

Study Area 3: Assessment of Childcare Workforce Opportunities and Women's Demand 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.
2 Skilling to employment	Map existing childcare-related skilling pathways, job roles and institutions across Karnataka, including, government institutions, private institutions, public-private partnership model, other relevant child care occupations - 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, service providers, employers, enterprise models, career routes, 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:

- **Map existing and emerging childcare and ECD job roles**, including the types of employers and service providers that engage childcare workers;
- **Assess the skills, qualifications, training and certification requirements** for different childcare/ECD roles, including opportunities and gaps in workforce professionalization;
- **Map childcare employment and enterprise models**, including relevant employers, service providers and emerging opportunities for women;
- **Assess current and potential demand for trained childcare workers**, including recruitment needs, vacancies, hiring challenges and future demand;
- **Examine wages, working conditions, employment arrangements and opportunities for retention and career progression** across childcare/ECD roles;
- **Understand women's awareness, interest and perceptions of childcare work**, including their motivations, expectations and barriers to entering and remaining in the sector;
- **Assess the potential for women's childcare-related enterprise and livelihood opportunities**, including enabling conditions and key barriers; and
- **Recommend priority job roles, population groups and geographies for future employment, workforce professionalization and carepreneurship interventions.**
- Assess and recommend six priority districts in Karnataka for further study or intervention, based on childcare workforce demand and potential, women's interest and availability, existing childcare/ECD ecosystems, employment and enterprise opportunities, and feasibility of implementation. The study should generate an evidence-based rationale for the selection of these districts.

Suggested methodology

A combination of desk research, childcare workforce and institutional mapping, employer and service-provider consultations, and focused empirical enquiry with existing childcare workers and potential women trainees for demand projections – estimating the need for skilled workers based on regional demographics, urban/rural divides, and potential government expansions like Anganwadi programs.

Methods may include key-informant interviews, focus-group discussions, and selected case studies of employment or enterprise models. Applicants should propose an appropriate geographic and participant sample reflecting relevant rural-urban and regional variation within Karnataka.

Expected deliverables

1. Inception note with methodology, research tools, sampling approach and work plan;
2. Map of childcare/ECD occupations, competencies, training and certification pathways, employers and service providers;
3. Assessment of current and potential workforce demand, wages and working conditions;
4. Analysis of women's interest, expectations, barriers and conditions for uptake;
5. Assessment of relevant employment, livelihood and carepreneurship models;
6. Recommendations on priority occupations, population groups, geographies and opportunities for future intervention or piloting; and
7. Final 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 the three 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.

Childcare/ECD, gender, labour-market assessment, qualitative research and enterprise or livelihood models.

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 3: Childcare opportunity and women’s demand**”. **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.