

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Meghalaya Early Childhood Development Mission (MECDM) team in collaboration with the Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Odisha organized an exposure visit to observe interventions on early childhood development in the state and to learn more on the work being done by the Bernard van Leer foundation in Odisha. The visit was scheduled from the 1st to 4th of December 2022. The team arrived in Bhubaneshwar, Odisha at 6pm on the 1st of December 2022. The Meghalaya team comprised of

- 1. Shri. Sampath Kumar, IAS, Principal Secretary, Social Welfare Department & CEO, MECDM
  - 2. Smt. Doreen Lyngwa, MCS, Director, DERT, Education Department
  - 3. Krystal Lyndoh, Programme Manager, MECDM
  - 4. Jessica Passah, Programme Manager, MECDM
  - 5. Laura Khongsit, Programme Manager, MECDM
  - 6. La in Shap Phanwar, Programme Manager, MECDM

The agenda of the visit included visiting AWCs in the rural and urban areas, THR processing units and the Home Economics Training Centre (HETC). A meeting was also scheduled with the Secretary, Women & Child Development department and key officials from the department at the Odisha State Secretariat.

- Total number of ICDS projects in Odisha: 338
- Total number of AWCs in Odisha: 74,154

The team also visited an AWC in Ganjam which is being run by the Vedanta foundation with the help of SESAME Workshop India. Smt. Rajshree Sen, Business Development, SESAME Workshop India also accompanied the Meghalaya team to the AWC.

#### Day 1:

Visit to AWCs in Rural areas, a THR processing unit and the HETC followed by a meeting at the Secretariat with Officials from WCD Department.

On the 2nd December 2022, the team from Meghalaya was divided into two groups: -

- The first group included the Principal Secretary, Social Welfare Department and two Programme Managers of ECD Mission
- The second group included the Director, DERT along with two Programme Managers of ECD Mission.

The first group were accompanied by Joint Secretary, Technical Lead BvLf, ECCE Consultant, WCD Department. The group visited the following centers:

### i) Mathasahi Anganwadi Centre at Pipili:

The AWC was in close proximity with a Health and Wellness Centre and was also a model AWC. The children in the AWC wore uniforms provided by the WCD since 2015. The AWC opens from morning at 9am to 1pm. In the afternoons, the AWW would go for home visits from 1pm till 2pm daily. The State ECCE curriculum which focuses on brain development of children aged 0-6 is currently being followed across all AWCs in Odisha. A monthly themed framework has been developed in partnership with UNICEF. The framework of the curriculum conceptualizes accordingly with what is available in the State. As part of the curriculum, 2 workbooks (3-4 years-Part 1, 4-6 years-Part 2) containing 64 theme-based activities are given weekly to the children. Completion of activities in these workbooks are flexible according to the child. The 64 activities range from simple to complex. The children can complete 2 activities every Saturday. Picture cards were used in different ways according to different age groups as part of the school readiness program;

- For 3-4 years telling stories from the picture cards given
- For 4-5 years telling stories in their own words from pictures given
- For above 5 years telling stories using their own imagination

For children aged 0-3, digitalised cards in the form of "kuni" (small) are being distributed through WhatsApp among parents for early stimulation.

The "Ghare Ghare Arunima" calendar designed with monthly themes for 3-6 years, contains 30 activities for each day. It is an initiative that was developed during COVID-19 and contains different preschool activities for the children led by the parents and family members at home to foster learning continuity. It was developed along with UNICEF. AWWs are given 1000 rupees per year for printing.

It was also observed that Child Assessment Cards (3 to 6 years) provided by the Ministry of Women and Child Development were also used to assess the child's learning and development needs according to their age. These cards will also help parents to gain information about their child's progress. The state is collaborating with RBSK and UNICEF for creating a similar assessment card for the age group of 0 to 3 years as this is not available yet.

"Ankur day", a day where a parent-teacher meeting is held to discuss the overall well-being of the child and ECD concepts is observed every month. Grandparents and other caregivers can also attend. "Adhwika" (Unique), a month-wise theme-based skill development and counseling programme for adolescents. A "Bag of Accomplishments" for each child is kept at the AWC which is shown to the parents on "Ankur Diwas". All information and education is imparted in the local language. Most curricula have been developed with support from UNICEF and BvLf. There are also 2–3-day capsule courses are being developed. Adolescents would also volunteer every Saturday by giving awareness and engaging children in fun activities like singing, dancing, etc.

Morning snacks were provided to the beneficiaries such as:

- Besan and atta ladoo
- Rice flake, groundnut and jaggery ladoo
- sprouted moong with jaggery or seasonal fruits

The Hot cooked meals provided daily in the AWCs consists of rice, eggs(cooked in curry or boiled form), dal with vegetables or vegetable curry and a slice of lemon (for vitamin C); for pregnant and nursing women and adolescent girls only THR is provided.



**ii)** THR (Take Home Ration) processing unit, Itipur, Dhauli, Khordha: Odisha follows a decentralized system of processing THR by SHGs to be used in AWC for supplementary nutrition. The products being processed in the unit are groundnut mixed with jaggery ladoo, besan ladoo and **chhatua** (a powdered mixture of wheat, groundnut, bengal gram and sugar).

