INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction:

"Nation marches on the tiny feet of its children."

"The children of the nation are a trust of the nation. What is the future will be, will depend on how we discharge this trust."

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru

Children are the foundation on which the future of the country rests. Healthy, well-educated children are considered the valued asset of a country. Children whose early years are affected by hunger, poverty, disease or whose minds are not stimulated by appropriate interaction with caregivers and their environment, pay for these early deficits throughout their lives and so does society. Such children are more likely to perform poorly in school, to drop-out early, to be functionally illiterate and to be only marginally employable in today's high technology world, they are unable to develop their human potentiality and productivity fully and contribute less to national development. Therefore, it is a responsibility of mankind as a whole to save them from deprivation and any possible danger and to think about their all round development. In the inaugural address to the SAARC conference on South Asian children in October 1986 in New
Delhi, former Prime Minister (The then Foreign Minister) Mr. P.V. Narasingha Rao said, "Our development is primarily linked with the human factor, namely, the quality of coming generation which is determined by the state of well being of children today and their preparation for life."

1.1 Child population:

The estimated global population in 2000 was 6055 million [Source World population prospects, 1998, Revisions (vol. II) United Nations.] and according to UNICEF report, 121 million primary school aged children are out of school. Similarly, out of 102,7015,247 millions of total population of India, being the number of children below 6 years of age is 163511029, constituting nearly 15.9 percent of India's total population, where number of male and female are 84841521 and 78669508 respectively (Source statistics on children in India, Hand Book-2004, NIPCCD.

In Assam too, out of 26655528 of total population, children below 6 years of age, accounted for 4498075, constitute 16.9 percent of total population and number of male and female are 2289116 and 2208969 respectively.

But unfortunately, a large number of children continue to face unmet challenges in their efforts to survive and develop to their full potential. Majority of them live in a poor social and economic environment, which includes poverty, poor environmental sanitation, disease, infection inadequate access to primary health care, inappropriate child rearing and
feeding practices and those can impede their growth and development. On the other hand, this grim environment is also responsible for high mortality rate, low birth-weight of infants, malnutrition, and complication from measles, poliomyelitis, diarrhoea, gastroenteritis, respiratory infection, skin diseases, eye infection, whooping cough, as children are easily vulnerable to these. In addition to this, the rights of children are violated even at their home, as they are denied the right to basic nutrition and adequate early childhood care. The rights of millions of children are also violated in factories, in the streets and in many other places. Even their access to this world; goes unknown as birth are not registered. They lack safe drinking water, quality health, opportunities for learning, sound education and they sometimes may face sexual abuse. Children in different circumstances are deprived of their basic needs and rights, and suffer from exploitation and neglect. With these, prevalent attitudes, beliefs and age-old practices, concerning children are also still the major impediments for promoting child development.

The nation has great responsibility to bring up the large number of children as responsible and capable citizens. India has made commendable progress in various child survival and developments indicators like IMR, Immunization, life expectancy etc. in the last 55 years; yet there are lots of ground to cover and therefore investing in children today can be the best possible strategy for tomorrow. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru said, "If we do not
look after children today, we will be creating many more new problems for ourselves in the future". It means society has to give interest, time and value to change the morally unexpectable situation more itself than it has done before to its children. Everybody should understand the phases of child development and their characteristics to help the human child to manifest and unfold all the qualities for the growth in totality. National Policy for Children (1974) stated "state to provide adequate services to children both before and after birth and through the period of growth to ensure their full physical and social development."

1.2 Concept of Early Childhood period, its importance:

Educationists and philosophers attempted to classify human developmental process into some stages among them Rousseau, Earnest Jone and Ryburn's classification for human development is noteworthy. All of them admitted that the first few years of life have special significance for everybody.

The first few years of life particularly from conception upto 6 years are divided broadly into three distinct heads as follows -

1. Pre-natal Period-

It extends from the day of conception till the birth of the child. This pre-natal period passes generally through three main stages, such as:

I. Period of Ovum or germinal stage- This is the first stage of ones life which continue from the moment of conception to the fourth day.
II. Period of Embryo or embryonic stage- which begins from the fourth day of conception and continue till the fortieth (40th) day of growth.

III. Period of Fetus- The third stage is the stage of fetus, which begins from the child, fortieth (40th) day and continue till the day of birth. All the three stages of human life have special significance for everybody. Because, all the psycho-physical qualities and capacities of the human child is determined by the genetic or hereditary history of the child by the help of the natural laws. The properties of one's life are fixed by the natural laws during all the three stages. Development after birth begins with the properties that are stamped by the natural laws. During this period it is important to take care of the mother. As the fetus receives food materials directly from the mother blood streams the mother is to be provided with sufficient nutrious food during the pre-natal period. Any type of ailment of the mother also affects the growth of the child. Hence, care need to be taken to keep the mother quite healthy and free of any physical or mental ailment so as to allow the fetus grow without any difficulty and comes out to the earth undisturbed.

