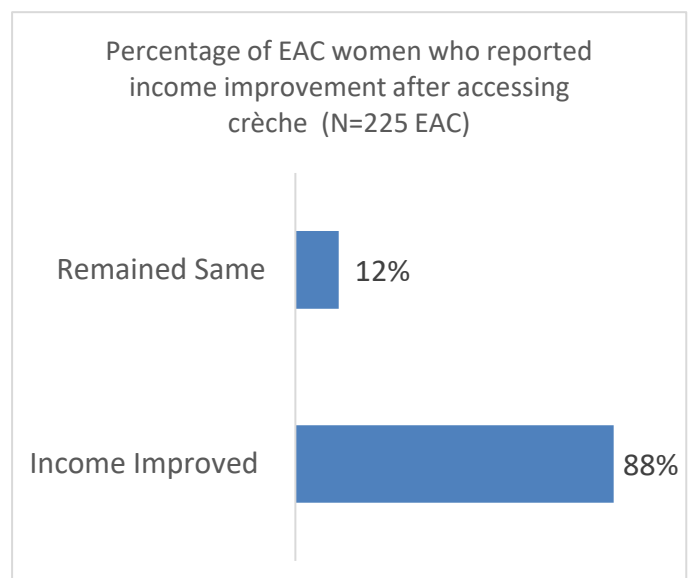
4.1 FROM HOMEMAKER TO EARNING MEMBER

In this study, **34.7% (N=78) respondents joined paid work only after they could avail the creche facility.** There was a consensus among the EAC women that it has helped them in improving their standard of living. The improvement in financial and economic stability after using Creche is evident in the following quotes. "Pati ke aage paise ke liye haath nahin failana padta hai", "Apna chota mota jarurat apne se poora kar lete hain", "accha lagta hai, apna paisa apne account mein jama karte hain" (do not have to depend on husband for petty expenses, happy that we are able to meet our requirements on our own, it feels good to deposit our money in our bankaccounts).

Before availing Creche facilities, only a few women were working. But now, seeing the women who have started to send their children to Creches and engage in paid work, the number of women joining paid work has been increasing daily (KU-1A; JR-1A). **Jharkhand rural men further added that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, financial income of most families has declined, and working women could support the family financially at the time of distress.**

4.2 ENHANCED INCOME AND OPPORTUNITIES

Of the total 225 women, 88% (N= 198) responded that their income level has improved after accessing Creche facility. An interesting finding was that 34.67% (N=78) of the respondents started working only after using Creche. The range of income for these respondents was Rs.1000-6000. For the remaining respondents, the average increase in income was 108% (Jharkhand=142.50%, Gujarat=87.87%, Karnataka=83%, and Odisha=108.65%). The following graph depicts the specific changes in income and work which women have reported after using Creche.



The data from FGDs revealed that women from across the states agreed that Creche facility has contributed to an increase in income as they are able to work for more hours than earlier. Women shared that by availing Creche, they could increase their income indirectly by working for extra hours or by engaging in other work in addition to their regular paid work. Rural women from Jharkhand pointed out that, "If we get more time for work, we can grow vegetables and sell in the local markets." (JR-1A) Similarly, urban women from Odisha said that after availing Creche, they were able to get extra time to stitch their own clothes and thereby save money (OU-1A, 1B), travel farther, seek better paying jobs, and run small shops in addition to regular paid work, thereby increasing their income.

Men respondents echoed the same sentiments and said that Creche facilities have led to an increase in the income because they have taken up paid work. Along with regular paid work, women were also able to undertake additional work (JR-1A, 1B) such as selling vegetables, collecting firewood, gathering forest produce etc. (JR-1A).

4.3 REDUCED STRESS LEVEL AND MORE TIME FOR SELF

Of the total EAC women who were employed and availing Creche facilities, 89.3% (N=200) respondents said that Creche was helpful in managing childcare responsibilities. As a result, they could devote more time to their household responsibilities, go to work without tension about their children, contribute financially to their families and manage their household and childcare responsibilities better. The male respondents from all the states, and from both rural as well as urban areas, concurred that Creche facilities have added to the well-being of women. After availing Creche facility, women reported experiencing less stress and doing better both mentally and physically. They were able to take out time to go to market, bank, etc. They were also able to attend meetings of Self-Help Groups (KU-1B). They got time to take care of themselves. The overall work burden has decreased after they started accessing Creches. The time spent earlier on childcare is now diverted towards other things (OU-1A).

Availability of meals at the Creche also helped the women relax, as they no longer had to worry about feeding children. Women from rural Gujarat shared that the facility kept them mentally free as they didn't have to take their children along with them to work; "taking along means worrying about their food and security." (1A) Women from Jharkhand (rural-1B) shared that their annoyance had also reduced due to respite from daily childcare work. They can manage their time between household responsibilities and paid work in a better way.

Women said that both food consumption and the consumption process has improved – earlier they would eat in a hurry as there were multiple tasks to be done— "susta khai paruchan," (OU-1B) roughly translated as being able to eat food quietly, without rushing, without distractions. Some even reported having more food choices. (Odisha Urban 1B). They have their meal on time and never miss the meal (KU-1B). Women shared that after availing Creches, they fall sick less often compared to earlier (JU-1B). They can take rest during their own illness, as the child is taken care of at the Creche (JU-1B).

4.4 IMPROVED MOBILITY

A significant impact of Creche on women's life was that they were able to take out some time for leisure activities and for learning new skills such as filling bank challans for depositing money and withdrawing money from ATM, attending short training courses like jewelry making, *zari* work, and button stitching (KU-1B). Another subsidiary benefit of availing creche was their ability to allocate time for social activities and other errands. For example, Jharkhand urban women associated with groups were able to go to the meeting on time (JU-1B), and rural women associated with village organizations were able to receive monetary help from the block office (JR-1B).

When asked about the activities which women can afford to indulge in after accessing creche, the top three responses were: go to ration shop/bank/hospital (78.8%), rest and relax (48.2%), learn new skills (35.1%), and attend village/SHG meetings (35.1%) regularly. However, some women from Jharkhand, both rural and urban, pointed out that their childcare burden is only partially lessened as Creches only look after children aged 3 months to 3 years old and there is no facility for children above 3 years of age (JR and JU -1A).

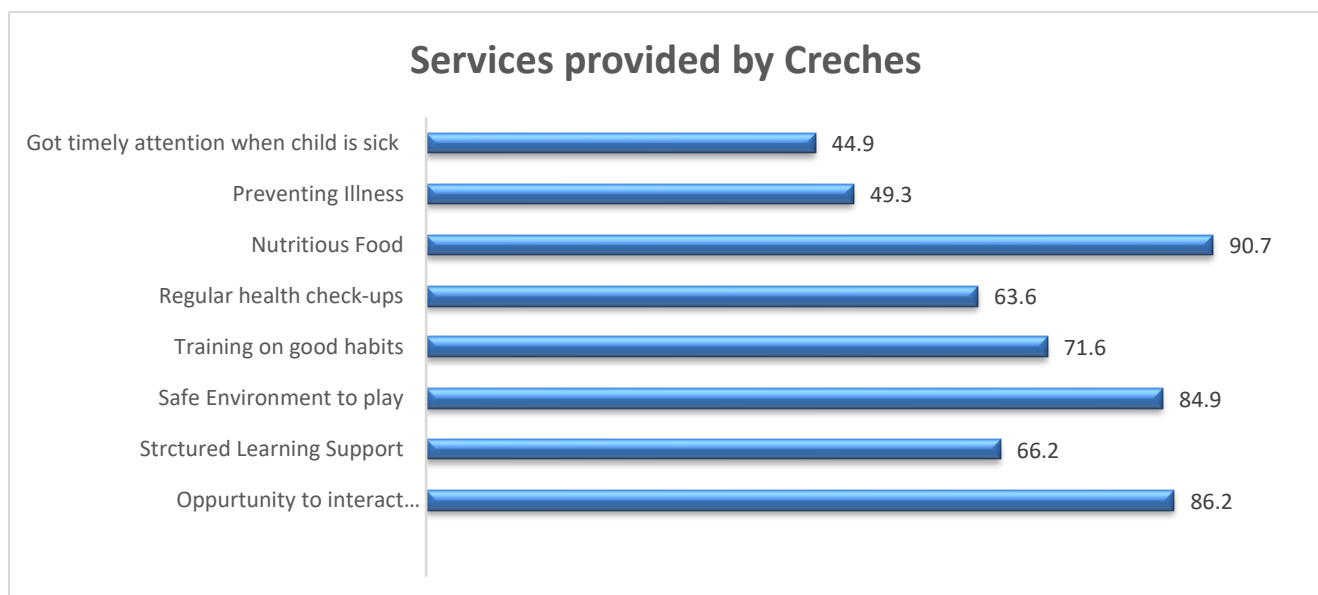
4.5 STRONG FAMILY BONDING

Fights have reduced in most of the respondents' families, and they have developed a good relationship with family members, especially with in-laws. They are getting respect in the family due to their financial position. Relationships with husbands have improved (JU-1B, GU-1B), and they are able to share their happiness and struggles with husbands and family members (KR-1B). Men and women are now sharing financial responsibilities, and together they are working towards improving their family's standard of living (KU-1B). Men reported that they could start saving money for the future. They believe that together they can fulfil their children's needs and wishes (KU-1B). Better bonding between mothers and children (KR-1B) were reported due to reduced irritation (GR-1B) After their wives started earning, the men also reported trusting them more with money and its management (OU-1B). Men shared that, "Earlier, we used to hit our children when they engaged in mischief, but now such situations do not arise. There are fewer quarrels with wife as well." (GR-1B)

IMPACT ON CHILD'S WELL BEING

The biggest concerns for women were concerning their child's food intake and health. Accordingly, the impact of Creche services on children's well-being was also enquired. In terms of services provided by the Creche, most respondents who were availing Creche facilities replied positively about the food (98.2%), followed by safe environment (88.4%), play and educational facilities (88.4%), health checkups (84.8%), and immunization (80.8%). The following graph depicts the responses received from women availing Creche.

Creche has been useful for children as it provides the following services
N= 225 EAC



4.6 HEALTHIER CHILDREN AND HAPPY PARENTS

Availability of nutritious food at Creches was one of the chief attractions among women in all the states. Women shared that, nowadays, due to regular health checkups and better food availability in Creches, their children fall ill less often (JU-1B). "Bacche saaf safai se rehte hain, kam bimar padte hain" (JR-1B). The men who were surveyed also echoed this sentiment, saying that Creches have enabled consumption of quality food (JR-1B).

Children in Creches get freshly cooked food specifically prepared for them keeping, their age and needs in mind, which is difficult to manage at home on a regular basis with multiple priorities (OU-1B, GR-1B).

Men showed their satisfaction with the medical attention their children are getting, including regular and timely health checkups (OR-1B). Timely immunization was another advantage associated with Creche use. Earlier, children would miss their scheduled immunization appointments—cited both by men and women respondents (GR-1B)—but this is no longer the case for children going to Creches. They receive individual attention in the Creche. The fact that somebody is there to take care of the child dedicatedly is an important reason for satisfaction (KU-1A). **96.4% respondents stated that their child's health has improved after joining the Creche.**

4.7 CHILDREN HAVE PICKED UP DIVERSE SKILLS, PAVING THE WAY TO SMOOTH TRANSITIONING TO SCHOOLS

The FGDs reveal that Creches have contributed to a holistic development of children. Across all the states, women believed children are learning good habits like respecting elders, maintaining hygiene & cleanliness, practicing handwashing prior to eating (JR-1B), learning to eat on their own, and using a spoon (OU-1B). Some of the quotes from the FGDs on children's wellbeing were: "Earlier, my child used to be very shy and would hide from people, but now talks to everyone." (JU-1B) "Children are able to recite poems and sing songs with confidence." (JU-1B) "Children have become more active than before." (JU-1B) "I have noticed that my child has learned to do a few things independently without anyone's assistance." (GU-1B). Women were happy that activities such as acting, song, dance, drawing, writing etc. have helped their children to develop different skills (OU-1B). Another cause for satisfaction was the children learning good habits, hygienic practices, appropriate social behaviors, and new skills. Men from rural Jharkhand shared that the children have become mischievous (1B). Rural Jharkhand Rural men shared that after availing Creche, the older children of the family were also able to go to school. Earlier, older children used to be engaged in paid work to supplement the low family income (JR-1A). Some women said that Creches have smoothed the children's transition to schools as they have picked up different academic concepts.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Of the total 225 women, 88% (N= 198) responded that their income level has improved after accessing Creche facility. An interesting finding was that 34.67% (N=78) of the respondents started working only after using Creche. The range of income for these respondents was Rs. 1000–6000. For the remaining respondents, the average increase in income was 108% (Jharkhand=142%, Gujarat=88%, Karnataka=83%, and Odisha=108%).
- 89.3% (N= 200) EAC respondents said that Creche was helpful in managing childcare responsibilities.
- Availability of nutritious food at Creches was one of the chief attractions among women in all the states. Women also shared that, due to regular health check-up and availability of better food, children fall ill less often (JU-1B).
- 96.4% (N=216) respondents stated that their child's health had improved after joining the Creche.

