

Status of Early Childhood Development Centers: A Study Based on National Minimum Standard



Submitted To

Save the Children, International

By

Setogurans National Child Development Services, Lalitpur

2011

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ABSTRACT

Early Childhood Development (ECD) program is increasingly being popular day by day due to its vitality in the formation and development of foundation in children's later life. The need and demand of ECD program has increased in the recent years. A number of ECD centers have been established in all districts of the country. Quality issues of ECD centers are major concern for stakeholders. The MOE has developed Minimum Standard for ECD to ensure quality services in the ECD centers. Debates on quality of ECD centers are still ongoing. Since there was lack of ECD center standards, these debates are natural. Now after years of practices of ECD as per the Minimum Standard, this study was launched to find out the status of ECD centers particularly those supported by SCI in 21 districts of the country. While exploring the status of ECD centers, mainly eight areas of ECD centers were assessed. There are eight major areas (a) Physical infrastructure of the ECD centers, (b) Health, Nutrition, safety and Sanitation, (c) Learning materials at ECD centers, (d) outdoor environment, (e) ECD management committee, (f) human resource and (g) document management. Tools were developed to find out the status of these eight components of ECD centers in question. The tools mainly focused to obtain quantitative information from the target ECD centers of the 21 different districts in Nepal. The quantitative data obtained from the field were processed into SPSS computing program and the results were presented in table, graphs and charts. These results were discussed, analyzed and interpreted and findings were derived accordingly. The tools assessed these components based on the National Minimum Standard of ECD centers developed by DEO. Those ECD centers which were found to meet almost all the criteria mentioned in the National Minimum Standard in corresponding areas of ECD centers were categorized as A. Similarly those which were found to meet the criteria of National Minimum Standard about 50% and above were categorized as B. In the same way, those which met below 50% of the criteria suggested by the National Minimum Standard were categorized as C. The finding included that each area of the ECD centers under this study is both poor in some ECD centers of some districts and proficient in some other ECD centers of some other districts. In most of the districts, a large number of ECD under this study are found to be proficient in their ECD management committee. For example, there is not even single ECD center under this study recorded in category 'C' in Tanahu district in terms of document management and learning materials at ECD centers. However, there are some areas of ECD centers under this study which are waiting for further support, for instance document management, human resource and quality environment within the centers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Environment shapes children's physical, social, cognitive, emotional and language development. ECD centers are the initial place for learning and development of children. The input and the process in ECD centre affects children who are enrolled. In this sense the progress of children largely depends upon quality ECD centers environment and services received. There are guideline, curriculum, and strategy plans of ECD centers in Nepal. Government, I/NGOs, institutions has been working for ECD. ECD centers are providing service all over the country for three decade. However, question arises, what is the status of ECD center? How is the environment? What is the role performance of facilitator, MC and parents? How is the enabling environment for children to learn and develop? Are the efforts adequate to meet the national minimum standard? However some of the answer of this question still lacks the information. The issue is raised by the Nepal forum for ECD professional group meeting in 2004. The group members were from government, I/NGOs, institutions, experts, ECD promoters, frontline worker and parents. After series of sessions Department of Education and Save the children with all the groups developed National Minimum Standard draft in 2008. It has been disseminated for implementation in 2010 as final ECD centers standard.

The study has been a part of assessment of ECD centers supported by SCI partners and government based on National Minimum Standard 2008/9. Seto Gurans has been conducting research/ study in ECD issues and information and innovation. Seto Gurans has attempted this study with the help of its partners at national and district level.

I express my gratitude to the authorities of Department of Education, Save the Children International for allowing us to conduct this study. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Save the Children International partner organizations - Shree puroj Samudayik Bikas Kendra- Saptari, Seto Gurans Child Development Services- Sindhupalchowk, Bawani Akikrit Bikas Kendra- Siraha, Peacewin Accham, Gramin Samaj Uthan Kendra-Sunsari, Samudayik Bikas Kendra- Doti, Asman Nepal -Dhanusa, Bal Bikas Samaj Nepal, BASE-Kailali, NNSWA, CWIN Nepal-Rukum, Backwardness Eradication Society, KIRDRAC, Seto Gurans Child Development Services-Baridya, Dalit Sewa Sangh-Bardiya, Seto Gurans Child Development Services- Rolpa, CWIN Nepal, Seto Gurans Child Development Services- Tanahu, DEO Siraha, Seto Gurans Child Developmetn Services-Udaypur, ECD network- Kavre who have seriously conducted field data collection.

I would also like to thank Ms. Devina Pradhanang, Deputy Director, DOE, Ms. Agatha Thapa, the Founer & Executive member of Seto Gurans NCDS, Ms. Udaya Laxmi Pradhanang, ECD expert for their precious contribution in developing indicators from the book. I thank Mr. Prakash C. Bhattarai for developing data base and analyzing the data. I thank Mr. Radheshyam Thakur for analyzing data for this report. I cannot forget the PNGO's trainers and staff for their support in this study. I also thank Mr. Manik Munakami, Ms. Rukmani Karki and Mr. Madhusudhan Dhoj Khadka for entering data into SPSS of 1925 centres. I cannot forget coordinators, staff members of Natioanl Seto Gurans for their support through out the study.

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ACRONYMS

ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECDE	Early Childhood Development and Education
EFA	Education for All
DOE	Department of Education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nation International Children's Emergency Fund
NGO	Non-Government Organization
DEO	District Education Office
TOT	Training of Teacher
BBK	Bal Bikas Kendra
INGO	International Non-Government Organization
LDO	Local Development Officer
SCI	Save the Children International
VDC	Village Development Committee
HNSS	Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation

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CHAPTER I

Background

Quality of Early Childhood Program ensures ECD rights of children. There is hardly a single definition of quality ECD. It varies from organization to organization and nation to nation. Since all children in universe require basic things like food, health service, care, love, stimulation, protection and opportunity for play in a peaceful and supporting environment, early Childhood Development focuses the same. ECD program enriches for their holistic development and prepares them for school education. 'Education for All' is a global movement in education, which clearly mentions ECDE as "Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged childhood should be a policy objective" (EFA 2000).

Plan of action strategy paper (2004, DOE) supporting the goal of 'Education for All' aims at providing learning opportunity to the children between 3 and 4 years of age. It recognizes holistic development of children and prepares children for school education. As per the objectives of strategy and ECD curriculum, ECD directory has aimed at providing quality ECD services. In this regard, Department of Education (DOE) has endorsed minimum standard for ECD center which was developed by joint collaboration of Save the Children, UNESCO, UNICEF, Setogurans, educationists, professionals and teachers/facilitators. Save the Children and its partner Non-Government Organizations (NGO) working in education sector has a key concern about the quality aspects of ECD.

Seto Gurans National Child Development Service is a pioneer and leading organization in the field of ECD services at national, district and community level. It has experience in awareness raising, ECD advocacy, trainings, program development /innovations, research and study, coordination and linkages and network. Partnership of more than a decade with Save the Children Nepal has contributed remarkably in Early Childhood Development nationwide.

Need and Context of the Study

The ECD centers in the country are being operated with support of District Education Office (DEO). The numbers of ECD centers are growing every year. There are altogether 29,089 ECD centers (DOE Calendar 2066/2067) in Nepal. Study and research on various issues of ECD had been done by CERID, UNICEF, Save the Children, Plan Nepal, Setogurans National Child Development Services. There is hardly any authentic report on the status of ECD centers functioning in districts and, also the ECD centers are facing enormous

challenges in terms of quality assurances. The need to explore and identify the status of ECD centers was felt to understand and identify the actual level of ECD centers and the area to be improved to foster quality in ECD centers. This research, therefore, focuses the same.

This study has explored the information on eight areas of ECD centers namely infrastructure, HNSS, learning materials at ECD centers, outdoor environment, ECD management committee, human resource, quality environment, and documentation. The information as such comprises much significance. First, it will be a kind of benchmark in the knowledge practice of ECD centers in various districts in Nepal. Second, it is the first study of ECD centers based on the National Minimum Standard which has categorized the ECD centers under this study into A, B and C grades in terms of the accessibility and availability of infrastructure, learning materials, quality environment, ECD services, etc. Third, the information contained in this study will give the key stakeholders a broader space to promote the various areas of the ECD centers. The government and funding agency will get the clue regarding where and what aspects of ECD centers need support and investment.

National Minimum Standard

There are various standards of ECD followed by different nations. The Global report on Early Learning and Development Standard (ELDS) shows nation wise standards of countries like Cambodia, China, Fiji, Ghana, Jordan, Macedonia, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and South Africa for children specially 3-6years (Kagan & Brillo, 2008. p. 5). Children with a base of good pre-reading and math skills, some social and behavior development, and attention span can learn new activities more easily. The standards are based on different domains such as cognitive development, social emotional, language literacy, health motor development, approaches to learning, creativity, math, science, religion and moral, natural and cultural and character development The standards are developed according to the program modalities for children, ECD/Preschools, parents, community, and policymakers as well as the institutions /organizations (Rajbhandari, 2011).

The National Minimum Standard for ECD centers (2010) was developed by the Ministry of Education, Department of Education (MOE, Nepal) in collaboration with save the children alliance. The draft was finalized and disseminated in 2010 by MOE, DOE. It intends to bring uniformity in quality, and mapping of ECD service effectiveness. The objectives of the ECD center is to ensure the right of children of 3-5 years of age by promoting health, nutrition and sanitary situation; increase the learning abilities for overall development and prepare them for primary education of children (DOE, 2010, p. 6).

It has mentioned eight major sectors and fourteen sub-sectors to represent management and pedagogical aspects of ECD. The minimum standard has focused on the management aspect of the ECD center operation. It has included the ideal standard and the minimum standard of ECD centre. There are more that 200 indicators for eight standard areas that include management, infrastructure, facilitator, children and monitoring and so on. Even though standards are stated as minimum requirement, it is challenging to meet them through existing practices and resources allocated for the program. This document has been developed for ECD centre which can lead to decide and trace the situation, condition as well as the standard for future planning. It has made easy way-out for monitoring evaluation of ECD centre.

Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To assess the status of the environment in ECD centers
2. To examine the status of ECD management in terms of resources , documents, daily performances
3. To assess the quality of ECD centers

CHAPTER II

METHODS OF THE STUDY

The methodology and procedure adopted to explore the status of the focused ECD centers has been discussed in this section of the report. The documents like ECD directory, ECD curriculum, Minimum National Standard for ECD were reviewed. This study is based on quantitative and descriptive approach. The details of methods and procedures for this study are mentioned as below:

Methods and Procedures

The methods and procedures accounted for this study are mentioned as follows:

Capacity Development

The study intended to cover almost all focused districts of SCI. Thus, necessary human resources were developed to carry on this study to survey 2900 ECD centers as per National Minimum Standard throughout the country. The following steps were taken into account to develop the required human resource to meet the purpose.

Training of Trainers

In the first step, trainings for trainers were launched. In the trainers' training the indicators mentioned in the National Minimum Standard for ECD centers were discussed. They were informed about the indicators and their settings in real ECD classrooms. They were also provided with opportunity to survey ECD centers as per National Minimum Standard as a pilot study. The objectives of the training of trainers were as follows:

1. To improve and develop the knowledge and skills to supervise and observe ECD centers in the line of National Minimum Standard
2. To improve the standard of ECD

Human resource for this study was developed at district and community level. In the first phase trainers were developed by Setogurans National Child Development Services. The TOT on ECD center minimum standard was inaugurated by DEO, Lalitpur. The 5 days training included ECD philosophy, ECD curriculum, ECD standard/ quality and National Minimum Standard, Study tool, Survey procedure and field practice. There were participants from 23 districts. Field practice was done in ECD centers supported by DEOs of Lalitpur and Kathmandu districts and also by World Vision Kathmandu ADP namely, Mahalaxmi PPC, Ichnagu Narayan BBK, and Paropakar PPC. Training of trainers and enumerators was successful in its endeavor. Distinguished guests from INGOs, NGOS, DEO and LDO-Lalitpur, etc participated in the closing program of the training.

Formulation of the Study Team

The following teams and individuals were united to accomplish the study:

- (a) Advisory team: It consisted of ECD expert, DEO Deputy Director
- (b) Study team: It consisted of team leader/ coordinator, ECD expert, researchers, report writers and enumerators.

Selection of Districts, Sample ECD Centres and Respondents

There were 23 districts taken into account for this study. The sampled ECD centres (see table 1) were those that were supported by SCI. The study focused the ECD centers supported by the PNGO, SCN and Setogurans. It included both school based as well as community based ECD centers. The name of the districts and the sample size of the ECD centres are mentioned in annex (Table 1). The facilitators and management committee of the ECD centres in question were the main respondents to generate data and information for this study.

