

India's Journey Towards Development: Creche System and Women Workforce

Anjanah GJ¹

Ramanasubramanian G²

Abstract

India is growing with the object of becoming a developed nation by 2047, which marks the centenary of Indian independence from the Britishers. India as a country in its economic terms is improving; there is huge economic growth and more investors are coming into India, which is complimentary to the increase in employment opportunities. Many Indians are motivated to become self-employed, in the fancier version of “entrepreneurs”. With all these booms of development, what we need to check up on is the equal participation of men and women in the workforce. If women do not have equal participation in development, then the men will be overburdened, and women will be underdeveloped. To prevent these two consequences from occurring, what can be done is the inclusion of an equal number of women in the workforce. Women often due to their feminine and nurturing character opt to stay back at home after conceiving or after childbirth. But if women have a satisfying alternative, then they might not choose to leave their jobs. This will lead to the inclusion of women into the workforce, lessening the burden of men's earnings and ultimately will lead to the economic growth of the nation.

The authors in this paper will discuss the importance of the creche system and the impact that when a woman's burden is shared and her focus is shifted towards her passion, her economic independence and what the nation attains is development not only economically but also socially. The paper will also focus on implementation and ground realities faced in creche facilities in India.

Keywords: *Creches, Women, Domestic Chores, Development and Economic Independence*

Introduction

A creche refers to a setup of an atmosphere away from home that provides a secure and caring environment like that of the home for those children whose parents — including the mother — goes to work. This facility is available during the day and hence is also known as daycare.

The creche facility enables the mother to continue her work post maternity leave. These facilities are the key for all women who want to achieve professionally and also her nurturing and feminine trait of taking care of her child comes into play. It is a must to remember that women are also the sole bearers of the next generation of the human race. Keeping that in mind along with the increase in inflation, awareness to be financially independent and following their passion, women need help to fulfil their dreams. Creches is a great initiative by the government but what needs to be focused upon is the implementation process, usage by the people and real challenges faced. But before delving into the aspects of realities the paper will initially focus on the need for creche and how it is going help the development of the women and the nation.

¹ 5th Year Law Student, Sastra Deemed to be University

² 5th Year Law Student, Sastra Deemed to be University

background and need for creches

With the disintegration of the joint family system, the lack of elderly females in the family and the independence of the new generation parents is vividly present in society. Living in the 21st century, women are also equally educated; as per 2021 statistics 91.95% is the female literacy rate³. But the statistics also connote the female working population to be only 32.8% as per the report of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2021-22.⁴

The acceptance of the fact that literacy rate doesn't solely indicate the eligibility to work but it can be a deciding factor. With many reasons in hand which does not empower a woman to work, one of the primary reasons could be "to take care of the family and children". The biological and psychological characteristic of a female is that, she is of nurturing and fostering character, then it can be said that woman is the spearhead of the continuation of the human race.

With all the stated statistics and reasons above women require a helping hand in the nurturing process of the humankind, all the while she can be a little selfish in her selfless characteristic to pursue her passion and dreams, and to be ambitious as well. If women are able to achieve greater heights and represent the nation in the international arena with only a little help while facing an abundance of stereotypes, then we shall all think of a scenario where she is celebrated in and out of her house for all the activities she does, where she is getting help from her counterpart, where she is given the opportunity to achieve something, then it shall be of no doubt that India will be a developed nation by 2047 or maybe even before. And we can look upon the benefits that we as a nation are going to attain. Leaving one segment of the population behind is not going to help India to be a developed nation is a sheer statement. Hence, for India to focus on being a developed nation, the development of women is a must. Neglecting women from the process of developing is not going to help the nation in any way.

Another facet of this policy is that the children- "the future of this nation" are also the other stakeholders of this policy. The children often — after the mother resumes her job — tend to be left alone at some random relative or friend's place. But with the facility of creches, the children will also get a home-like environment along with other children helping them with the co-existence quality of humans. Creches function in a home-like manner with foods being served, sensory improvement games, and some knowledge-related tasks.⁵ These activities help in the development of the child at an early age and it is an undeniable fact that the growth of the little ones is ultimately the attainment of development of the nation.⁶

Creche facility is one such system that has three stakeholders- women, children and the nation.⁷ The beautiful thing to look upon is that, one initiative by the government is going to benefit all three stakeholders and in the end, the aim of being a developed nation will also be ignited as well as attained.

