
UNIT 5 GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON ECCE

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

Globally, it has been recognized that early childhood care is an important issue in education and human capital development. Sheldon Shaeffer, Director of the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education stated during the regional launch of the EFA Report, “Given their positive influence on health, nutrition and education outcomes, early childhood programmes are a good investment in human capital. The skills children acquire from ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) programmes are a foundation for all further learning.” It has been found that if children suffer from malnutrition and nutritional deficiency disorders during their early years, it will have negative impacts on their physical and mental development. It can affect their gross and fine motor skill development and reduce their attention span and activity level. Early childhood care and education is crucial to enhance children’s physical well-being, cognitive, social, emotional, and language development.

Countries across the world have implemented several policies and programmes to promote early childhood care and education. This Unit deals with the brief introduction of major ECCE policies and programmes implemented in different parts of the world including developed and developing countries.

These ECCE services and programmes support children's overall development i.e. physical, cognitive, language and socio-emotional and their health, nutrition and hygiene – from birth to entry into a primary school in formal, informal and non-formal settings. The ECCE programmes are of diverse forms, ranging from preschools and daycare centres to community-based and home-based childcare programmes.

You have already learnt about the diverse forms of ECCE programmes and also about the benefits of ECCE programmes in Unit 1. Can you recall some here?

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Objectives

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- appreciate the benefits of ECCE programmes;
- understand major initiatives taken globally to promote ECCE services across the world;
- analyze the situation of ECCE services in some developed countries and describe some major ECCE programmes of the concerned countries; and
- describe the situation of ECCE in developing countries specifically in some of our neighbouring countries like China, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan.

5.2 BENEFITS OF ECCE PROGRAMMES

The following benefits of ECCE programmes have been acknowledged across the world:

- a) **ECCE programmes ensure the overall development of children:** ECCE has significant benefits on children's early brain development and thus, impacts their potential to learn (Heckman & Carneiro, 2003). ECCE programmes provide nutritional supplementation and appropriate stimulation to children aged 0-6 years. This ensures the good health of

children, protects them from nutritional deficiency disorders, and also enhances their overall development — cognitive, physical, gross and fine motor development, language and socio-emotional development.

- b) ECCE programmes prepare children for formal schooling:** ECCE programmes act as school readiness programmes for children. These programmes provide for the overall development of children by improving their cognitive abilities, gross and fine motor skills, language skills, and enhancing their socio-emotional development. These programmes nurture in children several competencies which make them ready for formal schooling. For instance, by attending an ECCE programme, children learn to stay in school away from their parents for a long time. They also learn to sit in one place and concentrate on an activity given and explore and manipulate materials to make discoveries on their own. Children develop a positive self-image as well and also learn how to adjust with their peers. These programmes hence help establish a firm foundation for formal schooling. Across the world, it has been proved that ECCE programmes have improved the enrolment rates of children in primary schools and also have reduced the dropout rates of children from primary school. So, children who attend ECCE programmes are more likely to complete their primary schooling.

Studies conducted in the United Kingdom indicate that ECCE improved the intellectual development, independence, concentration, and sociability of children in the initial three years of primary school (cited in UNESCO, 2006). On the other hand, a study conducted in 33 African countries in the year 2003 showed that the absence of preschool experience was related to the repetition rate of 25 per cent and a completion rate of 50 per cent or less in primary schools.

Hence, children in both developed and developing countries benefit from ECCE.

- c) ECCE programmes help bridge social and gender inequalities:** ECCE programmes provide appropriate nutrition and stimulation experiences to children belonging to lower SES families and bring their overall development at par with the children from middle and high-income group families. These programmes also help in minimizing gender inequalities. Girls in low SES families are often burdened with the responsibility of caring for their younger siblings at home while their mothers go out to earn a living. This makes them unable to attend school while their male siblings do not face any restrictions in going to school. ECCE programme, if operating in the area, takes care of young children for a major portion of the day, especially during school hours. This allows older girls to attend the school regularly as they have the opportunity of placing their younger siblings at the ECCE centre. In this manner, ECCE programmes bridge the social and gender inequalities by supporting the young child's development as well as facilitating the school participation of older siblings.

In two different studies conducted in Nepal and Kenya, it was found that there was a higher enrolment of older siblings in schools, especially that of girls whose younger siblings were attending preschool (Arnold, 2004; Lokshin et al. 2004).

- d) Investments in ECCE programmes have high rates of return:** ECCE programmes following a holistic approach provide nutritional supplementation to preschool-aged children, pregnant and lactating women, nutrition and health education to women and adolescent girls, and immunization and health care services to the infants. All these services help reduce malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women, and thereby, reducing the risks of nutritional deficiency disorders in newly born and infants. These ECCE programmes also help reduce the incidence of stillbirths, low birth weight infants, or infants with birth defects due to maternal nutritional deficiencies during pregnancy.

Studies conducted in developed, as well as developing countries, show that by providing education services to the pre-schoolers, ECCE programmes help reduce dropout and repetition rates of children in primary schools and also reduce their special education placements. Children with quality ECCE experiences tend to advance to higher education and thereby can obtain employment when grow up. Therefore, they are less likely to become social delinquents or to be dependent on public assistance.

Hence, by investing in ECCE programmes, the Government can save money at large which would be otherwise spent on providing specialized services to improve the condition of malnourished children or children born with defects or on providing special education to school dropout children. According to a Philippines' Jacoby-King study, ECCE has benefits for improving the resource efficiency of the education system and returns to society (Glewwe, 2001). Early investments in ECCE can reduce the need for public welfare expenditures later and reduce the financial and social costs associated with grade repetition, juvenile delinquency, and drug abuse nationally and globally.

In the context of the above-mentioned benefits, the efforts have increased manifold to plan and implement ECCE programmes across the world. We shall now discuss some prominent actions taken in this regard across the world.

5.3 GLOBAL INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE ECCE

Recognizing the above-outlined benefits, there have been increased efforts in the past few decades to expand quality ECCE services across the world. There has also been a notable increase in early childhood care and education programmes globally and more and more governments are adopting them

(UNESCO 2006; 2008). Worldwide, the number of children enrolled in pre-primary education has shown an increasing trend for almost a decade from 31.66 per cent in 2000 to 50.36 per cent in 2017 (World Bank, 2019). However, there exist some regional differences in the gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary education. Globally, three major initiatives have been taken to promote ECCE services across the world.

a) Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted by the United Nations in September 2000. The MDGs are the commitments made by member governments to improve the development situation of their citizens by 2015. Five of the eight MDG goals are related to health, nutrition, and education of children, reducing gender inequalities, and assisting the empowerment of women. These MDGs require governments to increase investment in early childhood care, education, and development. UNESCO published the latest data in the report titled 'Progress for Children: Beyond Averages — Learning from the MDGs' (UNICEF, 2015) which showed that the Millennium Development Goals have greatly resulted in significant advances in the lives of the children across the world.

