

Study Area 1: Evidence Synthesis and Gap Analysis on Women's Workforce Participation, Skilling, Employment and Care in Karnataka

About Mobile Creches

Mobile Creches is a pioneering organization working to advance the rights, care and development of young children, particularly those from vulnerable and marginalized communities. Its work includes strengthening childcare services, building the capacities of childcare workers, generating knowledge and advocating quality childcare as essential social and economic infrastructure.

Background and Overall Initiative

Women's workforce participation is influenced not only by access to skills but also by suitable employment opportunities, care responsibilities, social norms, mobility, and working conditions. Skilling does not necessarily lead to sustained employment, improved earnings or career progression unless it is connected to labour-market demand.

Childcare presents a dual opportunity: access to quality childcare can enable women to participate in paid work, while the childcare sector itself can create skilled employment, livelihood and enterprise opportunities. However, evidence on women's skilling-to-employment pathways, childcare workforce demand, employment conditions and opportunities for professionalizing childcare work remains fragmented.

Mobile Creches is therefore undertaking a broader scoping initiative comprising three complementary studies in Karnataka:

1 Evidence and gaps	Review evidence on women's workforce participation in Karnataka; the role of skilling in access to work, earnings and retention; and the influence of unpaid care, social norms, mobility and other constraints. The review will distinguish established findings from major unanswered questions; establish what is already known and the strength of the available evidence; and identify significant evidence gaps and priorities for further research or intervention.
2 Skilling to employment	Map relevant government, private and partnership-based skilling programmes and assess the full pathway from outreach and enrolment to certification, placement, employment, retention and progression. The study will examine which opportunities show credible employment outcomes, for whom, and under what conditions.
3 Childcare opportunity and women's demand	Map existing and potential childcare/ECD job roles, training and certification routes, service providers, employers, enterprise models, wages and working conditions. It will assess employer and service demand alongside women's willingness to train for and take up such roles—their motivations, expectations, perceived status of care work, constraints and conditions for participation.

Each study will be undertaken independently, and the findings will subsequently be brought together to inform future research, policy engagement and potential initiatives related to women's economic participation and childcare workforce professionalization in Karnataka.

Through these three connected studies, the aim is to establish what is currently known, identify critical evidence gaps and assess whether childcare-related skilling represents a viable pathway to employment and women's economic participation in Karnataka. It will generate a practical basis for deciding whether, where and how a deeper research or pilot initiative should proceed.

Scope of Work

The selected consultant or agency will review and synthesise existing evidence in Karnataka on:

- **Women's workforce participation and employment outcomes**, including employment patterns, sectors, earnings, retention and career progression;
- **The role of skilling in women's economic participation**, including access to employment, certification, placement, earnings and sustained employment;
- **Economic, social and institutional factors** that enable or constrain women's participation in paid work;
- **Care-related and other structural barriers**, including unpaid care responsibilities, access to childcare, social norms, mobility, safety and working conditions;
- **Differences in outcomes** across regions, rural and urban settings, and population groups;
- **Evidence on interventions and enabling conditions** that support women's workforce participation and employment outcomes, including childcare and care support;
- **The availability, quality, relevance and limitations of existing evidence**, including gaps in geographic and population coverage; and
- **Priority evidence and data gaps**, including themes, population groups and geographies requiring further research or intervention.

The study will identify what is known, where evidence or data are limited or missing, and the priority areas, groups and geographies for further research or intervention.

Suggested methodology

A structured review of academic literature, government documents, policies, program reports, evaluations, labour-market data and relevant grey literature. Applicants should describe their search strategy, selection criteria, analytical framework, and approach to assessing the quality and strength of evidence. A limited number of expert consultations may be undertaken to validate findings, identify unpublished evidence, and clarify gaps.

Expected deliverables

1. Inception notes with research questions, review framework, methodology and work plan;
2. Evidence inventory covering literature, datasets, reports and evaluations reviewed;
3. Thematic evidence synthesis;
4. Evidence-gap matrix showing established findings, strength of evidence and unanswered questions;
5. Recommendations on priority themes, population groups and geographies for further research or intervention; and
6. Final evidence synthesis report and presentation.

Duration of the Assignment

The assignment will be completed within three months from the date of commencement. Applicants should propose a detailed work plan, including activities, milestones, and deliverable timelines, within this period.

Role of the Advisory Board

A common Advisory Board will provide strategic and technical guidance and oversee to all the 3 studies. The selected consultant or agency will engage with the Advisory Board at key stages of the assignment and incorporate its consolidated feedback into the final outputs.

Who Can Apply

Individual consultants, teams of consultants and agencies with relevant experience may apply. Applicants should demonstrate the expertise and capacity required to complete the assignment within the stipulated three-month period.

Gender, labour economics, women's workforce participation, secondary-data analysis and evidence synthesis.

Submission Guidelines

Applicants should submit:

- A brief understanding of the assignment;
- Proposed approach and methodology;
- A three-month work plan with key activities and milestones;
- Proposed team composition, roles and relevant CVs;
- Relevant experience and examples of similar assignments; and
- A detailed financial proposal covering professional fees and all assignment-related expenses.

Proposals must be submitted to chaitra.g@mobilecreches.org and meal@mobilecreches.org by **5th October 2026**, with the subject line

"Study Area 1: Evidence Mapping". Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis; therefore, early submission is encouraged.

For any questions or clarifications regarding the assignment or submission process, please connect on the same email id.