3 <https://www.globaldata.com/data-insights/macroeconomic/literacy-rate-in-india/#:~:text=rate%20has%20improved,-.Between%202018%2D2021%2C%20the%20literacy%20rate%20was%20highest%20in%20the,of%20India%20grew%20by%202.6%25.;>

4 <https://www.ijfmr.com/papers/2023/1/1409.pdf>

5 http://164.100.161.239/reports/sereport/ser/ser_RGNCreche.pdf

6 http://164.100.161.239/reports/sereport/ser/ser_RGNCreche.pdf

7 Trivedi, D., Majumder, N., Bhatt, A., Pandya, M. and Chaudhari, S.P. (2023), "Global research mapping on reproductive health: a bibliometric visualisation analysis", *Global Knowledge, Memory and Communication*, Vol. 72 No. 3, pp. 268-283. <https://doi.org/10.1108/GKMC-08-2021-0131>

8 <http://164.52.210.154:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/733/1/1sept2013revisedSynthesis%20reportSC.pdf>

Evolution of legislation regulatory paradigms

encompassing the creche facility

Drawing the power from the very sovereign document “The Constitution of India”⁸ which puts down all the laws, ways and means, and acts as a grund norm to all the other legislations. The provisions related to the development of women and children, maternity relief and even other provisions and laws are from the Constitution.

Constitution of India

According to Article 14⁹, the Constitution provides for equality before the law and equal protection of laws for every person. Subsequently, Article 15¹⁰ prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, caste, sex or even place of birth to all persons. Article 15 protecting the equality clause along with prohibition also provides an exception under Article 15(3)¹¹. Article 15(3) provides an exclusion of a provision from the general clause which is enshrined under Article 15(1)¹² and Article 15(2)¹³. It lays down that the State can make any special laws to provide special protection towards the interests of women and children.

Furthermore, Article 42 provides for secured justice and humane conditions in the workplace and maternity relief.

The Factories Act, 1948¹⁴

The Factories Act provides for a suitable space or room where the women workers may use for having their children during the working time. This facility shall be given by the employer to all such factories where there are more than 30 women workers. This room facility can be accessed by all the women, and children below the age of 6 years can only be kept. While interpreting this clause what shall also be considered is that India just got independence, colonizers exploited, looted and left India as the poorest country divided into two parts. With minimal opportunities for development, legislation framing laws for the provision of creche system is a great thing. But what the legislation could have done is to bring an amendment. After the Factories Act, 1948 even the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961¹⁵ did not provide any provision for creches and it was only after the 2017 Amendment.

The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996¹⁶

The scope of this Act extends to the employment and workplace conditions of the employees at buildings and other construction places. The provisions of the Act aims for the safety, welfare and health care of the workers working therein.

Section 35¹⁷ of the Act provides for the provisions of creches with the condition that more than 50 females shall be working in such building or construction area; it also states that such women shall be ordinarily employed and the employer shall provide for a creche facility or

⁸ The Constitution of India, 1950

⁹ Article 14 of The Constitution of India, 1950

¹⁰ Article 15 of The Constitution of India, 1950

¹¹ Article 15(3) of The Constitution of India, 1950

¹² Article 15(1) of The Constitution of India, 1950

¹³ Article 15(2) of The Constitution of India, 1950

¹⁴ The Factories Act, 1948

¹⁵ The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961

¹⁶ The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996

¹⁷ The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996, s 35

something similar to it. The room shall be suitable for chores related to child care and this facility is only available to children below the age of 6 years. Further sub-section (2)¹⁸ of the section also mentions the requisites of the room. The requisites are as follows:

1. adequate place
2. properly ventilated and lighted
3. clean and available with all sanitary condition
4. trained women to take of children and infants present there

*Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005*¹⁹

The Act provides 100 days of guaranteed work to unskilled labour from rural areas. The provision of this Act is the only law that talks about the creche or daycare provision for the unorganized labourers getting employment under this act.