Tools, Techniques and Procedure for Data Collection

The indicators for this study were developed on the basis of the guidelines of National Minimum Standard (2010). Tools for ECD center assessment was developed with frequent consultation with ECD experts and researchers. The tool intended to collect data through observation and interview. The tools were shared and approved by consultation group and tested for two times before the actual field study.

Tools for this study were developed on the basis of National Minimum Standard which focused to check the eight areas of ECD centres namely, (a) physical infrastructure, (b) health, nutrition, safety and sanitation, (c) Learning materials, (d) outdoor environment, (e) Management committee of ECD centers, (f) human resource, (g) quality environment of ECD centers and (h) document management. The tool had five-range scale: very bad, bad, average, good and very good which were coded as 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively. The tools developed for this study is given in the annex

Survey

The ECD center was observed on the basis of survey format developed by Setogurans. The survey format is based on National Minimum Standard, 2010. It was consulted and tested in Kathmandu and Lalitpur districts.

Procedure of Data Collection

The trainers developed from Setogurans National Child Development Services for SCN focused districts were provided with the survey tools. Action plan prepared by partners were rarely followed by partners. Some of the partners collected data in allocated time. Most of the data were received after the dead line. Data were collected by the trained enumerators from the districts. The sample ECD centers were selected from the VDCs. The data were received from 21 districts. Total numbers of valid data were 1929.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data obtained from the field were computed into SPSS device to receive statistical information. The data entered in likert rating scale while the interpretation of data was done in three stages: good, average and poor. The eight different major areas and fourteen sub-areas of ECD centers based on National Minimum Standard were analyzed and interpreted (see chapter III). The observation form of this study developed in terms of five-point scales which consisted the value as 5=very good, 4= good, 3= average, 2= poor and 1 = very poor. In the course of analysis the mean value for category 'C' ranged from 0-2.99, the mean value for category B ranged from 3.00-3.99 and the mean value for category 'A' ranged from 4.00 and above.

CHAPTER III

STATUS AND CLASSIFICATION OF ECD CENTERS

The total ECD centers (1925) sampled from 21 districts were assessed in terms of eight different areas and classified into A, B and C (see chapter III). Similarly, the status of district-wise ECD centers were also assessed and classified in terms of the same areas (8 in number) and sub-areas (14 in number) of ECD centers as mentioned in the National Minimum Standard

Classification of ECD centers by areas

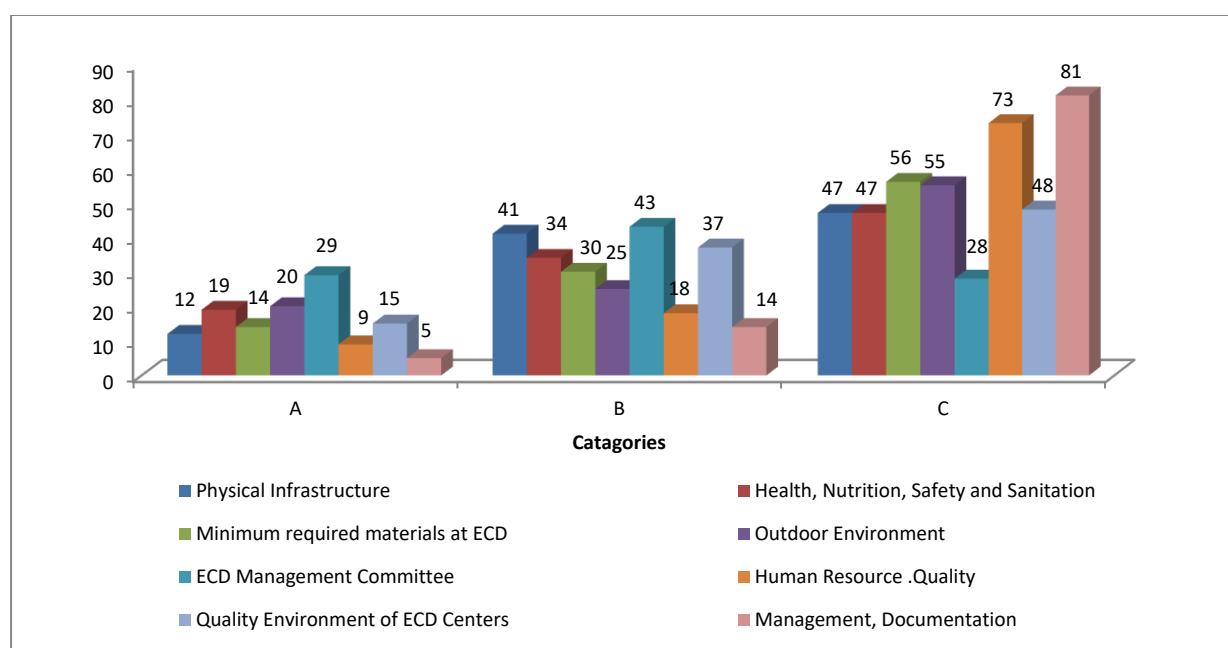
The ECD centers were classified into categories 'A', 'B' and 'C' in terms of the eight areas of ECD centers as mentioned in the National Minimum Standard.

Areas / Indicators	N	Mean	SD	A		B		C	
				Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
All areas	1925	2.77	0.74	131	6.8	558	29	1236	64.2
Ideal standards/indicators	1374	3.29	0.86	365	26.6	556	40.5	453	32.9
Physical Infrastructure	1925	3.06	0.78	238	12.4	780	40.5	907	47.1
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation	1924	3.05	0.91	361	18.8	662	34.4	901	46.8
Minimum required materials at ECD	1925	2.82	0.98	261	13.6	583	30.3	1081	56.1
Outdoor Environment	1914	2.31	1.28	380	19.9	481	25.1	1053	55
ECD Management	1925	3.38	0.87	553	28.7	826	42.9	546	28.4
Human Resource	1925	2.25	0.84	111	5.8	343	17.8	1471	76.4
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	1924	2.99	0.86	281	14.6	712	37	931	48.4
Document management	1925	2.27	0.77	80	4.2	273	14.2	1572	81.6

Table 2. Major Areas and classification of ECD Centers

Table two shows the overall scenario of 1925 ECD centers from 19 districts, reflecting National Minimum Standard mentioned by DEO. It shows that about 7% of ECD centers are in 'A' category (Table 2). These centers meet more than 51% of ECD National Minimum Standard. The same table also shows that 29 % of the ECD centers have average requirement, i.e. 50% while 64% of the ECD centers are below average. The classification of ECD centers in each area has been presented in percentage in figure 1.

Figure : 1 Classification of ECD/PPC centers based on National Minimum Standard

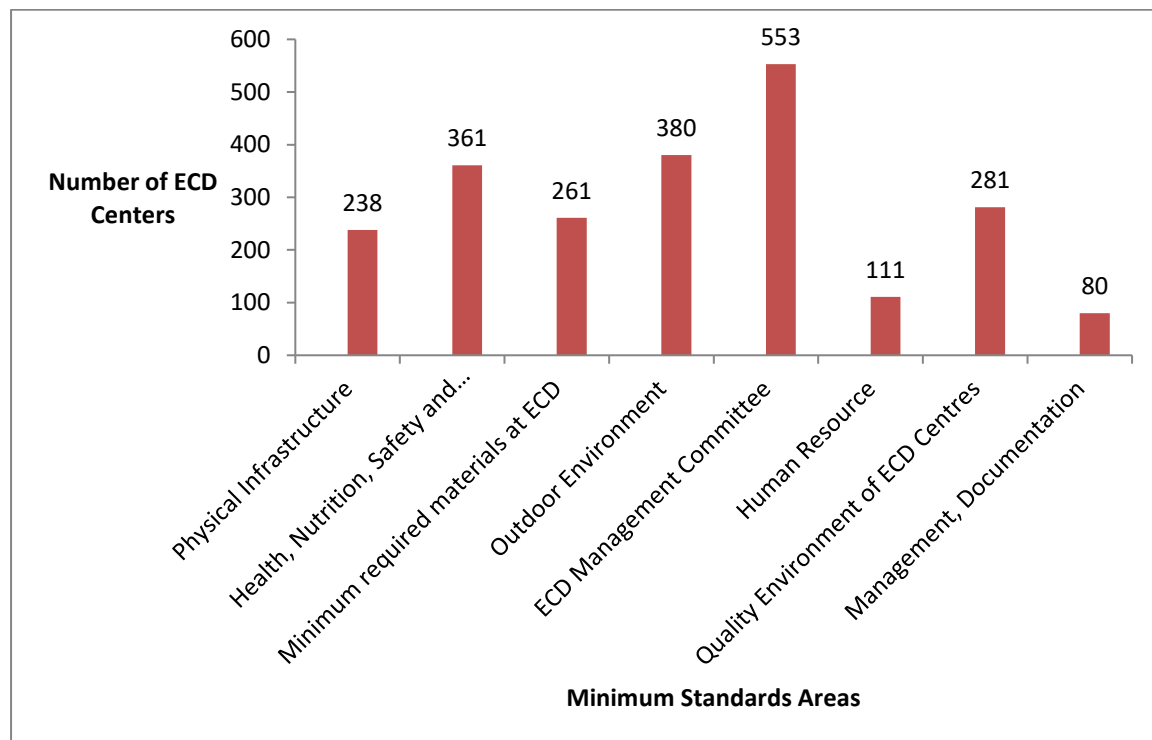


The above diagram categorizes the 1929 ECD centers into A, B and C. The status of ECD centers in each aspect mentioned in the diagram is presented in percentage. The diagram above reveals that maximum number of ECD centers come under the category 'C' and only few fall into the category 'A'. The percentage of ECD centers in terms of document management aspect of ECD centers is lowest and has been categorized as 'A' while the percentage of ECD centers in the same area of ECD center is highest and has been categorized as 'C'. This means, a large number of ECD centers lack the requirements to as mentioned in the minimum standard for quality ECD centers. The status in terms of the areas mentioned above need high attention to get strengthened. Some of the districts like Baglung, Kailali, Siraha, Udaypur, Tanahu, Nawalparasi, Mugu and Mahottari have achieved 'A' categories of ECD minimum standards in each areas/ aspects. But districts like Kanchanpur, Bardia, Achham, Kalikot, Rolpa, Rukum, Saptari, Sunsari, Dhanusa, Doti, Sindhupalchok, and Bajura have achieved a large number of B category ECD standards in comparison to 'A' category. Most of the observed communities and ECD centers in the districts were reported to be politically affected and socio economically deprived. Out of the studied ECD centers 35% of them appeared into category 'B'. Again, out of the ECD centers in category 'B' only 18% of them are average in human resource and 14% of them are in average in documentation. Similarly, the document management aspect of 43% of the ECD centers in category 'B' appeared to be average.