- Across all the states, women believed children are learning good habits like respecting elders, maintaining hygiene & cleanliness, handwashing before meals, eating food on their own (using a spoon in some cases) etc.
- Men from rural Jharkhand shared that, earlier, older children used to be engaged in paid work to supplement low family income, but now they were able to go to school.
- Women shared that, after availing Creche, they felt mentally free and relaxed due to reduced stress, hence they were able to focus on work better than earlier. Availability of meals at the Creches also puts them at ease as they don't have to worry about feeding children.
- However, some women from Jharkhand (both rural and urban) pointed out that their childcare burden is only partially lessened as Creches only look after children aged 3 months to 3 years old and there is no facility for children above 3 years (JR and JU -1A).
- Men shared that, "Earlier, we used to hit our children when they engaged in mischief, but now such situations do not arise. There are fewer quarrels with wife as well." (GR-1B).
- When asked about the activities which women are able to indulge in after accessing Creche, the top 3 responses were: go to ration shop/bank/hospital (78.8%), rest and relax (48.2%), learn new skills (35.1%), and attend village/SHG meetings (35.1%).
- Data from FGDs among employed women availing Creche revealed that Creche facilities tremendously affect women's well-being, income, child's well-being, and relationship with family members.



Source: *Mehnat Manzil*, A museum celebrating lives of informal workers in India, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

KEY FINDING 5. DO GENDER NORMS INFLUENCE WOMEN'S ACCESS TO CHILDCARE AND THEIR DECISION TO JOIN PAID WORK?

This section examines how patriarchal notions have been institutionalized in Indian homes and how they impact women's access to childcare services. This section is based on both survey and FGD data.

About 97% women (N=1080) in the survey shared that access to creche or similar facilities would enable more women to start paid work. However, the research team was interested in finding out why some women, especially ENAC and NE women, were not using creches despite having access to them. In the following section, the reasons behind this will be discussed, as articulated by women themselves.

5.1 DO WOMEN LACK AGENCY TO DECIDE ON AVAILING CRECHE FACILITIES?

One of the primary reasons for not availing creche facility was family members' refusal to send the children to Creches because they were not comfortable with leaving them in someone else's care (JU- 2A, GR-2A). Women who are currently working but not availing Creche attributed two important reasons for not accessing Creche: they felt it was their duty to care for their children (23.2%, N=16/69), and elders in the family did not allow it (20.3%, N=14/69). In urban Karnataka, ENAC women showed their enthusiasm for Creches in the following words: "We are curious to know more about the services which will be offered in the childcare facility in our locality" (KU-2B); "I am ready to send my child to a childcare facility, will you convince my husband?" (KU-2B). According to a few women in Gujarat, it was hard to overrule the family decision. Therefore, they could not put the child in a Creche without an approval from their husbands and the elders of the family.

5.2 IS THE NATURE OF INTERNALISATION OF UNPAID CARE WORK THE PROBLEM?

Women want to go out and work and become financially independent due to years of transformational work by civil society organizations and the affirmative actions of various governments. However, despite massive efforts to address gender inequality, women are unable to imagine men in caregiving roles. There is a lack of local role models for them to emulate. Similarly, though men perceive the benefit associated with women joining paid work, they are not ready to share childcare responsibilities. This is evident from the articulations made by women from different states: "Pila manankara jatna maa mane hin bhala bhabare nei paranti," Mothers are best at taking care of children -Said Sarada Meleka, Hemabati Mandangi, "Actually, it is the mother's responsibility to take care of her child." (GU-4 Grp 2)

"Chhua mankara jatna neba ta kebala maara dayitwa, ghara ra purusa loka hau ki husband huantu semane sabu dina kaama ku jauchanti, sethlagi semane ghare time dei paranti nahin. Semane mahila mananku part time kaama kariba ku kuhanti," childcare is the responsibility of women only; male members in the family are engaged in full time work so they ask women to do part time work and also take childcare responsibility," Hemabati Mandangi, Dio Meleka, Gouri Mandangi, Pappi Nachika (OR). One male respondent, Muna Paika said that the perceptions of other people are not good. Generally, people have the perception of men who engage in childcare is unfavourable, that the man/husband of working is incapable of bearing the requirements of the family and couldn't sustain the family. "Creche facility has reduced the burden of childcare, but other responsibilities of household chores are still on us. Many neighbors behave strangely because they consider sending children to Creches is not good." (GR)

5.3 IS THERE RESISTANCE TO INSTITUTIONAL CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS?

India is still largely a kinship-based traditional society where a high emphasis is placed on familial bonding and support. In such a cultural context, beliefs like, "The home is the best place for the child," (OU-4 Grp 2) "Nobody can take care of the child like a family does," etc. dominate decisions around childcare. Male FGD respondents from urban Karnataka did not prefer Creches saying, "Elder family members can't spend much time with the children during daytime. Grandparents want their kids to stay at home." (KU-1A) Similar statements were also made by men from rural Jharkhand Rural who said, "The elders in the family may not agree to it as they want the children to stay at home. Elders of the family do not like to be left alone in the house." (JR-1A)

The ENAC women who make alternate arrangements despite having a Creche in their locality also largely expressed satisfaction with these arrangements. Though it did contribute to increased stress and strain on relationships, it was still the default option, and preferred over leaving the child with an 'outsider.' They said that their families were not comfortable with leaving the children in someone else's care (FGD). Some of them, therefore, worked from home while caring for children. "Hamien nahi bhejna bachho ko, hum ghar se hi kaam karte hai to bachhe bhi dekh lete hai," (GU-2B) "We don't wish to send the kid to some other place; we work from home so we look after the kids at home"; "Bachhe to ghar pe hi khush hain, bahar nahi bhejna." (GU-2B). "The kids are happy at home, we don't want to send them anywhere".

The resistance to institutional childcare arrangements was driven by concerns around caste-based discrimination and absence of personalized attention. Women from urban Odisha (Urban) felt that the caregiver should be from upper-caste background (2A). Other groups from Odisha and Jharkhand stressed on non-discrimination based on caste and color. The apprehension around caregivers' attitude and behavior also featured as barriers to accessing childcare facilities (OR-2A). The number of caregivers in a facility was also perceived as an important factor in deciding whether to put the child in the Creche (JU2B). Women from urban Odisha specifically pointed out that the caregiver should be a mother herself because a mother can take better care of children (OU-2B). Some women from urban Gujarat expressed that they couldn't trust their children in "others" care: "Hume ghodiyaghar pe bharosa nahi hai," "We don't trust Creche," (GU-3B); "Hamara baccha dusre bachho ke saath jake bigad jaiga," "our child will get spoilt in the company of other children," (GU-3B). Men from rural Jharkhand feared that the children may not learn the family culture and tradition (JR1B). Thus, it is seen that gender, caste, and kinship factors were closely intertwined in resisting externally hired institutional support.

5.4 ARE THERE SUPPLY-SIDE ISSUES? ARE PUBLIC SPACES AND WORKPLACES WOMEN-FRIENDLY?

While women are ready and eager to get out of home, travel, and engage in paid work, are workplaces and public spaces ready to welcome and support them? The women did consider that this may have its share of problems, as perceived by them and their husbands and families, and society. On being asked, "Why are women not joining paid work?", other than the family permission and gender norms factors cited above, women cited additional reasons such as fear of molestation (JU-4 Grp 2), husband's lack of faith in their wives' (OU-4 Grp 1), and fear of societal reproach (JU-4 Grp 2). Furthermore, men from rural Gujarat were also concerned about high travel costs and stated, "Women should not go to distant places to work as it incurs traveling cost and women won't be able to do household work." (GR-1A) This shows that if factors at the workplace and in public spaces, including safety and costs involved in travel can be taken care of, some of the factors hindering women's work participation can also be mitigated.

5.5 IS ADDRESSING GENDER NORMS KEY IN ACCESSING CHILDCARE FACILITY AND JOINING PAID WORK?

The conversations with EAC women and their husbands during FGDs clearly suggest that situation on the ground is changing. Men who value woman's participation and mobility articulated a series of benefits of both the husband and wife working. This changing notion of gender role articulated by men has been outlined below.

Some women said that their husbands are not giving them permission to work as they don't trust them to work alongside other men. In response to this concern, one male respondent said, "This is all about trust. Why can't they do the work with male members in the workplace?" (Balu Jhadia, OU-Men). Similarly, another male respondent, Muna Paik, said, "Chhua mananka jatna neba taa mahila au purusa dui jankara dayitwa heba katha," "Childcare should be the responsibility of both husband and wife." (OU – Men). Both men and women think it is hard to run a family with only one source of income. "Ame pura maasa kaama kujai nai paribar, jetebele mahila mane kaama kari jauchan seita ghara chalaba ku bahut bad help hauchi," "We are not able to work for an entire month. In this context, income of women becomes more beneficial in managing family needs," Muna Jhadia. (OR – Men); "In a city, how can we meet the expenses and lead a comfortable life if only one person earns?" (KU -1b). Rasamani Paika and other two women said, "Jadi aame kaama karba k nai jimbu bele aame sabubele amar husband upre nirbhara hei ki rahijimu au gute chhotia jinisa te bi kinbalagiaamku haata pataba ku padiba. Enta ki aame nijar darkari jinia te b kininaiparu," "If we don't work, then we will always ask for money from husband or other family members to buy our things and be dependent upon them forever." (ORU). Men are also now trusting women much more than earlier. After their wives started earning, they were much more open to them managing the expenses and not seeking accountability like earlier (OU1B). The above responses suggest that there is a need to work with men and support them in changing gender norms to bring more women to work.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Availability of childcare facilities is not enough; women lack agency to decide what is good for them and their children and therefore are not able to access the facilities.
- The ENAC women who make alternate arrangements despite having a Creche in their locality largely expressed satisfaction with these arrangements. Though it did contribute to increased stress and strain on relationships, it was still the default option, and preferred over leaving the child with an 'outsider.'
- If factors at the workplace and in public spaces, including safety and costs involved in travel can be taken care of, some of the factors hindering women's work participation can also be mitigated.
- The gendered notion of a woman's primary role as a caregiver has been internalized by women as much as by men in the socialization process. Therefore, despite seeing the value in leaving the child at a Creche and fulfilling their desire to join paid work, many women are unable to do so and are waiting for approval from either their husbands or the elders in the family. Despite massive efforts to address gender inequality, women are unable to imagine men in caregiving roles. There is lack of local role models for them to emulate. Similarly, though men perceive the benefit associated with women joining paid work, they are not quite ready to share the childcare responsibilities.
- Beliefs like, 'The home is the best place for the child,' 'Nobody can take care of the child like a family does,' dominate decisions around childcare.
- The resistance to institutional childcare arrangements was driven by concerns around caste-based discrimination and absence of personalized attention. The above responses suggest there is a need to work with men and support them in changing gender norms to bring more women to work.

KEY FINDING 6. WHAT ARE THE KEY FEATURES OF A GOOD CRECHE?

While women's experience of the creche and their views on its benefits were sought from EAC members, both ENAC and NE women were asked to articulate their vision of a good creche for children aged 0-3 and 4-6 years. The responses articulated by women are presented below. 96% of the women availing creche facilities have rated the facilities as "good," barring around 4% who said they were "average." The EAC women who use creche facilities reported that they found it useful for their children's development because it provides nutritious food (90.7%), a safe environment to play (84.9%), and an opportunity to interact with other children (86.2%). Creche facilities have helped children's health by providing them with adequate nutrition (95.1%), growth monitoring (82.6%), doing regular health check-up (72.3%), and getting routine immunization (71.9%).

6.1 HAVE GOOD INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING SLEEPING FACILITY

Women from across the states emphasized on good infrastructure. They underlined the need to have a pukka building, big rooms, dedicated play area, boundary wall, playground for older children, separate kitchen, clean toilet, and cradles for babies. Availability of clean drinking water, clean and hygienic environment, proper sleeping space (such as a crib for the smaller children to sleep) (JU2A) were also emphasized. "Creches should not be on the roof, but on the ground floor," (JU3B), said a woman from Jharkhand. To ensure the safety of children, women stressed that there should be no potholes and muddy ground in the Creche area. Wood should not be used for cooking, there should not be a well or a pond near the Creche, there should not be big trees in the campus of the Creche, the place of cooking should not be near the children. It should be ensured that there is no glass or other sharp material near the children. Animals such as dogs and cats should not enter the Creche. The Creche should not be overcrowded (JU2B, KR2B). Respondents from urban Karnataka insisted on the presence of CCTV cameras in the Creche and they also suggested that there be family counselling on the importance of children's education and health (KU2A) which would motivate families to use Creches.