Under the Schedule II Condition for Guaranteed Rural Employment Under A Scheme and Minimum Entitlements of Laborers, Section 27²⁰ lays down that provision for children shall be provided at the respective woman's workplace. Further, Section 28²¹ speaks about the condition where the number of children under the age of six years — belonging to the woman who is working in such site — is five or more, then a woman shall be delegated to take care of all the children and she shall be duly paid under the 100-day work scheme.

*Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme (RGNCS), 2006*²²

This scheme was launched in 2006 under the Ministry of Women and Child Development which is the initiative taken by the government to encourage mothers to continue their employment post their child birth. Even after legislations had provision for creches or something similar to it, the left-out industry was the unorganized sector which made up 148.59 million in 2004-2005.²³ Another factor that needs to be in consideration is that India also has the largest number of young populations ageing from 15-34 years. These statistics indicate the need for creche to improve the condition of women's participation in the workforce.

The scheme provides for day care system for children from 6 months to 6 years of age. It also includes giving a holistic environment for children who are away from their parents and home. This facility is available for working women who are employed in rural and urban areas and are ordinarily employed a minimum of 15 days a month or for 6 months a year. The timings of the creche are somewhere near about 7 to 7 ½ hours in a day. In case the mother's working shift is greater than 7 hours then the mother can pay some additional charges for keeping her child in the creche itself. Three meals are provided in the creche which is ensured to be nutritious and children who are still mother fed are also provided with milk if necessary.²⁴ The scheme also ensures an upper ceiling for children, workers and helpers. The ratio suggested is 25:1:1. The worker and helper are equal in number for 25 children. The worker and helper are selected through an examination and the minimum qualification for a

¹⁸ The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996, s 35(2)

¹⁹ Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005

²⁰ Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, s 27

²¹ Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, s 28

²² Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme (RGNCS), 2006

²³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7539753/#:~:text=It%20has%20dropped%20from%20148.59,to%20be%20favourable%20to%20India.>

²⁴ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1606292>

creche worker is a Class XII pass and a Class X pass for that of the helper. Apart from these, the scheme also targets regular medical tests, sleeping facilities for the children, preschool education training and co-scholastic activities²⁵.

With all these schemes written in paper, the real question arises whether these schemes are being practically applied, implemented and used by the targeted audience. Studies suggest that due to household responsibilities, a lot of women are forced to leave their employment and opt to do unpaid work which is attributed to them.²⁶ According to the OECD report Indian women spend 352 minutes (5.8 hours) per day, while men only spend 52 minutes (0.8 hours) per day, for unpaid work²⁷. Women juggling between whether to choose their economic independence or their responsibility to do household chores, tend to choose the latter. Comparing the statistics where the women's work participation rate in 2004-2005 was 148.59 million, it had dropped in 2017-2018 to 104.1 million. According to PLFS statistics, females aged from 15 years to 29 years who are opting to fulfil their internal duties increased from 45.9% in 2004-05 to 52.3% in 2017-18.²⁸ The same situation for the age group 30 years to 59 years was 46% in 2004-05, which had increased to 65.4% in 2017-18.²⁹ The empirical evidence suggests a notable disparity between the levels of female participation in the workforce and their proclivity towards engagement in domestic responsibilities³⁰. If this increase is not stopped then the development of the nation will be difficult by 2047.

In 2017, Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme, 2006 was implemented as the National Creche Scheme (NCS). This central government-sponsored scheme was executed by the state and the benefits of this scheme were as same as what was provided in RGNCS.³¹

Later extension of the same scheme was seen in 2022 as “Palna” - a scheme under Mission Shakti.³² The term “Palna” refers to “upbringing” in Hindi. This scheme was aimed to provide quality services in the care economy and the medium to attain the same was processed through Anganwadi cum Creches facilities.³³

Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017³⁴

With Article 42 leading its way towards maternity relief, the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 with a further amendment in 2017 as the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act which provides for the availability of creches to employees.

Under Section 11A³⁵ which speaks about the accessibility provisions of creches. When any establishment has employees ranging from 50 or more, then such establishment shall have a creche and women workers shall be given an option of visiting the creche four times a day and such time shall not be considered or included under their break time. The visiting time is kept to breastfeed and check on the children regularly.

