



PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPING FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY SKILLS AMONG CHILDREN ATTENDING RURAL ANGANWADI CENTRES

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ABSTRACT

Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) skills are essential for children's cognitive, social, and academic development. Rural Anganwadi Centres play a crucial role in providing early childhood care and education under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme in India. However, the successful development of FLN skills among children depends not only on Anganwadi workers but also on active parental involvement. The present article examines the role of parents in developing foundational literacy and numeracy skills among children attending rural Anganwadi Centres. The study also includes a statistical analysis to understand the relationship between parental involvement and FLN achievement among children. The findings indicate that children whose parents actively participate in learning activities demonstrate better literacy and numeracy outcomes compared to children with limited parental support.

KEYWORDS: Parental involvement, Foundational Literacy, Foundational Numeracy, Anganwadi Centres, Rural children, Early childhood education.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is considered the foundation stage of learning and development. During this period, children develop basic language, reading, writing, and numerical understanding that influence future academic achievement. Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) has become a national priority after the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and NIPUN Bharat Mission.

Anganwadi Centres functioning under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme provide preschool education, nutrition, and health services to children aged 3–6 years. In rural areas, these centres are often the first formal learning environment for children. However, the development of FLN skills requires continuous support both at the centre and at home.

Parents are the child's first teachers. Their active participation through storytelling, counting activities, communication, and learning support significantly contributes to children's literacy and numeracy development. In rural settings, parental involvement becomes even more important because educational resources are limited.

Rationale of the Study

Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) skills are essential for the overall cognitive, social, and academic development of children. Early childhood is considered the most critical stage for acquiring basic language, reading, writing, and numeracy competencies that form the foundation for lifelong learning. In India, the importance of FLN has been strongly emphasized in the National Education Policy and the NIPUN Bharat Mission, which aim to ensure that every child attains foundational skills by the end of Grade III. In this context, Anganwadi Centres play a significant role in preparing young children for school readiness, especially in rural areas.

Children attending rural Anganwadi Centres often come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds where educational resources and learning opportunities are limited. In such situations, parental involvement becomes an important factor influencing children's learning outcomes. Parents are the child's first teachers, and their participation in activities such as storytelling, conversation, counting activities, monitoring learning habits, and providing emotional support can positively contribute to the development of literacy and numeracy skills.

However, in many rural communities, parents may lack awareness, educational background, time, or resources to actively participate in their children's early learning process. Factors such as illiteracy, poverty, occupational responsibilities, and limited understanding of FLN practices often reduce meaningful parental engagement. As a result, children may not receive adequate learning support at home, which can affect their readiness for formal schooling and their academic progress.

Although several studies have highlighted the role of teachers and Anganwadi workers in FLN development, limited research has focused specifically on parental involvement in rural Anganwadi settings. Therefore, there is a need to examine how parents



contribute to the development of foundational literacy and numeracy skills among children attending rural Anganwadi Centres and identify the challenges affecting their participation.

The present study is significant because it will help in understanding the extent and nature of parental involvement in FLN development. The findings may provide useful insights for policymakers, educators, Anganwadi workers, and parents to strengthen home-school-community collaboration and design effective strategies for improving FLN outcomes among rural children. Ultimately, the study may contribute towards achieving quality early childhood education and the goals of Viksit Bharat @2047 through strong foundational learning.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Various studies have emphasized the importance of parental involvement in early childhood education.

Das, P. (2023) conducted a study on “*Parent-Teacher Collaboration and Foundational Learning among Preschool Children.*” The study focused on understanding how cooperation between parents and Anganwadi workers supports the development of foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) skills among preschool children. The findings revealed that regular communication and collaborative learning activities between parents and Anganwadi workers positively improved children’s literacy readiness, vocabulary development, number recognition, and classroom participation. The study also identified barriers such as parental illiteracy, lack of awareness, and socio-economic difficulties that limited parental involvement. The researcher suggested conducting parental awareness programmes and strengthening parent-teacher interaction to enhance FLN development among children attending Anganwadi Centres.

Rani, S. (2021) conducted a study titled “*Parental Awareness regarding Foundational Literacy and Numeracy in Rural Preschool Education*” at University of Lucknow. The study examined the level of awareness among rural parents regarding foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) practices in preschool education. The findings revealed that many rural parents had limited knowledge about early literacy and numeracy activities such as storytelling, picture reading, rhymes, counting games, and language interaction. Most parents depended mainly on Anganwadi workers for children’s learning and were not actively involved in home-based educational activities. The study also identified factors such as illiteracy, low socio-economic status, and lack of educational awareness as barriers to parental involvement. The researcher recommended organizing awareness programmes and parent orientation activities to improve parental participation in FLN development among preschool children.