6.2 RECRUIT TRAINED CAREGIVERS AND ENSURE CHILDREN ARE NOT DISCRIMINATED

Caregivers should not be male members. There should be no discrimination between children based on caste (OU 3B and JU3B) in a Creche. Therefore, caregivers' caste assumed importance. While upper caste women preferred caregivers from the same caste, women from other castes shared their concern that their children may be discriminated against. This is particularly important in villages and has, on many occasions, led to tension. Women in rural Jharkhand suggested that the caregiver should not have small children of her own because, in such a situation, she will not be able to take proper care of the rest of the children. However, there was disagreement on this issue as some said that if all children are being taken care of, then why not the child of a Creche worker (JR3B). Women insisted that the caregiver should have experience of childcare, should be kind, affectionate, trustworthy, and maintain hygiene. Women from urban Odisha specifically pointed out that the caregiver should be a mother herself because "only a mother can take care of children better" (OU2B). Women from rural Odisha suggested that there should be four caregivers for 30–40 children (OR2B), while those from urban Jharkhand emphasized that a good Creche should have more than two caregivers and a separate staff for educational activities (JU2B). Women from rural Jharkhand suggested that the caregiver should be literate and should be a mother (JR 3B), affectionate, kind, trustworthy and should be from the same village (JU3B). There were also suggestions regarding the provision of honorarium and proper training for women running the Creche (JU3B).

6.3 CATER TO BOTH YOUNGER AND OLDER KIDS

Women from Jharkhand (Rural and Urban) took along small children (0-3 years) with them to work. All other women across the state kept the children in this category under the care of family members, elder siblings, neighbors, and relatives. The older children (4-6 years) were left at home under the supervision of the elder family members. In Gujarat (Urban), the 4–6 year old children attended Anganwadi pre-school and tuition class (GU3A). Women want Creches to cater to older kids as well because they cannot keep one child in a Creche and another at home. They also want there to be meaningful activities for the older kids.

6.4 OFFER EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Women from both rural and urban Odisha, urban Jharkhand, and urban Gujarat emphasized on the availability of learning materials such as toys, games, along with tables, chairs, and engaging instructional paintings on walls. The educational activities should be based on play methods, rhymes, and toys. Women from urban Jharkhand pointed out that there could be arrangements for reading and writing for older children (JU2B). Women from both rural and urban Odisha and Jharkhand, and rural Karnataka also mentioned that the availability of suitable learning material for children such as educational toys, attractive pictures etc., would motivate them to send their children to Creches. Women shared that the provision of educational facilities such as books for older children, educational toys, attractive pictures, and slates were essential in a good Creche. Women from urban Odisha expressed that the children should also be taught simple good habits, “chhot chhot jinis sikheiba katha.” (OU3B)

6.5 PROVIDE FOOD, NUTRITION, AND HEALTH SERVICES

The provision of freshly cooked nutritious food at the centers was considered important as it relieved the pressure on women to prepare dishes which would be both nutritious and liked by the children. Women from rural Odisha (OR2B) said local nutritious food items such as eggs, chhatua (multigrain powder specially prepared for kids), mandia pitha (locally made cake with raggi) could be served; women from urban Jharkhand (JU2B) added that Creches could also provide healthy drinks. Women also wanted that they must be facilitated to breastfeed their young children at creche. The women also stressed on the need for proper health care and immunization facilities in a good creche, including growth monitoring, supplementary food, and nutrition for the malnourished children etc.

6.6 INVOLVE PARENTS

Women from urban Karnataka (KU2B) suggested that there should be involvement of parents in the management of the facility, with regular parents’ meetings. Additionally, the KII emphasized on the participation of community members and parents to build ownership for the Creche facility and to have accountability. “It is good to conduct monthly parents’ meeting and training regarding child development,” said the women from Karnataka (KU2B).

6.7 BE PEOPLE-FRIENDLY IN TERMS OF LOCATION, TIMING, AND SERVICES

The women emphasized that a good Creche should work from morning to evening (8 am to 5 pm), cater to older children, and should be within accessible distance from their homes. Saiiyad Tabassum from urban Gujarat noted, “Ghodiya ghar hamare ghar ke paas hote to hum ko aasan pade,” “If the Creche is located near our house, then it will be easy for us to send our child.” (GU3A). Pick up and drop off facility was another motivating factor for women from rural Gujarat. Women from urban Gujarat and rural Karnataka wanted free Creche facilities whereas women from rural Gujarat women were ready to pay a monthly amount of Rs 100. The survey suggests that 50% women are willing to pay a very nominal amount towards the Creche services while the rest want it to be a fully free facility.

KEY FINDING 7. COVID-19 AND WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

This section has been analyzed using both primary and secondary data. The primary data for this section was collected only through the survey. This section discusses: a) impact of Covid-19 on women's income, b) nature of impact of Covid-19 on family, c) the kind of support received by women during the pandemic. Secondary data (not exhaustive) outlines key trends on the impact of Covid-19 on women in the informal sector.

The Covid-19 Pandemic and its socioeconomic effects have created a global crisis, unparalleled in history, that requires a response to match its scale and complexity.[1] This crisis has made it apparent that the compounded impacts are exacerbated for women and girls, who are generally earn less, hold insecure jobs, and live in poverty.[2] It has worsened women's LFPR in India.

7.1 COVID-19 AND ITS IMPACT ON WOMEN

A careful study of the secondary literature suggests that women have been the worst affected due to Covid-19 and the resulting strict lockdowns. During the pandemic, most women lost their jobs or faced a fall in their incomes. Women stopped working for pay, although their contribution through unpaid labour increased. Small businesses run by women experienced temporary and permanent closures. The IWWAGE-LEAD [3] study on home-based small businesses of women in handloom and handicrafts in India—conducted over November 2019 and August 2020 (a pre- and post-Covid-19 comparative analysis)—revealed income losses, substantial closure of businesses, and withdrawal of women from such economic activities. It was further reported that the loss of micro and nano businesses owned by women have been greater than those owned by men (Mitra and Sinha, 2021) [4]. Chakraborty (2020a), cited by Mitra and Sinha (2021), also reported similar income losses for women in most of the informal sectors. Further, reports suggest that a large section of women migrant workers remain unrecognized as 'workers' since they do not have any form of registration or identity issued by authorities. The Action Aid Report (2020) [5]—based on a combination of in-person and telephonic survey of 11,000 respondents across 15 states, conducted in May 2020—highlighted that fewer woman were seeking work in the post-lockdown period as compared to men, indicating a further exodus of women from the labour force.

The ISST (2020) telephonic survey [6] of women informal workers in sectors like domestic work, construction labour, street vendors, waste pickers, and home-based workers have clearly indicated that the gendered impact of Covid-19 is profound. Women were impacted differently because of their prime responsibility as caregivers. Owing to the lockdowns, their unpaid care work had increased manifold. 66% of the respondents in the study indicated an increase in unpaid work at home and 36% reported an increased burden of child and elderly care work during this period. These studies also reported that 83% of the respondents, mainly the construction workers, waste pickers, and home-based workers, had witnessed substantial decline in their earnings (Chakraborty, 2020b). Azeez et al. (2020) paper, cited by Mitra and Sinha (2021), explores the impact of Covid-19 on women migrant workers and their families, analyzing qualitative interviews in two localities each in Delhi and in Gurugram (Haryana). The paper notes loss of livelihoods and resulting debt as the typical experience for women migrant workers. The complete closure of public transport facilities, accompanied by mobility restrictions, affected women workers relatively more.

[1 and 2] 'Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women'. UN Women, 2020,

[UN Secretary-General's policy brief: The impact of COVID-19 on women | Digital library: Publications | UN Women – Headquarters](#)

[3 and 6] Women in the Indian Informal Economy. ISST, IWWAGE, Lead -Krea University. 2021

[4] Mitra and Sinha (2021). Covid-19 and Women's Labour Crisis: Reiterating an Inclusive Policy Response. *Economic and Political Weekly* 56 (17). [COVID-19 and Women's Labour Crisis: Reiterating an Inclusive Policy Response | Economic and Political Weekly \(epw.in\)](#)

[5] 'Workers in the time of Covid-19'. ActionAid Association India. New Delhi. (2020) [Workers in the Time of Covid-19 - ActionAid India](#)

While the impact on women from informal economy is largely bad, during the pandemic, women were the frontline workers and were leading the fight against the Corona virus, which spread both in rural and urban India. Under the NRLM, as part of the response to Covid-19, women SHGs had been involved in making masks, protective gear, sanitizers and handwash. They had also been involved in running community kitchens and vegetable delivery units. Production and delivery of such essential goods/services can also be an effective way of creating employment opportunities for women. However, it is not yet clear what the livelihood impact of these initiatives have been (Mitra and Sinha, 2021).

Based on the above discussion, it could be argued that women’s work participation has remained a huge concern both before and during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Covid-19 has made ‘visible’ the scope and scale of the problem as the economy is in a deep crisis. This survey was conducted towards the end of 2021. Because many studies had already been undertaken and a significant number of reports were available in the public domain, it was decided that this study would focus on very specific aspects of the impact of Covid-19 on women in the informal sector.

7.2 IMPACT ON WOMEN’S EARNING DURING COVID -19

Only 10% women (N=19/1119) were engaged in some sort of paid work during the lockdown. 90% were not engaged in paid work. The survey points out that during the pandemic, more number of ENAC women were engaged in paid work than EAC women. Only 14.5% of the total working women— (EAC (23/10.2%) + ENAC (59/17.5%))—who participated in the survey were engaged in paid work during the lockdown. The percentage of EAC and ENAC women who worked during the lockdown is listed in the table below.

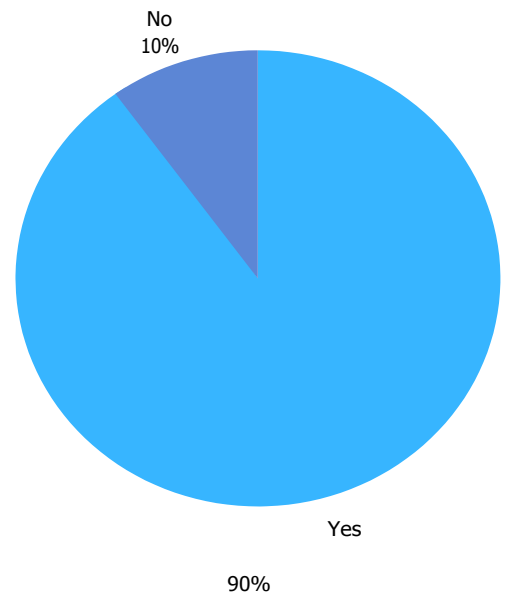
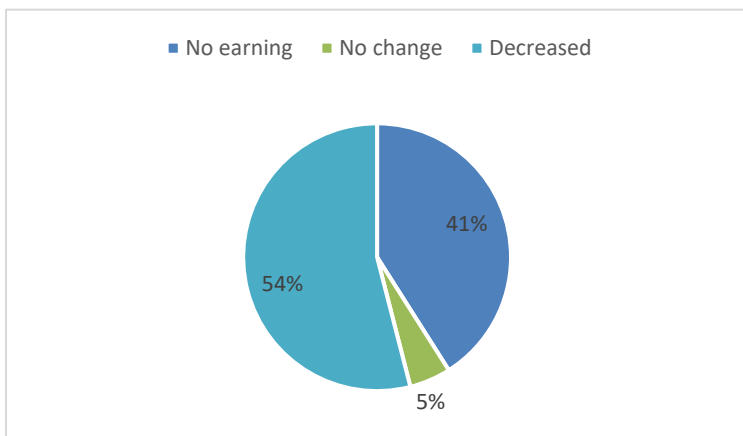


Table 10-EAC and ENAC women who were engaged in paidwork during Covid-19

	EAC N =225	ENAC N =337	Total N = 562
Urban	9.3%	11.03%	10.4%
Rural	10.8%	22.05%	17.6%



41% women reported that they had zero income during Covid-19. 54% reported a decrease in monthly earnings, and 5% reported no change in their earning.

In total, 58% of urban women who were in paid work reported “no earning.” The percentage was 47.2% for rural working women. It is interesting to note that while more women in rural areas were working, the income decline was more for them than for women in urban areas. A meagre percentage i.e., below 4% reported no change in earning during Covid-19.