²⁵ https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Revised%20RGNCSscheme_210515.pdf

²⁶ <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41720140>

²⁷ https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/breaking-down-barriers-to-women-s-economic-empowerment_c4ff3ddb-en

²⁸ https://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/Annual_Report_PLFS_2018_19_HL.pdf

²⁹ <https://www.gktoday.in/gk/demographic-dividend/>

³⁰ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/—asia/—ro-bangkok/—sro-new_delhi/documents/publication/wcms_324621.pdf

³¹ https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/National%20Creche%20Scheme%20For%20The%20Children%20of%20Working%20Mothers_0.pdf

³² https://wcd.delhi.gov.in/sites/default/files/WCD/universal-tab/palna_scheme_under_mission_shakti.pdf

³³ https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/AWCC%20SOP%20book_2023.pdf

³⁴ Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017

³⁵ Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017, s 11A

Social Security Code, 2020³⁶

Section 67³⁷ of the Code, provides for the same provision where the employer must provide for a creche facility either separately or with the common facilities. As the code is the consolidated statute, there is not much amendment in this aspect.

Further, the Code has laid that the central government, state government and other private entities have to put funding in respect to the establishment of the creches. The funding is constituted in the manner that central will contribute 60%, state will provide for 30% of the fund and individual NGOs will give 10% of the funding.

Implementation Problems in India

With above all legislations, one thing is clear that there are laws which mandates the set-up of creche or something similar to it. The “Palna” scheme, 2022 plans to establish 17,000 creches by 2025-26, and out of which 5,222 has already been established.³⁸ Even after so many infrastructures, provisions and scheme the participation of women is still less than what it was in 2004-05.³⁹ As per the study quoted above, it is clear that women opt for domestic chores. The crucial question is whether there is implementation problem? The implementation problems which are faced or what is seen through other studies are as follows:

1. Financial Constraints:

Looking towards the history of creches scheme in India it has come a long but what needs to be considered is that even after being planned and legislated for such long time, India still cannot establish a proper fool proof mechanism of creches. Establishing and maintaining a creche system nationwide involves significant financial commitments. The objective of NCS is decreasing day by day due to the combined reasons of allocating sufficient funds for the initial setup, day-to-day operations, staff training, and ongoing support. For a long time, Centre was always burdened with the financial responsibility.⁴⁰ Until the implementation of NCS in 2017, the major funding contributors were the Centre and NGO with the ratio of 90:10. By 2017, even the NGOs claimed irregularity and insufficiency of funds burdened the central government. It is only after NCS, 2017 where the contributors were revised and state government was brought in. With the 14th Financial Commission which included the contributors to be the Centre, the State and NGOs with the ratio of 60:30:10 all over India with the exception given in North-eastern states having it as 80:10:10 and Union territories have 90:0:10.⁴¹ But then again, the situation in some states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar is still worse with a scenario that there is not even a single operating creche in the state. The 15th Finance Commission allocated Rs. 20,989 crores for setting up of creches by both Centre and State governments and has also made a point that by 2025-26 every state shall have completed the target given under the “Palna” scheme.⁴² With all financial resources given what the stakeholders are stating is the increasing population of the nation. It's crucial to consider the long-term financial sustainability of the programme while analyzing the monetary stability.

³⁶ Social Security Code, 2020

³⁷ Social Security Code, 2020, s 67

³⁸ <https://pib.gov.in/pressreleaseshare.aspx/?PRID=1883405>

³⁹ <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/erecontent.aspx?relid=21041>

⁴⁰ <https://sansad.in/getFile/loksabhaquestions/annex/10/AU4038.pdf?source=pqals>

⁴¹ <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/budget2015-2016/es2014-15/echapvol1-10.pdf>

⁴² [https://nhsrcindia.org/sites/default/files/2021-](https://nhsrcindia.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/FCXV%20Technical%20and%20Operational%20GLs%20to%20States%20dated%2031082021.pdf)

[09/FCXV%20Technical%20and%20Operational%20GLs%20to%20States%20dated%2031082021.pdf](https://nhsrcindia.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/FCXV%20Technical%20and%20Operational%20GLs%20to%20States%20dated%2031082021.pdf)

