CHAPTER IV

THE SETTING
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The present study is carried out in Anantapur, the major city and district headquarters of Anantapur District. Anantapur district falls in the region known as Rayalaseema, the erstwhile ceded district in Andhra Pradesh. This Rayalaseema region as a whole and Anantapur district is known for chronic drought proneness and economic backwardness.

Anantapur district comprises as many as eleven towns, of which Anantapur is the largest and major city. The mainstay in the district is agriculture and allied activities as the district is not industrialised. The agriculture is dependent upon rainfed irrigation and thus returns poor incomes to the populace. Most parts of the district are well connected by rail and road communications. The Anantapur district has a rich tradition of education right from the times of Jainism. The literacy percentage in the district is 59 per cent. In the following pages an attempt is made to present the profile of Anantapur town which is our study area.

LOCATION:

Anantapur town, in which our present study was conducted, is the district headquarter in the Rayalaseema region, Andhra Pradesh. It is situated
68 Kms., south of Bangalore city. Among the eleven towns in Anantapur district, the Anantapur town, the district headquarters is an important educational centre and is accessible by train and road. It is connected by rail to Secunderabad on the North and Bangalore on the South. The town is also well connected by regular bus service not only with all taluk headquarters in the district but also with other important towns like Hyderabad, Cuddapah and Nellore.

POPULATION:

Anantapur is the only town at 1981 census which has crossed 1 lakh population. It has population of 1,19,531 persons according to 1981 census. Establishment of a good number of educational institutions, improvement in the commercial activities, establishment of an Industrial Estate besides the location of a good number of district as well as regional offices of the state administration are some of the reasons attributed to the rapid growth of the town in the recent decades.

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS:

Land Use Pattern:

Being the rainshadow area this district gets
### TABLE-1

**ANANTAPUR TOWN - A GLANCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>1,19,531 persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>62,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy</strong></td>
<td>59.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26,746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workers</strong></td>
<td>31,873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28,429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-School children</strong></td>
<td>8.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economy/occupation</strong></td>
<td>Non-industrial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
an average rainfall of 524 mm., only. During the past three decades the district was subjected to drought condition. Due to scanty rainfall the main crops that are cultivated in this area include ground-nut and millets which do not fetch much income. As major cash crops are not cultivated here it accounts for one of the reasons for poor commercial activities in this area thus making it an economically backward place.

**Occupational Pattern:**

91 per cent of the total population in the town are engaged in urban occupations including petty trade and commerce. If the population is stratified in terms of class, a larger percentage of people of the total population belong to the 'middle class' as this place is not an industrial city and commercial centre. This factor assumes significance regarding our present study because this factor is also responsible for the mushrooming of pre-schools in the town. This is due to the fact that while the richer class people can afford to send their children to good private schools in cities, it is the middle class people who cannot do so thereby giving an opportunity to the private sector to commercialize pre-school
education by establishing good number of substandard pre-schools.

LITERACY:

Anantapur district occupies 7th rank in literacy amongst the districts in Andhra Pradesh. Among the towns the literacy rate varies from 40.58 per cent in Kadiri town to 59.71 per cent in Anantapur town. Being the district headquarters and location of several educational institutions Anantapur town tops in the proportion of literates. In Anantapur itself we find Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Engineering College, Sri Satya Sai Women's College, Government Arts College and good number of primary and secondary schools which render good educational facilities. Thus this town tops in number of educational institutions, literacy and has an environment conducive for education.

PERCENTAGE OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN:

The pre-school children constitute 8.48 per cent of the total population (Source: Municipal records). Though one can find mushroom growth of pre-schools in the town, among these the total number of standard pre-schools with the required infrastructure to cater to the needs of pre-school children are only a few.
On the 27th August, 1974 India adopted a momentous resolution, the resolution on 'National Policy of Children'. This resolution recognises children as the nation's supremely important asset and declares that the Government should take over the responsibility for their nurture and solicitude. The second of October, 1975, coinciding with the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, heralded the introduction of the 'Integrated Child Development Services Schemes' (ICDS) as sanctioned by the Government of India in pursuance of the 'National Policy of Children', under the scheme, 30 projects have been located in 30 blocks in different parts of the country.

Each project will aim at the delivery of a package of services, namely supplementary nutrition, immunisation health and nutrition education for women and non-formal education for pre-school children. Children in the age group 3-5 years will have the benefit of non-formal pre-school education through the institution of 'Anganwadi' to be setup in each village and in each centre in an Urban Project Programme will be coordinated with other similar schemes of the Department of Social Welfare in the Project area.
In the Fifth Five Year Plan, the scheme of I.C.D.S. has been classified as a centrally sponsored programme and will be implemented through the state governments with 100 per cent financial assistance from the central government.

In Anantapur district, ICDS scheme comprises of 6 projects, of which five are meant for rural areas and one for urban areas. Total number of Anganwadis in Anantapur town is 108. The project has been divided into 5 sectors, each sector covering a specific number of Anganwadis spread over different slums to cater to the needs of children in the pre-school age drawn from disadvantaged sections of the society.

Apart from these Anganwadis, there are eleven Private Recognised English Medium Schools and twelve unrecognised English Medium Schools run by the private management, having the provision for pre-school education.