Table 11 - Nature of earning during Covid-19 by region (rural/urban)

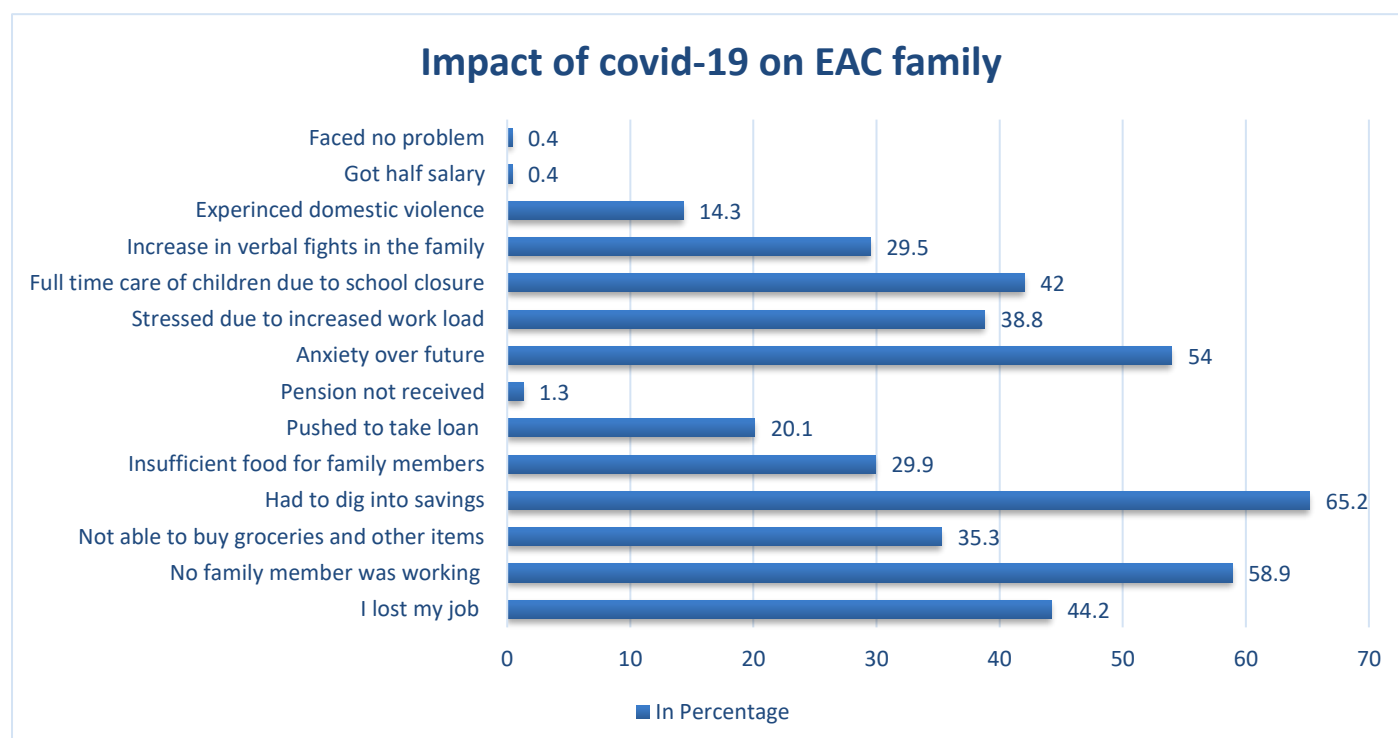
	R-EAC (N = 129)	U-EAC (N = 96)	R-ENAC (N = 195)	U-ENAC (N = 145)	Total Rural working women (N = 324)	Total Urban working women (N = 241)
No earning	54.3%	54.2%	42.6%	60.7%	47.2%	58%
Decreased	42.6%	43.7%	51.3%	33.8%	47.8%	37.7%
No change	2.3%	2%	4.6%	4.1%	3.7%	3.3%

7.3 NATURE OF IMPACT ON FAMILY DURING COVID-19

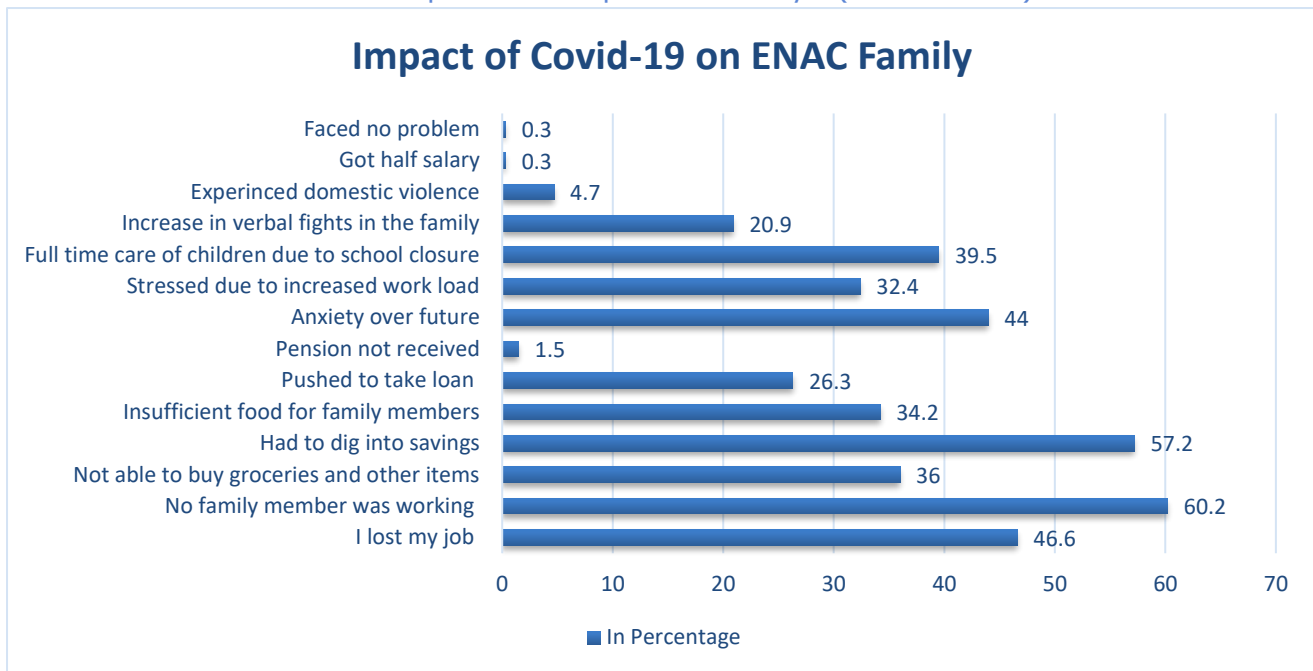
Covid-19 has impacted one and all but not equally. Families who are in the informal sector were hit hard due to the sudden and extended lockdowns. Out of 1128 women, 716 women (63.47%) reported that, during this period, no family member was working. More than a quarter of the respondents reported that food availability at home was insufficient. As we live in a patriarchal society, it would be safe to assume that, at a time like this, women are more adversely affected than male members of the family during such insufficiency of food. 7.4% women faced domestic violence. 25% women reported that there were verbal fights in the families. The top three most common impacts on family were: a) No family member was working, b) Had to dig into savings, and c) Anxiety over future.

It is important to note here that in percentage terms though these were ranked as top three issues, the lack of money to buy food and necessary groceries has severely impacted women and their children's health for the long term, not just during the pandemic years.

How did Covid-19 impact EAC respondents' family?
(N=224 EAC)



How did COVID-19 impact ENAC respondents' family? (N= 329 ENAC)



As discussed earlier, 90% women were not engaged in paid job and therefore could not support their family with an income. The 10% who supported their family with an income reported that they took up some new work which they had not done earlier. Many got work making masks and sanitizers, selling vegetables / flowers / fruits, and sanitation work. Some of them availed the work offered through MGNREGA to supplement their family's income.

7.4 TYPES OF SUPPORT RECEIVED DURING THE PANDEMIC

In terms of the kind of support respondents and their families received during the lockdown period, 86% women (N=798/930) have reported that they received cooked food, dry rations, cash, Covid-19 kits, etc. 14% women shared that they did not receive any support. Those who had received the support got it from government sources (49%), voluntary organizations/NGOs (25%), local administration (12%), and rest from others.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Only 10% women (N= 19/1119) were engaged in some sort of paid work during the lockdown. 90% were not engaged in paid work.
- More women in rural areas (17.6%) were engaged in paid work in comparison to their urban counterparts (10.4%). However, more women reported decrease in income in rural areas than in urban areas. (N=559, including EAC and ENAC women).
- The survey points out that more ENAC women than EAC women were engaged in paid work during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Out of 1128 women, 716 women (63.47%) reported that during this period no family member was working. More than a quarter of the respondents reported that food availability at home was insufficient.
- Covid-19 impacted families in many ways. The top three most common impacts on family were: a) no family member was working, b) had to dig into savings, and c) anxiety over future. It is important to note here that in percentage terms, though these were ranked as top three issues, insufficient food, and lack of money to buy groceries would have had lasting and, in many cases, detrimental impact on wellbeing of women and children.
- In terms of the kind of support respondents and their families received during lock down period, 86% women (N=798/930) have reported that they have received cooked food, dry rations, cash, Covid-19 kits, etc. 14% women shared that they have not received any.

ARE WOMEN WILLING TO USE CRECHES?

88.7% not employed women attributed childcare responsibility as the main reason for not joining paid work.

95.1% women said "Yes" to Creche use and only 4.9% women said "No."

"Hamien nahi bhejna bachho ko, hum ghar se hi kaam karte hai to bachhe bhi dekh lete hai"

We work from home, so we can also take care of our children. We do not wish to send our children to the Creche.

"Since joining the Creche, I have noticed that my child has learned to do a few things independently, without anyone's assistance."

(FGD Gujarat Urban -2B & 1B)

”



CHAPTER 5. KEY INSIGHTS

Based on the primary research in four states, backed by secondary sources, the current study provides the following key insights.

5.1 ANGANWADIS VS CRECHES - SEPARATION OR CONVERGENCE?

There are two major schemes covering the care of children under 6 years – Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and NCS (formerly RGNCS). The ICDS programme in India is the world's largest programme for early childhood care and development, with over 158 million children (2011 Census) in the 0–6 years age group and includes pregnant and lactating mothers in the country coming under its umbrella [1]. It offers six services– supplementary nutrition, pre-school non-formal education, nutrition and health education, immunization, health check-up, and referral services— through 14 Lakh sanctioned Anganwadi Centres in the country, out of which 13.77 lakh Anganwadi Centres are operational across all the districts in the country (PIB, Min. WCD, Nov 2019) [2]. Anganwadis are a well-established hyper-local/ grassroots network providing many essential services to the immediate communities, acting as a link between government schemes and beneficiaries. However, they are increasingly overburdened with multiple roles and tasks, ranging from enumeration and maintenance of records to ensuring nutrition and health of children and adolescents.

While the ICDS programme, under which Anganwadis function, was India's first nationwide programme to tackle child malnutrition and morbidity, the NCS, was started with the intention of enabling women to enter the workforce. As per the definition under the NCS, the distinguishing feature of a Creche is the drop-in and care facility for children who are 6 months to 6 years of age, along with nutrition and education for their holistic development.

One of the contentious issues revealed in this study is the confusion between the roles of Anganwadis and Creches. Some respondents (KII, Technical Expert) think it is prudent to merge the roles, given the several overlaps, and given that Anganwadis are a widespread well-established national network which could be leveraged to operate Creches. This is, of course, subject to availability of required physical infrastructure, separate trained Creche staff, and enhanced budgets. Others (KII, Technical Expert) feel that Anganwadis are already overburdened and underfunded; and in their current form, they cannot be expected to cater to the special needs of very young children of 0–3 years with extended working hours. Therefore, they suggest there is a need to clearly separate the two to ensure both their mandates are fulfilled.

In this study, the women's concerns/demands (or 'asks') with respect to creches also include specialized care for the very young child (0–3 years), ensuring safety and sleeping facilities, with specialized trained staff for feeding them with nutritious food and ensuring age-appropriate learning. They also demand extension in the operational hours of creches to cover the working hours of parents. Citing the need for breastfeeding facilities as well as for proximity of the Creche to the mother's place of work, especially in the case of infants and very young children, the technical expert (KII, Technical Expert) strongly advocated for employer-run creches (subsidized / incentivized by the government, where necessary). An immediate first step is to sensitize bureaucrats at the state level on the mandates of these schemes and how significant they are for the holistic development of the child. Without additional human resource, funds, training, and infrastructure, expanding the mandate of the Anganwadis to running a Creche is not feasible.

[1] <https://www.thehansindia.com/editors-desk/who-cares-for-anganwadi-workers-693842>

[2] Ministry of Women and Child Development, Anganwadi Sevikas, Posted On: 12 JUL 2019 4:39PM by PIB Delhi <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1578557>

This is a complex issue with multiple positions. Any proposal to merge or separate Anganwadis and Creches needs careful analysis of pros and cons and a further study of different positions. Any such measure should be undertaken with caution and after due consultation with all the stakeholders and building consensus among various parties. Above all, it is best to localize the decision-making and provisioning on a case-by-case basis to better adapt to local constraints and needs.