ECD centers in category 'A' by their Areas/Aspects

The number of ECD centers that appeared in category 'A' in each studied area mentioned in National Minimum Standard has been presented in the figure below:

Figure 2: ECD Center of category 'A' based on National Minimum Standard

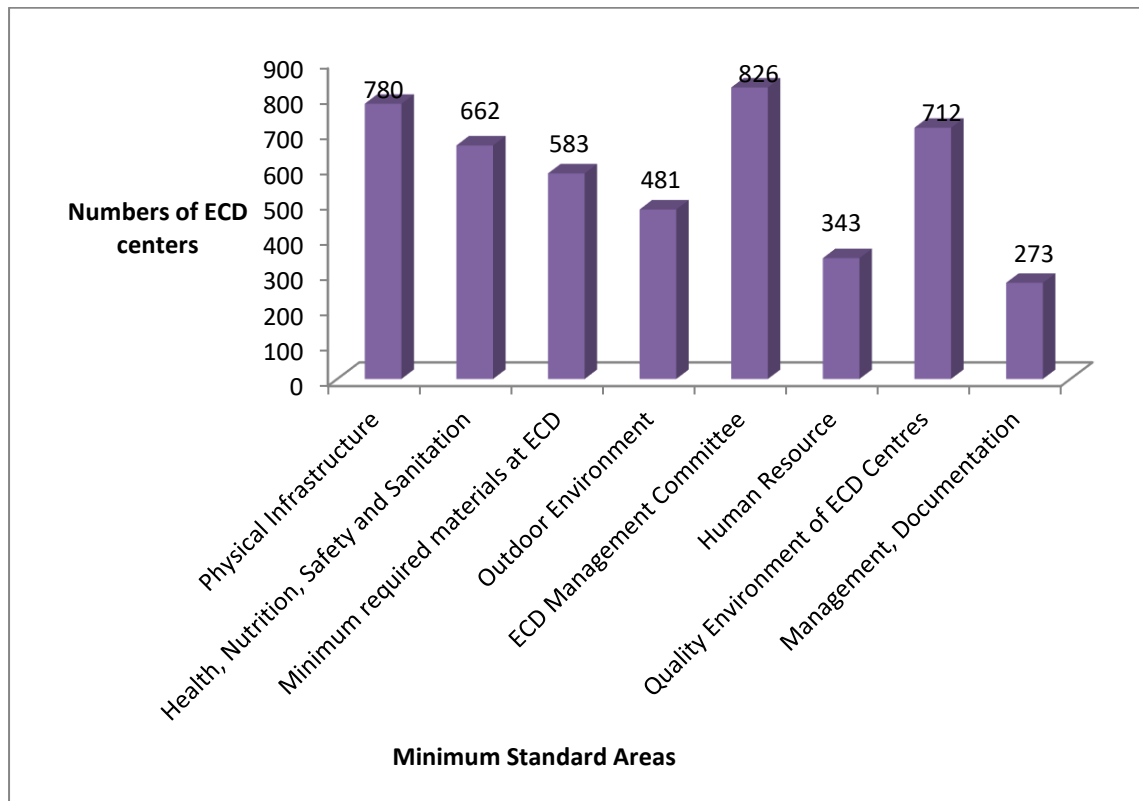


The above diagram represents the number of ECD centers that meet all the requirements mentioned in the National Minimum Standard of ECD centers in terms of the given areas and, hence, are categorized as 'A' level of ECD centers. The major areas of ECD centers assessed in this study are physical infrastructure, learning materials, Outdoor and indoor environment, ECD management, human resource, document management, etc. The number of ECD centers that exists in category 'A' in each area as mentioned in the diagram above have been selected out of 1925 ECD centers under this study. The diagram shows that the management of 553 ECD centers meets maximum number of indicators and ranked as A. Similarly, 380 ECD centers in outdoor environment and 361 centers in health, nutrition, and safety were found to meet the requirements as per National Minimum Standard. Only 80 and 111 number of ECD centers was found to exist in category 'A' in terms of ECD documentation and human resource respectively.

ECD centers in category 'B' by their Areas/Aspects

The number of ECD centers meeting the requirement of average quality in terms of the eight areas of each ECD center has been presented in figure below:

Figure 3: ECD Center of category 'B' based on National Minimum Standard

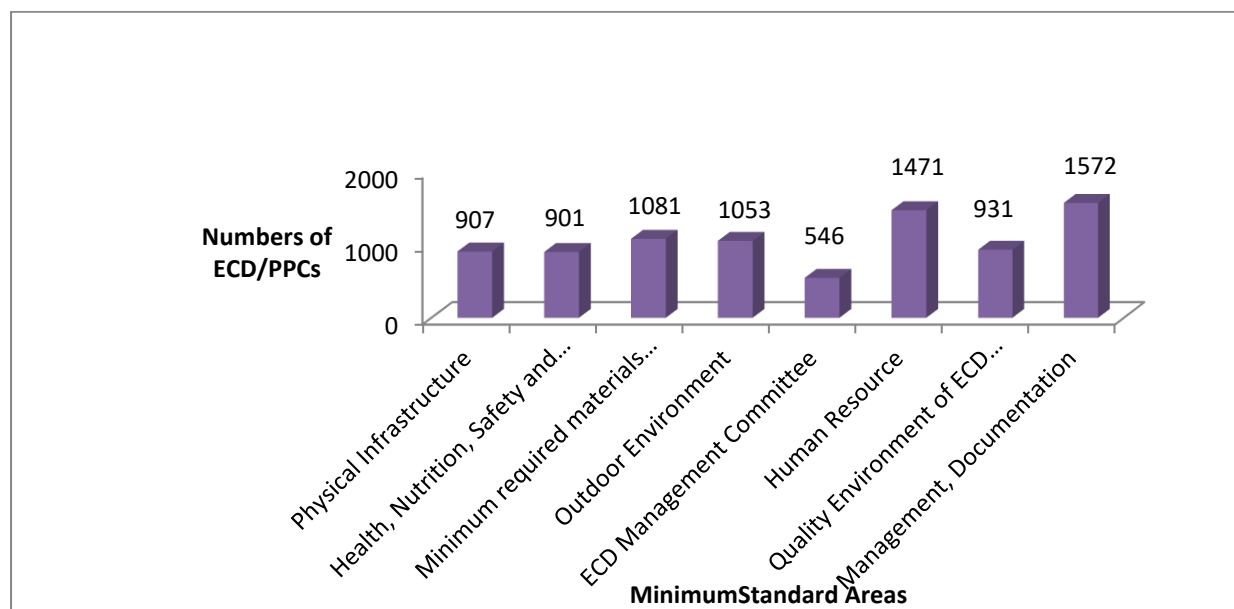


The above diagram consists of the number of ECD centers in category 'B' in terms of the various aspects of ECD centers mentioned in it. The figure shows that maximum number of ECD centers has been able to maintain and practice ECD management and materials required for quality environment in the center. The areas such as physical infrastructure, safety and sanitation, learning materials, etc. encompass the number of ECD centers as 780, 662, 583 respectively. Comparatively, very few numbers (343 and 273) of ECD centers have been able to manage human resource and documentation.

ECD centers in category 'C' by their Areas/Aspects

The number of ECD centers that appeared in category 'C' in each studied area mentioned in National Minimum Standard has been presented in the figure below:

Figure 4: ECD Center of category 'C' based on National Minimum Standard



The above diagram represents the number of ECD centers that represent into category 'C' in terms of the given aspects for the requirements of ECD centers. The ECD centers in this category were not found to meet more than 50% of the indicators as mentioned in the National Minimum Standard of ECD centers. The area such as documentation of ECD centers such as attendance, meeting minutes, supervision records, resource inventory were poor. Similarly, the situation of human resource of ECD centers, outdoor environment, etc were found comparatively poorer in the ECD centers in this category.

While analyzing the ECD centers in category C maximum number of ECD centers have very poor condition of learning and play materials, document management. Likewise, the other areas such as physical infrastructure distance of ECD centers from children home, health, and sanitation and quality environment were also appeared to be poor.

Summary

The ECD centers under this study can be taken as good, satisfactory and poor. The percentage of good and average ECD centers 36 and the percentage of weak ECD centers in terms of the specified areas in National Minimum Standard are 64. The parents and children of 36% of the ECD centers are benefited directly. Despite of minimum investment 36% of the ECD centers have reached the standard as per National Minimum Standard which can be taken as good achievement in the part of ECD centers and their key stakeholders.

CHAPTER IV

DISTRICT-WISE STANDARD OF ECD CENTERS

In the course of study the status of ECD centers were observed in different aspects such as physical infrastructure, health, nutrition, safety, sanitation, quality learning materials at ECD centers, ECD management, human resource, document management, etc. These aspects of ECD centers have been categorized as A, B and C as shown in each table below. The ECD center that met 50% requirement of the National Minimum Standard was rated as B; those which fell above and below 50% were rated as category A and C respectively. In this way the status of ECD centers in terms of the availability and strength of their various aspects have been analyzed and interpreted district wise below:

Status of ECD Centers in Achham

The ECD centers in Achham are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas. There are 397 ECD centers currently running in Achham. Out of them 64 are supported by Save the Children with the collaboration of local PNGOs.

Table 3: ECD Centers in Achham (%)

Area / Aspects of ECD centers	C	B	A
All areas	100	0	0
Ideal indicators	100	0	0
Physical Infrastructure	93.75	6.25	0
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation (HNSS)	92.19	7.81	0
Minimum required materials at ECD	96.88	3.13	0
Outdoor Environment	87.3	12.7	0
ECD Management	67.19	32.81	0
Human Resource	96.88	3.13	0
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	93.75	6.25	0
Document management	100	0	0

The status of these ECD centers were studied in terms of various indicators as mentioned in table 3. According to the data (Table 3) each aspect of the ECD center in Achham met the requirements (as indicated in the National Minimum Standard of ECD centers) only up to 50% and hence they were placed in the category of only B and C. The data show that almost all the indicators were rated in C and very few of them fell into the category B. For example, in terms of infrastructure 93.75% of the studied ECD centers were found to possess only poor infrastructure which could not even meet the 50% requirements as per the National Minimum

Standard of ECD centers and only 6.25 of them could meet only 50% of the requirements specified in the national minimum standard and hence they were put into the category B. This shows that the status of ECD centers in Achham is worse. Out of eight areas of ECD centers under this study physical infrastructure, learning materials, human resource, quality environment, document management, etc. were found in urgent need of support.

The status of ECD centers in Achham was assessed as an integrated form of eight areas / components available at ECD centers, viz. (a) physical infrastructure, (b) health, nutrition, safety and sanitation, (c) Learning materials, (d) outdoor environment, (e) ECDMC, (f) human resource, (g) quality environment of ECD centers and (h) document management.

While taking 'physical infrastructure' into account the availability of the seven aspects of physical infrastructure (as mentioned in the National Minimum Standard) were assessed. The seven aspects of physical infrastructure included the things like size of the ECD Room/ building, furniture, space etc. (For detail, See National Minimum Standard, indicator no. 1.1.1-1.2.6). The data (Table 3) maintains that more than 93% of the ECD centers in Achham hold their position in category C. This reveals that 93% of the ECD centers under this study in Achham were not found to possess the ideal physical infrastructure. Only 6.25% of the ECD centers under this study could maintain about 50% of the requirement in terms of physical infrastructure as per the National Minimum Standard and, therefore, they were categorized as B (Table 3). Since the physical infrastructure of the ECD centers in Achham is much primitive, the ECD service they disseminate to the children in question is not convincing. It is, therefore, obvious that there is still a large room to make efforts for enrichment in physical infrastructure of the ECD centers in Achham.

The HNSS is a component to be assessed to infer the quality of the status of the ECD centers. The need to assess the condition of HNSS of the ECD centers follows the premise that children learn quicker and better if the affairs of health; safety and sanitation at ECD centers are positive and motivating for them. The National Minimum Standard has specified nine different indicators to ensure the basic status of HNSS at ECD centers (see annex for detail). This study assessed the condition of HNSS available at the ECD centers under this study in Achham. According to the data (Table 3) more than 92% of the studied ECD centers in Achham fell into category C, which means they poorly maintain the HNSS for children within the centers. The figures of ECD centers (92.19% in category C and 7.81 in category B) in terms of HNSS indicate that the efforts for quality HNSS within the centers in Achham remain inadequate or useless. Hence, the status of HNSS in the studied ECD centers in Achham is not encouraging and, therefore, it is to be supported with great attention.

Learning materials management is one of the basic components of the status of ECD centers. It is a prerequisite to the child centered that takes place in the classroom. The quality of learning is largely dependent upon the use of the learning materials during teaching-learning activities. While studying the status of ECD centers under this study the availability of learning materials (either readymade or prepared by the facilitators) in the ECD centers was examined. The learning materials assessed in this study is given in the National Minimum Standard (from indicators 3.1.1-3.1.31). This study explored that more than 96% (Table 3) of the ECD centers studied in Achham could hardly possess the learning materials at ECD room. Since the status of learning materials possessed by facilitator was quite poor, their status fell into category C in terms of the availability of learning materials within the centers. Only 3.13% of the ECD centers appeared in category B in terms of learning materials. This means only 3.13% of them could maintain the learning materials moderately within the centers. Since the large number of ECD centers is too far to meet the criteria of ECD learning materials as mentioned in the National Minimum Standard, the learning outcome of the children in these ECD centers cannot go in the line of ECD principles. This also reveals that the ECD facilitators in Achham need vigorous inputs for developing learning materials within the centers through frequent training and workshops.

Learning depend upon the activities that take place within the classroom. Outdoor environment also has a key role to promote learning at the ECD centers. The total learning and development of a child is, therefore, an outcome of the both outdoor and classroom environment of the ECD centers. The quality outdoor environment, thus, is unavoidable and imperative for ECD centers (The indicator of quality outdoor environment is mentioned in the National Minimum Standard, indicator no. 4.1.). This study also included the assessment of the outdoor environment available at the ECD centers. The data reveals the fact that more than 87% of the ECD centers in Achham under this study could not, even moderately, maintain the quality outdoor environment as mentioned in National Minimum Standard and, therefore, they were categorized as C. However, 12.7% of the ECD centers appeared as category B in maintaining outdoor environment. This reveals that the basic materials to ensure quality outdoor environment at ECD centers under this study in Achham are missing. This also shows that the children of more than 87% of the ECD center in Achham are largely prevented from participating and enjoying outdoor games and activities to promote their learning.

