

Impact of ICDS on Language Development of Pre-School Children

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Abstract : *The study was designed to examine the impact of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) on Language Development of Pre-School children in three types of settings, i.e. urban, rural and tribal. The sample consisted of 600 children of which 300 were ICDS children and another 300 were non ICDS children. The results confirmed the hypothesis that ICDS programme had significant effect on language development of rural and tribal children. The results further revealed that age had significant effect on language development of pre-school children irrespective of the localities. However, sex had no significant impact on language development of pre-school children across the locality.*

Keywords: *ICDS, Language Development, Pre-school Children.*

Introduction

Pre- school education is the preparation for the future life, where the child get's benefited physically, intellectually, socially, morally and psychologically. A good number of cases of physical deformities and mental disorders in adult life have been examined and it has been found that the abnormalities owe their origin to the infancy period. Our educationists and psychologists are of the opinion that great emphasis and attention must be laid on the children of age group 2 to 6 years for their optimum development.

Languages Development

Language is a powerful means of making adjustment to situation and individuals. Of all the phases of child development, growth in the use of language has attracted the attention most. Educationists and psychologists have evinced very keen interest in studying the language development of children. Many psychologists hold that a close study of the language development of children as to how they learn to speak and understand languages. Languages is a tool of both thinking and communication. In education it is the tool by which the child is able to acquire knowledge and matter facts. Effective hearing is dependent on the progressive mastery of language. Facility in the use of language is regarded as a mark of intelligence for the most satisfactory device for testing intelligence is based on language. The most important use of language consists in social communication. Language development is influenced by many external factors even though the general rate of maturation is centrally important (Hall & Gibby, 1958). Language is intimately connected with a child's feeling activity. It's use is pervasive. It is also hierarchically structured. It is an abstraction from behavior. According to Macginties (1974) "It is a double system-a system of content or meanings and a system of expression or signs.

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Swain

The former is called receptive language and the latter as expressive language. Language learning and language development has been a subject of recurrent research for last several decades both from the psychological point of view and the linguistic point of view. The first major break in this tradition came with research generated by Fries (1952) followed by transformational of grammar by Chomsky (1965).

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

ICDS scheme as the largest single programme of child development translates into action the objectives enumerated in item 15 of the 20 point programme. In pursuance of the National Policy for children which laid emphasis on the integrated delivery of early childhood services and services for expectant and nursing women and based on the recommendations of the inter-ministerial study teams set up by the Planning Commission, the scheme of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) was evolved to make a co-ordinated effort for an integrated programme of delivery of a package of such services. One of the objectives of the scheme is to provide non-formal pre-school education to the children within 3-6 years of age and to lay foundation for proper physical, social and psychological development of the child.

Objectives of the study

- i. To study the effect of ICDS programme on language development of urban, rural and tribal pre-school children.
- ii. To study the effect of age on language development of urban, rural and tribal pre-school children.
- iii. To study the effect of sex on language development of urban, rural and tribal pre-school children.
- iv. To study the inter-action effect of ICDS and age, ICDS and sex and ICDS, age and sex on language development of urban, rural and tribal pre-school children.

Hypotheses

- H₀₁ There exists a significant effect of ICDS on language development of pre-school children in urban, rural and tribal areas.
- H₀₂ There exists significant effect of age on language development of pre-school children in urban, rural and tribal areas.
- H₀₃ There exists significant effect of sex on language development of pre-school children in urban, rural and tribal areas.
- H₀₄ There exists interaction effect of ICDS and age, age and sex, ICDS and sex and ICDS, age and sex on languages development of pre-school children in urban, rural and tribal areas.

Methodology

Based on the hypotheses, the present study was designed using 2 x 3 x 2 factorial design. The method of casual comparative research was applied followed by cross sectional and naturalistic observation.

Sample

The sample for the study consisted of six hundred children aged 3-6 years out of which 300 were ICDS children and 300 were non ICDS children. The sample children were selected randomly from Cuttack and Mayurbhanj district representing urban, rural and tribal areas.

Tools used

The following tools were used for the collection of data for the present study:

- i. Raven’s Coloured Progressive Matricas (RCPM) (1962)
- ii. Socio Economic Status Scale by Srivastava (—)
- iii. Developmental Check List by Blum et al. (1976), Indian adaption by Kohli (1987).

Procedure of Data Collection

Necessary data/information were collected by testing children individually and in groups in respective centres and non-school situations.

Statistical Technique

The raw scores were converted to Development Quotient (DQ’s) following the formula MA/CA x 100 for each dimension of development. Further 2 x 3 x 2 way ANOVA was used for analysis of data.

Results

A. ICDS & Language Development of Pre-School Children in Urban Area

Table 1: Summary of 2 x 3 x 2 ANOVA: Effects of ICDS Programme, Age and Sex on Language Development of Pre-School Children in Urban Area

(N=200)

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F
A (Programme)	49.47	1	49.47	3.44
B (Age)	340.71	2	170.36	11.83 **
C (Sex)	15.77	1	15.77	1.10
A x B	117.01	2	58.50	4.06 *
B x C	9.41	2	4.70	0.33
A x C	4.43	1	4.43	0.31
A x B x C	23.12	2	11.56	0.80
Error	2707.52	188	14.40	

*DF = df (Degrees of Freedom), * p < .05; ** p < .01*

It is evident from table 1 that age has significant independent effect on language development of pre-school children in Urban area (F=11.83; p < .01) while the main effects of the ICDS and sex are not significant. This indicates that as the children grow in age there is increase in their language development. The interaction effect of ICDS and age are also significant in urban area (F=4.06; p < .05) which indicates that the longer the stay of the children in ICDS centres the better the language development of pre-school children. But ICDS programme independently has little effect on language development of pre-school children in urban area.