5.2 RECOGNITION AND REMUNERATION OF THE CARE ECONOMY IS VITAL TO IMPROVE FLFP

16.4 billion hours are spent in unpaid care work every day. This is equivalent to two billion people working eight hours per day with no remuneration. India's unpaid care work is valued at 3.5% of the GDP in United States Dollars: Women 3.1% and men 0.4%. Indian women spend 312 minutes/day (in urban areas) and 291 minutes/day (in rural areas) on unpaid care work, contrasted against men spending 29 minutes (urban) and 32 minutes (rural). The unequal burden of unpaid care work between women and men is very high in India—the gender equality gap is 40.5% with India placed 4th from the bottom (among 67 countries). In India, public investments in the three pillars of care work—i.e. (a) preprimary education, (b) long-term care services, (c) maternity, disability, sickness, and employment injury benefits—taken together is less than 1% of the GDP. With women burdened with disproportionate care work, it is no wonder that 78.6% (urban) and 66.4% (rural) women are out of the labour force in India [3].

Thus, unpaid care and domestic work is closely linked to household production, market production, and public sector policies. The gender-based division of labour in the home and in society poses several constraints and serious disadvantages to women in areas like earning income, developing new skills, participating in public and democratic life, and having rest and leisure time. Therefore, addressing care work must be a key policy priority to support women's economic empowerment. Time-use surveys that help to recognize and remunerate care work and policy and budgetary allocations can reduce and redistribute care work done by women.

Evidence from Mexico has shown that public provision of childcare services through both demand-side and supply-side incentives—grants for individuals and CSOs to facilitate setting up and running childcare institutions, as well as targeted subsidies to low-income mothers who enroll their children—has had a double impact on female labour force participation. First, low-income mothers were supported to engage in paid work. Second, the programme generated around 45,000 paid jobs for providers and their assistants, mostly women (OECD, 2012) [4].

The situation of the feminized care economy in India is no different. Each of the 14 lakh Anganwadi centres, benefiting over 7 crore people in India, is run by an Anganwadi Worker (AWW) and a Helper (AWH), who are mostly women. The workers are from the community they operate in and thus have an intimate understanding of the issues of the community. With about 27 lakh (26,82,544) women workers employed in Anganwadis [5], about 10 lakh ASHAs and ANMs, Creche workers, mid-day meal workers in primary schools, and the sanitation workers (again mostly women, and primarily from Dalit communities in this case) there are a huge number of women engaged in India's workforce.

[3] Source: Care Work and Care Jobs: The Future of Decent Work. ILO Report. June 2018

[4] Source: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_613536.pdf

[5] Ministry of WCD data shared in the Parliament in Nov2019 <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1578557-> Ministry of Women and Child Development, Anganwadi Sevikas , Posted On: 12 JUL 2019 4:39PM by PIB Delhi

However, despite the Government having an agenda of increasing the female labour force participation, these women who work in various schemes of the government and render critical services to the communities, are not recognized workers covered under labour laws. They are seen as mere 'volunteers' or 'honorary workers' who are only paid minimal monthly 'honorariums,' far below the minimum wages, that too often delayed. "This is a very gendered division of labour, where care work is performed by women," said economist Reetika Khera. "This care work is done outside the domain of the house, but the women are still not paid enough for their work. This reinforces the idea that care work is something women are meant to do, rather than economic work that deserves fair compensation" [6].

While honorariums paid to scheme workers differ in different states, in most states, their pay is lower than the state's minimum wage. There have been protests and court cases by the scheme workers' federations and unions over decades, their demands including increased budget allocation for ICDS and NCS and to ensure risk allowance, insurance, minimum wages, social security and pension to the scheme workers and helpers, other issues of privatization and opening of pre-schools, unscientific digitization, extra work, non-payment of wages and other benefits for months etc. Despite protests and demonstrations in almost every state recently, their concerns and demands for better pay and recognition as government employees with permanent jobs have not been considered. In a recent written response to the Parliament in Nov 2019, the Minister of WCD said:

"The Government of India has enhanced the honorarium of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) at main Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 4,500 per month, AWWs at mini AWCs from Rs. 2,250 to Rs. 3,500 per month, Anganwadi Helpers (AWHs) from Rs 1,500 to Rs. 2,250 per month and introduced performance linked incentive of Rs. 250 per month to AWHs, effective from 1st October 2018. AWWs are paid Rs. 500 per month under POSHAN Abhiyaan for using ICDS-CAS. There is no proposal under consideration present for further increase in monthly honorarium" [7].

With a change in the scheme pattern and the consequent changes in funding pattern, the number of operational Creches in the country have fallen from 19809 in 2013-14 to 7930 in 2019. Under the erstwhile RGNCS, the Creches covered a total of over 5.9 lakh children. Of these, more than 15,000 Creches covering more than 3.78 lakh children were operating in rural areas. However, the recent years have seen a drastic fall in the budget allocation for the scheme [8]. Citing from the KII [9], 5500 Creches run by the BAJSS [10], and supported by the CSWB, were shut down in 2017-18 after budgetary allocation ratios were reduced from 90:10 to 60:40 (Centre: state). Faced with budget cuts, the bureaucrats suggested scraping the Creche scheme citing "duplication of services" by the Anganwadis. However, Mr. Gagan (name changed) is of the firm opinion that Creche services are critical and should be revived with enhanced budgets.

The scheme workers' long-standing demands especially need urgent attention in the light of the fact that nation's 27 lakh Anganwadi workers, along with ASHAs, were the frontline responders in their communities in the battle against COVID-19. On top of their usual responsibilities, they distributed dry rations and cooked food, screened people for COVID-19, and spread awareness of the virus [5]. The Covid-19 Pandemic has further worsened the challenges at hand and childcare facilities are almost non-existent due to the lockdown restrictions.

[6] <https://scroll.in/article/1022099/the-historic-injustice-served-to-care-workers-by-indias-highest-court>

[7] <https://www.pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1592815> - Ministry of Women and Child Development, 21 NOV 2019 4:46PM by PIB Delhi Increase in Salary of Workers and Helpers

[8] MC Concept Note 2022

[9] KII with Mr. Gagan (name changed) Jharkhand

[10] Bhartiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangh

[11] <https://theleaflet.in/asha-and-anganwadi-workers-are-the-backbones-of-indias-rural-health-and-care-services/>

Rather than supporting these poor and hardworking women workers by providing them with safety measures, bonus, and social security, instead, many women were thrown out of jobs because of the closure of Creches before and during covid times; these jobs were their primary or supplementary source of income for the family. This is in stark contrast to the stated goals of improving FLFP.

Appropriately and fairly recognising these lakhs of frontline women workers is essential as care providers are the backbone of the country's workforce, now and in the future, and constitute a significant proportion of the women labour force. Therefore, transformative policies and decent care work are crucial to ensuring a future of work founded on social justice and promoting gender equality for all.

5.3 NO CHOICE: GIVE UP PAID WORK OR OPT FOR COMPROMISED CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS

One of the key reasons preventing women from joining paid work has been the burden of unpaid care work, including childcare. Evidence from across the world suggests that it is particularly difficult for poor families to provide quality care for their children because paid childcare is unavailable and/or unaffordable since they barely manage to make ends meet. Data from various developing countries shows that women not accessing Creches resort to a range of options—from taking children to work or leaving them behind with family members or neighbors, and at times even leaving them alone. A study of NREGA workers showed that of the 104 women, almost 50% left their children at home, while 19% brought their children to the worksite. About 12% of the respondents reported leaving their children at the 'balwadi' or 'anganwadi' and around 1% at schools [12].

Secondary data also suggests that bringing children to work does not solve broader family and work concerns. Having children at work also reduces the time and investments that women can put into paid work, including training, market development, registration, and expansion. It may also place children in hazardous environments and further contribute to problems of child labour as children in the workplace gradually take on work tasks as they grow older [13].

The care burden placed on women in general, and more specifically the responsibility of care of young children, acts as a significant barrier to women engaging in paid work. Those who still do engage in paid work, do so carrying the 'double burden' of care work and paid work, and this often drives them to take up marginal and informal low-paid jobs. Besides the 'time poverty' they experience, this may also restrict their chances in the labour market, the amount of time they can spend on income-earning activities, and ultimately their levels of income [14]. However, for most women surveyed in the current research, childcare responsibility prevents their entry into the paid work force or forces them to drop out of paid work.

[12] Employment guarantee-women work and childcare.pdf, p.11.

[13] Expanding wwp and informal economy workers and the need for childcare.pdf, p.4

[14] WIEGO Childcare Initiative Literature Review, p.7

Studies show that childcare facilities enabled women from poor socio-economic backgrounds to join paid work and enhanced their productivity and income. Mahajan (2018), while discussing the case of Sangini, a full-day childcare center run as a cooperative by SEWA—stated clear advantages for children in the center. Children in this center showed a) greater ability to talk and express themselves, b) better nutrition linked habits, and c) high rate of age-appropriate vaccination. (Cited by Banerjee, 2020) [15]. Women in the present research perceived Creches as enablers because it allows them to be financially independent and reduced their childcare responsibility while providing a range of benefits to their children.

The ENAC women— both, those who had no access to a Creche and those who did not use Creches despite its availability of Creche in their areas—acknowledged that the current childcare arrangement has left them stressed, irritated, and under immense mental pressure. The above expression, when seen in conjunction with the main attraction for using the creche by EAC women, locates the reason for stress and irritation among women. 83.5% EAC women said that safety is the most significant factor influencing their decision to use Creches, followed by the availability of free services (67.9%). This underlines that women value safe childcare facilities. It is evident from the current study that childcare responsibility is critical to all young mothers, and they perceive creches as not only sharing this responsibility but also minimizing risks to a great extent.

A huge percentage 59% (N=196) of working mothers (ENAC) in this study reported that they are forced to compromise and adopt sub-standard options for childcare, adversely impacting the children's wellbeing as much as their own economic productivity and mental wellbeing! Resource-poor families need state support to supplement childcare arrangements such as exposure to good childcare practice, systems linkages, adequate nutrition, infant stimulation practices, and childcare tools for home. As several studies have elucidated, women working in the informal sector cannot afford paid childcare facilities and therefore rely on a range of informal arrangements to care for their children while they engage in paid work to support their family.

In Indonesia, 40% of working women care for their children while working; 37% rely on female relatives and 10% deploy older female children to help; in rural areas, reliance on older female children for care is much higher. In Nairobi, 54% of poorer mothers were found to bring their babies to work, whereas 85% of better-off mothers had house-girls. In Vietnam and Botswana, one quarter of poorer parents took their children to work regularly; in the informal economy, half of parents brought their children to work with them on a regular basis [16].

[15] Monika Banerjee, *Women and their Childcare Needs: Assessing childcare provisioning in India through a Gender Lens*. ISST Working Paper Series. 2020)

[16] Naomi Cassirer & Laura Addati, 'Expanding women's employment opportunities: Informal economy workers and the need for childcare'. *Conditions of Work and Employment Programme*

WHY WOMEN LEAVE PAID WORK?

48.6% not employed women (N=271) were engaged in paid work in the past and had quit

Key reasons:

- a) childcare responsibility
- b) inability to manage responsibilities at work and home



"Earlier, my child used to be very shy and would hide from people, but now talks to everyone."

"Children are able to recite poems and sing songs with confidence."

"Children have become more active than before."

(FGD Jharkhand Urban -1B)





CHAPTER 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

1 DEVELOP A NATIONAL STRATEGY ON CARE ECONOMY

Unpaid care work, including childcare, is closely linked to household production, market production and public sector policies related to female labour force participation. The gender-based division of labour in the home and in society poses several constraints and serious disadvantages to women, preventing them from earning an income, developing skills, participating in public and democratic life, and having time for rest and leisure. Therefore, addressing care work must be a key policy priority to support women's economic empowerment. Time-use surveys that help to recognize and remunerate care work and adequate policy and budgetary allocations can reduce and redistribute the unpaid care work done by women, thereby enabling them to play a greater role in the paid work arena.

2 ENSURE DECENT WORK AND WORKERS' RIGHTS TO WOMEN WORKERS ENGAGED IN PUBLIC 'CHILDCARE' SCHEMES

The above recommendation on care economy also has linkages with the Decent Work agenda on creation of sustainable, inclusive, and decent employment for women and the youth in care jobs, who are especially vulnerable to socio-economic and environmental exclusion in the informal economy. Government 'care schemes' would go a long way in supporting and boosting women's participation if they were to give workers rights— such as recognition and professionalization of childcare cadre, job security, fair remuneration, social protection, and decent working conditions—to the lakhs of care workers in India, who are mostly women. Decision-makers should take concrete action in promoting quality job generation in the care sector while ensuring their recognition and protection as workers. This would have a two-fold impact— directly benefit the women care workers and enable other women to avail care and enter the workforce.

