

April 2025: Empowering Early Childhood Care and Education - A project under the Saksham Initiative of the Centre for Public Policy, IIM Bangalore



In most of India's rural and semi-urban landscapes, Anganawadis, which literally translate to Courtyard Shelters, can be seen. Established as part of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program in 1975, these centres function as crucial hubs for early childhood care for children and mothers, offering services like supplementary nutrition, immunisation, health check-ups, support for pregnant and lactating women, and non-formal preschool education to children under the age of six.

In the gram panchayats that IIM Bangalore works with under the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan, a needs assessment survey was conducted by the UBA Field Staff in all the 44 Anganawadis. By November 2024, information on staff, number of students, drinking water supply, toilet facilities, condition of the building, books, bags and other teaching-learning materials, play materials, and essential kitchenware was collected from the D V Halli, Chinnakavajra, Hunaseghatta, Dasarighatta, and Nonavinakere Blocks.

The intervention targeted for this is 3-fold. The Centre for Public Policy communicates with the Gram Panchayat, Zilla Panchayat and other line Departments concerned with this to nudge them to take development action. Capital-intensive work such as building construction, repair and renovation, setting up of toilets and drinking water facilities generally comes under this. The Centre also mobilises funds through philanthropy and identifies development partners to deliver soft infrastructure such as almirahs, education kits, kitchen needs and others. Thirdly, the Centre identifies organisations that deliver quality capacity-building programs for Anganawadi Staff to better serve the community.

The Centre has begun its work by donating 10 almirahs to various Anganwadis in Tiptur. These will be used to store the toys, materials, and other items safely and prevent their theft. The Centre is now working on identifying partners for capacity building and assembling an educational toolkit for children at the foundational stage of learning to be donated to the Anganwadis.

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