B. ICDS & Language Development of Pre-School Children in Rural Area**Table 2: Summary of 2 x 3 x 2 ANOVA: Effects of ICDS Programme, Age and Sex on Language Development of Pre-School Children in Rural Area (N=200)**

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F
A (Programme)	89.73	1	89.73	10.43**
B (Age)	725.09	2	362.55	42.14 **
C (Sex)	0.52	1	0.52	0.06
A x B	12.37	2	6.19	0.72
B x C	3.57	2	1.78	0.21
A x C	2.21	1	2.21	0.26
A x B x C	9.21	2	4.61	0.54
Error	1617.56	188	8.60	

*DF = df (Degrees of Freedom), ** $p < .01$*

Table 2 reveals that the independent effect of ICDS programme is significant on language development of pre-school children in rural area ($F=10.43$; $p < .01$). This implies that the language development of children attending ICDS centres in rural area is better than the children not attending such centres. Similarly independent effect of age is significant on language development of pre-school children in rural area ($F=42.14$; $p < .01$). Table 4.16 reveals that neither the independent effect of sex nor any interaction are significant on language development of pre-school children in rural area.

C. ICDS & Language Development of Pre-School Children in Tribal Area**Table 3: Summary of 2 x 3 x 2 ANOVA: Effects of ICDS Programme, Age and Sex on Language Development of Pre-School Children in Tribal Area (N=200)**

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F
A (Programme)	148.47	1	148.47	24.54**
B (Age)	366.82	2	1683.41	278.28***
C (Sex)	6.01	1	6.01	0.99
A x B	198.27	2	99.13	16.39 **
B x C	13.16	2	6.58	1.09
A x C	3.44	1	3.44	0.57
A x B x C	6.13	2	3.07	0.51
Error	1137.28	188	6.05	

*DF = df (Degrees of Freedom), ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$*

It is evident from table 3 that the independent effect of ICDS programme is significant on language development of pre-school children in tribal area ($F=24.54$; $p<.01$). This implies that the language development of ICDS children is better than the non ICDS children. Similarly the main effect of age is significant on language development of children in tribal area ($F=278.28$; $p<.001$). This indicates that the older children are better in language skills than the younger ones. It is also evident from table 4.18 that sex has no significant effect on language development of tribal pre-school children ($F=0.99$; $p > .05$). This implies that there is no difference between the tribal boys & girls in their language development. It is clear from the same table that ICDS programme when interacts with age has significant effect on language development of children in tribal area ($F=16.39$; $p<.01$). This indicates that the older children are better in language development than the younger ones.

Discussion

The findings that ICDS programme has significant independent effect on language development of pre-school children in rural and tribal areas are supported by the studies of Muralidharan and Banerji (1974), Parikh (1978), Devi (1980) Muralidharan & Kaur (1987), Rath (1998), Sanghan, Sangeeta & Punia (2000) & Mohanty (2002), where they reported that the children with pre-school experiences performed better in language development tests than the children without pre-school background.

Findings

The following are the main findings of the study:

- i. ICDS programme had significant effect on language development of pre-school children in rural and tribal areas where as the programme had little effect in urban area.
- ii. Age had significant effect on language development of pre-school children irrespective of the localities to which they belonged.
- iii. There was no significant difference between boys and girls in their languages development in urban, rural and tribal areas.
- iv. ICDS programme when interacts with age had significant effect on language development of pre-school children in urban and tribal areas.
- v. ICDS children were found better in language development than the non ICDS children irrespective of the localities.

Educational Implications

- i. The findings that the ICDS programme had significant positive impact on language development of pre-school children in rural and tribal areas is very important especially in the context of tribal children whose spoken language is inhibited by the standard Odia language supposedly used in ICDS centres. But in practice, the Anganwadi workers, choosen from the locality, interact with the children in local dialect which help in development of their language abilities.
- ii. The findings that age had significant effect on language development of pre-school children irrespective of localities, is quite an expected lines because development is always age related.
- iii. The findings that both boys and girls perform at par in language development irrespective of localities, emphasizes the importance of pre-school education in eradicating gender disparities in the society.

Swain

- iv. The findings that ICDS children are better in language development than non ICDS children would help the parents of these children in opening their eyes and realizing the importance of the scheme. These findings would also help the ICDS functionaries, government officials, and policy makers in making this programme more attractive and useful for the children.

Conclusion

Early childhood is a critical period in the developmental ladder. ICDS programme, the largest of its kind, is primarily intended to bring about a holistic development during this period, with the aim of preparing children for the schooling life. While this study reinforced the impact of ICDS on language development of young children, it also brought the deficiency in the age appropriate level of development in language.

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