3 ADVOCATE FOR GENDER RESPONSIVE AND GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE POLICIES IN THE AREAS OF CARE, LABOUR, AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Gender responsive and transformative institutional policies related to care, labour and social protection will have a strong effect on women's work participation. These include innovative and transformative practices to recognize and support the rights of women informal workers; addressing gender stereotypes and cultural barriers through increased investments and incentives for programmes promoting father's engagement in caregiving; implementing programmes to develop responsive caregiving capacities of parents (Based on UNICEF's Family-Friendly Policies); creating targeted policy initiatives for gender-responsive recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and its economic fallout; building large scale public opinion to shift women's social narratives to value women's unpaid care work and economic rights and redistribute the care burden; etc.

4 AWARENESS-BUILDING EFFORTS ON INSTITUTIONAL CHILDCARE FACILITIES AND PROVISION IS CRITICAL TO CREATE AND SUSTAIN A DEMAND FOR QUALITY CHILDCARE SERVICES

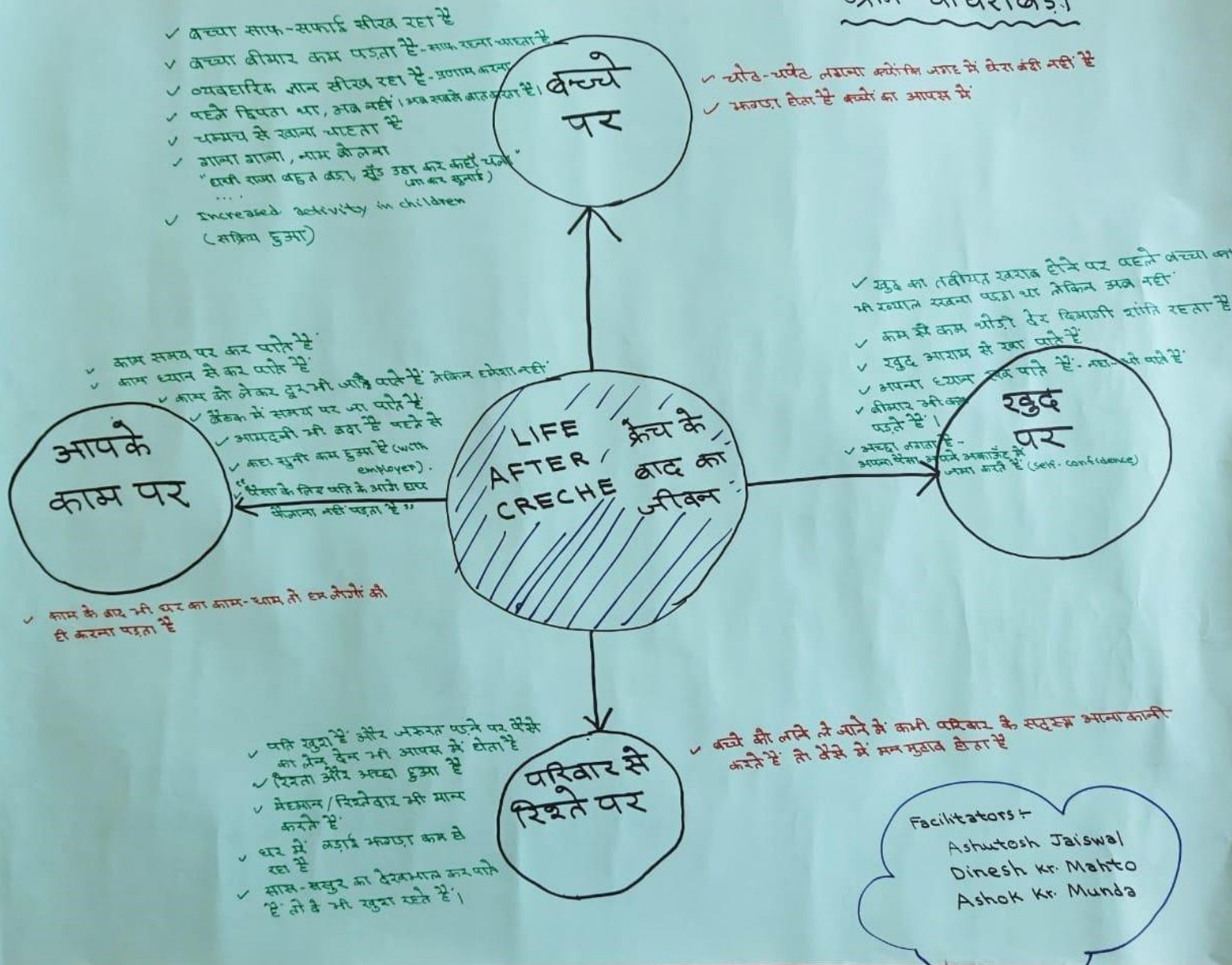
Large-scale information and public awareness programmes undertaken by the government for better uptake, and localized campaigns initiated by civil society are needed to create awareness among women and give them the agency to demand for quality institutional childcare facilities as a public good and as a basic right for children, women, and workers. A multi-pronged and broad-based civil society campaign involving women's rights groups and gender specialists; unorganized sector workers' federations; trade unions and labour rights groups; youth groups; advocates of early childhood education and alliances for health and nutrition; anti-child labour groups; along with other activist groups will bring their expertise and understanding of grassroots work in order to outline advocacy directions to pursue the twin agendas of improved child well-being and women's work participation through institutional childcare facilities.

5 ENHANCED PUBLIC PROVISIONING AND BUDGETARY ALLOCATION IS THE NEED OF THE HOUR FOR THE EXPANSION OF QUALITY CHILDCARE SERVICES

With both the ICDS and NCS already poorly funded with declining provisioning over the years, the number of Creches, and number of children they covered, have seen a steep fall. The Covid-19 Pandemic has further dealt a big blow, shutting down these essential services at a time when they are needed the most. This is a cause for serious concern that needs urgent attention to address child well-being as well as the needs of women. Both schemes meet very vital needs and fill a huge gap in support, especially for women in the informal sector who need to work to meet even their basic essential needs and do not have the option of hiring childcare support. There is an urgent need to increase government budgets, with separate allocations for full day Creche facilities with trained staff and infrastructure. However, given the immediate overwhelming need for Creche facilities and women's readiness to get to work, multiple funding models may be explored to bridge the gap. Revitalizing the provisions of the existing schemes and adding a network of public and workplace Creches will be hugely beneficial. Incentives to support community-based and contributory models may also be explored, with private partnerships wherever possible.

6 DRIVING AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TOWARDS INCLUSIVE AND QUALITY CHILDCARE IS ESSENTIAL TO MAKE CHILDCARE A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

It takes a community to raise a child. Nurturance and care of children as the future generations, future citizens, future workforce, and the nation-builders of the future is the collective responsibility of various elements of society, not just at an individual level but also institutionally. Policy and programmes need to focus on meaningful integration of parents and families, local communities and CSOs, the market and media, as well as the local governance and State, for ensuring quality childcare. Ground level work with community groups and local decision-makers would bring in contextualized innovations in management for quality and sustainability. The measures will not be successful without proper implementation of labour provisions and employers setting up childcare facilities at the workplace, with incentives and subsidies and PPP model. New age entrepreneurs can be incentivized to come up with commercial and community-based models to pilot and scale up childcare support for women in the informal sector.



CHAPTER 7. IDEAS FOR ACTION

IDEAS FOR ACTION

It is evident that there are no easy solutions in the ongoing debate over Low FLFP. Based on the primary research in four states, the study proposes the following ideas for action in the short term.

1. EMPHASISE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE ROLES OF ANGANWADIS AND CRECHES

The distinguishing feature of a Creche is the drop-in and care facility, including sleeping facility for children in the age-group 0-6 years, along with nutrition and education for their holistic development. Barring a few overlaps, the mandates of Creches and Anganwadis are different. Anganwadis are already overburdened and underfunded; in their current form, they cannot be expected to also run a Creche. Therefore, there is a need to unburden Anganwadis and have separate provision for Creches, with trained staff and enhanced budgets to ensure quality and access. An immediate first step is to sensitize bureaucrats at the state level regarding the differing mandates of these schemes and their significance, as many of them confuse these schemes as duplications. Without additional human resource, funds, training, and infrastructural commitments, any attempt to expand the responsibilities of the Anganwadis to include the running of Creches should be avoided at all costs.

2. INVEST SIMULTANEOUSLY IN UPSKILLING INITIATIVES AND CHILDCARE FACILITIES

Most poor women take up jobs in the informal sector as they lack the education and skills for higher paying skilled jobs. The Government's skill building initiative has focused on this issue and encourage women to enroll in specialized skill building programmes through the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship; they have even set up women ITIs to encourage more women to join the labour force. This study, consistent with other studies, shows that childcare is majorly responsible for preventing women in the 20-30 age-group—when they are the most productive—from getting further training or seeking work. Further, the study confirms that time freed up from childcare work is also spent on skill upgradation. Rather than drawing women into highly gender-segregated trades which perpetuate gender stereotypes, the skill building initiatives could look at setting up childcare facilities for prospective trainees which would help women challenge the conditions that force them to choose between caring responsibilities and paid work and enable them to enter the job market with confidence and competence.

3. INITIATE STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT WITH NEW-AGE ENTREPRENEUR

It has been demonstrated by different agencies that young people, having undergone a rigorous gender sensitivity training, understood the needs and concerns of young rural women wanting to work, and have designed ventures that take into consideration the concerns and abilities of women.

It is recommended that the campaign should consider unicorns and new age entrepreneurs as key stakeholders, especially in urban areas, to explore opportunities that would include women workers and enhance FLFP. Such enterprises can be incentivized by the government. A campaign inviting ideas from young entrepreneurs to scale up childcare support for women in the informal sector must be explored by partnering with organizations such as EDI Gujarat, Ashoka Social Entrepreneurs programme among others (<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/how-to-boost-womens-workforce-participation/article26104737.ece>).

4. EXAMINE DIVERSE FUNDING MODELS TO SCALE UP CRECHE FACILITIES

There is an urgent and overwhelming need for Creche facilities owing to women's readiness to work; multiple funding models may be explored to cater to this situation. The study shows that most women are accessing NGO-run Creche facilities. There are also examples of other models like employer-run Creches and community Creches, in addition to privately run Creches. Further, in the backdrop of the gradual breakdown of traditional family arrangements of childcare, a community-based approach to the provision of childcare services can be investigated. In this regard, the Second National Commission on Labour (2002) cited the 'praveshdwar homebased childcare programme' of the Government of Nepal as an excellent example of community-based childcare which catered to children aged 0-3 years and was run by mothers themselves. Mothers often formed groups of six and took turns to look after children at their homes.

5. DEMAND FOR A STATE-FUNDED SYSTEM OF UNIVERSAL FULL-DAY QUALITY CHILDCARE

The study clearly establishes that having access to a Creche has enabled women to join paid work and vice versa. An overwhelming number of women are willing to use Creches but lack the capacity to pay for the services. More than 65% of the families surveyed earn less than Rs.10,000 a month. The economic conditions of these women do not allow them to pay for childcare services. However, in this study, it was found that women considered Creche facility an essential requirement for them to join paid work, an opinion shared by 97% respondents who had highly dependent children. Therefore, it is important to demand a state-funded system of universal, full-day, quality childcare to enhance FLFP.

6. CREATE AWARENESS AMONG YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN ABOUT INSTITUTIONAL CHILDCARE FACILITIES

There is a lack of awareness regarding Creche facilities among women in rural as well as urban areas. Lack of awareness combined with cultural norms, which put the onus of childcare solely on mothers, make it difficult for women from disadvantaged communities to demand childcare facilities. Large scale campaigns which inform the public about the concept of creches and its benefits must be designed and executed using all kinds of media. Locals who help break stereotypes could be felicitated as role models; this would aid the sensitization of men.

ANNEXURE 1 - RESEARCH QUESTIONS

CHILDCARE SUPPORT AND PAID WORK

- How do (working) women/mothers of children aged 0-6 years, who are engaged in paid work, deal with the responsibility of childcare? / What kind of support do women engaged in paid work have for childcare?
- What kind of childcare facilities (refers to Creche facilities run by different institutions) do women access?
- Are these facilities paid or free?
- What kind of services do these free facilities provide?
- What are the main reasons for using these facilities?
- Do these facilities meet their requirements in terms of availability, accessibility, affordability, and quality?
- What are the challenges they encounter with respect to these facilities?
- What kind of improvements do women wish to see in these facilities?