ECD Management is one of the key components of the status of ECD centers. It has crucial role in managing and leading the ECD centers. It looks after the ECD centers in terms of their

quality services, maintenance, sustainability, etc. The quality status of ECD centers is largely influenced by the quality of the managerial team and its performances. The ECD National Minimum Standard consists of seven points to be considered to make a quality ECD management. This study examined the availability and practices of these seven indicators of quality ECD management at ECD centers under this study. The data shows that more than 67% of the ECD centers were categorized as C and more than 32% of them as B. This means about 67% of them are very poor in maintaining and practicing the indicators of ECD management as specified in National Minimum Standard and about 32% of them are moderate in the same. This shows that ECD management in ECD centers under this study in Achham is not much proficient to handle the ECD centers. Similarly, it is also obvious that the managerial condition of more than 67% of the ECD centers under this study in Achham is quite poor. They need vigorous supports and inputs to be proficient enough to meet the criteria as suggested in National Minimum Standard.

Human resource is indispensable for quality ECD services at ECD centers. The quality of ECD centers is largely dependent upon the capacity of the human resource available at the ECD centers. The indicators of quality human resource are given in National Minimum Standard (Indicators no. 6.1.1- 6.3.7). This study examined the quality of human resource in the line of the indicators. The data shows that more than 96% of the ECD centers are much too poor in meeting the criteria of quality human resource and only 3.13% of the ECD centers moderately maintain the same as per National Minimum Standard. This shows that the ECD centers under this study could have felt much too difficult to ensure the quality services to the children in question. It also infers that the ECD centers under this study in Achham require frequent and vigorous inputs and supports to develop their human resource.

Quality learning is largely dependent upon the quality of environment available at the ECD centers. The indicators of quality environment at ECD centers are stated in National Minimum Standard (from indicators no. 7.1.1 to 7.1.7). This study assessed these indicators in each ECD centers under this study and found that more than 93% of the ECD centers are much too far in meeting the indicators for quality environment as mentioned in National Minimum Standard. This shows that the environment of more than 96% of the ECD centers is not supportive to learning for ECD in the ECD centers in Achham. This also shows that it needs an urgent support to promote the learning environment of the ECD centers in Achham.

Document management was assessed as one of the components of the status of the studied ECD centers in Achham. The data shows that all the ECD centers under this study are quite poor at managing and documenting the procedures, events, materials, learning outcome, etc.

This reveals that the things at ECD centers under this study are not up-to-dated and they are messy as well. It is, therefore, obvious that this aspect of the ECD centers in Achham requires thorough observation, guidance, counseling, inputs and instruction.

Status of ECD Centers in Baglung

There are 304 ECD centers currently running in Baglung. Out of them 55 Centers focused by SCI were accounted for this study. The ECD centers in Baglung are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 4: ECD Centers in Baglung (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	34.55	54.55	10.91
Model	20	72.73	7.27
Physical Infrastructure	23.64	40	36.36
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation (HNSS)	21.82	21.82	56.36
Minimum required materials at ECD	23.64	43.64	32.73
Outdoor Environment	49.09	45.45	5.45
ECD Management	16.36	29.09	54.55
Human Resource	72.73	20	7.27
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	40	47.27	12.73
Document management	50.91	25.45	23.64

The status of ECD centers was studied in terms of the indicators mentioned in the column of 'area' (Table 4). The indicators such as ECD management; health, nutrition, safety and sanitation are the prominent one in which 54.55 and 56.36 percentages of ECD centers appeared to be in category A. Similarly in terms of physical infrastructure 36.36 percent of ECD centers appeared in category A. This shows that the above mentioned ECD centers in Baglung met the criteria of minimum standard in the three areas of ECD centers. This also means that the ECD centers (36.36%) in Baglung possess their own building along with toilets, furniture, etc. sufficiently.

The situation of physical infrastructure in Baglung is considerably better in the sense that more than 36% of the ECD in Baglung was recorded as category A and 40% of them as B (Table 4). This means 36% of the ECD centers in Baglung completely meet the criteria of ECD physical infrastructure as mentioned in National Minimum Standard and 40% of them moderately follow the same. However, 23.64% of the ECD centers in Baglung appeared in

category C, which means they are poor at maintaining the physical infrastructure minimally required for the ECD centers.

Similarly, the condition of Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation (HNSS) of the ECD centers in Baglung covers more than 56% of the ECD centers in category A and more than 21% of the ECD centers in category B. This means 56% of the ECD centers completely met the criteria of HNSS as per National Minimum Standard and 21% of them moderately met the criteria of the same. This means the condition of HNSS of most of the ECD centers in Baglung is appreciative. This reveals that the children in these ECD centers feels safe and they enjoy healthy environment within the centers.

While assessing the status of ECD centers in terms of ECD materials the data reveals that more than 32% of ECD centers appeared in category A and more than 43% of them appeared in category B. This shows that more than 32% of the ECD centers in Baglung has met the complete criteria of ECD learning materials and while more than 43% of the ECD centers moderately met the criteria as mentioned in the National Minimum Standard. Yet, there are 23.64% of the ECD centers in Baglung and are quite poor in maintaining learning materials at ECD centers as per National Minimum Standard. This shows that about 43% of the ECD centers in Baglung are in progress in terms of learning materials and about 23% of them need help for the same. It reveals that the facilitators in these ECD centers need vigorous inputs and instructions in terms of developing ECD materials at the ECD centers.

Outdoor environment of the ECD centers in Baglung is comparatively weaker than the other components of the ECD centers. According to the data (Table 4), almost 50% of the ECD centers fell into category C in terms of outdoor environment. This means that they poorly maintain the outdoor environment as specified by the National Minimum Standard. This also specifies that the children in these ECD centers are prevented from outdoor games and activities which exert greater influence upon their total learning outcome.

The status of ECD management in Baglung appeared as most improved area of ECD centers in the way that only about 16% of the ECD centers appeared in category C and rest of the ECD centers fell into category B (29.09%) and A (54.55%). This data indicates that the ECD management in these ECD centers (in category B and A) meet the complete (for those in category A) and partial (for those in category B) criteria of ECD management as indicated in National Minimum Standard. This also shows that the management in these ECD centers in Baglung has possessed the skills and knowledge to run ECD centers effectively.

Regarding human resource more than 72% of the ECD centers under this study in Baglung are poor. Only 20% of them fell into category B and only about 7% of them are in

C. This means that more than 72% of the ECD centers in Baglung extensively lack trained and competent teachers. This also means that the quality of ECD services delivered by these ECD centers is also less effective.

The quality of environment at ECD centers in Baglung needs vigorous support in 40% of the ECD center since they lack basic things to compose quality environment as suggested in National Minimum Standard. However, 47.27% of the ECD centers under this study in Baglung possess moderate environment. This means that quality of environment in these ECD centers meet only about 50% of the requirement as per the National Minimum Standard. Again, 12% of the ECD centers in Baglung were found to possess all the indicators to compose quality environment within the centers as per the National Minimum Standard.

The status of the document management of the ECD centers in Baglung was found poor in 50% of the ECD centers under this study and hence they were categorized as C. Similarly, 25% of them were categorized as B and about 23% of them categorized as A. This means that 25% of ECD centers fulfill about 50% of the requirements and 23% of them fulfill almost all the requirements of the ECD environment as suggested in National Minimum Standard.

The Status of ECD Centers in Bardiya

Out of 595 ECD centers in Bardiya 165 centers were assessed to specify their status in terms of the indicators as mentioned in table 5. The ECD centers in Bardiya are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 5: ECD Centers in Bardiya (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	67.27	32.12	0.61
Model	36.08	44.94	18.99
Physical Infrastructure	41.82	56.97	1.21
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation	38.18	48.48	13.33
Minimum required materials at ECD	56.36	41.82	1.82
Outdoor Environment	40	36.97	23.03
ECD Management	26.67	61.82	11.52
Human Resource	83.64	15.76	0.61
Quality Environment of ECD Centres	50.3	45.45	4.24
Document management	90.91	9.09	0

A large number of ECD centers in Bardiya appeared into category C and very few of them appeared to be into category A.

The percentage of ECD centers (Table 5) in terms of the indicators assessed in this study suggests that the ECD centers in Bardiya needs the gravest attention in the aspects of document management in which more than 90% of the ECD centers could very poorly meet the requirements as indicated in National Minimum Standard. Almost same aggravated situation was found in terms of human resource (0.61 in category A), materials at ECD centers (1.82% of ECD center in category A) and physical infrastructure (1.21% of ECD centers in category A). However, ECD management committee, health & nutrition, outdoor environment, quality environment of ECD, etc were recorded to encouragingly meet about the 50% of the requirements mentioned in National Minimum Standard and hence the ECD centers (61.82%, 48.48%, 36.97% and 45.45% respectively) were recorded in category B. This means that the ECD centers in Bardiya under this study need extensive supports and inputs particularly in the areas of human resource and document management. Since many of the ECD centers fell into category B, it infers that these ECD centers partially meet the criteria of National Minimum Standard in relation to their corresponding areas.

The Status of ECD Centers in Dhanusha

There are 101 ECD centers in practice in Dhanusha district among which 77 were supported by SCI. Their status was assessed in terms of the specified indicators under this study. The ECD centers in Dhanusha are classified as A, B and C in table 6. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 6: ECD Centers in Dhanusha (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	77.92	16.88	5.19
Model	59.46	24.32	16.22
Physical Infrastructure	63.64	29.87	6.49
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation	58.44	19.48	22.08
Minimum required materials at ECD	76.62	15.58	7.79
Outdoor Environment	71.43	20.78	7.79
ECD Management	64.94	16.88	18.18
Human Resource	88.31	11.69	0
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	68.83	27.27	3.9
Document management	87.01	9.09	3.9

The percentage of ECD centers noted in the columns A, B and C corresponding to each indicator (see Table 6) shows that very few of the ECD centers in Dhanusha could maintain the areas of ECD in the centers completely and proficiently as suggested in the National Minimum Standard. Particularly, the indicators such as management, quality environment, human resource, physical infrastructure, ECD materials and outdoor environment of the ECD centers were found to be in the need of urgent and vigorous support. The ECD centers recorded in column B have not exceeded even 30% in any indicator. This means more than 70% of the ECD centers in Dhanusha district were noted to fall into category C in terms of almost all the indicators (See Table 6).

This indicates that status of ECD centers in Dhanusha district is not promising. Since their status, if not all but many, is aggravated the services that ECD centers deliver are of less quality and to some extent ineffective. This also means that the efforts made so far to promote the status and quality of ECD centers in Dhanusha remained inadequate.

The Status of ECD Centers in Doti

Out of 305 ECD centers in Doti, 70 ECD centers were supported by SCI. This study assessed the status of these 70 ECD centers. The ECD centers in Doti are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 7: ECD Centers in Doti (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	67.14	32.86	0
Ideal	19.3	42.11	38.6
Physical Infrastructure	48.57	50	1.43
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation	48.57	35.71	15.71
Minimum required materials at ECD	57.14	41.43	1.43
Outdoor Environment	80	18.57	1.43
ECD Management	41.43	45.71	12.86
Human Resource	70	30	0
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	47.14	41.43	11.43
Document management	87.14	12.86	0

It was found that almost all the ECD centers could hardly maintain the listed indicators (Table 7) in the way as mentioned in the National Minimum Standard. Particularly,

the areas of ECD centers such as document management of ECD centers (more than 87% of the ECD center very poor), human resource (70% very poor), outdoor environment (80% of the ECD centers very poor) and learning materials (more than 57% of the ECD centers very poor) were in the need of urgent support. However, physical infrastructure, ECD management, and quality of environment at ECD centers were found moderate in 50%, 45.71%, and 41.43% of the ECD centers respectively.

This shows that the status of ECD center in Doti is also poor. About 40 to 80 percent of ECD centers fell into category C, which asserts that the indicators that indicate their status are very poor and weak. This reveals that they still need heavy support to improve.