b) Education for All

The world conference, '*Education for All*' was held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. It asserted that all countries across the world should set pre-primary education of children as a priority in their basic education system. This assertion is evident in the first goal of the EFA which states to expand and improve the early childhood care and education programmes, especially to reach out to the most vulnerable, poor, and disadvantaged children. Based on the analysis of the progress and challenges in achieving Goal 1 of *Education for All*, several recommendations were offered to the countries under five themes. It included Policy-making; Access for vulnerable and disadvantaged children; Holistic ECCE; Standards, regulations and guidelines, training and capacity building; and the Quality imperative of family-based or home-based ECCE programmes (UNESCO, UNICEF, 2012). EFA Global Monitoring Report (2015) reported that early education services have expanded considerably since 2000 with a global increase of almost two-thirds in pre-primary education enrolment and it rose almost two and a half times in Sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia.

c) Convention on Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1989, and by the World Summit on Children in 1990. UNCRC clearly states the basic human rights of children across the world. Article 6 of the UNCRC mentioned that the State parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life and that the State parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child. In the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Children, held in 2002, the Agenda for '*A World Fit for*

Children' was adopted by about 180 nations. This agenda calls for the best possible start in life for children. It recommends improving and enhancing early childhood care and education services specifically for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Further, the UN Committee on the rights of the child decided to declare a General Discussion on the theme of 'Implementing child rights in early childhood'. This resulted in a set of recommendations and the decision to issue a General Comment on this important yet neglected topic. The Committee adopted General comment no. 7 (2005): Implementing Child Rights in Early Childhood at its Fortieth session, Geneva (CRC/C/GC/7/Rev.1). The objectives of the General Comment were:

- i) To strengthen understanding of the human rights of all young children and to draw State parties' attention to their obligations towards young children;
- ii) To comment on the specific features of early childhood that impact the realization of rights;
- iii) To encourage recognition of young children as social actors from the beginning of life;
- iv) To draw attention to diversities within early childhood;
- v) To point out variations in cultural expectations and treatment of children including local customs and practices;
- vi) To emphasize the vulnerability of young children to poverty, discrimination, family breakdown, and multiple other adversities that violate their rights and undermine their well-being; and
- vii) To contribute to the realization of rights for all young children through the formulation and promotion of comprehensive policies, laws, programmes, practices, professional training, and research specifically focused on rights in early childhood.

d) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Early Childhood Development (ECD) has been considered a foundation step to successfully move towards achieving the goals of sustainable development. Early Childhood Development is included in Goal 4 of SDGs to be achieved by the year 2030. Goal 4 mentions "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." It specifically mentioned ECD as "By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education." This Goal is the very foundation goal that can positively impact the achievement of other 16 SDGs.

Now, we shall discuss some ECCE programmes and services in developed and developing countries.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Which of the given are the benefits of the ECCE programmes?
 - a) These programmes perform the responsibilities of parents.
 - b) These programmes ensure the overall development of children.
 - c) ECCE programmes prepare children for formal schooling.
 - d) Investments in ECCE programmes have low rates of return.
 - e) These help bridge social and gender inequalities.
- 2) Match the global initiatives to promote ECCE (Column A) with their meaning (Column B).

Column A

- a) Education for All
- b) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- c) Millennium Development Goals
- d) Convention on Rights of the Child

Column B

- i) These are goals adopted by the United Nations on issues related to health, nutrition, and education of children, reducing gender inequalities, and assisting the empowerment of women.
- ii) It is an agreement wherein nations agreed to protect the rights of children.
- iii) It was a global-level conference emphasizing setting pre-primary education of children as a priority in their basic education system.
- iv) These are goals adopted for a better world to be achieved by 2030.

5.4 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

In this Section, we will understand the major ECCE programmes and provisions from an international perspective. In most Western European countries, the majority of preschool-aged children attend ECCE programmes for at least two years before entering formal schools. Now, we shall discuss some major ECCE programmes in developed countries.

5.4.1 United States of America

In the USA, ECCE policy includes federal, state, and local efforts to manage the ECEC provision and quality standards. ECCE policy covers children from birth to kindergarten age which is specified differently by the states (between five to eight years). The measures enshrined under the policy include direct and indirect support such as provision for public preschool

centres and kindergartens, provision for grants, tax incentives, and subsidies to states and local providers; as well as enforcement of regulation and licensing of preschool and kindergartens.

The USA adopts a twin approach for early childhood care and education including daycare and pre-primary programmes. The provision for 0-3 years includes care and early learning stimulation encompassing health and nutritional screening, and covers family support services for parents such as parent education, nutrition classes, and social services. Daycare homes are available for children as young as six weeks up to age 3 years whose parents are employed. These homes are regulated and licensed by the states on the criteria including space, infrastructure, staff-children ratio, care providers' training, social protection, and immunization. These programmes run for about eight to twelve hours a day.

Pre-primary programmes include two groups preschool programmes and kindergarten. Preschool programmes are nursery schools generally offered under public or private bodies. There is a range of preschool types which include federally funded head start for economically weaker sections, state-funded preschools, government-funded special education programmes, and preschools run by private bodies and non-governmental organizations. These programmes are part-day, full-school day, and full-work day programme run by both public and private sectors. Kindergarten is a preschool programme a year before entry into the primary school largely for five years old. The kindergarten programme is universal across all the states of the USA with some variations in content and practices across the states. It can be a half-day or a full-day program. However, in some states, it is mandatory to attend kindergarten before primary school while in some states though it is available, it is not mandatory. It is left at parents' discretion to decide to enroll their children in kindergarten. The option of both public and private kindergarten facilities is available to the parents.

USA spends about 0.4 per cent of the GDP on early childhood care and education annually. This includes 0.1 per cent of GDP for child care and 0.4 per cent of GDP for pre-school education (OECD, 2019a).

In the USA, Early Childhood Education Act was passed in 1960 by the government which outlines the federal provision and funding for early childhood education. The Act stresses the significance of pre-kindergarten years which are critical to influence learning. The Act mandates a comprehensive set of services for young children from birth to the age of five. Various laws have been passed from time to time under this Act to better prepare children for school. Head Start was passed under this Act which offers services in the areas of health, nutrition, social protection, and education for children in low-income families.

Head Start was the first federal-funded preschool programme in the USA launched in 1965 with over 19000 centres nationwide. Head Start is a half-day ECCE programme for 3-4 years old children belonging to low-income families. It provides comprehensive health, nutrition, education and social

services to children. Head Start was implemented initially in a few states of the USA but later a large number of states have started similar programmes. The government has developed performance standards for Head Start Program. These include standards for programme operation including standards for eligibility, enrolment, attendance, programme structure, education and child development services, health programme services, family and community engagement, services for CWDs, services for pregnant women, transition services, and programme management and quality improvement (US Department of Health and Human Services). The benefits of Head Start led to the widespread enrollment of children in preschools. The USA has also developed an effective early intervention model known as the Portage Model for children with disabilities and their parents. The original Portage model designed in early 1969 responded well to the early intervention needs of children and their families.