CHILDCARE FACILITIES AND WOMEN'S WELLBEING

- How does access to childcare facilities impact the nature of paid work women are engaged in? / What impact does access to these facilities have on the nature of paid work that women are engaged in (conditions of work, formal/informal, hours of work, days of work, income, stress, etc.)
 - a. How has accessing childcare facilities impacted women's income? How have these facilities impacted women's mobility?
 - b. Did it impact her choice of paid work? If yes, then how?
- How has the availability of childcare facilities impacted women's own health and well-being in terms of a) physical health, b) mental and emotional well-being, c) quality of relationships, d) time for rest and leisure (self-care) etc.? [Each of these can be taken as a separate question and the following questions can be skipped, for example the following two questions are specific to impact on paid work and relationship with the child]
 - ✓ Has the nature of unpaid paid care work changed for women after joining paid work? If yes, then how and what way?
 - ✓ Is there a change in relationship with the child, including the nature of interaction, etc.?

CHILDCARE FACILITIES AND CHILDREN'S WELLBEING

- What kind of physical arrangement and environment is provided to the children? What kind of services are provided for children in these facilities?
- How are these services contributing to the children's a) physical wellbeing (nutrition, exercise, safety), b) health wellbeing (vaccination etc.), c) mental wellbeing (cognitive and emotional skills), and d) social wellbeing (communication, interaction) development and wellbeing?
- Are the women satisfied with the services? If no, what improvements do they suggest? Are there any programmes that provides pre-school education to children?
- Are there any educational programmes for parents/caregivers?

ANNEXURE 2 - FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION AND KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW

FGD Matrix

FGD	Districts	Themes covered	Title	Category
FGD 1 & 2	1 Urban + 1 Rural	CCF* and Paid work (Impact on women and children)	Activity 1A – True and False Exercise Activity 1B - Life after Creche	EAC – Women
FGD 3	1 Urban or Rural	Men's perspective- CCF and Paid work (Impact on women and children)	Activity 1A – True and False Exercise Activity 1B - Life after Creche	EAC -Men
FGD 4 & 5	1 Urban +1 Rural	Need for CCF, what is a good CCF	Activity 2A – Mann ki Baat ** Activity 2B – Humari Mangein	ENAC crèche available but not using – Women
FGD 6 & 7	1 Urban + 1 Rural	Need for CCF, what is a good CCF	Activity 3A – Mann ki Baat Activity 3B – Humari Mangein	ENAC crèche not available – Women
FGD 8 & 9	1 Urban + 1 Rural	Is CCF a need among women interested in joining the paid work	Activity 4 – Sarita ki Kahani	NE - Women

*CCF = Institutional Child Care Facility / Creche

** - Share credit – WIEGO Report - Our children do not get the attention they deserve

- Each state followed the above FGD matrix
- A facilitator manual was developed to enable investigators to facilitate the activities.
- Experienced facilitators were engaged in FGDs
- Documentation formats were designed for each activity and were part of the FGD manual

KIIs CONDUCTED WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMANTS

- Former caregiver under the NCS: Ms. Sulochana Mahto, Jharkhand
- Leading Creche programmes through NGOs:
Ms. Mamatha Bharath (Karnataka), Mr. Sanjib Ghosh (Odisha)
- Technical expert: Ms. Sudeshna Sengupta, Delhi / NCR
- NCS - NGO Partner: Mr. Gagan (*name changed*), Jharkhand
- Government official: Ms. Surekha LS, Karnataka
- Employer-run Creche-in-charge: Dr. Harish, Karnataka

PAID WORK AND CHILDCARE FACILITIES IN THE COVID-19 CONTEXT

- How did the Covid-10 Pandemic impact the access of women to paid work?
- What kind of support did they receive with respect to paid work and from whom?
- What kind of support could have minimized their struggle?
- How did it impact their earnings, in comparison to pre-pandemic times?
- As childcare facilities were closed, how did they meet the various basic requirements of children like nutritional food, vaccination etc.?
- Did women avail childcare facilities? If not, how were they managing?
- Covid-19 and the likelihood of a third wave is still there. What kind of childcare support do they seek, to continue their paid work and to increase their income?

INFORMAL SECTOR AND CHILDCARE SUPPORT

- What are the policy provisions for childcare for women in informal sector in India?
- Are women aware of these facilities in rural and urban areas?
- How well are these policies implemented on the ground?
- What kind of innovations have been made by the states to improve childcare facilities and services?
- Are these policies funded sufficiently?
- Is childcare provisioning considered a key priority to improve labour force participation in different states?
- What is the perception of women, who are not engaged in paid work towards childcare facilities? Is it a felt need? Do women currently not engaged in paid work see the absence of childcare facilities as a barrier to take up paid work?
- Does the availability of childcare support influence women's decision to join paid work? Why? How?
- Are women open to availing institutional support for childcare? If no, then what are the barriers?
- What kind of childcare facilities would enable women to join paid work with confidence?

ANNEXURE 3 - STATE REPORTS





GUJARAT

Districts: Ahmedabad (urban) and Anand (rural)

Blocks & Villages:

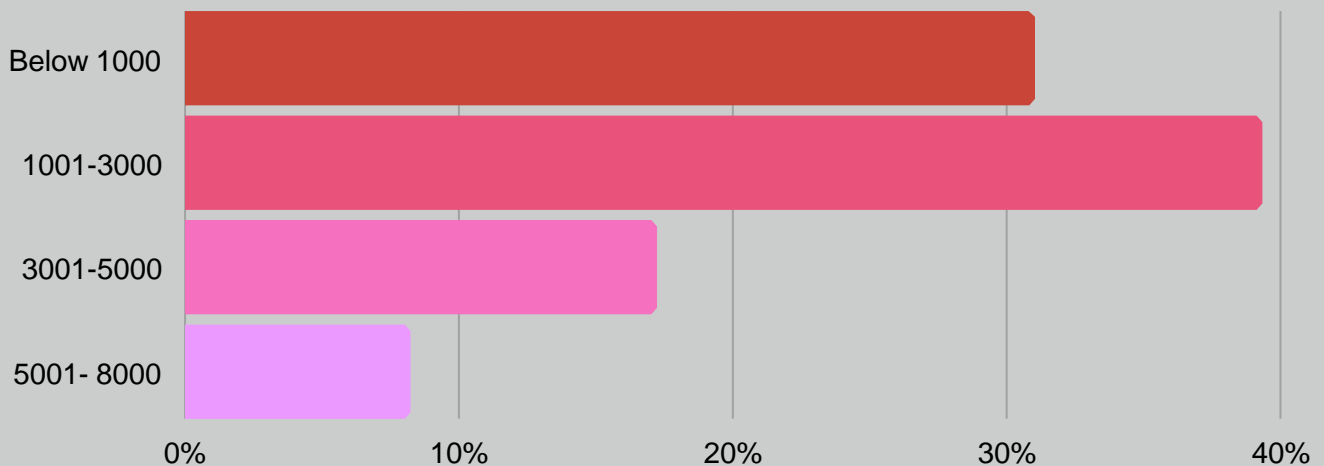
- Anand (Bedva, Khanpur, Kunjarav, Vadinathpura, Ransol, Tranol, Chikhodra, and Khambholaj)
- Borsad (Alarsa, Desarda, Dhundakuva, Kavitha, Rass, Vadeli, Nani Shredi and Vera)

Wards & Locations:

- Shahpur (Galaji ni Chali, Parmanand ni Chali, Gujarat Colony, Lakahaji Kunwarjini Chali, Kajimiya no Tekro, Naklangpura, Aalampura, and Poor Quarters)
- Maktampura (Apna nagar, A Ward, C & D Ward, E ward, G ward, H ward, J ward and B ward)

Villages with Creche facility: Chikhodra, Khambholaj, Nani Shredi, and Vera

Locations in urban areas with Creche facility: Poor quarters and B Ward



The graph above shows how much women engaged in paid work earn on an average in a month

ACCESS TO BASIC FACILITIES

How many women have a toilet at home?

94.03% (N=268/285)

Main source of water for families?

Tap at home (88.77%), Common tap (6.6%)

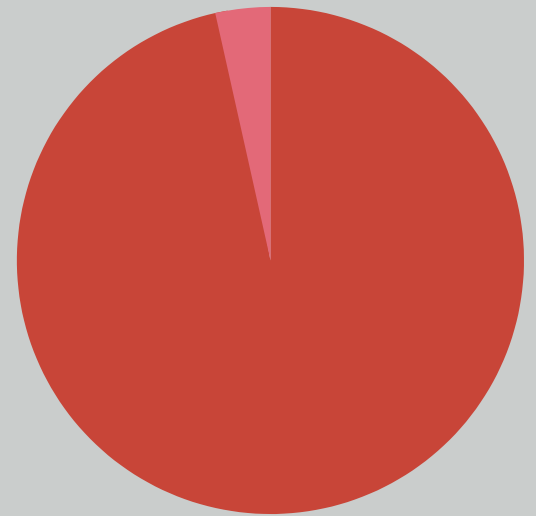
Time spent in travelling to and back from work

< 1hour (35.17 %), between 1 - 2 hours (19.3%), between 3- 4 hours (4.8%), N A (33.1%)

What would enable women to join paid work?

1.Creche/Anganwadi/childcare centres (42.8%) 2. Availability of work (3.9%) 3. Family support (2.4%)

96.5% EAC women reported increase in income after crèche use (N=55/57)



Income increased
96.5%

WOMEN AND PAID WORK

Average family income of the family?	<5000 (21%), 5001-10000 (44.56%), 10001-15000 (26.3%), 15001-20000 (6.3%)
How much do women engaged in paid work earn on an average?	Below 1000 (31%), 1001-3000 (39.3%), 3001-5000 (17.2%), 5001- 8000 (8.2%)
Top 3 types of paid work that women are engaged in?	1. Agriculture 2. domestic/cleaning 3. tailoring
Nature of paid work women have access to	Regular work (36.55 %), in seasonal work (48.96%), based on availability (13.79%)
Average number of working days in a month	18.81
Women who reported childcare to be the main reason for not engaging in paid work	80.7% (N=113/140)
Would having a good Creche would enable women to join paid work?	93.33% (N=266/285)
Percentage of women who reported increase in income after using Creches?	96.5% (N=55/57)
Percentage of increase?	87.87%



JHARKHAND

Districts: Ranchi (urban) and West Singhbhum (rural)

Blocks & Villages:

- Chakradharpur (Sengeldipi, Duikasai, Kenke, Unchibita, Baghmara, and Shyamraidih)
- Khuntpani (Khuntpani, Kotsana, Loharda, Matkamhatu, Bainka, and Narangabera)

Wards & Locations:

- Taw – (Mahtotoli, Ahirtoli, Koiritoli, College Road, Mundatoli and Harijan Colony)
- Gabhreya (Ulida, Bandaljara, Besradih, Judi Mahua, Kadamtoli, and Ghaghrabera)

Villages with Creche facility: Baghmara, Shyamraidih, Bainka, and Narangabera

Locations in urban areas with Creche facility: Harijan Colony and Ghaghrabera



Above graph shows how much women in paid work earn on an average in a month

ACCESS TO BASIC FACILITIES

How many women have a toilet at home?

58.21% (N=163/280)

Main source of water for families?

Common Tap (31.7%); Tap at home (11.4%); well and handpump (16.4%)

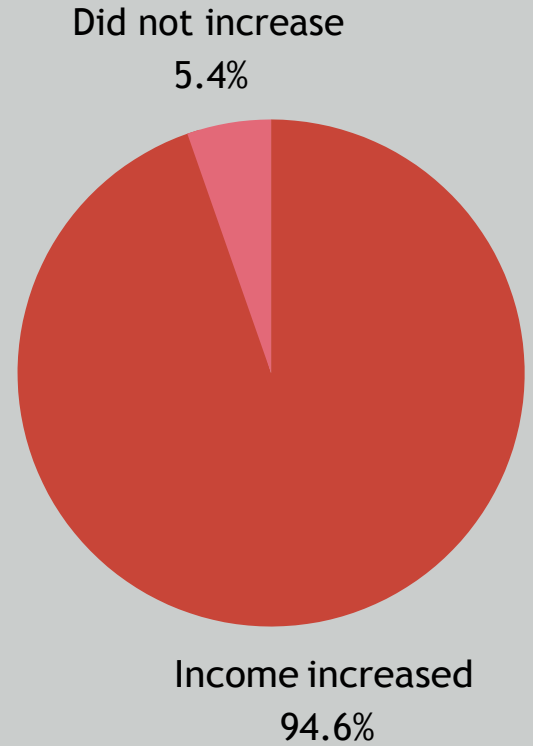
Time spent in travelling to and back from work

< 1hour (39.28%), between 1 - 2 hours (52.85%), between 3- 4 hours (4.28%)

What would enable women to join paid work?