2. Infancy and Babyhood-

The period of infancy and babyhood is extending from birth to two years of age which has different stages. The period from birth upto the disconnection of umbical cord is known as the period of parturition, and it is very critical for the baby, as it has to adjust to a complete new environment of the earth.
The period from cutting of umbilical cord up to the falling is known as the period of neo-nate. In the neo-natal period, the mortality rate of baby is high. So, during this period the baby needs all sorts of care. This period is regarded as the true foundation period of human life. During this period growth and development both physical and mental, is quite rapid. The fundamentals of all intellectual developments take place during this period. The infants gradually become independent in their work in this period. The general pattern of growth and development is almost similar in case of all babies. There may be variations in their weight, height and areas of physical growth and this is mainly due to heredity and nutrition.

3. **Early Childhood**

W.M. Ryburn attempted to classify early childhood from 3 - 6 or 7 and it is the period of mental growth. The third phase of growth and development the early childhood begins after babyhood and is also divided into two parts.

I. **Toddlerhood** - Which is from babyhood to a year and half particularly, at this stage the child is curious about environment.

II. **Pre-school childhood** - It begins after babyhood and continues upto 6 years. It is called the critical period for the child for his growth and development. It is rightly remarked by E. Hurlock that "the child's physical development has a marked influence on the quality and quantity of his behaviour." Physical growth is determined by some external and internal
factors like nutrition, fatigue, rest, exercise, work, heredity, illness and secretion of the ductless and endocrine gland etc.

In the total spectrum of human development, early childhood represents one of the most crucial periods during which the foundations for intellectual, cognitive, socio-emotional, language and physical/motor competence are laid. Not only most of the brain development takes place during this early years, but also the foundations for sound physical, social and mental health are laid down during this period. Thus the child's exposure to positive, nurturing and culture specific stimulus during these early years has a strong and direct bearing on her/his future life attainments including those in the educational field.

Lee (1971) in the "Encyclopedia of Education has defined the range for children education as from 2 to 3 years to eights years. The child during this period tries to acquire control over the environment. He is ready to explore his environment. In this period growth proceeds at slow rate. But early childhood period is ideal for learning new skills. He is adventurous at this stage. Speech skills are also developed during this period. Piaget believes that he quickly learns to distinguish among various features of the immediate environment and modifies his behaviour according to its demands.

During early childhood period the child reaches the stage of extremely rapid development of spoken language. The child also develops ego-
centricism. However, ego centricism gradually diminishes through the child's interaction with others particularly with his peers and friends. To many psychologists the period is a "Pre-gang age" and during this time the child learns the fundamentals of social behaviour. Many leadership qualities are also developed in this period.

Educationally, this period is very important and it is called as "Pre-school age". The child is prepared in all respects to profit from schooling during this period. So, enriched environment is to be provided for the receptive mind of all children. Some psychologists call this period as the period of plasticity as the impressions that are made on the child's mind last throughout his life and influence his career. Piaget in his research on learning theories arrived at the conclusion that child's learning consists of two processes:

1) assimilation and 2) accommodation. According to him, this process of assimilation and accommodations begins at birth and increases in intensity in early childhood. With this, at this stage the ability of representing things develops and there is gradual acquisition of knowledge and skills on the part of the child.

Benjamin Bloom, an eminent psychologist and educationist observed that environment from the first six to seven years of life is very significant for cognitive development. Therefore all kinds of facilities should be provided to the child to explore, to enquire, to play and to interact with his peers for optimum education.
In short importance of early childhood can be summarised as follows-

- Development of a child during the first year lays the foundation for the rest of life.

- Early development is more critical than later development or is the critical period" as early childhood is the time when particular good or bad characteristics are slowly and clearly developed.

- Considerable learning takes place during early childhood which prepares the child for adulthood.

- Easy to guide children in the right direction and inculcate good habits and moral values during early childhood influence later behaviour.

- Experiences during early childhood have an impact on the ways of thinking and behaviour in adulthood.

The new scientific evidence and practical experience also reveals that the first few years are very important for life. For example health and nutrition status such as iodine deficiency and early stimulation affect the development of brain. Children whose health and nutrition status are improved, better, able to profit from a more responsive environment. Likewise, early socialization patterns and quality of child's immediate environment afterwards influences physical, cognitive, emotional and social development, equality, mutual respect and non violence etc. After
all a child's survival, growth and development depend on the quality of health, nutrition, early stimulation and education of early childhood period.

Children are nation's asset and future resource of manpower. Their development with dignity is a matter of great concern throughout the world. Early childhood care and education (ECCE) can help in holistic development of the child.