2. *Infrastructure and Logistics:*

- i. **Building and Maintenance:** Setting up an adequate number of creches requires suitable infrastructure, involving the acquisition of appropriate buildings and ongoing maintenance. As the rules laid down in the NCS 2017, which mandates that the a creche shall be nearly around 150-200 sq. ft in total which gives each children an area of 6-8 sq. ft.⁴³ Further it also says that there shall be ventilation, proper lighting, toilet facilities, toys and other infrastructure required and necessary. All these parameters looks good in books but can be challenging on a large scale, especially in densely populated urban and rural areas where space, resources and supply is limited with a huge demand.
- ii. **Staff Recruitment:** Recruiting qualified staff for each creche is essential but can be a logistical challenge. The basic qualification for a creche worker is matriculation pass and creche helper is intermediate pass. But the question is whether this education is sufficient and help the people to nurture the children. The recruitment process is done through a written test with basic questions according to what they have learnt. Managing children not only requires educational qualification but other qualities and expertise which is more essential than the education gained in the school. Identifying, hiring, and retaining qualified caregivers across the country may require streamlined processes and incentives.

3. *Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Staff:*

Ensuring that creche staff possesses the necessary skills to handle children of different age groups and address their specific needs is crucial. Offering continuous training and professional development, opportunities become essential for maintaining a high standard of care. The reason for stressing the qualities and qualifications of these creche workers is behind the rationale that they are nurturing and upbringing young children from the age of 6 months to 6 years, and children of these ages are the future of this nation.⁴⁴ With keeping this factor in mind, the qualification of the worker at creche is still a grey yet a critical area.

4. *Cultural Diversity:*

India's cultural diversity implies that different regions may have distinct preferences and needs regarding childcare. Views coming from parents' side, each parent wants their children rooted towards their own culture. Parents feel that creche shall be a xerox copy of home. But it is essential to understand that India is a diverse country and when creches operate, they operate in equal terms to accommodate the need of all. In the need of it, the mother often chooses to be at home in giving personalized care and cultural lessons. What as parent, one need to understand is that human beings are social creature and mixing with the heterogenous society in a country like India is necessary for the development of the self. Hence, the creche system must be adaptable to accommodate these variations along with the parents having a broader perspective about creche facilities given, respecting and incorporating diverse cultural perspectives while maintaining a standardized level of care.

5. *Equal Access in Rural and Remote Areas:*

Providing equal access to creche facilities in rural and remote areas may involve overcoming logistical challenges. Ensuring that these areas receive the necessary resources and attention is vital to avoid creating disparities in childcare services.

6. *Public Awareness and Acceptance:*

⁴³ https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Revised%20RGNCSScheme_210515.pdf

⁴⁴ <https://doi.org/10.1080/0300443840170402>

Overcoming resistance or lack of awareness among the public requires a well-designed communication strategy. Highlighting the benefits of the creche system, dispelling misconceptions, and engaging with communities are crucial elements of building public acceptance. As said, the awareness and thought process of the parents also play a crucial role in the functioning of the creches.⁴⁵ As parents their act of concern towards proper availability of care and nurture is perfectly fine but what needs to be considered is what is at stake. It's absolutely understandable that in absence of any alternative or if there is no monetary need for the family the mother is staying back at home. But the target beneficiaries of this scheme are the daily wagers or unorganized workers for whom every penny matters and without that it is very difficult for them to have single meal a day.⁴⁶ Hence, when the government is offering services, then sometimes all we need is trust to implement such schemes.

7. Child Safety and Employee Rights:

Developing a robust policy and legal framework is essential to address concerns related to child safety and employee rights. Compliance with existing laws and regulations is critical for ensuring ethical operations and maintaining the trust of both parents and caregivers.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation:

Planning for long-term sustainability involves establishing mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation. Regular assessments of the program's effectiveness and responsiveness to evolving needs will inform necessary adjustments and improvements over time.

Therefore, addressing these challenges requires a holistic and adaptive approach that considers the financial, logistical, cultural, and legal aspects of implementing a creche system across diverse regions in India. Flexibility, ongoing evaluation, and a commitment to addressing the specific needs of working women and their children are essential for the success of such a nationwide initiative.