1. Creche/Anganwadi/childcare centres (87.36%)
2. Availibility of work (2.4%)
3. Family support (3.8%)

94.64% EAC women reported increase in income after crèche use (N=53/56)



WOMEN AND PAID WORK

Average family income of the family?

<5000 (25.35%), 5001-10000 (35.35%), 10001-15000 (27.14%), 15001-20000 (6.78%)

How much do women engaged in paid work earn on an average?

Below 1000 (6.4%), 1001-3000 (39.2%), 3001-5000 (42.85%), 5001- 8000 (10%)

Top 3 types of paid work that women are engaged in?

1. Agriculture 2. Construction 3. Domestic/ Cleaning work

Nature of paid work that women have access to

Regular work (36.4%), seasonal work (42.8%), based on availability (20.7%)

Average number of working days in a month

20.42

Women who reported childcare to be the main reason for not engaging in paid work

87.8% (N=123/140)

Having good Creche would enable women to join paid work?

95% (266/280)

Percentage of women who reported increase in income after using Creches?

94.5% (N=53/56)

Percentage of increase

142.50%



KARNATAKA

Districts: Bengaluru (urban) and Tumkur (rural)

Blocks & Villages:

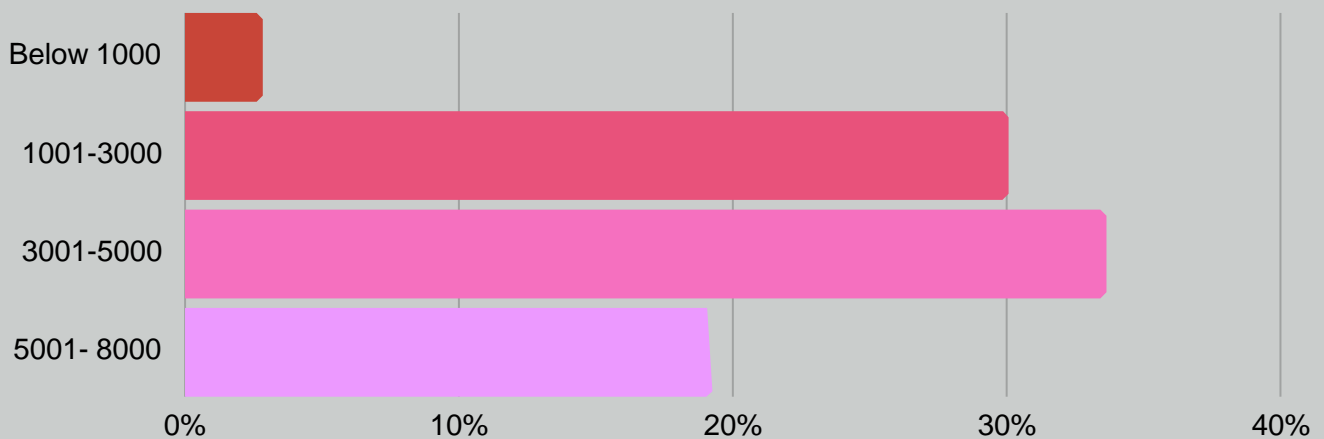
- Tumkur (Arakere, Rajiv Gandhi nagar, Hosahalli, Kuchangi, Shettihalli, Seegepalya, and Thimmlapuram)
- Madhugiri (Achenahalli, Dabbeghatta, Agrahara, Dasarahalli, Gollahalli, Badavanahalli, and Puruvara)

Wards & Locations:

- Hebbala (Kempapura, Maranaiyanapalya, Guddadahalli, Meshthripalya, Ratchnahalli, Cholanayakanapalya, and Bhadrappa layout)
- Mathikhere (Chikkamarenahalli, Netaji Circle, Sanjeevappa colony, Divanarapalya, Jayaram colony, AK colony, and Poorna puram)

Villages with Creche facility: Arakere, Rajiv Gandhi nagar, Shettihalli, and Achenahalli

Locations in urban areas with Creche facility: Kempapura, Meshthripalya, and Ratchnahalli



Above graph shows how much women in paid work earn on an average in a month

ACCESS TO BASIC FACILITIES

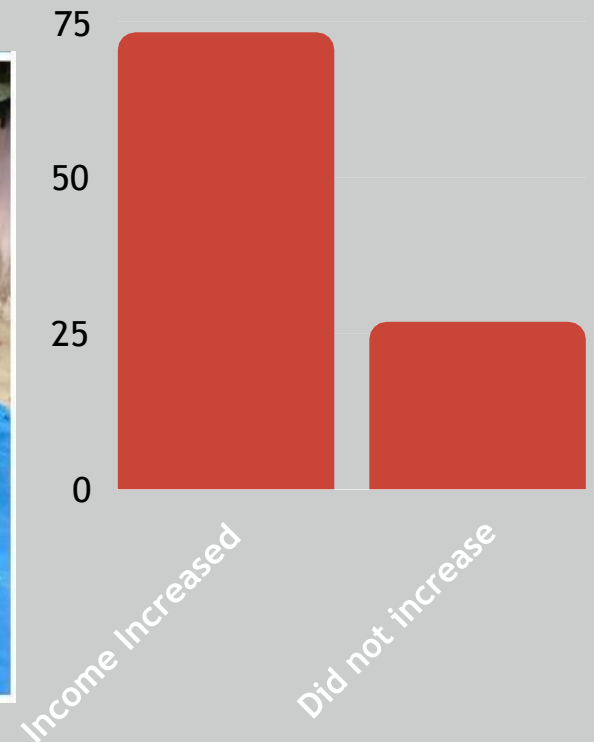
How many women have a toilet at home? 43.9% (N=123/280)

Main source of water for families? Common Tap (73.57%); Tap at home (8.2%); Stream/river water (6.4%).

Time spent in travelling to and back from work < 1 hour (48.57%), between 1 - 2 hours (19.28%), between 3- 4 hours or more (10%), not applicable (21.4%)

What would enable women to join paid work? 1. Creche/Anganwadi/childcare centres (97.1%) 2. Family support (2.14%)

73% EAC women reported increase in income after crèche use (N=41/56)



WOMEN AND PAID WORK

Average family income of the family?

<5000 (5.35%), 5001-10000 (42.85%), 10001-15000 (36.7%), 15001-20000 (12.5%)

How much do women engaged in paid work earn on an average?

Below 1000 (2.8%), 1001-3000 (30%), 3001-5000 (33.57%), 5001- 8000 (19.2%)

Top 3 types of paid work that women are engaged in?

1. Domestic cleaning, 2. construction work, 3. tailoring

Nature of paid work that women have access to

Regular work (78.57%), in seasonal work (15%), based on availability (6.4%)

Average number of working days in a month

24.43

96.4% (N=135/140)

Women who reported childcare to be the main for not engaging in paid work

Would having a good Creche enable women to join paid work?

96.7% (N=271/280)

Percentage of women who reported increase in income after using Creches?

73.2% (N=41/56)

Percentage of increase?

83%

KARNATAKA



ODISHA

Districts: Rayagada (urban) and Kalahandi (rural)

Blocks & Villages:

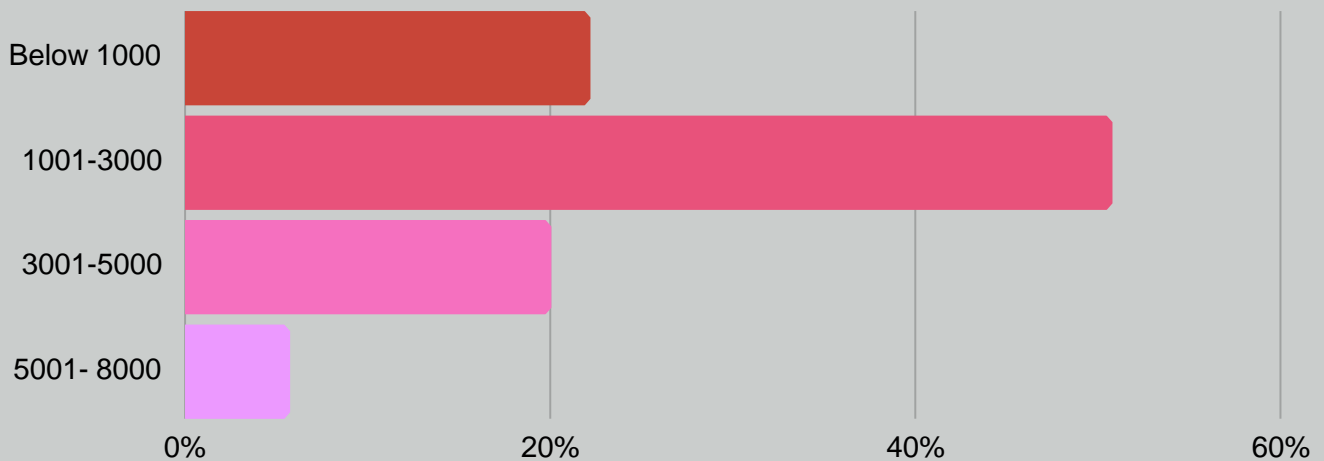
- Lanjigarh (Semilibhata, Kendubardi, Banigaon, Kasibadi, Ashrampada, Kadamguda, Balabhadrapur, and Jagannathpur)
- Golamunda (Sialjhudangi, Dhanrmal, Gargab, Aili, Uchhla, and Makhla)

Wards & Locations:

- Mankadjhola (Mankadajhola, Forest Area, Raniguda, Tentulikhunti, Goutam Nager, Women's College Sahi, and Kiapadasahi)
- Tumbiguda (Checkguda, Koilapada, Jhadiasahi, Katuru, Medical Colony, and Kanda Tumbiguda)

Villages with Creche facility: Semilibhata, Kendubardi, Banigaon, Sialjhudangi, and Dhanrmal

Locations in urban areas with Creche facility: Mankadjhola and Tumbiguda



Above graph shows how much women in paid work earn on an average in a month

ACCESS TO BASIC FACILITIES

How many women have a toilet at home?

40.9% (N=116/283)

Main source of water for families?

Hand pump (32.5%), Common Tap (29.3%); Tap at home (19.08%)

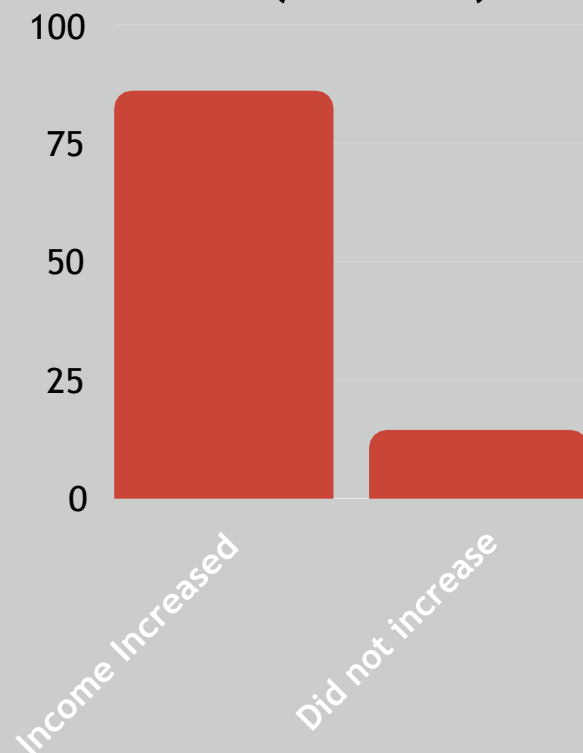
Time spent in travelling to and back from work

< 1hour (30%), between 1 - 2 hours (62.14%), between 3- 4 hours (5.7%)

What would enable women to join paid work?

1. Creche/Anganwadi/childcare centres (73.8%)
2. Family support (7.78%),
3. Availability of work (2.47%)

85.96% EAC women reported increase in income after crèche use (N=49/56)



WOMEN AND PAID WORK

Average income of the family?

<5000 (30%), 5001-10000 (43.8%), 10001-15000 (20.14%), 15001-20000 (2.4%)

How much do women engaged in paid work earn on an average?

Below 1000 (22.14%), 1001-3000 (50.71%), 3001-5000 (20%), 5001 - 8000 (5.7%)

Top 3 types of paid work that women are engaged in?

1. Agriculture 2. construction 3. domestic/cleaning work

Nature of paid work that women have access to

Regular work (35.71%), In seasonal work (30%), based on availability (30.7%)

Average number of working days in a month

18.05days

86.01% (N=123/143)

Women who reported childcare to be the main reason for not engaging in paid work

Having a good Creche enable women to join paid work?

97.5% (N=276/283)

Percentage of women reported increase in income after using Creches?

85.96% (N=49/56)

Percentage of increase

108.6%

ANNEXURE 4 REFERENCES

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