1.3 Concept of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):

Health is one of the most important indicators of overall development and well-being of a society and the progress of a nation depends on the physical and mental well-being of the people. The 2008 report of the UNESCO presents a gloomy picture of the Indian mothers and children. Every year in India as many as 21 lakh under five children die due to malnutrition of their mothers who are unable to breast-feed their children. India also accounts for one-fourth of global infant deaths every year. According to the UNICEF's India representatives, 25 percent of children dying world-wide before the twentieth day of their birth are from India. Another fact is that around 45 percent of infants belonging to the world who are born-under-weight are also from India. Malnutrition continues to affect the newborns and young children, which is found to be the underlying cause of up to 50 percent of under-five deaths. The most important reasons for poor state to infant and child health in India are inadequate health care of mothers and children, low immunity and high incidence of
communicable diseases besides insufficient breast-feeding and malnutrition of mothers. According to Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme – India's infant mortality rate in 2004 was 60 per 1000 live births. Moreover, maternal mortality ratio per 100000 live births was 540. In addition to malnutrition, Anaemia also affects 74 percent of children under the age of three, more than 90 percent of adolescent girls and 50 percent of women. Vitamin-A deficiency - which causes blindness and increases morbidity and mortality among preschoolers, also remains a public health problem. An estimated 400,000 children under five years of age die each year due to diarrhoea. Several millions more suffer from multiple episodes of diarrhoea still others fall ill on account of Hepatitis-A, enteric fever, intestinal worms and eye and skin infection caused by poor hygiene and unsafe drinking water.

Despite a major improvement in literacy rates during the 1991-2001, the number of children who are not in school remains high. Gender disparities in education persists for more girls than boys fail to complete primary school. A large number of India's disadvantaged children, especially girls, are vulnerable to violence, abuse and exploitation.

As per NFHS-2 the status of woman's health in Assam living with rural background have poor health condition as about 62 percent pregnant women are anemic; the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) was as high as 401 per 100,000 live births. (NFHS-2, 1989-99).
Assam has the highest 70 percent incidence of anemic amongst all the Indian states. Of course, the picture of rural and tribal women is worse than the women belonging to urban area.

Though many factors having direct bearing on safe motherhood and child-survival—yet Family planning, age of marriage, illiteracy and ignorance, lack of awareness and particularly in adequate child-care is responsible.

Indian planners have always accepted health and nutrition as an important factor for the development of the children. The first five-year plan recognized the need for adequate services of health and nutrition. Later on the Govt. of India with the co-operation of UNICEF, WHO, FAO launched various child welfare programme, with the objectives of providing supplementary nutrition to the pre-school children as well as to the women. Despite the many efforts, made by the Government and voluntary agencies, the health and nutrition status and development of children are not still satisfactory. The immediate determinants of survival, growth and development of children are adequate dietary intake, opportunities for playing and communicating and freedom from disease. These are determined by three underlying conditions:

(i) Household food security,
(ii) Access to health services
(iii) Healthy environment and caring practices.

(12)
Although, all of them are necessary none alone is sufficient for children's survival, growth and development, yet, care takes an important role. Care refers to the behaviours and practices of care givers (mother, siblings, father and family members) who provide food, health-care, stimulation and emotional support necessary for children's healthy growth and development. These practices translate food and health-care resources into good nutrition, responsible psychological care and adequate health for a child. Care also includes the ways they are performed with affection, responsiveness and consistency.

Types of care as follows:

- Infant feeding (breast feeding and complementary feeding).
- Psychological care.
- Hygienic and sanitation behaviours.
- Food preparation and storage.
- Home health practices.
- Care provided to women and girls by the family.

All kinds of care require patience, skill and love for the child and all of these are necessary for survival, growth and development of the child. Moreover, the human, economic and organizational conditions are the resources that help families provide care. Human resource are knowledge, skills and motivation of the care giver. Economic resources include both financial availability and control of assets like money and time and organizational resources are those that support good child-care such as...
joint families, community child-care facilities or alternate care systems in a household. Hence, early childhood care is very comprehensive.

It provides:

(i) An enabling environment for the mother and the child.

(ii) It seeks to ensure that all children are safely born to healthy mothers, who are full participants in family and community life.

(iii) Early childhood care provides support to the mother-health, nutritional status, well-being and leads to empowerment.

Importance of early childhood make us think about early childhood education. It is also called pre-school education which brings about optimum development of various aspects of the child.

Thus, the concept of early childhood care and education is very comprehensive which includes parental education, pre-natal, post-natal and childcare. So it extends from the birth of the child to his entrance into regular and formal schooling. William and Andrew states "the early childhood education is a term commonly used to describe programmes of formal schooling for children under six years of age."