Procurement of ingredients for THR by SHGs

- 556 SHGs engaged in preparation and supply of THR
- Wheat supplied to the SHGs by FCI
- All other ingredients for preparation of THR procured by SHGs



**MoChhatua App**- An app specifically developed to monitor and streamline processes of THR production and supply. The app is a repository of information on infrastructure and machineries owned by SHGs. It also contains training modules on THR, protocol / guidelines of THR. ICDS personnel and SHGs are trained on how to use the app. All Districts are using the application.

- Lady supervisors use the app for updating indent, inspection and THR preparation details which would then be approved by the CDPO for indent and creating work order
- SHGs would use the app for viewing work order, updating stock and supply details, raising invoice and tracking status
- AWWs use it to update THR received and distribution details
- Monitoring on 1st and 23rd of every month to understand how many beneficiaries of THR
- This app allows for seamless payment of SHGs

Apart from this app, there is also a web portal for CDPOs and DSWOs for creating or viewing work orders, inspection details, viewing invoices and making payment approvals

### iii) Home Economics Training Centre (HETC):

- Observed the Toy/TLM Repository.
- Prarambhik Demonstration of Model AWC
- Job course Training Session of AWW

The HETC is a counterpart that has an MoU with the Odisha Government. There are 2 such centers across the State. The training of AWWs takes place here for 1 month where they are taught how to set up and run an AWC. These days are divided into -5 days for ECCE training, 3 days orientation to the department and the system, 7 days community development, 7 days preschool songs and activities and 7 days on nutrition. Apart from this, refresher training takes place every 2 years. Different organizations or departments cover different aspects of training.



There are 4 units in one training that happens simultaneously with 35 AWWs each.

An extensive training covering all components is given with focus on school readiness and detecting early childhood disabilities.



All the toys are self-made, thereby instilling in them the concept of Do It Yourself (DIY). The centre was set up in 2014.

The corner activities were introduced after NEP 2020.

NIPCCD (Delhi & Guwahati) train the trainers. Lady supervisors are trained at the Mid-level training centre on ECCE with focus on Early Stimulation, Preschool education and Supportive supervision. (This training is supported by BvLf).

## iv) Ganjam AWC (SESAME Workshop)

### Participants and caregivers at the Center

- AWW
- AWH
- SESAME Trainer
- Mothers and Grandmothers

#### Curriculum

- State ECCE Curriculum for 3 to 5 years
- SESAME Workshop supplements the State Curriculum
- SESAME trains the AWW to use already existing materials effectively

## **Observations**

- The vibrant center looks very inviting, not only for children by adults as well. Outdoor space with play materials is essential for children's physical, cognitive, social and language development.
- The State has developed its own ECCE Curriculum
- It was informed that the AWW sometimes finds the learning material overwhelming because it is very descriptive.
   SESAME helps train the AWW on the already existing materials as well as supplement the already existing materials with their own materials.
- It was observed that the AWW was asking the children to recite the alphabets and numbers and emphasize in a rote learning manner. Often they would pick out one or two active children to perform for the team.
- There were proper space to display materials created by the children
- The uniforms and individual chairs and table gave it a feel of a pre-school
- LPG gas was was used which is a healthier alternative for the children and people in the AWC



• It was informed that grandmothers sometimes tell stories to the children which can preserve culture and pass on cultural knowledge from one generation to another

## Day 2:

The team visited 3 AWCs namely,

- Raghurajpur Rural
- Srikhetra Colony
- Nilachakra Nagarin Puri Municipality

This was followed by a visit to the THR processing unit in Puri. The team comprised the Director, DERT and four Programme Managers of Meghalaya ECD Mission.

The team was accompanied by Joint Secretary, Technical Lead BvLf, ECCE Consultant, WCD Department, CDPOs and staff from the Women & Child Development department.

It was observed that the AWCs visited follow a uniform pattern with respect to the activities, SNP and THR. The same applies to THR processing unit in Puri.



# **Initiatives taken for Improving SNP**

- 1. The State collaborates with WFP for mechanized production and fortification of THR.
- 2. Capacity building programmes of THR manufacturing SHGs on operation/ financial protocols.
- 3. Fixed day approach on THR mixing & distribution.
- 4. Revision of menu under SNP. Revised THR to ensure food diversity
- 5. The Odisha Millets Mission aims to improve nutritional status and ensure dietary diversity for preschool children by including millets in morning snacks at AWCs.

## Community management of SAM and MAM in Odisha:

- 1. SAM children are provided SNP for 112 days as per instructions from Nutrition Board of Odisha and Department of Women and Child Development so as to prevent any morbidities or relapses. They are given a100 gram packet of chhatua daily apart from receiving hot cooked meals in AWCs. SAM children were being kept under observation for 112 days. The AWW would go for home visits daily and ANM would also go along with them and do regular checkups once a week at the SAM child's home. Weight and height of the child is being taken every 7 days.
- 2. For severely underweight children (6 months to 3 years), the following SNP is given chhatua packet of 4.9 kg/month (normal children of 6 months to 3 years would get 2.45kg/month), atta besan ladoo/ragi besan ladoo and 12 eggs per month.
- 3. For severely underweight children (3 6 years), the following SNP is given Hot cooked meals which include 20 eggs per month, chhatua packet of 1.8kg per month along with atta besan ladoo/ragi besan ladoo.