In 2017, the percentage of children enrolled in pre-primary programmes in the USA was 86 per cent for 5 years old and 68 per cent for 4 years old while it is only 40 per cent for 3 years old. Among the 3 to 5 years old who were enrolled in preschool programmes, the percentage attending full-day was 56 per cent in 2017. Similarly, among 3 to 5 years old enrolled in the kindergarten program, the percentage attending full day was 79 per cent in 2017 (US Department of Education, NCES, 2019).

Regarding the quality of the ECEC program, there exists variation across the states in the USA. Some states have set up the high-quality standards of health, nutrition, and education components while in other states the quality standards are not met adequately. Some states follow an integrated model for health, social, and cognitive development services, while in other states there is a lack of comprehensive services for holistic development outcomes (Kamerma n & Gatenio-Gabel, 2015). In 2013, the USA government has initiated a 'Preschool for All' programme. The programme offered joint funding from the federal and state government to expand high-quality preschool (pre-K) programme for 3-4 years old in low and middle-income families across 50 states.

In 1985, the USA has started voluntary accreditation of early childhood programmes according to the standards of health, nutrition, and education. The goal was to promote the quality standards of the ECCE programmes. In the USA, nearly all child care centres are regulated and licensed by the states on health, nutrition, and education standards by the Office of the Child Care under Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2019). This also includes an annual inspection of the centres.

5.4.2 United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom (UK), Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) policy supports the expansion of high-quality early years provision for children in the age group of 0-5 years. The most prominent legislations which support

provision for early learning and childcare in England, Wales and Scotland include Childcare Act (2006) in England and Wales, Childcare Act (2016) in England and Wales, and the Children and Young People Act (2014) in Scotland. These Acts have established regulatory mechanisms to ensure high-quality ELC provisions.

The Childcare Act (2006) made provision for powers and duties of local authorities and other bodies in England and Wales in relation to child care and information to parents. Section 7 of the Act calls for action from local authorities to ensure early learning and child care provision to 3-4 years old and disadvantaged 2-years-old free of cost. Children in the age group of 3 to 4 years are universally entitled to 570 hours of free provision per year comprising 15 hours per week over 38 weeks of the year. The Childcare Act 2014 later expanded the entitlement hours from 15 to 30 hours for working parents. This Act provides a legal dimension to publically funded ECE by prescribing eligibility and minimum standards for publically funded Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) covering three to five years old. Under this Act, a framework called '*Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*' was developed to set out learning and development standards in ECE. It also provided standards for child protection and safety in ECE settings.

In the UK, ECE is not compulsory. However, it is a universal entitlement and publically funded. It is provided for 3-4 years old in maintained nursery schools, nursery classes in primary schools, children's centres, and private and voluntary settings (day nurseries, registered childminders, and playgroups). In the UK, there is no universal entitlement to free provision from birth to 2 years old but children in disadvantaged families have free entitlement in centres. However, those in well-to-do families have available fee-paying privately run day nurseries. Publically-funded children's centres provide early years services in the area of health and nutrition, early childhood education, child care, social services, training and employment assistance to parents, and information services. Children between 4-5 years old are entitled to a full-time school reception class to facilitate their transition to primary education. Children enter compulsory full-time education at the age of five.

UK Government provides ECCE services in an integrated manner by the means of the 'Sure Start programme' which was launched in 1998 to provide high-quality services to preschool-aged children. Sure Start centres provide early childhood care and education services to children from birth to 4 years. The Sure Start Children's Centres operate for a minimum of 10 hours a day, five days a week, and 48 weeks a year. It provides ECCE services in the given areas:

- a) Early Childhood Education, Health and Child care services
- b) Support services to the parents and Community
- c) Social services relating to young children, parents or prospective parents

- d) Training and employment services to parents or prospective parents
- e) Support services to children with special needs and their parents.

At Sure Start centres, special care is taken to provide appropriate child care services and maximum play and learning opportunities to infants and young children. These centres also provide ‘drop-in sessions’ for the parents and children. In addition, it also provides health and nutrition services in ECCE. The centres organize information on antenatal services, breastfeeding, post-natal health and provide counselling services. The centres also provide specialized services such as speech therapy for children with sensory disabilities.

Under the Sure Start Initiative, the UK Government established a framework of best practices to support high-quality early learning and childcare. This led to the development of ‘*The Birth to Three Matters Framework*’ designed as a source of support, information, and guidance for those working with babies, toddlers, and young children under 3 years of age. The framework provides guidelines and standards to support effective practices for early learning and childcare from birth to 3 years (DFES, 2002).

Public spending in the early years in the UK is 0.6 per cent of the GDP on pre-school education and 0.1 per cent of GDP on child care services (OECD, 2019a). All four countries of the UK (England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland) have core ECEC practitioners and assistants. However, in England, Wales, and Northern Island, continuous professional development for ECEC staff and initial qualification requirement for assistants is not mandatory both for those working with children under 3 years and above. In Scotland, continuous professional development for all core ECEC staff and initial qualification requirements for assistants is mandatory for those working with children under 3 years as well as above 3 years.

5.4.3 New Zealand

New Zealand provides comprehensive early childhood education and care programmes in close collaboration with the local authorities and communities. The ECEC programmes provide early childhood education and childcare services for children under 5 years. Most children under 5 years of age attend early childhood programmes usually for 20-22 hours a week. Early Childhood Education is not compulsory in New Zealand. However, the country acknowledges the relevance of ECEC services for young children as a significant investment. The major ECEC programme includes centre-based provisions and home-based provisions. Centre-based ECEC programme provides early learning and care to children from birth to 5 years. It provides kindergarten for 2-5 years old. Home-based ECEC programmes also provide early learning and care to children from birth to 5 years. In New Zealand, some ECCE programmes are also led by parents. It includes ‘*Kōhanga Reo* and *Puna kōhungahunga*’. These centres are licensed and based on Māori cultural environment. These centres provide integrated ECEC in *te reo Māori*, the Māori language.

New Zealand has a legal provision for child protection. The Child Protection Act 2014 ensures that all learning centres must have a child protection policy for all centre-based, home-based, hospital-based, *Kōhanga Reo*, and play groups.

In New Zealand, almost all children are enrolled in some form of early childhood care and education programme during their first five years of life. In 2019, the majority of 68 per cent of children irrespective of their ethnicity attended Centre-based services (Education and Care) while the remaining attended other types of programme such as Kindergarten, home-based programme, play centre, and *Kōhanga Reo* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand). In New Zealand, the participation of 0-2 years old in formal care is 41 per cent which is higher than the OECD average of 33 per cent. Participation of 3-4 years old in pre-primary education is 87 per cent which is higher than the OECD average of 71 per cent. Most five years old are enrolled in primary education (OECD, 2016).