The Status of ECD Centers in Kailali

There are 836 ECD centers currently running in Kailali district among which 348 were supported by SCI. The ECD centers in Kailali are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 8: ECD Centers in Kailali (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	54.89	33.33	11.78
Model	7.69	42.31	50
Physical Infrastructure	44.54	33.05	22.41
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation	31.32	35.34	33.33
Minimum required materials at ECD	50.86	25.57	23.56
Outdoor Environment	46.24	20.81	32.95
ECD Management	11.49	41.09	47.41
Human Resource	79.02	13.51	7.47
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	40.23	34.48	25.29
Document management	89.37	7.18	3.45

While studying the status of ECD centers supported by SCI in Kailali it was recorded (See table 8) that more than 89% of the ECD centers were found in aggravating situation in terms of the aspect of document management and the condition of more than 79% of them appeared to be quite feeble in terms of human resource. Similarly, the indicators such as ECD materials (50.86% of ECD centers in category C), outdoor environment (46.24% of ECD centers in category C) and physical infrastructure (44.54% of ECD centers in category C) were found to be moderately meeting the standard as mentioned in the National Minimum

Standard. The ECD management (in 47.41% of the ECD centers in category A) was found comparatively prominent in Kailali. In the aspect of ECD management about 41% of the ECD centers fell into category B and about 47% of them into A. This means about 41% of them moderately maintain the criteria of management and about 47% of them somehow completely possess the same as mentioned in the National Minimum Standard. Except this, the other areas of ECD centers in Kailali are much too feeble, among which the components such as document management, human resource, outdoor environment, ECD materials, physical infrastructure, etc. are mostly aggravated ones.

This reveals the fact that the status of most of the ECD centers under this study is in the need of heavy support. This also means that the quality delivered through these ECD centers is largely hampered due to their weak condition as mentioned above.

The Status of ECD Centers in Kalikot

There are 195 ECD centers currently running in Kalikot district. This study assessed the status of only 68 ECD centers supported by SCI. The ECD centers in Kalikot are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 9: ECD centers in Kalikot (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	79.41	19.12	1.47
Model	53.85	40.38	5.77
Physical Infrastructure	47.06	50	2.94
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation	76.47	17.65	5.88
Minimum required materials at ECD	70.59	26.47	2.94
Outdoor Environment	50	41.18	8.82
ECD Management	20.59	60.29	19.12
Human Resource	86.76	10.29	2.94
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	48.53	44.12	7.35
Document management	91.18	8.82	0

As presented in Table 7 more than 91% of the ECD centers appeared in category C in terms of document management, this means, their status of document management within the centers was noted to be quite messy and weak. Similarly, only about 2 to 8 percent of the ECD centers were found to be recorded in category A (See Table 9) in terms of physical infrastructure, ECD materials, human resource, Health& sanitation, quality of ECD

environment at ECD centers and outdoor environment. However, the status of ECD management was found moderately improved in about more than 60% of the ECD centers under this study in Kalikot. The data show that a large number of ECD centers in Kalikot fell into category C in almost all the areas / components that indicate the status of ECD centers. It proves that these ECD centers are much too weak in possessing the corresponding components as mentioned in table 9. This also reveals that any effort to improve the status of ECD centers in question remained inadequate and the ECD service delivered through these ECD centers could hardly maintain the desired quality. It is thus obvious that the ECD centers in Kailali are in urgent need of support with all respects.

The Status of ECD Centers in Kanchanpur

There are 503 ECD centers currently running in Kanchanpur district. The status of 98 ECD centers supported by SCI was assessed in this study. The ECD centers in Kanchanpur are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 10: ECD Centers in Kanchanpur (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	65.31	33.67	1.02
Model	19.39	60.2	20.41
Physical Infrastructure	45.92	51.02	3.06
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation (HNSS)	36.73	44.9	18.37
Minimum required materials at ECD	54.08	41.84	4.08
Outdoor Environment	56.12	21.43	22.45
ECD Management	22.45	54.08	23.47
Human Resource	82.65	17.35	0
Quality Environment of ECD Centres	45.92	50	4.08
Document management	92.86	6.12	1.02

As the data shows (See Table 10) more than 80% of the ECD centers were found to be quite poor in the area of human resource and more than 92% of them were noted to be quite worse in the area of document management. This gives the meaning that the ECD centers in Kanchanpur are in the need of vigorous support to improve their managerial system within the centers and human resource to ensure quality learning at the centers. According to the data (see Table 10) the areas such as physical infrastructure, ECD management and quality environment at ECD centers were found moderately improving (in category B) in about 51%, 54% and 50% of the ECD centers in Kanchanpur. The data reveals that except ECD management the other components to measure status of ECD centers in Kanchanpur are

discouraging. Though some components such as physical infrastructure, HNSS and learning materials cover about 40 to 50 percent of the ECD center in category B, the majority of ECD centers were recorded in category C.

This means the ECD centers in Kanchanpur lack sincere support and desired inputs to strengthen their status. This also means that they do not possess adequate resources and technical support for their advancement. It proves that the ECD centers in questions could hardly delivered the ECD services in the line of ECD philosophy because their status basically in terms of human resource, document management and ECD learning materials is largely weak.

The Status of ECD Centers in Kavre

There are 446 ECD centers currently running in Kavre. Out of them 41 were supported by SCI. The ECD centers in Kavre are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 11: ECD Centers in Kavre (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	58.54	41.46	0
Model	2.44	34.15	63.41
Physical Infrastructure	9.76	82.93	7.32
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation	53.66	34.15	12.2
Minimum required materials at ECD	41.46	53.66	4.88
Outdoor Environment	75.61	14.63	9.76
ECD Management	2.44	46.34	51.22
Human Resource	78.05	21.95	0
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	14.63	63.41	21.95
Document management	95.12	4.88	0

This study assessed the status of SCI-supported ECD centers on the basis of given areas/ indicators (Table 11). According to the data more than 82% of the ECD centers were categorized as B and only about 9 and 7 percent of them were recorded in the categories C and A respectively in terms of physical infrastructure. This means the status of their physical infrastructure was recorded to meet about 50% of the requirements mentioned in the National Minimum Standard. Similarly, about 63% and 53% of them were also noted in category B in terms of the quality of the environment within the centers and ECD learning materials

respectively. Similarly, in the areas of document management and human resource more than 95% and 78% of the ECD centers were found to perform and maintain their status quite poorly. In these two noted area none of the ECD centers under this study could be listed in category A. This shows that the managerial aspects of ECD centers and availability and use of human resource in this district is most aggravated area for which urgent and vigorous support is imperative. However, the ECD centers in this district has been able to develop the system of ECD management prominently and was recorded in category A which covers about 51% of the ECD centers.

The Status of ECD Centers in Mahottari

Out of 486 ECD centers in Mahottari the status of 57 ECD centers supported by SCI were assessed in this study. The ECD centers in Mahottari are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 12: ECD Centers in Mahottari (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	66.67	29.82	3.51
Model	47.37	36.84	15.79
Physical Infrastructure	56.14	31.58	12.28
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation (HNSS)	49.12	38.6	12.28
Minimum required materials at ECD	63.16	28.07	8.77
Outdoor Environment	57.89	17.54	24.56
ECD Management	49.12	26.32	24.56
Human Resource	80.7	12.28	7.02
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	45.61	49.12	5.26
Document management	78.95	19.3	1.75

According to the data (see Table 12) 40 to 80 percentages of the ECD centers were categorized as C, about 12 to 30 percentages of the ECD centers were categorized as B and about 1 to 20 percentages of the ECD centers were categorized as A in almost all the areas of ECD centers under this study. This shows that a large number of ECD centers still scarcely maintain the areas specified for their status. Document management, quality of environment at ECD centers, human resource, ECD materials, etc. were tabulated as the feeblest areas of ECD centers in Mahottari. Specifically, the condition of human resource of more than 80% of the ECD centers in Mahottari is recorded in category C. This means that these ECD centers do not possess proficient and skilled human resource. Similarly the area of document

management holds more than 78% of the ECD centers in category C. This shows that the document management of these ECD centers is poor. However, the condition of HNSS of about 50% of the ECD centers is moderate, i.e. neither too weak nor excellent. Regarding ECD learning materials about 63% of the ECD centers fell into category C and about 28% of them in B. This means leaning materials in 63% of the ECD centers does not meet the criteria as mentioned in National Minimum Standard. On the whole the status of ECD centers under this study is needed strong support and inputs to improve.

Status of ECD Centers in Mugu

There are 100 ECD centers currently running in Mugu district among which 23 were supported by SCI. This study assessed the status of SCI-supported ECD centers in Mugu. The ECD centers in Mugu are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 13: ECD Centers in Mugu (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	65.22	30.43	4.35
Model	21.74	52.17	26.09
Physical Infrastructure	43.48	43.48	13.04
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation (HNSS)	56.52	39.13	4.35
Minimum required materials at ECD	52.17	39.13	8.7
Outdoor Environment	52.17	30.43	17.39
ECD Management	43.48	39.13	17.39
Human Resource	86.96	8.7	4.35
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	56.52	34.78	8.7
Document management	82.61	13.04	4.35

The data (Table 13) vividly shows that only 4.35% of ECD could maintain their area of document management, human resource and health & sanitation as per the National Minimum Standard. Almost about 40 to more than 80% of the ECD centers fell into the category C in all the areas of ECD centers listed in table 13. The data reveals that the components such as human resource and document management are in the most vulnerable situation which respectively covers 86.96 and 82.61 percents of ECD centers in category C. This shows that the facilitators are not competent and trained in these ECD centers. It also

conveys the meaning that the facilitators in these ECD centers require thorough inputs and supports through trainings and workshops.

Since more than 80% of the ECD centers were categorized as C in terms of their document management, the daily activities and regulations of these ECD centers could be proved to be messy and random. Again, the components of the ECD centers such as HNSS (56.52%), learning materials (52.17%), outdoor environment (52.17%) and quality of environment within the centers (56.52%) are moderate in about half of the total number of the ECD centers under this study. Since about 50% of the ECD centers are categorized as C in terms of these components, it is proved that these ECD centers need deliberate and extensive efforts to improve these components for developing their status to desired extent.

The Status of ECD Centers in Nawalparasi

There are 543 ECD centers currently running in Nawalparasi district. Out of them 20 were supported by SCI. The ECD centers in Nawalparasi are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 14: ECD Centers in Nawalparasi (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	80	20	-
Model	75	15	10
Physical Infrastructure	75	10	15
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation (HNSS)	70	20	10
Minimum required materials at ECD	75	15	10
Outdoor Environment	75	20	5
ECD Management	50	30	20
Human Resource	80	10	10
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	80	10	10
Document management	85	5	10

According to the data (Table 14) only 5 to 20 percent of the ECD centers appeared to possess the given indicator fully (category A) and partially (category B) as suggested in the National Minimum Standard. This means that the status of 20 to 80 percent of the ECD centers was found to maintain their status quite poorly. The areas such human resource, quality environment at ECD centers and document management, respectively, covers 80 and 85 percent of the ECD centers in category C. Similarly, the areas of ECD centers such as

physical infrastructure, learning materials and outdoor environment covers 75% of the ECD centers in category C. Only ECD management has appeared as somehow prominent one since it covers only 50% of the ECD centers in category C.

This reveals that 70 to 80 percent of the ECD centers under this study could not be observed to maintain their corresponding components as prescribed in the National Minimum Standard. Since a large number of ECD centers in Nawalparasi are too far to reach the requirements mentioned in the National Minimum Standard, ECD services they deliver can't be proved to be in the line of ECD practices and philosophy in Nepal. It also specifies that the efforts to improve these ECD centers remained inadequate.

The Status of ECD Centers in Rolpa

There are 300 ECD centers running in Rolpa district among them 60 were supported by SCI. The ECD centers in Rolpa are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 15: ECD Centers in Rolpa (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	86.67	13.33	0
Model	44.44	52.78	2.78
Physical Infrastructure	68.33	31.67	0
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation (HNSS)	51.67	40	8.33
Minimum required materials at ECD	90	8.33	1.67
Outdoor Environment	43.33	46.67	10
ECD Management	56.67	41.67	1.67
Human Resource	88.33	11.67	0
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	73.33	26.67	0
Document management	88.33	11.67	0

The data indicating the status of SCI- supported ECD centers (See Table 15) vividly reveal that none of the ECD centers completely performed and maintained the indicators such as physical infrastructure, human resource, quality of environment and document management as per the National Minimum Standard. ECD management and ECD materials were also performed and maintained by only about 1% of the ECD centre. Similarly, ECD management, outdoor environment and health & sanitation areas were found moderately covered by about 40% of the ECD centers (See Table 15, category B). The data shows that

human resource, environment of ECD centers and document management are the most aggravated areas in Rolpa which cover 88.3%, 73.33% and 88.33% of the ECD centers respectively in category C. This shows that these ECD centers in Rolpa possess these three areas quite poorly. It also reveals that the aggravating condition of human resource and quality environment of these ECD centers would have largely hampered the quality of ECD services. Similarly 90% of the ECD centers in Rolpa fell into category C in terms of the availability of the ECD learning materials. This indicates that the facilitators in these ECD centers not proficient enough to develop learning materials. This also means that the facilitators require developing their competence through frequent trainings and workshops.