Analyzing Situations with Other Countries

The system of creches varies across countries, and the involvement of governments in setting up and regulating creches can differ significantly and has had a major impact as well. Here are some general observations:

Scandinavian Countries (e.g., Sweden, Norway, Denmark):

In these countries, the system of creches is deeply intertwined with the government's commitment to family-friendly policies. Governments actively support and regulate childcare services, including creches, with a strong emphasis on providing affordable and accessible options for working parents.⁴⁷ Subsidies and financial support are commonly provided to both public and private childcare providers, reflecting a comprehensive approach to ensuring the well-being of families.

France:

It boasts an extensive network of creches and preschools, known as "écoles maternelles", with the government playing a prominent role in their provision and regulation. The active involvement of the government includes a focus on providing subsidized childcare to support

⁴⁵ <http://164.52.210.154:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/733/1/1sept2013revisedSynthesis%20reportSC.pdf>

⁴⁶ <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1369-7625.2005.00319.x>

⁴⁷ https://lhomme-archiv.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/p_lhomme_archiv/PDFs_Digitalisate/19-1-2008/lhomme.2008.19.1.81.pdf

working parents.⁴⁸ The French system reflects a commitment to making quality childcare services accessible and affordable, aligning with broader social policies.⁴⁹

United Kingdom:

In the United Kingdom, the system of childcare is characterized by a mix of public and private providers. The government supports families through financial assistance schemes such as Tax-Free Childcare and 30 Hours Free Childcare for eligible working parents.⁵⁰ Regulations and standards for childcare providers are set by the government to ensure quality and safety, contributing to a diverse landscape of childcare options for families across the country.⁵¹

Germany:

Germany has a well-established system of childcare services with active government involvement. Financial support and subsidies are provided to families to facilitate access to childcare. There is a notable emphasis on integrating childcare with early childhood education, showcasing a holistic approach to the development and well-being of young children. The German system reflects a commitment to supporting families and fostering early childhood development.

United States:

Childcare services in the United States exhibit considerable diversity, with a mix of public and private providers.⁵² The government plays a role in supporting families through subsidies to low-income households via programs like Head Start and Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). While regulations and licensing of childcare facilities are primarily carried out at the state level, federal support contributes to the overall framework of childcare provision across the country.⁵³

Canada:

In Canada, childcare services are delivered through a combination of public and private centers, and the government plays a key role in shaping the landscape. Some provinces have implemented subsidized childcare programs to support working families, demonstrating a commitment to accessibility and affordability.⁵⁴ The federal and provincial governments collaborate to establish standards and regulations, ensuring the provision of high-quality childcare services throughout the country.

Recommendations

The suggestions given here are on the basis of several survey and studies already made. The authors here have stated few suggestions which by implying collectively will surely help in the implementation of the scheme to a better extent than what is at present.

1) **Government Initiatives:**

The government must take a leading role in establishing and regulating creches, ensuring they meet quality standards and serve the diverse needs of working families. Allocating ample budgetary resources is crucial for building and maintaining a

⁴⁸ <https://doi.org/10.1093/jsh/shr144>

⁴⁹ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF02589526>

⁵⁰ <https://www.lenus.ie/bitstream/handle/10147/615610/finalfullreport.pdf?sequence=1>

⁵¹ <https://demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/files/crechebarriers.pdf>

⁵² <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0013935106002428>

⁵³ <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article-abstract/94/6/1081/60946/Child-Care-in-the-United-States-and-Industrialized>

⁵⁴ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10995-016-2059-0>

nationwide network of creches, signalling a commitment to supporting women in the workforce and fostering early childhood development.

2) Public-Private Partnerships:

Encouraging public-private partnerships can significantly expand the reach of creche facilities. Offering incentives and tax breaks to private organizations incentivizes investment in childcare services.⁵⁵ This collaborative approach leverages the strengths of both sectors, enhancing the overall accessibility and quality of creche facilities across the country.⁵⁶

3) Workplace Creches:

To support working mothers, employers should be encouraged to establish on-site creches within workplaces. Providing incentives for businesses to adopt family-oriented policies, including childcare facilities, contributes to a more inclusive and supportive work environment for women.⁵⁷ Workplace creches not only benefit employees but also promote gender equality and workforce diversity.

