

## Research Highlights

### 'Women Need Creche'

#### A Study on Women's participation in Paid work and Childcare arrangements in India

Mobile Creches conducted a study at a national level to examine the interlinkages between access to childcare, child and mother wellbeing, and women's ability to engage in paid work in four Indian States, Gujarat, Karnataka, Jharkhand, and Odisha, geographically covering both urban and rural locations. 1128 women who have children in the age group of 0-6 years participated in this study. Women participants included three categories including **Women who are employed and availing creche (EAC)**; **Women who are employed and not availing creche (ENAC)**; and **Women who are not employed (NE)**. FGDs were conducted with women from all three categories and Men (husbands) whose children are using creche facilities and their wives are in paid work (EAC).

#### Key Findings

##### **Poor awareness of institutional childcare facilities (creche)**

- About 61% of women who were not working (n=563) and 63% who were working but not availing creche (n=340) reported that they are NOT aware of institutional childcare facilities (creche).
- Overall, a large percentage of women (49%) (N=1128) were unaware of the institutional childcare facilities.

##### **Women reported that childcare provision (creches) is an enabler to join paid work**

- Majority of women in all categories (EAC, ENAC, and NE) believe that a good quality creche would enable women to join paid work.
- 89% of women who were not working (n=563) reported that they would like to join the paid work if good quality creche is available.
- One third women (35%) who were working (n= 225) reported that they were able to join paid work only with access to creche.
- Majority of women (89%) who were not working (n=563) reported that childcare responsibility is one of the main reasons for not being able to join paid work.

##### **Absence of quality childcare affects health and wellbeing of mother and child**

- Majority of women (59%) who were working and not accessing creche (n= 340) were compelled to adopt compromised or unsafe childcare arrangements impacting child's wellbeing, women's mental health and economic productivity.
- Out of the total number of women who were working and has no childcare support in their locality, 38 percent had no family support for childcare. These

women were either taking their children to worksite, leaving child at home inadequately supervised, or singlehandedly juggling with childcare responsibility and domestic chores.

**Unequal Unpaid work (Caregiving responsibilities) is a main factor that keeps women out of paid work**

- Prevailing patriarchal norms in families influence women's access to childcare and therefore decision to join paid work
- There is disproportionate burden of care work on women due to unfavourable gender attitudes. Out of the total women who were not working, 39 percent reported that they were working earlier but left their jobs due to childcare responsibility.

**Crèche facilities have a favourable impact on women and children**

- Crèche facilities contribute to women's well-being, income, relationship with family members and child's well-being. Absence of quality childcare affects child's and mother's health and wellbeing.
- About 88% of EAC women reported that their income has increased after accessing creche.
- Women want free and good 'quality' childcare facility to join paid work. The 'quality' is perceived by women as having adequate physical infrastructure including sleeping facility, variety of educational activities and teaching learning aids, recruitment of trained childcare workers, flexible timings for creches, creche catering to young and older children, non-discrimination against children, and involvement of parents.

**Implications**

The study discussed the following implications for a gender transformative policy in areas of labour, care, and social protection.

Develop a **national strategy on care economy**

Ensure **decent work and workers' rights** to women workers engaged in public 'childcare' schemes

**Awareness-building efforts** on institutional childcare facilities and provisions is critical to create and sustain demand for quality childcare services

Driving an **ecosystem approach towards inclusive and quality childcare** is essential to make childcare a collective responsibility

Enhanced **public provisioning and budgetary allocation** is the need of the hour for expansion of quality childcare services.