The most widely accepted definition by Katz about early childhood Care and Education is "group setting which are deliberately intended to effect developmental changes in children in the age range from birth to the age of entering the first grade" (Evans -1975).
In conclusion, early childhood care and education (ECCE) is care taken in the area of health, nutrition, mental and social aspect etc., in early childhood for all round development of the child for survival, growth and development. Hence it is said, "Early child-hood care and education for survival, growth and development is an integrated holistic approach within rights perspective to ensure proper Child-care leading to the survival, growth, full-development and protection of the young child through child-centered, family focused and community based intervention."

1.4 Aims and objectives of ECCE:

Early Child Care and Education (ECCE) is the first step towards preparation for life. So, it must lay foundation for building personality of the future. The sounder the foundation the better the balanced the structure of personality will be.

**Objective accepted at international level:** - Austin, Gilbert R. in "Early childhood Education: An International perspective." (1976) has done a comparative study on Early childhood Education system of eight countries namely England and Wales, Canada, Sweden, France, Belgium, Germany and Netherlands. The objectives set by some of the countries are-

**England and Wales:** Social and educational aims with major emphasis on cognitive development through the medium of language.
Canada: Acquisition of proper health habit, development of language and number concepts, development of moral and spiritual self, including feeling social values through the medium of play.

France: Social and Educational development of the child under social development, the areas of emphasis are physical, sensory, aesthetic manual and social education of the child.

Germany: Building in child's minds the desirable concepts of co-existence, democratic values, social development, independent and creative work.

According to Miss Grace Owing, a pioneer in the field of early childhood education, there are seven objectives of pre-primary school:-

1. To provide healthy environment to children like-space air, light and sun shine.

2. To provide a healthy, happy and regular life.

3. To provide continuous medical supervision.

4. To assist in the formation of healthy and good life.

5. To give opportunities for the development of different interests and skills of various kinds.

6. To give experience of social life on a small scale where children work and play together.
7. To establish real unity between external environment and home life.

The Education Commission of India 1964-66 has also enunciated the following objectives of pre-primary education:

1. To develop in child good health habits and to build up basic skills, necessary for personal adjustment, such as dressing, toilet habits, eating, washing, cleaning etc.

2. To develop desirable social attitudes and manners and to encourage healthy group participation.

3. To develop emotional maturity by guiding the child to express, understand, accept and control his feelings and emotions.

4. To encourage aesthetic appreciation.

5. To stimulate intellectual curiosity concerning the environment and to help him understand the world in which he lives.

6. To encourage independence and creativity by providing the child with sufficient opportunities for self-expression.

7. To develop the child's ability to express his thoughts and feeling in fluent, correct and clear speech.


reinforced the priority to promoting early childhood care and education through approaches for holistic child development. Emphasis has been laid on the use of child centred developmentally appropriate activities to nurture joy, curiosity and creativity in the young child.

1.5 Models of ECCE:

Many terms like kindergarten, Montessori, Nursery etc. have been used interchangeably to denote early childhood education. In India, too different early childhood care and education models are being practised - Shishu Kendra in UP, WB, MP Balwadies in educationally backward states. Mukulikas in Assam, social education centers in Tripura, pre-primary units attached with primary, Higher Secondary and Elementary schools in AP. MP, Assam, Chattisgarh, J&K, Nagaland and in HP, Laboratory Nursery schools attached with university system like in MS University, Vadodara. Parochial, Pre-schools, Anganwadi of Integrated Child Development Service, (ICDS) programme etc. The aim of all the models of ECCE is to change behaviour of children or transmit information in the most efficient and direct manner. Particularly, ICDS is an integrated approach for covering basic services for improving childcare stimulation and learning, health and sanitation targeting young children, pregnant and nursing mothers, women and adolescent girls' group.

1.6 Need and Importance of ECCE with reference to ICDS:

More than two thousand years ago, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle laid
stress on the importance of early childhood Education and pleaded for adequate care for young children. Comenious, recognising the importance of early childhood education rightly observed "Education is a development of the whole man. If the superstructure is not to totter, the foundation must be laid well, study should be adopted to the capacity of the pupil." UN conventions on the Right of the child on 20 Nov. 1989 seek to protect children everywhere against exploitation, neglect and abuse. India ratified the convention on December 2, 1991, which emphasized on four aspects like civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights of every child for his/her survival, protection, participation and development. Article 24 of the convention emphasized ensuring pre-natal and post-natal care for mothers. Similarly, article 27 recognised the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. It is the responsibility of parents or society to secure conditions of living necessary for the child development. In addition to this, Article 28 & 29 of the convention recognised the right of every child to education and envisages that state shall provide free and compulsory education, along with taking measures to reduce drop-out rates for which early child-hood care and education should be enhanced.