Again, physical infrastructure is another area of about 68% of the ECD centers in Rolpa which also are in the needs of vigorous supports. This also means that these large number of ECD centers lack the basic physical infrastructure as mentioned the National minimum Standard. However, the areas such as HNSS, outdoor environment and ECD management hold 40%, 46% and 41% of the ECD centers in category B. This means these ECD centers meet 50% of the requirements in these areas as per the National Minimum Standard.

The Status of ECD Centers in Rukum

There are 252 ECD centers currently running in Rukum. Out of them 50 were supported by SCI and considered to assess their status in this study. The ECD centers in Rukum are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 16: ECD Centers in Rukum (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	98	0	2
Model	42.86	46.94	10.2
Physical Infrastructure	76	24	0
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation	60	38	2
Minimum required materials at ECD	82	18	0
Outdoor Environment	58	40	2
ECD Management	70	26	4
Human Resource	90	10	0
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	74	22	4
Document management	96	0	0

The data (Table 16) show that the status of various indicators of ECD centers in Rukum is quite poor. For instance, 96% of the ECD centers under this study rated as category C because they could not maintain the document management within the ECD centers even up to 50% as mentioned in the National Minimum Standard. Similarly, the same is the case in human resource (90%), ECD materials (82%) and physical infrastructure (76%).

Since the above mentioned areas of ECD centers in Rukum cover a very large number of ECD centers in category C, it infers that these ECD centers do not possess qualified and competent facilitators. It also infers that the facilitators in these ECD centers are weak at developing ECD learning materials and the ECD centers in questions heavily lack necessary physical infrastructure. This indicates that the quality ECD services in these ECD centers get extensively hampered due to the poor availability of the components necessary for the quality ECD practices in these ECD centers.

The Status of ECD Centers in Saptari

Out of 629 ECD centers in Saptari, 44 were supported by SCI and their status was assessed in this study. The ECD centers in Saptari are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 17: ECD Centers in Saptari (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	88.64	9.09	2.27
Model	45.16	48.39	6.45
Physical Infrastructure	59.09	31.82	9.09
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation (HNSS)	47.73	40.91	11.36
Minimum required materials at ECD	81.82	15.91	2.27
Outdoor Environment	50	47.73	2.27
ECD Management	54.55	38.64	6.82
Human Resource	68.18	31.82	0
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	45.45	50	4.55
Document management	79.55	20.45	0

The areas of human resource and document management of the studied ECD centers in Saptari were assessed as miserable because none of the ECD centers was noted in category A in these two components of ECD centers and more than 79% and 68% were recorded in category C respectively. In terms of ECD environment at the centers, outdoor environment and HNSS more than 50% of the ECD centers were recorded as moderately improving ones.

However, the percentage of ECD centers in category B is quite much lesser than those in category C. This shows that the status of ECD centers in Saptari also requires a lot of effort to improve. The data shows that the status of learning materials in about 81% of the ECD centers in Saptari is poor.

This shows that about the facilitators in these ECD centers in Saptari lack skills and knowledge for developing ECD learning materials. This also infers that the quality of service delivered in lack of ECD learning materials remained inadequate and ineffective in these ECD centers in Saptari. Similarly, about 50% of the ECD centers were recorded in category C in terms of document management. This shows that daily running of these ECD centers is not systematic. The activities and program within these centers do not take place in order.

The Status of ECD Centers in Siraha

Out of 571 ECD centers in Siraha, 380 were supported by SCI and their status was assessed in terms of the given areas of ECD centers as listed in table 18. The ECD centers in Siraha are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 18: ECD Centers in Siraha (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	39.47	43.95	16.58
Model	26.35	31.44	42.21
Physical Infrastructure	26.32	50.53	23.16
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation (HNSS)	40.9	37.47	21.64
Minimum required materials at ECD	28.42	45.53	26.05
Outdoor Environment	44.15	22.07	33.78
ECD Management	9.21	43.95	46.84
Human Resource	51.32	30.79	17.89
Quality Environment of ECD Centres	27.18	40.11	32.72
Document management	57.89	31.32	10.79

According to the data (Table 18) many areas of the ECD centers under this study are better and, therefore, most of them were recorded in category A and B. Still the areas such as document management and human resource of the ECD centers appeared to demand more support in comparison to other areas of the ECD centers. According to the data, 40% of the ECD centers require support in HNSS and about 44% of them need support for improving their outdoor environment. On the whole, the status of ECD centers in Siraha is encouraging and improving.

The Status of ECD Centers in Sunsari

The ECD centers in Sunsari are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 19: ECD Centers in Sunsari (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	57.89	5.26	36.84
Model	45	55	0
Physical Infrastructure	10	60	30
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation (HNSS)	30	70	0
Minimum required materials at ECD	65	35	0
Outdoor Environment	10	35	55
ECD Management	100	0	0
Human Resource	50	45	5
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	100	0	0
Document management	100	0	0

The three areas (document management, quality environment at ECD centers and ECD management) of the ECD centers in Sunsari were found considerably weak in all the ECD centers under this study (See Table 19). In terms of HNSS (70%) and ECD materials (65%) the ECD centers remained only in category B and C respectively. In terms of physical infrastructure and outdoor environment the status of about 90% (including the category A and B) of the ECD centers is highly encouraging and improving. On the whole the status of ECD centers in Sunsari partially (only in some aspects) needs greater attention to improve. According to the data some areas such as physical infrastructure and outdoor environment are much more positive in Sunsari.

This shows that these ECD centers in Sunsari are good at resources for physical infrastructure and the children in these ECD centers enjoy outdoor games and activities considerably. But 50% of the ECD centers under this study in Sunsari are poor in terms of human resource, which shows that these ECD centers are in need of support to improve their condition of human resource. Again ECD learning material is the other component which holds 65% of the ECD centers in category C and 35% of them in category B. This infers that facilitators in these ECD centers are to be supported in developing their knowledge and skills to improve the situation of ECD learning materials.

The Status of ECD Centers in Tanahu

There are 314 ECD centers currently running in Tanahu in which 34 were supported by SCI. This study assessed the status of these 34 ECD centers. The ECD centers in Tanahu are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 20: ECD Centers in Tanahu (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	20.59	58.82	20.59
Model	5.88	64.71	29.41
Physical Infrastructure	5.88	52.94	41.18
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation (HNSS)	32.35	26.47	41.18
Minimum required materials at ECD	-	20.59	79.41
Outdoor Environment	23.53	41.18	35.29
ECD Management	-	38.24	61.76
Human Resource	47.06	44.12	8.82
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	26.47	61.76	11.76
Document management	35.29	52.94	11.76

According to the data presented in table 18, none of the ECD centers appeared in category C in terms of their performance recorded in the areas of ECD management and ECD materials. This means the status of ECD management and ECD materials of almost all the ECD centers under this study in Tanahu is highly encouraging since more than 61% and 79% of them met the criteria as mentioned in the National Minimum Standard and hence they appeared in category A. In addition to this, the area of ECD centers such as physical infrastructure, outdoor environment, quality of environment at ECD centers and even document management are encouragingly better in Tanahu (see Table 20).

This infers that the status of ECD centers in Tanahu is better in terms of the above specified components. Some ECD centers are improved and some are on the way to improvement. HNSS and human resource in about 32 and 47 percent of the ECD centers in Tanahu require still more support and input to improve.

The Status of ECD Centers in Udayapur

The ECD centers in Udayapur are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 21: ECD Centers in Udaypur (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	77.63	19.74	2.63
Model	48.89	44.44	6.67
Physical Infrastructure	60.53	35.53	3.95
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation (HNSS)	47.37	39.47	13.16
Minimum required materials at ECD	71.05	22.37	6.58
Outdoor Environment	67.12	20.55	12.33
ECD Management	39.47	44.74	15.79
Human Resource	84.21	15.79	0
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	63.16	28.95	7.89
Document management	82.89	14.47	2.63

Table 21 records more than 84% of the ECD center in category C and none of them in category A in terms of human resource. This indicates that the condition of human resource in these ECD centers in Udayapur is miserable. This also infers that these ECD centers could hardly meet the quality in the line of ECD philosophy since the facilitators are inadequate and they do not possess the competence as mentioned in National Minimum Standard. Similarly, the learning materials at ECD centers holds about 71% of the ECD centers in category C and only about 6% of them in category A. It reveals that the status of learning materials in these ECD centers in Udayapur is waiting for supports to improve. It also indicates that the facilitators in these ECD centers are not proficient enough in developing learning materials and, hence, they need vigorous support and input to increase their knowledge and skills for developing learning materials required in the ECD centers.

Similarly, the other aggravated area of the ECD centers in Udayapur is document management. This holds about 82% of the ECD centers under this study in category C. This infers that in these ECD centers, the ECD activities and program are not properly recorded and ECD documents are not instantly up-to-dated. However, the areas such as HNSS and ECD management are recorded as moderately improved ones. This shows that some areas of ECD centers in Udayapur need vigorous input while some others need a slight support to improve.

The Status of ECD Centers in Sindhupalchok

There are 284 ECD centers currently running in Sindhupalchok district among which 51 (supported by SCI) were studied to assess their status in terms of their areas (Table 22). The ECD centers in Sindhupalchok are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 22: ECD Centers in Sindhupalchok (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	96.08	3.92	0
Model	4	16	80
Physical Infrastructure	58.82	39.22	1.96
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation	50.98	43.14	5.88
Minimum required materials at ECD	92.16	7.84	0
Outdoor Environment	90.2	9.8	0
ECD Management	74.51	25.49	0
Human Resource	94.12	5.88	0
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	90.2	9.8	0
Document management	98.04	1.96	0

According to the data as presented in table 20, almost all the ECD centers could not meet the criteria as mentioned in National Minimum Standard in about all the areas of ECD centers and hence they were not able to appear in category A, except in the areas of physical infrastructure and health & sanitation. The majority of the ECD centers appeared in category C in each indicator mentioned in the table. This shows that the status of ECD centers in Sindhupalchok is deteriorating and, hence, they need vigorous attention and support to improve.

The Status of ECD Centers in Bajura

There are 213 ECD centers currently running in Bajura district. This study assessed the status of 124 ECD centers supported by SCI. The ECD centers in Bajura are classified as A, B and C in the table below. The table consists of the areas of ECD centers to be assessed to find out their status. The number of ECD centers (in percentage) has been given in each class/category (A, B and C) corresponding to the given areas.

Table 23: ECD centers in Bajura (%)

Area	C	B	A
All areas	90.32	9.68	0
Model	41.88	40.17	17.95
Physical Infrastructure	78.23	20.97	0.81
Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation	82.26	16.94	0.81
Minimum required materials at ECD	88.71	10.48	0.81
Outdoor Environment	77.24	13.82	8.94
ECD Management	38.71	54.03	0
Human Resource	91.94	8.06	0
Quality Environment of ECD Centers	67.74	29.03	3.23
Document management	94.35	5.65	0

The data (Table 23) states that almost all the areas of ECD centers studied under this study were too weak to meet the complete criteria mentioned in National Minimum Standard. However, more than 54% of the ECD centers were recorded in category B in terms of the status of ECD management. The majority of ECD centers were found to poorly maintain the indicators as per National Minimum Standard and hence they were categorized as C.

The gravest situation was found in the areas of document management and human resource in which none of the ECD centers was noted in the category A and their percentage in category B also appeared very poor. This shows that the status of management in about 50% of the ECD centers is moderate. On the whole the status of ECD centers in Bajura is much too far from the status prescribed in National Minimum Standard. This infers that the ECD centers in Bajura are in need of vigorous support of all kinds to improve their total quality of status.