Quality management of ECE curriculum, training, administration of subsidies, grants, and monitoring and evaluation is carried out by the Ministry of Education. A central document 'Pathways to the Future' which is a 10-Year Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education was released in 2002 by the New Zealand Ministry of Education for identifying the goals for ECCE programmes in the country and to provide details about how these goals can be achieved and how outcomes to be measured. Another important curriculum framework called '*Te Whāriki*' which means 'woven mat' was released for teachers to become capable enough to develop and implement developmentally and culturally appropriate activities for young children, and to monitor their growth and development.

New Zealand spends nearly 1 per cent of the GDP on pre-primary education and 0.1 per cent on child care (OECD, 2019a). This ranked among the top group investment in ECED across all OECD countries. In New Zealand, the Ministry of Education takes care of all the ECCE programmes for children along with elementary, secondary, and tertiary (post-secondary) education programmes. In fact, the Ministry of Education bears up to 85 per cent of the basic operational costs of the ECCE programmes. The rest of the 15 per cent of the operational costs of ECCE programmes is met by raising funds and by charging nominal fees from the parents. To reduce the cost barrier of ECE, the Government provides free 20 Hours of ECE to all 3, 4, and 5-years-old children who are enrolled in an ECE service or *Kōhanga Reo* irrespective of family income, immigration status, or any other reason. This provision ends when the child turns six and must be enrolled in primary school.

5.4.4 France

In France, ECCE is guaranteed and compulsory at the age of three. France has both centre-based crèche facilities as well as home-based child minding provisions for children under 3 years of age. However, France is the only European country where more young children are with child minders than the

centre-based crèche facility. These home-based ECCE provisions are mainly about childcare and are not education-oriented. The purpose of these services is to ensure the child's safety and care during the working hours of parents. The pre-primary programme in France is known as '*Enseignement préélémentaire*' (means pre-primary education) which is a three-year programme with starting age of 2-3 years. In France, pre-school education is publicly subsidized while childcare provision is not publicly subsidized and hence, parents are expected to pay fees for childcare.

In France, ECCE is not considered a unitary provision. ECCE settings are separated into age-dependent settings including childcare settings for children under three and preschool settings for children above three until the start of primary education. ECCE phase is administered by dual authorities where the Ministry of Education is responsible for the rules and regulation of pre-primary education and other Ministry of children and family affairs is responsible for childcare provision. The French government has developed separate guidelines for younger and older children issued by different authorities.

The preschools in France are known as '*écoles maternelles*' (means maternal schools) are world renowned. The majority of these preschools are run by religious organizations receiving public subsidies from the Ministry of Education. These preschools are publicly subsidized and therefore, do not charge any fees. These '*écoles maternelles*' or preschools are part of the formal primary school system and come under the Ministry of Education. The preschool buildings are generally located adjacent to the building of elementary schools. In rural areas, the preschool classes are within elementary schools. These preschools operate for 6 hours daily, i.e., from 8:30 am-12:00 pm in the morning and then from 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm on weekdays. In general, there is a half-day on Saturdays and no school on Wednesdays. This causes problems for working parents. Therefore, provisions have been made for children to attend leisure-time activity centres after school hours on Saturdays and Wednesday afternoons as well.

In France, crèches known as '*Crèches Collectives*' and home-based childcare centres known as '*Halte-garderies*' are available for younger children under the age of three years. These centres are either run by the municipality or non-profit organizations to provide care to the children of working parents during office hours and during non-standard hours respectively.

In France, regulated home-based childcare provision for children under three years is widespread run by qualified childminders. These family daycare centres have '*Assistantes Maternelles*' (means 'maternal assistants') who provide care for one to three children in their homes. There are Parent co-operatives known as '*crèches parentales*' which involve parents in the daily management and running of the crèche. There are employer-sponsored crèches known as '*crèches d'entreprise*' in the hospitals and public sector organizations. These hospital-based centres provide childcare facilities to the children of employees during office hours.

France has core ECCE practitioners, as well as, assistants for working with children under 3 years and above. In France, ECCE professionals don't need to receive continuous professional development. However, it has initial qualification requirements for assistants. In France, public spending on ECCE is as high as 1 per cent of the GDP which includes 0.6 per cent for the childcare provision usually higher than many European countries (OECD, 2019a). This exceeds the average public spending of OECD countries on ECCE for the year 2015.

5.4.5 Switzerland

In Switzerland, the ECEC provision is mainly divided between child care facilities for children under 4 years and pre-school learning or the first learning cycle for children between 4 to 6 years old. Child care facilities include support to families, managing family skills in child care, and aiming to develop social skills among young children. The conditions for childcare are regulated under the Swiss Civil Code (Article 316) and the Federal Ordinance on the Placement of Children in Foster Care and for Adoption (FCAO). These include daycare centres called '*crèches-nidi d'infanzia*' available for children under age four until the start of compulsory kindergarten. In some cantons, it is also available for children up to age 5 or 6 for additional hours of provision. There is also a home-based ECEC (*Tagesfamilien de jour/Famiglie diurna*) that usually caters to children between 3.5 months up to the start of compulsory education. The Cantons have the responsibility of implementing the provision in partnership with private organizations. Childcare usually falls within the responsibility of the social and family sphere. There is no fee regulation for private child care facilities and therefore, these facilities fix their charges. Switzerland has a Federal Act on Financial Assistance for Childcare which came into effect on 1st February, 2003. Under this Act, Cantons are provided financial assistance for subsidized childcare for parents.

The Cantons have integrated two years of preschool education into free compulsory education as a part of primary education. There are centre-based kindergarten programmes called '*école- enfantine- scuola dell'infanzia*' for 4-6 years old which is a part of compulsory education. The basic curriculum for preschool years is play-based learning, social skills and school routines.

In Switzerland, the percentage of three years and four years old in early childhood education is one of the lowest among OECD and partner countries which is only 5.4 per cent and 48 per cent respectively in 2017 (OECD, 2019b).

Despite high spending of 1.5 per cent of GDP on compulsory primary education, Switzerland spends less than 0.4 per cent on preschool education which is below the OECD average of 0.8 per cent spending on preschool (OECD, 2016).

The Federal Assembly of the Swiss Confederation under the Swiss Civil Code (Article 316-Supervision of foster children) has laid down implementation regulations for child foster care under which foster homes require authorization from the child protection authority or some other body designated by the Canton. The Federal Constitution (Article 65.4-School education) obliges the cantons to coordinate various benchmarks in the school education system throughout Switzerland.