Research studies conducted by the psychologists, and educationists all over the world also have revealed that an adequately enriched environment in early childhood brings about optimum development of the child. Although...
genetic background is mainly responsible for growth and development, yet, environmental care, which includes the quality of opportunities, the responsiveness of environment and interaction with it, play a decisive role. Again, although biological factors are mainly responsible for child's nature and temperament, sometimes malnutrition or frequent illness may be responsible. For example, children can become irritating, listless or timid due to malnutrition. Even, child with mild or moderate malnutrition or deficiencies of certain nutrients such as iron or Iodine will run the risk of lower I.Q. Similarly, frequent illness may compel them to withdraw their interest to learn and explore. Besides, a lingering illness may affect the cognitive, social, or emotional development of the child. In developing countries Protein-Energy Malnutrition (PEM), Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD), Vitamin-A Deficiency (VAD) and Iron Deficiency Anaemia (IDA) are the major problems in child development. The effect of these problems are particularly strong prenately and in the first two years of life.

The early childhood care and education help the child in spiritual development as the child becomes aware of values of society how he or she is valued. Even, social and emotional development of the child depends on the quality of attachment between the caregiver and the child. A child with a secure sense of attachment will be happier and more confident learner. Thus, various arguments can be pointed out to support early childhood care and education. These are-
1. **A Human rights argument:--** Child as an individual has the right to live and to develop his/her full potentiality. Education is the birth right of every child. So, insurance for survival, growth, development, protection and participation of children is the obligation of the families, communities, service providers and civil societies.

2. **A moral, social value argument:--** To preserve desirable moral and social values in the future, one must begin with the children as humanity transmit its values through children.

3. **An economic argument:--** Society can benefit economically from investing in child- development through increased productivity and cost savings.

4. **A Political argument:--** Children provide a rallying point for social and political actions that build consensus and solidarity.

5. **The efficacy of other programme:--** Related to early childhood care and education like health & nutrition, education can be improved through their combination with ECCE.

6. **ECCE brings social equity:--** By providing a fair start it is possible to modify distressing socio-economic and gender related inequities. Early socialization pattern and the quality of the child's immediate environment influence physical, cognitive, emotional and social development Gender socialization of both
boths and girls in life towards value of equality, mutual respect and non-violence, is an important example of how early experiences can influence later action.

7. **ECCE gives adequate environment:** Early years are critical for all-round development, particularly for development of intelligence, personality & social behaviour, and that these are long term effects associated with a variety of early intervention programme.

8. **Changing social and demographic situation:** The increasing survival of vulnerable children, changing family structures and country to city migration, women in the labour force and other changes require attention to early childhood education. In addition to this, the mothers, attending schools or trying to upgrade their vocational skills, also need ECCE institutions for the treatment of their ill or handicapped children.

The need of ECCE is now being recognized all over the world since the child acquires most of the personal and social habits before the age of six. It also helps in the development of aesthetic aspect from the early childhood which enables the child to appreciate different forms of phenomena in nature. Proper development in aesthetic aspects also accelerates development in moral and ethical values which makes a child more social, disciplined and a useful member of the country.
Early childhood Care and Education component of ICDS which complements and strengthens family based learning and initiates socialization provides the first learning opportunities. It plays an important role in preparing the child for primary schooling. It is especially significant in the rural context of Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts (BTAD) compensating children for the disadvantages of poor home and family environment. It is particularly significant for the first generation learners of the tribal society. After all systematic provision of ECCE helps in the development of children in a variety of ways, such as - group socialization, inculcating good health habits, stimulation of creative learning process and enhanced scope for overall personality development. In addition to this, ECCE can stop high rates of wastage in our primary schools by providing home environment. This problem is acute in rural tribal families. Shiv Kumar Mitra, the former Director, NCERT, rightly suggested that by creating interest in learning from the tender age, the high drop-out rate of first five years of primary school can be brought down. In conclusion, childhood is a time for the celebration of life, family and community. Family and community should share in supporting the growth and development of healthy, creative children. Access to quality ECCE services is not only a human right of each child for survival, development, protection and participation, but also for sustainable human development. The Planning Commission of India in their 6th Plan framework states "Attention should
be paid to all children during their crucial developmental years. The pre
school years of a child is the period of its maximum learning and intellectual
development and hence of gross potential educational significance."

Kothari Commission had rightly mentioned that pre-primary schools
were first established to meet social needs; but recently the educational
significance of this stage is being increasingly realized. The modern trend
in educational policy, therefore, is to emphasize pre-primary education
especially for children with unsatisfactory home background. The education
policy 1986 emphasized the investment in the development of the young
child. The revised POA 1992 has also reiterated in the postulates and
provisions of the NPE 1986 on ECCE.

The world Declaration on "Education for all" urged countries to
expand "Early child-hood Care and development activities", including
family and community interventions especially for poor, disadvantaged
and disabled children. In this light, in addition to emphasis on
supplementary nutrition and convergence with health services, special focus
is also being given on to the pre-school education component of the ICDS
programme so that the children are fully prepared for entering class-1 at
the age of 6 years under the Sarva Siksha Abhijan and District Primary
Education Programme. For this, the states have been requested to ensure
necessary convergence between ICDS, SSA and DPEP. In response to the
world declaration, the Government of Assam in 1999 by an order in all
provincialized primary and lower-basic school included "K Shreni" as pre-
primary education and tried to make convergence with AWCs of the ICDS programme.

