



Awareness on Child Care Institutions: A Study Among the Women Street Vendors of Puducherry

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ABSTRACT

Early childhood care is the most important aspect in the stages of human development. The quality of care provided during childhood decides the future of the child. The current study tries to know about the awareness of women street vendors with regard to the child care services provided at Puducherry. The study is descriptive in nature. Data was collected from 76 respondents through snowball sampling method. The study findings state that the services provided by the government and private child care centers are not up to the standard and some of the respondents are not even aware about the services provided. Quality child care center in their vending zone is the immediate need for the women street vendors of Puducherry.

KEYWORDS

Women Street Vendors, Awareness, Quality child care, Government and private service providers.

Introduction

Every child need to be cared. The care which is given during the childhood determines the future of the child. The concept of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) states about the care from the pre-natal period to 6 years of age of a child. Child care centers offer various services to the working parents who cannot take care of their children during the working hours. The child care centers act as a second parent to the child. The study states about the awareness of women street vendors regarding the child care institutes available at Puducherry.

Puducherry is one of the Union Territories of India. The culture, history and heritage of Puducherry have its own uniqueness. Puducherry has the combination of French and Indian traditions as a cultural background. This attracts the tourists all around the world. The increase in number of tourists increases the number of street vendors. The industrialization policy of Puducherry government pulls people around the country and thus the population grows. Puducherry has the population of 7,35,332 in numbers (Population Census of India, 2011). When the population increases the demand for daily requirements also increases. The demand for daily requirements is predominantly fulfilled by the street vendors who provide service in an affordable price. The women from lower economic background of Puducherry take up street vending as a profession to fulfill their economic needs.

Necessity of child care institutions

Children are the most vulnerable age group amongst all age groups. The children from lower economic background are the most underprivileged. The women who start their work at early morning cannot give a proper care to their children. In the case of women street vendors the condition is more critical. The street vendors have to start up early for their work and thus they cannot care for their child in a better way. They cannot take their children to the vending place due to various reasons such as safety, security and other well being of the children. So, the children are left at home in the care of family members and neighbors. Recent study reports states that children are abused even by the own family members itself. Since the condition is pathetic, it is unimaginable to leave the children with the neighbors or to take them to the vending place.

The following figure depicts the types of abuse faced by children

Figure 1: Types of abuse



Meaning and Importance of child care

Proper care in the childhood is an important aspect in the life of children. The term child care comprises the totality of major score of education, safety and security and social rights intended to give each individual an equality of opportunity for growth and development (Vasudev, 2009). The history and culture of India gives more importance for child care. Before Independence the voluntary organizations have taken responsibility in child care services. But still there were very few institutes available for child care. After the independence the state has taken the full responsibility and shouldered along with the private sector to provide a quality care for children. ICDS is one among the child care institute which provides care for the children.

The table below shows the services of ICDS and the beneficiaries by age group.

Table 1: Services of ICDS

Sl.No	Services	Target Group
1	Supplementary Nutrition	Children below 6 years, pregnant and lactating mother
2	Immunization	Children below 6 years, pregnant and lactating mother
3	Health Check-up	Children below 6 years, pregnant and lactating mother
4	Referral Services	Children below 6 years, pregnant and lactating mother
5	Pre-School Education	Children 3-6 years
6	Nutrition & Health Education	Women (15-45 years)

Source: Integrated Child Development Service [ICDS] <http://www.icds.gov.in>

Objectives:

- To study the awareness on child care institutes among the

women street vendors of Puducherry.

- To know the opinion on the services provided by both government and private services providers at Puducherry.
- To review the suggestions offered by the women street vendors towards the role of government and non government organizations in providing quality child care service.

Review of literature

Angello F, Moller J (2006) ILO research report describes the situation of women-vendors in Phnom Penh. The research report states that the women vendors need proper child care assistance in the midst of their business challenges. In managing the trade and family the women vendors plays a double role in their life. The mothers of infants face more problems in the aspect of child care. The equilibrium between the business and family is disturbed because of the existence of these problems.

Hernandez P, Zetina A, Tapia M, et.al (1996) conducted a study on the child care needs of female street vendors of Mexico city. The study comprises 426 female street vendors as respondents. The study states that the children who are taken by their mothers to vending place faces lots of issues such as respiratory problem, accidents, etc, the children who are taken care of family members in another environment also faces same kind of issues. The study further states that the health care policies are concerned more on the food consumers rather than the workers who produce the food. The study comes with a suggestion that necessary actions must be taken to provide a quality child care service to the children of female street vendors.