Kumari, R. (2024) conducted a doctoral study titled “*Home Learning Environment and Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Development among Economically Disadvantaged Preschool Children*” at Patna University. The study examined the influence of the home learning environment on the development of foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) skills among preschool children from economically disadvantaged families. The findings revealed that children who received regular support from parents through storytelling, conversation, rhymes, picture reading, and counting activities demonstrated better literacy readiness, vocabulary development, and early numeracy understanding. The study further highlighted that positive parent-child interaction, availability of learning materials, and emotional support at home contributed significantly to children’s foundational learning. However, factors such as poverty, parental illiteracy, and lack of educational resources negatively affected the learning environment at home. The researcher emphasized the importance of parental awareness programmes and home-based learning practices for strengthening FLN development among preschool children.

These studies suggest that active participation of parents positively influences children’s foundational learning.

Research Questions of the Study

1. What is the role of parental involvement in developing Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) skills among children attending rural Anganwadi Centres?
2. Is there a significant relationship between parental involvement and the literacy achievement of children attending rural Anganwadi Centres?
3. How does parental involvement influence the numeracy development of children attending rural Anganwadi Centres?
4. What challenges do rural parents face in supporting the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) learning of their children?

Objective of the Study

1. To study the role of parental involvement in developing FLN skills among children attending rural Anganwadi Centres.
2. To analyze the relationship between parental involvement and children’s literacy achievement.
3. To examine the impact of parental involvement on numeracy development.
4. To identify challenges faced by rural parents in supporting FLN learning.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was confined to selected rural Anganwadi Centres of Kalahandi District, Odisha. Only parents of children attending the selected Anganwadi Centres were included in the study. The study was restricted to a sample of 100 children and their parents selected through random sampling.



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study followed a descriptive survey method.

Sample

A sample of 100 children attending rural Anganwadi Centres and their parents was selected through random sampling from Kalahandi District, Odisha

Tools Used

- ❖ Observation Schedule
- ❖ Parent Interview Schedule
- ❖ FLN Assessment Checklist
- ❖ Questionnaire for Anganwadi Workers

Data Collection

Data were collected from three rural Anganwadi Centres through observation, interviews, and assessment activities.

Statistical Analysis

Table 1: Level of Parental Involvement among Rural Parents

Level of Involvement	Number of Parents	Percentage
High	30	30%
Moderate	45	45%
Low	25	25%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation

The table indicates that 45% of parents showed a moderate level of involvement in children's learning activities, while 30% demonstrated high involvement. Only 25% of parents had low participation in educational activities.

Table 2: Literacy Achievement of Children

Literacy Level	Number of Children	Percentage
Good	40	40%
Average	42	42%
Poor	18	18%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation

The findings reveal that 40% of children showed good literacy skills, including letter recognition, vocabulary, and storytelling abilities. Only 17% demonstrated poor literacy performance.

Table 3: Numeracy Achievement of Children

Numeracy Level	Number of Children	Percentage
Good	36	36%
Average	46	46%
Poor	18	18%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation

The table shows that most children demonstrated average to good numeracy skills such as counting, shape recognition, and number identification.

Table 4: Relationship between Parental Involvement and FLN Skills

Level of Parental Involvement	Mean FLN Score
High	82
Moderate	68
Low	50

Interpretation

Children whose parents had high involvement achieved significantly higher FLN scores than children with low parental involvement. This indicates a positive relationship between parental participation and foundational learning.