1.7 Integrated Child-Development Service (ICDS)

Any human development strategy begins with the welfare of children. Various problems related to children like - hunger and malnutrition, mortality, morbidity, school drop-out etc. can be reduced by investing children's health, nutrition, and education. It is recognized by the planners all over the world that access to minimum services for children is likely to ensure their optimal development and thus help in preparing socially efficient individual.

With this aim in view the Government of India introduced ICDS - the most comprehensive programme for early-childhood care and development. It aims at enhancing survival and development of children from the vulnerable sections of the society. Launched in 1975 with 33 projects on an experimental basis, ICDS is at present, one of the World's largest and most unique out-reach programmes for early child-childhood care and development.

ICDS is a unique programme comprising the main components of human resource development namely - health, nutrition and education. It is the country wide programme functioning on a large scale, requiring multi-sectorial operations and intersectoral linkages for its implementation. Integration of services is depicted in Fig. No. 1.1
1.8 Objectives of ICDS

Objectives of the Integrated - Child - Development Service programme have been identified as follows:-

1. To improve the nutritional and health status of children below 6 (six) years.

2. To lay the foundations for proper psychological, physiological and social development of the child.
3. To reduce the incidence of mortality, malnutrition and school drop-outs.

4. To achieve effective coordination of policy and implementation among various departments to promote child-development.

5. To enhance the capability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child through proper health and nutrition education.

1.9 Coverage: -

The ICDS programme was introduced in 33 blocks (projects) in 1975. To fulfill its commitments contained in the National Common Minimum Programme and to comply with Supreme Court's directives to increase the number of Anganwadi Centres, the Government has expanded the ICDS scheme to cover all Community Development Blocks and major slums of the country. With the expansion of the scheme, the total number of Projects has increased to 6118 (upto 2005-06). During 2006-07 numbers of sanctioned projects increased to 6284 although the number of operational projects was 6068 and that of AWCs to about 9.46 lakhs as on 30.09.2006. During 2006-07 the total number of AWCs increased to 1052638 although the number of operational AWCs were 1010912 (29.02.08, DWC, Govt. of India). Coverage of ICDS projects are shown in Fig. No. 1.2
The programme of ICDS seek to provide all basic essential services to children and mothers in an integrated manner and the Anganwadi Centre (AWC) is the focal point of delivery of these services to children and mothers. The Anganwadi Worker (AWW) deliver services herself or with the help of village level workers of other departments like health, education and rural development. The AWW also makes the AWC literally a courtyard play centre joyful with play way activities to attract and sustain the participation of children and community, as community participation is very important for child-development.

1.10 Services and Participant:

ICDS provides a package of integrated services in a comprehensive and cost effective manner to meet the multi-dimensional and inter-related needs of children. ICDS beneficiaries receive health, nutrition and early childhood care and education related services. All basic sectoral services
related to early childhood care, pre-school education, nutrition and health, converge through the AWW, on the same group of children, adolescent girls, pregnant and nursing mothers.

The principal participants of the ICDS programme are children below 6 years, pregnant and lactating mothers (P&LM), women in the age-group of 15-45 years and adolescent girls identified from the low income families and deprived sections of the society and they are given key health services as well as better care and counselling for improving maternal nutrition. ICDS services and beneficiaries are depicted in Fig. No. 1.3

Source: Integrated Child Development Services, (ICDS), Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of H.R.D., Govt. of India.
The early childhood care and education (ECCE) is very critical component of the packages of services envisaged under ICDS programme as it seeks to lay the foundation for proper physical, psychological, cognitive and social development of the child. ECCE activity is the most joyful play-way daily activity sustained for three hours a day and focuses on the total development of the child. It also includes promotion of early stimulation of the under three through intervention of mothers or caregivers. The joyful play-way activity of AWC is built on local culture and practices, using local support materials develop by AWWs themselves. The AWC activities conducted by the medium of play, aims to provide a learning environment for the promotion of social, emotional, cognitive, physical and aesthetic development of the child. Through ICDS 33061972 numbers of children (three to six years of age) from disadvantaged groups were participating centre based early learning activities where the numbers of boys and girls were 16886790 and 16175182 respectively. (Source: DWC, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India)

With the children age group of 3-6 years, children of 0-3 years, pregnant & Nursing mothers adolescent girls are also motivated by the programme. Table No. 1.1 shows statement of beneficiaries for SNP and others package of services.
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<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Country/State</th>
<th>Children (0-3 yrs)</th>
<th>Children (3-6 yrs)</th>
<th>Total Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Boys (3-6 yrs)</th>
<th>Girls (3-6 yrs)</th>
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Source: DWC, HRD, Govt. of India.
Thus, ICDS provides increased opportunities through AWCs for promoting early development associated with improved enrolment and retention in the early primary stage and releasing girls from the burden of sibling care to enable them to participate in primary education. Objectives of pre-school education programme in ICDS are shown in Fig. No. 1.4