4) Subsidies and Financial Support:

Implementing subsidies or financial assistance programs is essential to make creche services more affordable, particularly for families with lower incomes. Exploring innovative financing models ensures the sustained funding of the creche system over the long term. These financial measures address economic disparities and contribute to creating a more inclusive and equitable childcare system.

5) Professional Training:

Establishing training programs for creche staff is crucial to ensure that they possess the necessary skills to handle the diverse needs of children. Collaborating with educational institutions to create specialized courses for childcare professionals enhances the overall quality of care provided in creches. Investing in professional development contributes to the competency and effectiveness of the workforce in the childcare sector.

6) Cultural Sensitivity:

Recognizing the cultural diversity of India is essential in adapting creche services to accommodate regional preferences. Involving local communities in the planning and implementation of creche programs ensures that services are culturally sensitive and meet the specific needs of different regions. Culturally adapted creche services contribute to community acceptance and the overall success of the program.

7) Rural Outreach:

Prioritizing the establishment of creches in rural and remote areas ensures equal access for women in these regions. Implementing mobile creche units or community-based models addresses logistical challenges in remote areas, providing childcare services where they are needed most. This outreach effort contributes to reducing

⁵⁵ https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/11870407/sem200601_md02_in-libre.pdf?1390860629=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DPRIVATIZATION_AND_PUBLIC_PRIVATE_PARTNER.pdf&Expires=1710573532&Signature=VuLpJLmWdbcV5WqYle5TE2c8ePiw3SbwmBrz4FoYZpiUCyhBxr5QuczO0aI6tCXHBTNtEUcSD4KcehVGUo2K4B2thieuciDBvXMqy-7kb5HxqVLDfH6s0I4JsFIpTgpJXNPGoaeN9qFI2wKo~VrVaOkB9u7InlKkE3m4C5KTcyUAtcQ8RKKIcedgoSE8i-Tg9P7V-s8b8Xq2nylyq39C4ReZz1IBEbOo~a7~edxLBdG69MR6c~oQTitX-Hw2ZXYnNL0ixJYscp8E5LWvoEqEdz~UDOHUBeq5Y87svX0luOwXEPA-kRZzwwkFl~Otog6b5zmPSPvXy7NIWsLerfJrhv__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA

⁵⁶ https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-981-13-8534-6_6

⁵⁷ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00094056.2021.2000274>

urban-rural disparities and supports women's participation in the workforce in all regions.

8) Awareness Campaigns:

Conducting public awareness campaigns is essential to educate the population about the benefits of creches for working women and their families. Promoting a positive perception of women in the workforce and highlighting the importance of early childhood development creates a supportive social environment.⁵⁸ These campaigns raise awareness about the societal benefits of creche facilities, garnering public support for their implementation and success.

9) Monitoring and Evaluation:

Implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation system is necessary to assess the effectiveness of the creche system. Regular assessments and feedback mechanisms allow for necessary adjustments and improvements over time. This dynamic approach ensures that the creche system remains responsive to evolving needs, maintaining high standards of quality and service delivery.

Conclusion

Establishing and nurturing a comprehensive system of creches in India is not merely a matter of convenience for working women; it is a pivotal driver of societal development. By providing accessible and high-quality childcare, creches empower women to participate more actively in the workforce, contributing to economic growth and fostering gender equality. The positive impact extends beyond individual families, as early childhood development is a cornerstone for building a healthier, educated, and more skilled population.

Failing to prioritize and implement widespread creche facilities in India implies a missed opportunity for progress. Without such crucial support systems, the nation risks hindering the potential contributions of a significant portion of its workforce. This absence of support for working parents, especially women, not only perpetuates gender disparities but also stalls the trajectory of national development. It sends a regressive signal, indicating a reluctance to adapt to the changing dynamics of the modern workforce and the evolving needs of families.

Conversely, a proactive commitment to establishing creches aligns with a forward-thinking approach to development. It acknowledges the interconnectedness of economic progress, gender equity, and early childhood well-being. By fostering a supportive environment for working parents, India not only propels itself forward in the global development landscape but also invests in the future by nurturing the potential of its youngest citizens. In this context, the provision of creche facilities emerges as not just a social initiative but a strategic imperative for the holistic advancement of the nation.

⁵⁸ https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-81-322-2446-4_3