5.4.6 Canada

In Canada, kindergarten is the only universal early years programme and the only preschool programme most children attend. Early childhood education programmes are mainly school-operated and enroll 5 years old in kindergarten and 4 years old in pre-kindergarten. Pre-kindergarten includes school-operated Pre-K, parent-child drop-in programme, licensed child-care, and unlicensed Aboriginal Head Start. Kindergartens are universally school-operated. Access to early childhood education varies across the jurisdiction of provinces and territories. Northwest Territories, British Columbia, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island offer full-day kindergarten for five-years-old. Province like Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec have offered free access to part-time programmes for children in vulnerable circumstances. Each province and Northwest Territories have an ECE Curriculum framework in place (Early Childhood Education Report, 2017).

In Canada, children under 3 years of age are provided with child care facilities mainly through private care providers. Canada has over one million child care centres across the country. However, over half of these centres are run by private for-profit bodies. Parents are expected to pay for the child care. There is no universal high-quality child-care programme in Canada. Child care facilities and access vary across the jurisdiction of provinces and territories. Access to child care is better in Quebec province but outside Quebec, child care reaches only 25 per cent of children. High fees for child care excludes many children from receiving child care facilities.

Access and participation in the ECE programme also vary across the provinces and territories. About 95 per cent of five-year-old children attend kindergarten across all provinces and territories except Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. About 75 per cent of all kindergarten attending children attend full-day kindergarten, while only 20 per cent attend part-time kindergarten. The access of four-year-old children in pre-kindergarten is only 35 per cent which is comparatively low from the high access of five-year-olds in kindergarten. The majority of four-year-olds attend full-day pre-kindergarten.

Children's participation in pre-K and kindergarten has increased but child care is not adequately supported in many provinces and territories. Child care is provided temporarily. The services are not regular and parents have to be on the wait-list to avail of the slot for child care services. This is due to limited funding in child care compared to a higher level of funding for the

ECE programme which is twice that compared to child care. Thus, Canada is facing a big divide between child care and early years education and the ECE and care are not served in an integrated manner. Quality is an issue in child care provision. The private home-based child care facilities do not meet the quality standards. According to a study in Quebec province, children enrolled in private child care centres hardly get the advantage for school readiness compared to children who attended non-private ECE centres. Child care facilities also suffer from quality issues such as a shortage of qualified staff. Most private child care centres have inadequate infrastructure and staff qualifications.

Canada has licensed most early childhood care and education centres in nearly all jurisdictions in the category of child care, junior kindergarten, public nursery schools, and early childhood services. There are legislated requirements and regulated service delivery for these programmes in each province/territory.

Public spending on ECE varies across jurisdictions. The ECE spending is highest for Quebec and Ontario which exceeded 3 per cent of their provincial annual budget while for other provinces and territories it is less than 2 per cent of their annual budget (Early Childhood Education Report, 2017). More recently, the government has launched the 'Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework' to strengthen the quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility, and inclusivity of the early learning and child care system. There is a social scheme of 'Canada Social Transfer (CST)', announced in June 2017, under which the federal government provides transfer payments as a block fund for social programmes in provinces and territories.

5.4.7 Scandinavia (Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden-Nordic Countries)

The Scandinavian system of ECCE is not a single child care system in the world. However, it includes certain common features to which each Scandinavian country varies to a degree. The Scandinavian system of childcare is regarded as being among the best in the world with several positive outcomes for children and their families. Scandinavian countries have a system of quality state-supported ECCE where the government makes a high investment in this area as compared to many other countries in the world.

In Finland, there are kindergartens for 3 to 5-years-old; pre-primary education for 6-years-old in kindergartens and comprehensive schools; and family daycare for 3 to 5 years old, all including special education programmes. In Norway, there is a legal right to place every child in an early care setting from the age of 1. In Sweden, all children from 1-12 years old have a right to be in '*pedagogisk omsorg*' (pedagogic care run by registered childminders), an early care setting, or after-school services regardless of the working status of their parents.

In Nordic countries, children generally have a right to free pre-school

provision whereas in some cases parents do pay a nominal fee for private ECCE services. In Denmark, there is a strong integration of care and education, i.e. pre-school, school, and after-school services for children, including the age group 1-12 years and the services are free for low-income parents. In Norway and Sweden, the Ministry of Education undertakes the holistic responsibility of schools as well as preschool and after-school services (play, leisure time, and recreation). These Nordic countries also support family-friendly child care policies through the provision of parental or paternity paid leave, strong work-life balance, and gender-balanced leave policies for ensuring gender equality in care responsibilities.

These Nordic countries have been spending high on early childhood care and education in comparison to other countries in the world (OECD Family Database, 2012). This has resulted in these countries securing top positions in indicators of early childhood care and development. Sweden has the highest spending on early childhood care and education among all OECD countries. It spends around 1.6 per cent of GDP on pre-primary education and 1 per cent on childcare. In Norway, it is 1.3 per cent for pre-primary education and 0.7 per cent for childcare. In Finland, it is 1.2 per cent for pre-primary education and 0.6 per cent for childcare. Denmark spends a total of 1.2 per cent on integrated pre-primary education and childcare (OECD, 2019a). The increased public investments in ECCE have significantly enhanced the child's experiences in the early years of life and thus, reduced child poverty and increased labour market participation of parents (Barnardos & Start Strong, 2012).

The above review must have given you the idea of ECCE programmes operating in various developed countries. In the next section, we will discuss the ECCE structure, policies and programmes in some developing countries.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1) Write one key feature of ECCE/ECE programme of the countries.

a) France

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b) Canada

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c) U.K.

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d) U.S.A.

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e) Switzerland

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5.5 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

As noted above, pre-school education is available to almost all children in most developed countries. In the most recent years, the SDG regional data on gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary education as presented by UNESCO indicates the highest of 66.23 per cent in Europe and Northern America followed by Eastern and South East Asia at 57.63 per cent, Oceania at 45.21 per cent, Latin America and the Caribbean as 38.78, and the regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, Northern Africa and Western Asia and the Central and Southern Asia as least reported as 21.90 per cent, 23.09 per cent, and 25.95 per cent respectively (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019). Despite an increasing trend in the gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary education witnessed globally for a decade, there exist a wide regional difference indicating the highest ratio of 89 per cent for North America and Western Europe and 74 per cent for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2012, whereas it is only 20 per cent for Sub-Saharan Africa and 25 per cent in the Arab States countries (UNESCO, 2015). This indicates that significant efforts are needed to increase the pre-primary school enrolment rate in many developing countries.

According to the Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report, among countries in East Asia, Malaysia has the highest pre-school enrolment and

while Thailand is also doing extremely well. However, Vietnam has a pre-school enrolment of 47 per cent and the Philippines has 40 per cent. On the other hand, Lao PDR and Cambodia have the lowest pre-school enrolment rates at 8 per cent and 9 per cent, respectively. Thus there are considerable disparities in the region as far as preschool enrolment is concerned. We shall describe in detail the situation of ECCE in our neighbouring countries like China, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

5.5.1 China

In China, ECE is not a part of compulsory education. There are no specific ECE policies and laws in the country. ECE providers are mainly the non-state partners who are supported by government bodies and educational institutions. In China, there are four categories of ECD provision. These include: a) three-year kindergarten or *Youer Yuan*; b) one-year pre-primary class or *Xueqian Ban*; and c) rural community ECD centres or *Zaojiao Dian*. In China, the official age of pre-primary education is 3-5 years.