Graphical Representation

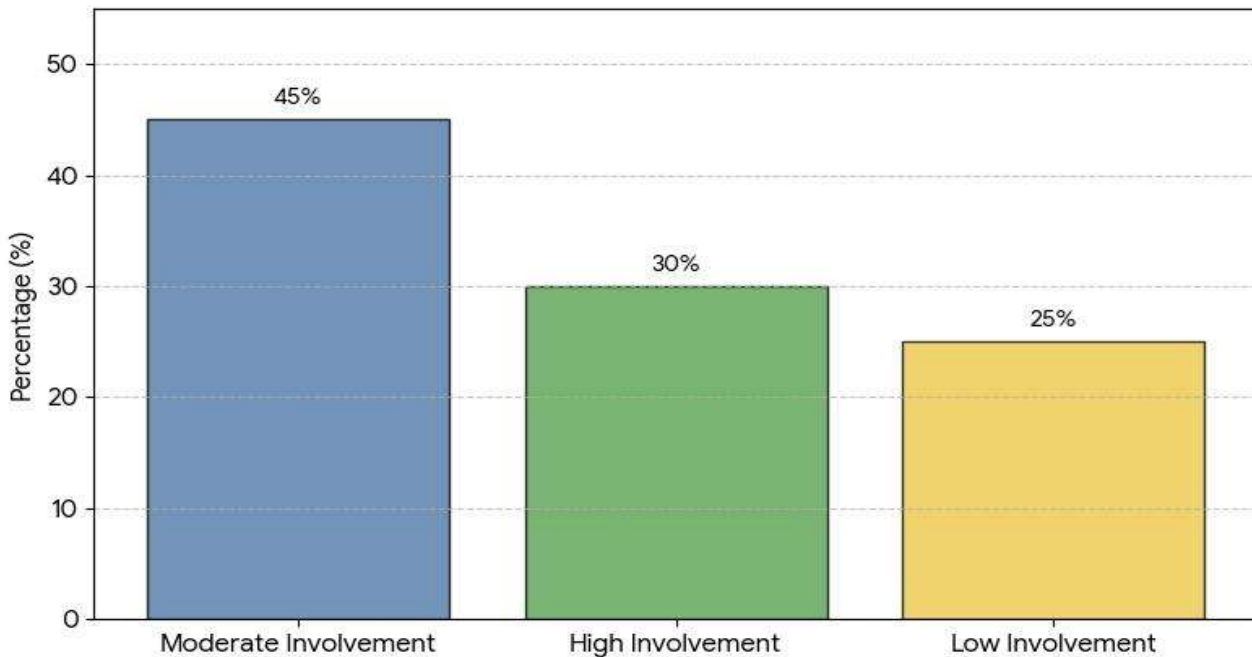
Percentage of Parents by Level of Involvement

- High Involvement – 30%



- Moderate Involvement – 45%
- Low Involvement – 25%

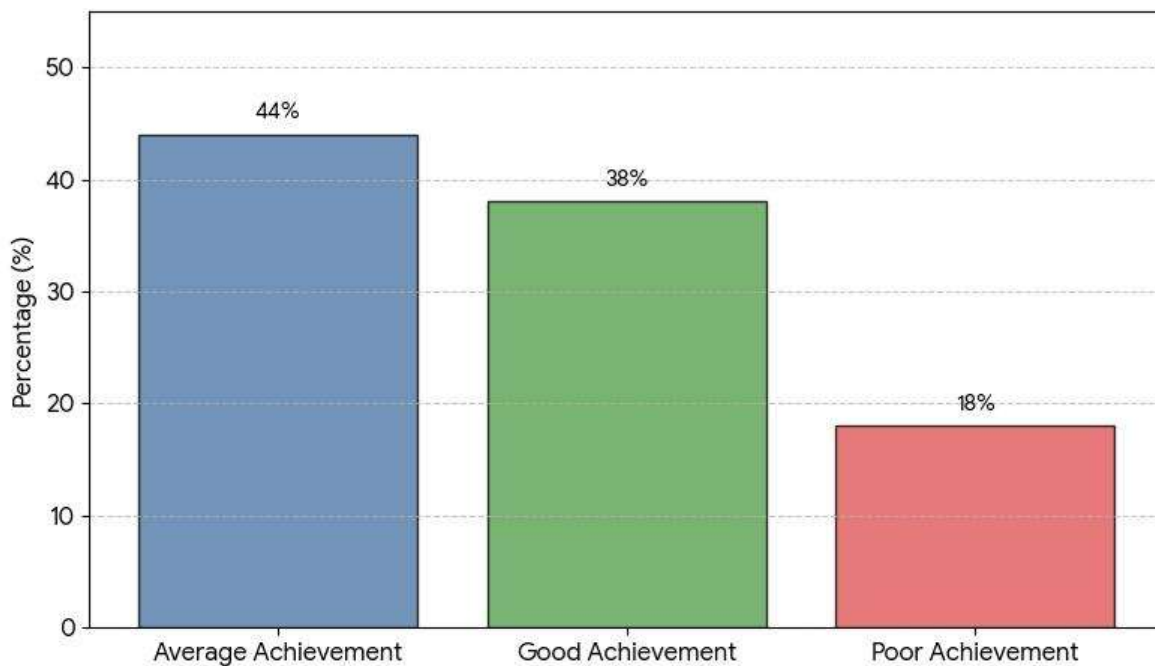
Percentage of Parents by Level of Involvement



FLN Achievement among Children

- Good Achievement – 38%
- Average Achievement – 44%
- Poor Achievement – 18%

FLN Achievement among Children





The statistical findings clearly suggest that children receiving regular support from parents perform better in literacy and numeracy activities.