Fig. No. 1.4

Objective of Preschool Education Programme in ICDS

- **GOOD PHYSIQUE, muscular co-ordination, basic motor skills**
- **GOOD HABITS AND SKILLS** for personal adjustment, toilet training, dressing, eating, cleaning etc.
- **SOCIAL ATTITUDE, group manners and sharing things with others; live & play with others and control natural aggressiveness and destruction**
- **PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT through rich learning experience**
- **ABILITY TO EXPRESS THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS, in fluent, correct and clear speech**
- **SELF CONFIDENCE and inner discipline**
- **EMOTIONAL MATURITY** by guiding to express, understand, accept and control feelings and emotions.
- **AESTHETIC APPRECIATION of self, others, things and environment**
- **STIMULATING INTELLECTUAL CURiosity to enable the child to understand his environment by exploring, investigating, experimenting and learning**

**Source:** Handbook for Anganwadi Workers, NIPCCD.

1.11 **ICDS in Assam, BTAD:**

The first ICDS project was introduced in Dhakuakhana Development
Block of Lakhimpur district of Assam on 02-10-1975. Considering the role of ICDS for rural masses of the country Government of India has expanded its coverage year after year. As a result 223 ICDS projects are working in Assam at Block level during 2006-07. Moreover, there are 36849 operational AWCs under these projects. But the number of sanctioned AWCs was 37082 on 29-2-08 (DWC, H.R.D. Govt. of India).

Among the ICDS projects of Assam 24 projects are under Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts (BTAD) administration.

Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts (BTAD), a self Governing Body, created in Bodo inhabited area of Assam, as per Memorandum of Settlement (MOS) singned between Government of India, Government of Assam and Bodoland Liberation Tigers (BLT) have 24 sanctioned ICDS projects. But 21 ICDS projects are operating in 4 districts of BTAD. The projects are Rupshi, Debitola, Mahamaya, Kokrajhar, Dotama, Kachugaon, Gossaigaon, Hatidhura, Sidly-Chirang, Bodobazar, Jalah, Gobardhana, Tihu-Barama, Dhamdroma, Goreswar, Kalaigaon, Khairabari, Udalguri, Mazbat, Nagrijuli and Rowta. The number of sanctioned and operational AWCS are 3546 and 3137 respectively and these are running in the area through the handful cooperation of equal number of Anganwadi Workers and helpers. The Table No. 1.2 Shows the Status of ICDS programme.
Table No. 1.2 Status of on going ICDS programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL. No.</th>
<th>State Autonomous Body</th>
<th>Nos. of Sanctioned ICDS Project</th>
<th>Nos. of Operating ICDS Project</th>
<th>Nos. AWC Sanctioned</th>
<th>Nos. of AWC Operating</th>
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<td>BTAD</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3546</td>
<td>3137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source - Social Welfare Dept. Govt. of Assam

1.12 Need of the present study:

The various studies reveal that ECCE component of ICDS helps in improvement of enrolment and scholastic performance of children and its impact in cognitive and language development is positive. But the research conducted in this area is not available and adequate. Present endeavour is the first attempt in the BTAD area and hope it will help to assess the role of ICDS in early childhood care and education of tribal children. In addition to this, the investigation feels the need of the present study for the following reasons:

(1) The constitution of India, Directive Principles of state policy of children, and the UN Convention on Rights of children has called upon the society to join a global movement that will help to build a world fit and protected for children. In this world, leave no child behind, they will get the best possible start of life, necessary care and Education and will be free from poverty, exploitation, hatred...
and HIV/AIDS etc. In this situation, the study of ICDS or any other child-care programme has importance. The ICDS projects are running in full swing in BTAD areas, but no study has far been made in this area. The present study is the first attempt towards this area and hope the findings could be used extensively to strengthen and inspire the training of various Child-Welfare officials particularly working in backward tribal areas.

(2) For the bright future of the nation, the significance of early childhood care and education has internationally recognised. In India too, different Education Commissions suggested to provide play experience to the child to promote his/her physical, mental, social, emotional and cognitive development. With the same aim in view Government of India launched ICDS more than in three decades ago. The programme through its various packages of services has been taking care of the mothers and children in BTAD areas. Particularly, through ECCE component has been imparting pre-school education (PSE) to children. So, to analyse the nature of non-formal PSE of the ICDS the study was important. Moreover, after implementation of any programme it needs evaluation in its impacts. Hence, here is the attempt to study the impact of ICDS. In addition to this the study was conducted for answering the following questions –

- What are the existing conditions of AWCs in the backward rural tribal areas?
Are the existing conditions of AWCs in conformity with desired standard?