Summary

Based on the information obtained from the sampled ECD centers for this study, the ECD centers are found to be in three different categories namely, 'A', 'B' and 'C'. The status of ECD centers differ between and among the ECD centers and districts. Comparatively, the aspect of ECD management has been seen comparatively well while the aspects of human resource, document management and quality learning materials are poor in the most of the ECD centers under this study. Similarly, the ECD centers of Eastern, Central and Western districts are comparatively better in meeting the indicators of ECD National Minimum Standard than those of the Mid-West and Far-West districts.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study was carried out to explore the status of the SCI PNGO supported ECD centers in 21 districts. The status of the focused ECD centers was studied in terms of assessing eight different areas of the ECD centers. The eight components of the ECD centers focused under this study were: (a) physical infrastructure, (b) Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation, (c) Learning materials at ECD centers, (d) outdoor environment, (e) ECD management, (f) human resource and (g) document management. The data obtained in these areas of ECD centers were presented, analyzed and interpreted in the previous chapter. Out of the discussion and analysis and interpretation, findings were derived and presented as follow:

1. Status of ECD centers in terms of physical infrastructure

- 1.1. Physical infrastructure is one of the components of ECD centers. It comprises of land, building, classroom, bookcase, etc. (see National Minimum Standard, indicator no. 1.1.1-1.5.4). This study explored that 93.75% of the ECD centers in Achham, 78.23% of the ECD centers in Bajura, 76% of the ECD centers in Rukum and 75% of the ECD centers in Nawalparasi are much aggravated in terms of physical infrastructure. Similarly, the ECD centers in Rolpa (68.33%), Dhanusha (63.64%) and Udayapur (60.53%) were appeared weak in terms of availability physical infrastructure. In the same way 40 to 50 percentage of the ECD centers appeared to be weak in terms of physical infrastructure in Bardiya, Mugu, Kailali, Kanchanpur, Doti, Kalikot, Mahottari, Sindhupalchok and Saptari districts. The ECD centers in Tanahu, Baglung, Siraha and Sunsari were found to be prominent, competitive and to more extent rich in terms of Physical infrastructure.
- 1.2. The study also explored that 12% of ECD centers were found into category A, 41% of them into B and 47% of them appeared into category C in terms of their status of physical infrastructure.
- 1.3. While comparing the condition of infrastructure of the ECD centers of 21 districts under this study it was found that the ECD centers of Achham are least and the ECD centers of Tanahu are most developed ones. In the former district 93.75% of ECD centers fell into weaker category while in the latter district only 5.88% of the ECD centers were found weaker.

2. Status of ECD centers in terms of Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation (HNSS)

- 2.1. This study found that 92.19% of ECD centers in Achham, 82.26% of the ECD centers in Bajura, 76.47% of the ECD centers in Kalikot and 60% of the ECD centers in Rukum are in category C and hence they were listed as weaker in terms of HNSS. Similarly, 50 to 58 percent of ECD centers appeared in category C in terms of HNSS in the districts: Sindhupalchok, Rolpa, Kavre, Mugu and Dhanusha. The percentage of the ECD centers that fell into category C in the districts other than the ones mentioned above from 20 to below 50.
- 2.2. This study also explored that among the total number of ECD centers in 21 districts under this study 19% of the ECD centers appeared into category 'A', 34% of them into B and 47% of them appeared into category C in terms of the availability and maintenance of HNSS within the centers. This reveals that the maximum number of ECD centers is still in category C in the area of HNSS.

3. Learning materials at ECD centers

- 3.1. Learning materials at ECD centers is one of the major components of the ECD centers. The status of learning materials at ECD centers under this study was examined and it was found that 96% of the ECD centers in Achham, 92.16% of them in Sindhupalchok and 90% of the ECD centers in Rolpa categorized as C in terms of the availability and use of learning materials at ECD centers and, hence, these ECD centers in the corresponding districts were specified as weaker in this respect. Similarly, 82% of the ECD centers in Rukum and 81.82% of the ECD centers in Saptari and 88% of the ECD centers in Bajura were found to be poor at learning materials at ECD centers. In the same way the ECD centers in Kalikot (70.59%), in Udayapur (71.05), in Nawalparasi (75%) and in Dhanusha (76.62%) were categorized as C. It specifies that these ECD centers in the corresponding districts largely lack the learning materials and their use in the ECD classroom. Again the ECD centers in Mahottari (63.16%) and Sunsari (65%) were categorized as C in terms of availability and use of learning materials at ECD centers. In the same way this study also found that about 50 to 57 percent of the ECD centers are weaker (in category C) in the districts like Bardiya (56.36%), Doti(57.14), Kailali (50.86), Kanchanpur (54.08%) and Mugu (52.17%). However, some prominent districts in developing and using learning materials are Baglung (only 23.64% of the ECD centers in category C), Siraha (only about 28% of ECD centers in category C) and Tanahu, in which none of

the ECD centers was found to be in category C. That is, about 80% of the ECD centers in Tanahu were appeared in category A.

- 3.2. The study also explored that among the total number of ECD centers in 21 districts under this study 14% of the ECD centers were fell into category A, 30% of them into B and 56% of them appeared into category C in terms of their status of availability and use of learning materials within the ECD centers.

4. The status of outdoor environment

- 4.1. Outdoor environment was a component to be assessed to determine the status of ECD centers under this study. It was found that 90.2% of the ECD centers in Sindhupalchok district fell into category C, 87.3% of them in Achham and 80% of them fell into the same category in Doti. Similarly, the ECD centers in Bajura (77.24%), in Kavre (75.61%), in Nawalparasi (75%) and in Dhanusa (71.43%) were found to be too weak to maintain outdoor environment, as per National Minimum Standard, at the ECD centers. Similarly, the outdoor environment of the 67.12% of the ECD centers were found aggravated in Nawalparasi. In the same way 50 to 58 percent of the ECD centers in Kanchanpur (56.12%), Mahottari (57.89%), Mugu (52.17%), Rukum (58%) and Saptari (50%) were found to be weak in terms of the availability and maintenance of outdoor environment. The other districts such as Baglung (49.09%), Bardiya (40%), Rolpa (43.33%), Siraha (44.15%), Sunsari (10%) and Tanahu (23.53%) consisted of the ECD centers ranging from 10 to 49 percents in category C. These ECD centers in the corresponding districts were not found to possess and maintain the outdoor environment as indicated in National Minimum Standard. The two districts Sunsari and Tanahu appeared as prominent ones in which only 10 and 23 percent of the ECD centers were found in the need of support for outdoor environment.

- 4.2. The study also explored that among the total number of ECD centers in 21 districts under this study 20% of the ECD centers were fell into category A, 25% of them into B and 55% of them appeared into category C in terms of their status of availability and use of outdoor environment within the ECD centers.

5. The status of ECD management

- 5.1. ECD management was assessed during this study to determine the status of the ECD centers under this study. It was found that 100% of the ECD centers in Sunsari, 74.51% of the ECD centers in Sindhupalchok, 70% of them in Rukum, 67.19% of them in Achham and 64.94% of them in Dhanusha were too far to meet the criteria as

mentioned in National Minimum Standard and, hence, they were categorized as C. Similarly, 50 to 57% of the ECD centers were found to be weak in Nawalparasi (50%), Saptari (54.55%) and Rolpa (56.67%). Similarly, Doti, Mahottari and Mugu are the districts in which 41.43%, 49.12% and 43.48% of the ECD centers respectively fell into category C. However in some districts like Kavre (2.44%), Siraha (9.21%), Kailali (11.49%) and Baglung (16.36%) very few of ECD centers fell in category C. This implies that ECD management committee is prominent and capable to lead ECD centers in most of the ECD centers in various districts under this study.

- 5.2. The study also explored that among the total number of ECD centers in 21 districts under this study 29% of the ECD centers were fell into category A, 43% of them into B and 28% of them appeared into category C in terms of their status of ECD management of the ECD centers.

6. The status of ECD center by human resource

- 6.1. Human resource was another important component to assess during this study to find out the status of the ECD centers in question. This study explored that the situation of human resource was too weak in the districts such as Rukum, Bajura, Sindhupalchok and Achham in which 90%, 91.94%, 94.12% and 96.88% of the ECD centers respectively appeared in category C. Similarly, 80 to 88 percent of the ECD centers appeared in category C in terms of human resource in the districts like Bardiya (83.64%), Dhanusa (88.31%), Kalikot (86.76%), Kanchanpur (82.65%), Mahottari (80.7%), Mugu (86.96%), Nawalparasi (80%), Rolpa (88.33%) and Udayapur (84.21%). In the same way 70 to 78 percent of the ECD centers were found in category C in terms of human resource in the district like Baglung (72.73%), Doti (70%), Kailali (79.02%) and Kavre (78.05%). Again, the ECD centers in the districts such as Saptari, Siraha, Sunsari and Tanahu consist of 68.16%, 51.32%, 50% and 47.06% of the ECD centers respectively in category C. This implies that these ECD centers in their corresponding districts extensively lack the criteria of human resource and they, therefore, are poor in status in this respect.
- 6.2. The study also explored that among the total number of ECD centers in 21 districts under this study, 9% of the ECD centers were fell into category A, 18% of them into B and 73% of them appeared into category C in terms of the status of human resource of the ECD centers.

7. Quality environment at ECD center

- 7.1. The status of ECD centers under this study was also assessed in terms of the quality of environment within the centers. The study explored that the situation of ECD centers in Sunsari, Sindhupalchok, Nawalparasi and Achham was considerably weak because 93.75% of ECD centers in Achham, 100% of the ECD centers in Sunsari and 90.2% of the ECD centers in Sindhupalchok, and 80% of the ECD centers in Nawalparasi are in category C. Similarly, in the district like Rolpa and Rukum 73.33 and 74 percents of the ECD centers respectively fell in category C. Likewise, 63.16% of the ECD centers in Udayapur, 67.74 of them in Bajura and 68.83 of the ECD centers in Dhanusha were categorized as C in terms of maintaining the quality environment within the ECD centers. Again, 56.52% of the ECD centers appeared as poor (in category C) in Mugu District. Similarly, 40 to 48 percent of the ECD centers were found in category C in terms of maintaining quality environment within the centers in the district like Baglung (40%), Doti (47.14%), Kailali (40.23%), Kalikot (48.53%), Kanchanpur (45.92%), Mahottari (45.61%) and Saptari (45.45%). The districts like Kavre, Siraha and Tanahu appeared as prominent ones in the sense that only 14.63%, 27.81% and 26.47% of the ECD centers respectively were found in category C. It is thus proven that these ECD centers in their corresponding districts are weak in maintaining quality environment.
- 7.2. The study also explored that among the total number of ECD centers in 21 districts under this study, 15% of the ECD centers fell into category A, 37% of them into B and 48% of them appeared into category C in terms of the status of quality environment of the ECD centers.

8. The status of ECD center by document management

- 8.1. The status of ECD centers under this study was studied and analyzed in terms of the document management within the centers. This aspect of the ECD centers was largely found unfocused in many districts. For example, all the ECD centers (i.e. 100%) in Achham and Sunsari were found to be weak and were categorized as C in the aspect of document management at the ECD centers. Similarly, about 90 to 98 percent of the ECD centers in the districts like Bardiya (90.91%), Kalikot (91.18%), Kanchanpur (92.86%), Kavre (95.12%), Bajura (94.35%), Rukum (96%) and Sindhupalchok (98.04%) appeared in category C. Again, about 82 to 89 percent of the ECD centers in the districts like Udayapur (82.89%), Mugu (82.61%), Nawalparasi (85%), Dhanusa (87.01%), Doti (87.14%), Rolpa (88.33%) and Kailali (89.37%) were categorized as

C in terms of document management within the ECD centers. The districts like mahotrtari and Saptari consists of 78.95% and 79.55% of the ECD centers which also appeared in category C. The district which has least number of ECD centers (only 35.29%) in category C in terms of document management is Tanahu followed by Baglung (50.91%) and Siraha (57.89%). It is prove that area of document management remained largely unfocused in these ECD centers of the various districts under this study.

- 8.2. The study also explored that among the total number of ECD centers in 21 districts only 5% of the ECD centers were found to have requirement into category A, 14% of them in B and 81% of them appeared in category C in terms of the status of document management of the ECD centers.

The ECD centers in category 'A' are very few in number while the number of ECD centers in category 'B' is more. The same is still more in category 'C' (see figures in chapter III). The reason behind more number of ECD centers in category 'C' can be observed in various ways as per the observation of the research site during field visit. The one reason is that the number of ECD centers under this study was established long ago before developing minimum standard of ECD center. They had developed their own set of infrastructure which became very hard for them to convert into way as mentioned in the minimum standard. In addition to it, they also asserted that they were not duly informed about the criteria for ECD centers contained in minimum standard. Again, the facilitators in ECD centers were quite new, young in the sense of immaturity and possessed only superficial training on ECD processes. The rate of recruitment and dropout of facilitators in ECD centers was reported to be high. The newly appointed facilitators were reported to be only less aware of the ECD mechanism. This also exerted an adverse effect on the production and management of learning materials and maintenance of daily and occasional happenings and events in the ECD centers under this study. Similarly, the socioeconomic status of the parents and community was reported to be the other impeding factor that prevented ECD centers under this study in maintaining the minimum standard required for the centers. The part of community awareness and mobilization was claimed to be an additional area to be improved to promote the standard of ECD centers.