Children below the age of 3 years attend an infant nursery programme called '*Tuo Er Suo*' which is an independent early childhood education institution with full-day service. These nurseries are partially funded by the government, and in some cases, by the workplace or parents. Nursery schools are gradually expanding their services, and are providing preschool education as well as child care services. Children in the age group 3-6 years mainly attend the three-year regular kindergarten programme and one-year pre-primary class.

Nursery programmes are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health while the education component of the nursery programmes is supervised by the Ministry of Education. Kindergarten programmes are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. The State and the local authorities administer the ECCE facilities. However, the local government is free to develop its own developmental plans and service delivery mechanism and is responsible for the implementation.

China has established an elaborate set of national guidelines and regulations for ECE. It has a Medium and Long-Term Education Development Plan Outline (2010-2020) in which the year 2020 is set as a target year to achieve kindergarten enrolment of 95 per cent for five-years-old, 80 per cent for four-year-olds, and 70 per cent for three-year-olds. In 2012, the Ministry of Education issued Learning and Development Guidelines for 3-6-years-old which focus on developmentally appropriate practices for children in the specified age group. The Government in China has developed minimum quality standards for ECCE centres and has defined the ECD goals, guidelines, and monitoring/evaluation frameworks. Infrastructural developmental standards for preschools are established. China is taking efforts to formulate specific ECE laws.

According to the recent data from UNESCO (2018), the gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary was as high as 88.09 per cent in China. The official entrance age in pre-primary education is 3 years in 2016 (Roser & Ostiz-Ospina,

2017). The total duration of pre-primary education is 3 years (UNESCO, 2018).

5.5.2 Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, ECCE programmes are delivered at two levels: a) Non-formal family and community-based programmes for 3-5-years-old children belonging to marginalized families, and b) Formal baby/pre-school classes attached to primary schools for 5 years old. One-year pre-primary education is integrated with primary education for children before the start of formal schooling at age six. The preschool providers in Bangladesh are generally government and non-government primary schools, mosques, madrasas, and private kindergartens. However, there is no structured curriculum for these 'baby classes' and no separate teachers have been appointed or trained for them. The Government has recognized the importance and need of developing a separate structured curriculum for the 'baby classes', training and appointing separate teachers, and providing adequate appropriate play materials for the overall development of children.

The Government of Bangladesh has taken several efforts to promote ECCE in the country. The government launched the project on Early Learning for Child Development (ELCD) for the period 2006-2010. This project focussed on early childhood interventions through the establishment of early learning centres. The project served about 1 million 3-5-years-old children and their families in disadvantaged areas. In 2008, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education approved Preprimary Education Operational Framework. This Framework had the vision to introduce one-year pre-primary education for all children 5-6 years old and comprehensive health and education services for children of age 3-5 years.

In 2010, the National Education Policy has been launched by the Ministry of Education which includes Pre-Primary Education as the first component of Primary Education. Pre-primary education is set as one-year education for children age 5+ before entry into grade 1. In 2011, the National pre-primary curriculum was approved by the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education to set guidelines for universal PPE. In 2013, a Comprehensive Policy on Early Childhood Development was approved by the government.

The Government has prepared and adopted the minimum service provision for pre-primary education in the country. These minimum standards have to be followed by the organizations and agencies running pre-primary centres. There is no national ECCE curriculum in Bangladesh but a pre-primary education curriculum was developed and adopted for children of 5 years.

According to the recent data from UNESCO (2018), the gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary in Bangladesh was 41 per cent in 2018. The official entrance age for pre-primary education is 4 years in 2016 (Roser & Ostiz-Ospina, 2017). The total duration of pre-primary education is 3 years (UNESCO, 2018).

5.5.3 Bhutan

In Bhutan, pre-primary education is part of formal primary education. In 2000, Bhutan adopted Universal Primary education and the Pre-primary education became part of the formal primary schooling including pre-primary class to Grade 6.

Initially, child care and development was assumed as parental responsibility to be provided at home. During the Ninth Five-year plan (2001-2007), ECCD was recognized in the education system and the government placed important frameworks to promote ECCD. The Government of Bhutan conceived Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) and delinked nursery class from primary schooling. It is voluntary for 3-4-years-old children to join the pre-primary classes but for 5 and 6 years old, it is mandatory to attend pre-primary classes before joining Grade 1.

In 2008, the Draft National Early Childhood Care and Education Policy was framed and it was endorsed in 2010. In 2010, Bhutan developed Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) programme to raise the quality of early learning and development. In 2011, the Draft National ECCE Policy framework was released. This framework included the following components: a) Home-based parenting; b) Early learning opportunities for children 3-5 years old; c) Interventions in schools to improve teaching-learning practices in pre-primary to Grade 2 for 6-8 years old, and d) ECCD recognized as an interdisciplinary field involving multiple stakeholders.

In Bhutan, ECCD is provided mainly through non-formal education programmes. The government has emphasized the community-based ECCD programmes as part of the non-formal education programme. While the mother's study in their NFE classes, their preschool-aged children engage in meaningful play and learning activities for 2-3 hours in pre-primary sections. Mothers take turns supervising and engaging in play activities with their children in the pre-primary sections. Day-care centres in urban areas of Bhutan are privatized.

According to the recent data from UNESCO (2018), the gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary in Bhutan was 34 per cent in 2018. The official entrance age for pre-primary education is 5 years by 2016 (Roser & Ostiz-Ospina, 2017). The total duration of pre-primary education is 2 years (UNESCO, 2018).

5.5.4 Nepal

In Nepal, the Ministry of Education has introduced a five-year plan for early childhood education and development under the EFA National Plan of Action 2011. ECED provision is defined in the National Plan of Action 2011 and ECED is included in the School Sector Reform Plan (2009-2015). It follows the multi-sectoral approach under the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Local Development, and the Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Welfare.

In Nepal, pre-primary education is a part of formal education. However, it is not compulsory but available for children aged 36-59 months. The Act for Compulsory and Free Education (2018) states that at least one year of early childhood development and education shall be provided after the completion of the age of four years. In Nepal, the Education Act 2028 (1971) identifies two forms of ECCE provision: Child development centres and pre-school classes. Children below the age of 4 years attend community-based child development centres. Children in the age group of 4 and 5 years attend preschool classes in primary schools. Child development centres are established and run by the local bodies. These community-based centres receive guidance and training from the Department of Education under the Ministry of Education and District Education Offices. These centres are not free of cost. Pre-school classes are mainly privately owned and fee-charging. There are also some public schools (community schools) that provide ECE classes free of cost.