What are its lacunae?

All these questions also demand a systematic and intensive study for successful achievement of the targets of the programme.

The study is also important in another way. Bodos are very rich in child-rearing and child-care practices. Moreover, ICDS has helped them in acquiring scientific knowledge of child care practices. But unfortunately, there is hardly any systematic study to understand the child-care practices in the context of ICDS. So, it demands an analytical study as knowledge of child-care practices are pre-requisites for designing and implementing various child-welfare programme in a particular region. Therefore, it is hoped that the study would give the knowledge of the child-rearing practices of Bodo society living in BTAD and will help others to frame other child-welfare programme on the basis of findings of the study.

1.13 The title of the study:

The title of the study reads as under –

"Role of ICDS Programme in Early Child-hood Care and Education of Tribal Children – An Analytical Study."

(36)
1.14 Operational Definitions of the terms used:

In order to facilitate the study on the "Role of ICDS Programme in Early Child-hood Care and Education of Tribal Children- An Analytical Study" the meaning of different words used in the study are necessary. It would enable us to understand the real concept of the term.

a) **Role**: According to Webster's Third New International Dictionary "Role" meant (i) a character assigned to or assumed by someone, (ii) a socially prescribed pattern of behaviour corresponding to an individual's status in a particular society (Webster's Third New International Dictionary of Seven Languages, Vol. II, 1768, p. 1968).

b) **ICDS**: Integrated Child Development Service programme, a centrally sponsored scheme of the Department of Women and Child Development launched on 2nd October, 1975 is the world's largest and unique childcare programme.

c) **Early Childhood Period**:

Early childhood begins after the babyhood. In other words it extends from 2 to 6 years of age. During this period, if a child has stimulating environment with a variety of learning experiences and opportunities to move and explore learning and development is enhanced. ICDS represents one of the world's largest and most unique programmes for early childhood development.
d) **Early childhood care:**

Early childhood care is the care provided to a young child in an integrated and holistic manner, with the rights perspective leading to his/her survival, growth and development and protection. ICDS is the most unique programme for early childhood care and development encompassing integrated services for development of children below 6 years, expectant and nursing mothers and adolescent girls living in the most backward rural, urban and tribal areas.

e) **Early Childhood Education (ECE):**

During the Six-Five Year plan (1980-1985) the trem early childhood education has been used. It is also called pre-school education, which brings about optimum development of various aspects of the child. Pre-school education in ICDS is a child centered programme for 3-6 years old children, which follows the playway activity approach using toys, play equipments etc.

f) **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):**

It is very comprehensive which includes parental education, pre-natal as well as post-natal education and child development. So, it extends from the birth of the child to his entrance into a regular and formal schooling. ECCE component of ICDS includes two types of services – (1) Early childhood stimulation (Children below 3 years), (2) Non-formal pre-school education (children 3-6 years.)
g) Tribal:

Article 366 of the Constitution of India has defined the scheduled tribes as "Such tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be the scheduled Tribe for the purpose of this constitution."

In Assam (i.e. North-Easten Tribal Zone) there are 23 ethnic groups including Bodo and they are identified as tribal community. In the present study childcare and education of Bodo tribe living in Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts (BTAD) are taken into consideration.

1.15 Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the study were –

(1) To analyse the present scenario of ICDS in BTAD in relation to (a) Implementation (b) Beneficiaries (c) Delivery and impact of services.

(2) To analyse the organizational structure of different components of ICDS specially Early Child-hood Care and Education (ECCE) component.

(3) To study the role of Anganwadi Worker in imparting ECCF activities.

(4) To study the effect of the programme on tribal children and women.

(5) To assess the perception of the tribal community about the ICDS programme and the extent of support provide by them in implementation of the programme.
ICDS, the single largest out-reached programme with its most comprehensive package of services for meeting total developmental needs of children in the 0-6 age groups has been helping to improve the nutritional and health status of children and women reduction, in the incidence of mortality and malnutrition in the BTAD areas. Moreover, it has also been helping the children in development by imparting ECCE through the AWCS from the inception of the programme. Undoubtedly, it has positive contribution in providing good stimulation to the children and their families. But yet, it has not been able to reach the objectives completely due to some constraints. So, through the present study the investigator also attempts to analyse the constraints in the implementation of the programme and to suggest for future improvement so that it can help the child to be healthy and efficient citizen of the country.

1.16 Delimitation of the Study:

The study is delimited to the Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts of Assam. It includes the ICDS projects of Chirang and Baksa districts of BTAD. Moreover, it confines to Bodo speaking people of BTAD. Other Bodo speaking group like Garos, Ravas, Dimassas, Tipras of Tripura, Lalungs, Sonowals, Hajongs, Deuries, Chutias etc. have not been covered by the term 'Bodo' used in the study.

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