Kratkoski, Peter C (1992) conducted a study among the male delinquents. The study comprises 863 male delinquents. The study was undertaken to understand the relationships between child abuse and later behavior towards the members of their immediate family or care takers. The study reported that around 223 respondents have experienced physical abuse caused by the family members. Around 22 percent Afro-American respondents were abused by the family members. The white respondents are more in terms of facing abuse by the family members. It states around 85 percent.

Chatterji, M (2009) SEWA runs crèches for supporting the self-employed poor women in the country. It runs around 120 crèches in the four districts with the support of cooperative organizations. It provides overall child development in all child care centers. Establishing the child care centers in urban and rural areas is its main aim. The children of working women are taken care in the SEWA child care centers. SEWA comes with an idea of making the local women to be self dependent in running and maintaining the child care centers.

Methodology of the Study

The field area of the study is Puducherry town. The researcher has used descriptive research design for the study. Data was collected from 76 women street vendors of Puducherry town by using snowball sampling method. Data was collected through a structured interview schedule.

Analysis and findings

The following are the analysis and findings of the study

Figure 2: Awareness on availability of child care centers

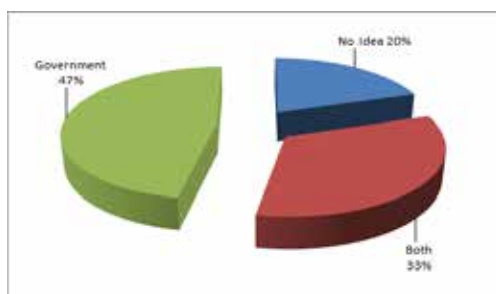


Figure 3: Money charged by Government Child Care Service Providers

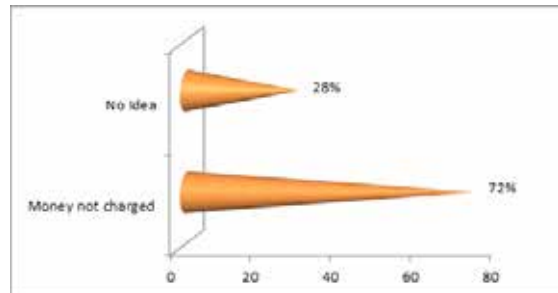
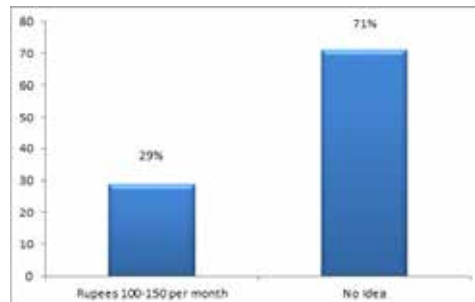


Figure 4: Money Charged by Private Child Care centers



- Around 47 percent of respondents are aware about the availability of government child care centers in their area.
- Around 33 percent of respondents are aware about the availability of both government and private child care centers in their area.
- It is found that only 20 percent of respondents do not have any idea about the availability of child care centers in their area.
- It is found that around 72 percent of respondents said that government child care centers never charge money for their service,
- Around 28 percent of respondents do not have idea about the money charged in government child care centers.
- Majority of the respondents said that they don't have any idea about the money charged in private child care centers. Some are not even aware about the private child care centers in Puducherry.
- Around 29 percent of respondents pay 200 to 300 rupees for a month to the private child care providers.
- Around 40 percent of respondents said that the service provided by the government child care center is bad.
- It is found that 35 percent of the respondents have an average opinion on service provided by the government child care centers.
- Around 25 percent of respondents said that the service provided in the government child care centre is good.
- Majority of the respondents said that they require a child care center in their vending zone.

Suggestions

The child care services which are provided by the private and government sectors are not up to the satisfactory level in Puducherry. The study states that the quality of these child care centers in Puducherry must be improved. Some women street vendors are not even aware about some of the child care services which are available in Puducherry. The study suggests that the awareness must be given to the women street vendors regarding the availability of child care centers and the services provided at the centers. The study further suggests that the quality of child care centers in Puducherry must be improved. Establishing a child care center in the vending zone could be an appropriate solution.

Conclusion

Child care need is the priority for the women street vendors of Puducherry. The work nature of women street vendors put their children in a vulnerable condition of not being given proper parental care. Taking children to the work place cause various risks such as abuse, health issues and accidents. The safest place on the earth, the home turns as a place of abuse by the family members and neighbors in the absence of mother. Women street vendors are in a helpless condition regarding taking care of their children. The government and non government organizations should consider the pathetic condition of women street vendors and they have to come up with a strong solution to overcome the issue.

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