The School Sector Reform Plan (2009-2015) was launched by the Department of Education to expand the ECED provision in the country in close collaboration with community-based organizations and international NGOs. Under this plan, the government proposed to fund one year of the ECED programme for 4-years-old children. It was expected from the communities to mobilize the resources and bear the cost of ECED services for children below 4 years. The target was 87 per cent of 4-years-olds enrolled in ECED centres.

To maintain the quality of all these ECED programmes, pre-primary schools and pre-primary classes in primary schools, the Government of Nepal has formed 'National Early Childhood Development Council' in 2005. The Government of Nepal has also constituted District Child Development Boards (DCDB) to ensure community participation in ECD programmes and to coordinate with local Government bodies, NGOs and local authorities. The Government of Nepal has developed adequate quality standards for early childhood development services across different sectors. However, there is a lack of a common quality standard framework for comprehensive ECCD.

The financing of ECD in Nepal is done both from private and public contributions. In 2011, 5 per cent of the annual education budget was allocated for pre-primary education. This is less than 0.1 per cent of GDP against the recommended at least 1 percent of GDP investment in ECCE.

According to the recent data from UNESCO (2018), the gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary was 87 per cent in Nepal in 2019. The official entrance age for pre-primary education is 3 years in 2016 (Roser & Ostiz-Ospina, 2017). The total duration of pre-primary education is 2 years (UNESCO, 2018).

5.5.5 Pakistan

In Pakistan, ECCE is recognized by the public sector. The traditional *Katchi* (pre-primary) classes were introduced in primary classes for children between 3-6 years to familiarize them with formal education. In the traditional *Katchi* classes, young children used to sit in a multi-grade classroom and share the space, material and teacher time with students of Grade 1 and 5. There are no special funds for separate ECE classes. A limited part of Grade 1 content was taught to the young children in traditional *Katchi* classes. In 1980, the Government of Pakistan suspended the traditional *Katchi* classes as it was didactic, formal, and did not follow prescribed norms of ECCE.

The National Plan of Action for EFA (2001-2015) was launched by the government. The plan suggested mainstreaming ECE in the formal education system through sensitization of stakeholders, allocation of funds and encouraging the private sector, etc. In 2002, the Government of Pakistan developed the National ECE curriculum to provide policy and curricular guidelines for ECE. In 2009, the National Education Policy (NEP) was launched. It was the first government document to formalize ECE in Pakistan as a Pre-Primary sub-sector, termed *Katchi*. The Policy called for the improvement of the quality of ECCE in the country. It recognized the ECE age group in the range of 3-5 years. ECE was included as a component in the Education Sector Reforms Programme and funding was provided to the provincial and district governments.

Recently, the Government of Pakistan has developed standards and guidelines for better quality education in the government-run *Katchi* programme. However, the improved style *Katchi* classes have been constituted in a very limited number (less than 1 per cent of all public primary) schools in Pakistan. In the separate improved style '*Katchi*' classes, the trained teacher imparts pre-primary education to preschool-aged children by using appropriate material and facilities.

Besides the '*Katchi*' classes (traditional or improved style) in government schools, several private schools in urban localities have also constituted separate pre-primary sections. These centres enroll children aged 2-5 years who are taught in proper classrooms by well-trained teachers using proper ECE materials. In these pre-primary classes, nursery, kindergarten, or Montessori-style education is offered. However, the quality of ECCE in these profit-making schools is substandard nature.

Pakistan adopts the multi-sectoral approach to provide ECCE services involving three ministries — the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Needs, and the Ministry of Education. Child care services are emphasized by the Government. The Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare, and Special Education provides day-care facilities to working mothers. Child care also extends beyond 3 years of age.

In Pakistan, Islamic or Quranic education is considered “compulsory” by tradition and is emphasized from an early age. Children receive Islamic education in mosques, madrassahs, or at home. It is considered an effective way to inculcate moral values and teach life skills to children from an early age.

According to the recent data from UNESCO (2018), the gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary was 83 per cent in Pakistan in 2018. The official entrance age for pre-primary education is 3 years in 2016 (Roser & Ostiz-Ospina, 2017). The total duration of pre-primary education is 2 years (UNESCO, 2018).

5.5.6 Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, the National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) was introduced and approved in 2004. This was the first Government policy that focused on the holistic development of children in the age group of 0-5 years. The Government of Sri Lanka passed a new National Policy of ECCD in 2017. This policy focuses on the children’s growth and development in all domains beginning from conception to age 5 years. The policy covers the service delivery in areas of health; nutrition; education; social services; care and protection; parents, family and community; and investments in ECCE. The new policy focused on improving the quality of ECCD provision.

In Sri Lanka, ECCD is a joint responsibility of the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (Children’s Secretariat) and other Ministries including the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education. The Provincial Councils are mandated to make necessary legislation for the management and supervision of preschools. Many Provincial Councils have formulated and implemented Statutes for ECCD and preschools.

In Sri Lanka, children in the age group of 3-5 years are expected to attend the ECE centres. The majority of the ECE centres are stand-alone preschools while in a few ECE centres, preschool and daycare are attached. Most of these ECE centres are privately managed or run by NGOs. The private preschools are profit-making fee-charging schools. Government preschools are run by local authorities like municipal corporations. The children below three years of age attend the daycare centres. Daycare facilities also extend beyond the age of three.

The Government of Sri Lanka has also developed a National Plan of Action for Children (2016-2020). The Plan has a devoted section on early childhood care and development. The Children’s Secretariat under the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs laid down the minimum standards for registration and conduct of ECCD Centers and the minimum qualification of the ECCD providers (preschool teachers). The Secretariat has also introduced early childhood development standards for children from 3-5 years.

The Government of Sri Lanka has developed many programmes to raise awareness of early childhood and promote ECCD activities. Two major ECCD programmes are implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child

Affairs, the Children's Secretariat- Senehe Thataka home-based ECCD programme and Poshana Manpetha food and nutrition programmes. These programmes focus on a child-friendly environment at home and food and nutrition for young children. Children's Secretariat also launched the Model ECCD village programme under which preschools are developed in a selected village with child-friendly facilities to sensitize the village on useful ECCD services.

In 2017, the Government of Sri Lanka introduced the National Guidelines for Child Day Care Centres for the regulation of daycare centres in the country. The guidelines stipulate standards on the caregiver-to-children ratio, recruitment processes, minimum qualifications for caregivers, standards for infrastructure, and the learning process. Sri Lanka has also drafted a National Policy on Child Day Care Centres to ensure the availability, affordability, and accessibility of day care services in the country. The policy aims to provide support to parents, particularly to working mothers to ensure female labour force participation. Under this policy, daycare centres have to be established within a prescribed framework and standards of care.

According to the recent data from UNESCO (2018), the gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary was 91 per cent in Sri Lanka in 2015.