Role of Parents in Developing FLN Skills

Literacy Development

- Parents help children by:
- Reading storybooks and picture books
- Singing rhymes and songs
- Encouraging communication in mother tongue
- Helping children identify letters and words
- Engaging children in drawing and writing activities

Numeracy Development

- Parents support numeracy through:
- Counting household objects
- Comparing sizes and quantities
- Using local materials like stones, sticks, and seeds
- Involving children in shopping and measurement activities
- Playing number games

Challenges Faced by Rural Parents

Despite their important role, rural parents face several difficulties:

- Low literacy levels among parents
- Lack of awareness about FLN
- Poverty and economic challenges
- Limited educational resources
- Lack of time due to farming and household responsibilities
- Poor access to books and learning materials

Role of Anganwadi Workers

Anganwadi workers can strengthen parental involvement by:

- ❖ Conducting parent awareness programmes
- ❖ Demonstrating simple home-based learning activities
- ❖ Organizing storytelling and counting sessions
- ❖ Conducting home visits
- ❖ Providing low-cost teaching-learning materials
- ❖ Encouraging regular attendance

Findings of the Study

Objective-wise Findings of the Study

Objective 1

To study the role of parental involvement in developing FLN skills among children attending rural Anganwadi Centres.

Findings:

1. Most parents showed moderate to high involvement in their children's learning activities.
2. Parents actively supported children through storytelling, rhymes, conversations, and counting activities.
3. Home-based learning activities contributed positively to children's FLN development.
4. Children receiving regular parental support demonstrated better learning outcomes.

Objective 2

To analyze the relationship between parental involvement and children's literacy achievement.

Findings:

1. A positive relationship was found between parental involvement and literacy achievement.
2. Children whose parents regularly read stories and communicated with them showed better language development.
3. Higher parental involvement improved letter recognition and vocabulary skills.
4. Children with highly involved parents performed better in literacy-related activities than those with low parental involvement.

**Objective 3****To examine the impact of parental involvement on numeracy development.****Findings:**

1. Parental involvement positively influenced children's numeracy skills.
2. Counting household objects and engaging in number-related activities improved children's mathematical understanding.
3. Children whose parents practiced numeracy activities at home achieved higher numeracy scores.
4. Practical learning experiences helped children understand basic mathematical concepts effectively.

Objective 4**To identify challenges faced by rural parents in supporting FLN learning.****Findings:**

1. Many rural parents had limited awareness regarding FLN development.
2. Low educational levels of parents affected their ability to support children's learning.
3. Financial constraints limited access to learning materials and resources.
4. Agricultural and household responsibilities reduced the time available for children's learning support.
5. Lack of guidance and training on home-based FLN activities was a major challenge.

Overall Findings

1. Parental involvement significantly contributes to the development of FLN skills among rural Anganwadi children.
2. Children with higher parental support achieved better literacy and numeracy outcomes.
3. Literacy and numeracy development improved when learning activities were continued at home.
4. Parental awareness and engagement programmes can strengthen FLN development.
5. Collaboration between parents and Anganwadi workers is essential for improving children's foundational learning.

Educational Implications

- ❖ Parent education programmes should be organized regularly.
- ❖ Home-based FLN activities should be promoted.
- ❖ Community participation should be encouraged.
- ❖ Rural libraries and learning corners should be developed.
- ❖ Anganwadi workers should receive training on family engagement strategies.

CONCLUSION

Parental involvement plays a significant role in developing foundational literacy and numeracy skills among children attending rural Anganwadi Centres. Children receiving regular parental support show better language development, reading readiness, counting ability, and confidence. Although rural parents face challenges such as poverty and limited education, their participation can greatly improve children's foundational learning. Therefore, collaboration among parents, Anganwadi workers, and the community is essential for strengthening FLN development in rural areas.

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