5.5.7 Some Successful Early Childhood Initiatives in Developing Countries

Given below are some of the existing successful early childhood initiatives in developing countries:

a) Argentina's Universal Child Allowance for Social Protection (*Asignacion Universal por Hijo*, AUH in Spanish)

In Argentina, the AUH programme, a conditional cash transfer (CCT) program, was launched in 2009. It is a part of a broader family allowance system implemented by the National Social Security Administration (*Administración Nacional de Seguridad Social*, ANSES) which is supported by the World Bank to protect children living in poverty and vulnerable conditions. The programme includes conditions related to health and educational obligations to have a long-term impact and break the inter-generational poverty. Under this programme, parents of children below 18 years receive cash transfers who are unemployed, temporary workers, workers registered under the Monotributo (single tax) scheme, domestic workers, or persons earning a less than a minimum salary in an informal sector. They receive a monthly payment of 220 pesos (\$53) per month for each child, up to a maximum of five, which makes 80 percent of the full benefit allowance. The remaining 20 per cent is accumulated and paid once every year along with a continuation of monthly 80 per cent with a condition for the children to complete school level with attendance and fulfill medical check-ups including vaccination. The beneficiaries lost their cash transfer when they do not meet the required conditions or when their labour status changes from informal to formal. Recently, this scheme has benefitted 3.9

million children from over two million families in Argentina through an allocation of approximately 0.6 per cent of the GDP. However, the programme has faced some challenges related to coverage and inclusion. Currently, the Argentina Government has expanded the AUH coverage to include additional 1.6 million children and youth up to 18 years who are eligible to receive the cash transfer but have been excluded for different reasons (World Bank, 2016). The programme resulted in significant benefits with an improvement of almost 30 per cent in the average income. In 2015, about 15.5 per cent of households receiving the AUH were recorded to be no longer in poverty. Studies have shown that AUH has led to a drastic reduction in extreme poverty, i.e. between 55 per cent to 70 per cent, and a less significant drop in the levels of poverty and inequality. Child poverty was reduced by 13.1 percentage points and extreme child poverty by 4.6 percentage points (UNICEF, 2018).

b) Peru's Non-formal Programme of Initial Education (PRONOEI)

The initiative came from a University, whose volunteers planned nutrition education and cooking mid-morning snacks for children from 3 to 5 years of age. The areas selected were villages in the highlands, where the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) was higher than 150. From these beginnings, a model of non-formal preschool emerged which was later extended by the Peru government.

Under this programme, about 60,000 children were covered. It provided food and extended physical, mental, and social development activities to support children's overall development. Children were taught in a group of 25 to 30 children several hours a day covering four or five days a week. Periodic refresher courses were developed for mothers and para-professionals were trained to run these courses. There was a children's house including 30 children each where mothers took a turn to cook morning snacks for children. The preschool teacher, called 'animator' is provided with training, curriculum, materials and periodic supervision. From the rural areas, the scheme has gone to urban children as well. Children attending these preschool centres were found to be socially and intellectually better prepared to enter primary school. This is an excellent example of community participation, with materials and services being offered voluntarily and all decisions in the hands of the Parents' Committee.

c) Thailand's Integrated Nutrition and Community Development Programme

Poverty alleviation tends to be the core of many national schemes in developing countries. In Thailand, a programme to eradicate poverty was combined with community-based primary health care and with nutrition education, supplementation, and growth monitoring. Nutrition education was followed by attention to interpersonal and psycho-social details, specifically caregiver-child activities. These were respectful of the culture so that there was no sense of alienation. Video cassettes were used for the messages so that even the non-literate mothers could learn them with ease. Health

communicators had several roles including supplement distributors and video operators. Thus, the operational costs were low.

d) Colombia's Hogares Comunitarios de Bienestar (Child Health and Nutrition, and Preschool Education)

This programme was implemented in Columbia in the year 1987-94 with great success in building the community's efforts for child growth and development. Under this programme, one meal, and two snacks (50 to 60 per cent of average daily calorie needs) were provided to young children aged 2 to 6 years. There was the regular monitoring of their weight, height, and nutritional status. The children were provided a nutritional supplement called *Bienestarina*. It also provided support to families in the purchase of local fresh food. In addition to nutritional support, this programme also supported the pre-school education of children through the provision of full-day care facilities.

In conclusion, investment in early childhood development is the best investment we can make for the future. The arguments in favour of doing so have been placed before you in this Unit.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) Match the names of the early childhood initiatives/ programmes in Column A, with the country in Column B.

Column A

- a) *Senehe Thataka* home-based ECCD
- b) *Katchi* classes
- c) Sure Start
- d) Head Start Programme
- e) *écoles maternelles*

Column B

- i) U.S.A
- ii) United Kingdom
- iii) Sri Lanka
- iv) France
- v) Pakistan

- 2) What lessons can be learnt from Thailand's Integrated Nutrition and Community Development Programme?

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5.6 SUMMING UP

Holistic early childhood programmes have multiple benefits. Given the research findings, early childhood care and education has become an important global concern pertaining to its role in not merely maximizing the child's development and potential to learn, but also due to its broader

function of national development. Countries all over the world have sufficiently realized this fact and have taken significant steps to reach out the young children. This is noted with some global initiatives to extend and expand the ECCE services across the world. A huge success in the field of ECCE is being recorded across the world in many developed nations such as the USA, United Kingdom, France, New Zealand as well as Scandinavian countries. While ECCE policies and programmes have resulted in improved learning outcomes for children as well as improved health and development indicators, however, this phenomenon is not uniform across the world. There exist serious regional disparities when the outcomes of the programmes are evaluated. Substandard implementation of policies and programmes is one of the main reasons for gaps in programme outcomes. Despite having significant policies and programmes on ECCE, many developing countries are yet to achieve universal preschool enrolment and quality ECCE provision. According to the estimates of the UNESCO Institute of Statistics database, the government expenditure in ECCE (pre-primary education) shows that the percentage share of expenditure in ECCE is lowest in Sub-Saharan Africa at only 0.2 per cent. This is followed by South and West Asia where the percentage share of expenditure in ECCE is only 1.1 per cent. North America and Western Europe have the highest percentage share of 7.9 per cent while it is 6.8 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean (UIS, 2010). With greater investments in the field of ECCE and through maintaining equity and quality standards in the existing ECCE programmes, it is hoped that the developing regions of the world, including India, would make it to achieve the SDG Goal- 4 (ECD) by 2030.

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5.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) b, c and e
- 2) a) - iii)
b) - iv)
c) - i)
d) - ii)

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) a) Home-based ECEC provisions
b) School-Operated

- c) Caters to the 0-5 age group
- d) Twin approach including daycare and pre-primary programmes
- e) Regulation of services through the legal provision.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) a) - iii); b) - v); c) - ii); d) - i); e) - iv)
- 2) Integration of poverty eradication programme with community-based primary health care and with nutrition education, supplementation, and growth monitoring.

Following nutrition education by interpersonal and psycho-social details, specifically caregiver-child activities.

Use of multimedia for non-literate mothers.