While analyzing the ECD centers in category 'C' maximum ECD centers were found to be poor in terms of quality learning materials, outdoor environment, and document management of ECD centers. Similarly, physical infrastructure, classroom management, sanitation, toilets

facility, water supply and management of quality environment were also found to be poorly maintained.

On the whole, the data shows that the number of ECD centers in category 'C' is increasingly higher than the number of ECD centers in Category 'A' and 'B' in most of the districts under this study (See tables in chapter IV). The reason behind such weak performances in each area of ECD centers was sought. For this, the co-relation between and among the studied areas of ECD centers were explored. The correlation result (table 24, annex) vividly represents the correlation among the studied indicators. The result shows that each area of ECD centers mentioned in the above table is significantly correlated with the other. This means the increase and decrease in quality of one area of ECD center deliberately causes corresponding influence upon the other. It reveals, for instance, that weak status of 'human resource' causes the quality of the other areas of ECD center such as 'learning material', 'ECD environment', 'document management', etc. to be weak. It is, therefore, essential to focus each area of ECD center to bring balanced improvement in the ECD centers as a whole.

Conclusion

From the discussion, analysis, interpretation and findings, it can be concluded that each area of the ECD centers under this study is in good, average and poor condition in some ECD centers of some districts. In most of the districts under this study, a large number of ECD centers are found to meet requirement for ECD management. There is not even single ECD center under this study recorded in category C in Tanahu district in terms of ECD management and learning materials at ECD centers. However, there are some areas of ECD centers under this study which are waiting for further support, for instance document management, human resource and quality environment within the centers. Following have been concluded in terms of the category of ECD centers:

The percentages of ECD centers in category 'A' are 12% in infrastructure, 19% in HNSS, 14% in learning materials, 20% in outdoor environment, 29% in ECD management committee, 9% in human resource, 15% in quality environment and 5% in document management. Similarly, the percentages of ECD centers in category B are 41% of them in infrastructure, 34% in HNSS, 30% in learning materials, 25% in outdoor environment, 43% in management committee, 18% in human resource, 37% in quality environment, and 14% in document management. Likewise, 47% of them in infrastructure, 47% in maintenance of HNSS, 56% in learning materials, 55% in outdoor environment, 28% in ECD management committee, 73% in human resource of the ECD centers, 48% in quality environment of the

ECD centers, and 81% of them appeared in category C in terms of the status of document management of the ECD centers.

Implications

The findings mentioned above can be implicated in various ways to foster ECD centers as per National Minimum Standard, 2010. Some major implications of this study can be observed as follows:

It is powerful evidence to ECD centers and stakeholders like DEO, I/NGOs, Management Committee, Community, etc on the existing maintenance and operating ECD center. It will help in strategic planning for ECD through community participation and ownership. It will also help to improve mechanism the way as per local needs and resources. It will provide a way-out for choosing various approaches and processes for achieving minimum standard. It will also encourage the policy makers and developers of National Minimum Standard to bring some necessary amendments in ECD policies and National Standard. The indicators are specified based on National minimum standard which helps to develop various tools. It gives clean direction to all stakeholders for joint effort in various aspects

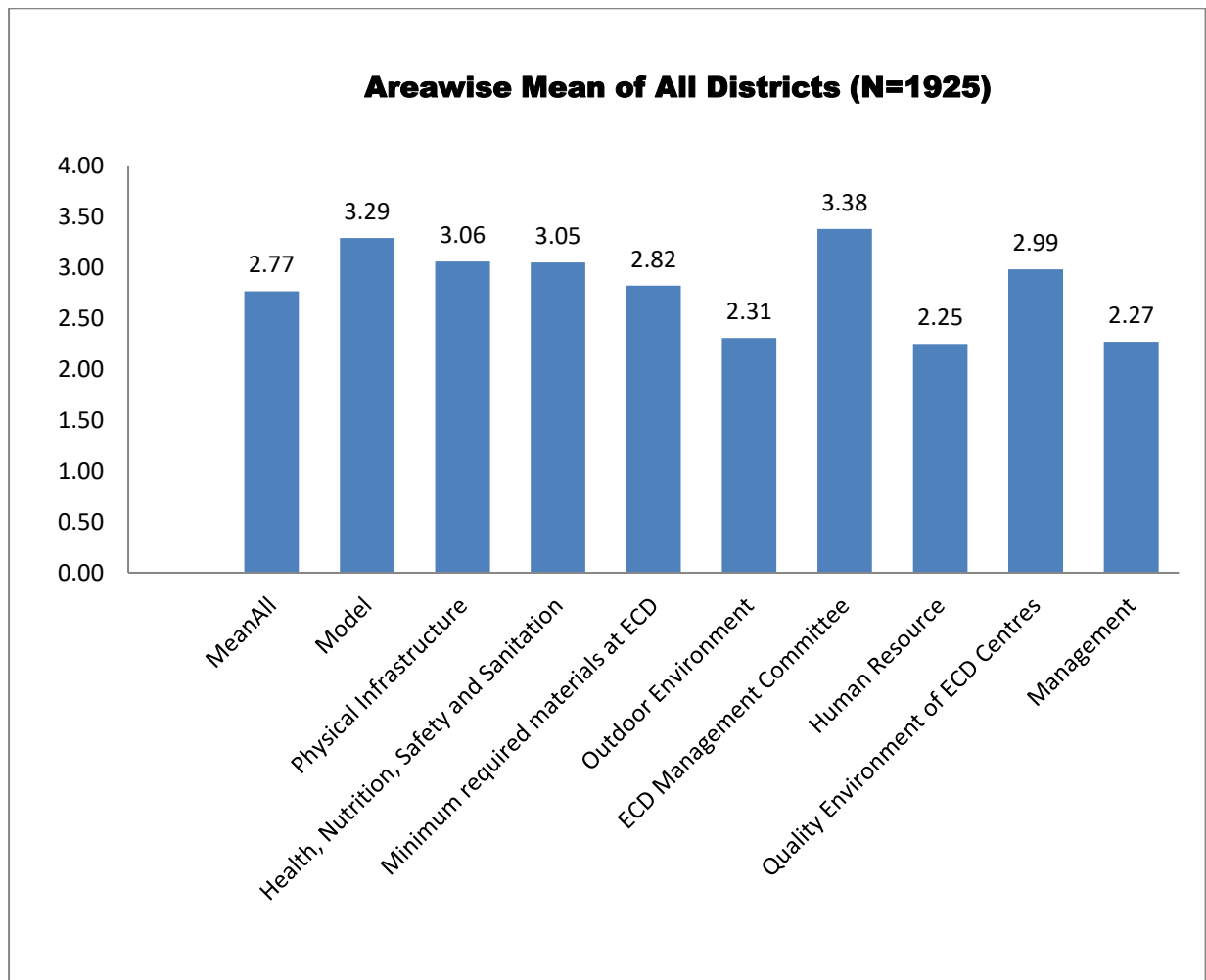
The program developers/promoters can envision why maximum ECD centers are in "C" category and how they could be promoted to "A". ECD center implementing guidelines directory will be ECD policy. The findings will remain as evidences through which advocacy for ECD policy and its implementation for quality output can be ensured.

Annex-I

Table 1. Districts and Sample of ECD Centers

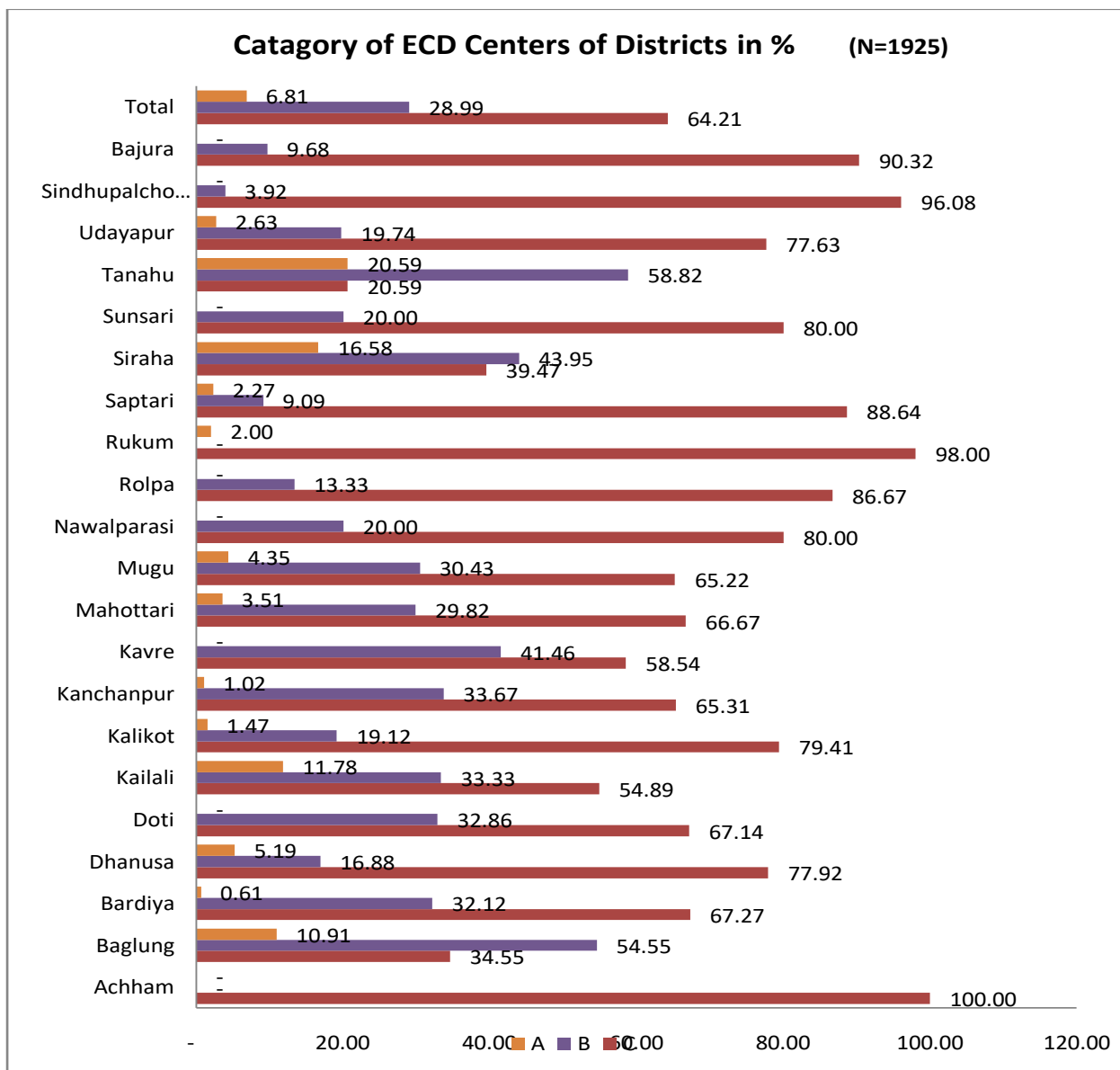
SN	Districts	Number of ECD Centers	Sample ECD Center	Sample in Percentage
1.	Acham	397	64	16
2.	Bardia	595	165	27
3.	Bajura	213	124	58
4.	Baglung	304	55	18
5.	Doti	305	70	22
6.	Kailali	836	348	42
7.	Kanchanpur	503	98	20
8.	Kapilbastu			
9.	Kavre	446	41	9
10.	Kalikot	195	68	34
11.	Mugu	100	23	23
12.	Mahottari	486	57	12
13.	Nawalparasi	543	20	3
14.	Pyuthan			
15.	Rolpa	300	60	20
16.	Saptari	629	44	7
17.	Siraha	571	380	66
18.	Sindhupalchok	284	51	17
19.	Sunsari	648	20	3
20.	Tanahu	314	34	10
21.	Dhanusa	101	77	76
22.	Rukum	252	50	20
23.	Udaypur	349	76	21
	Total	8371		23%

Area-wise mean of all districts

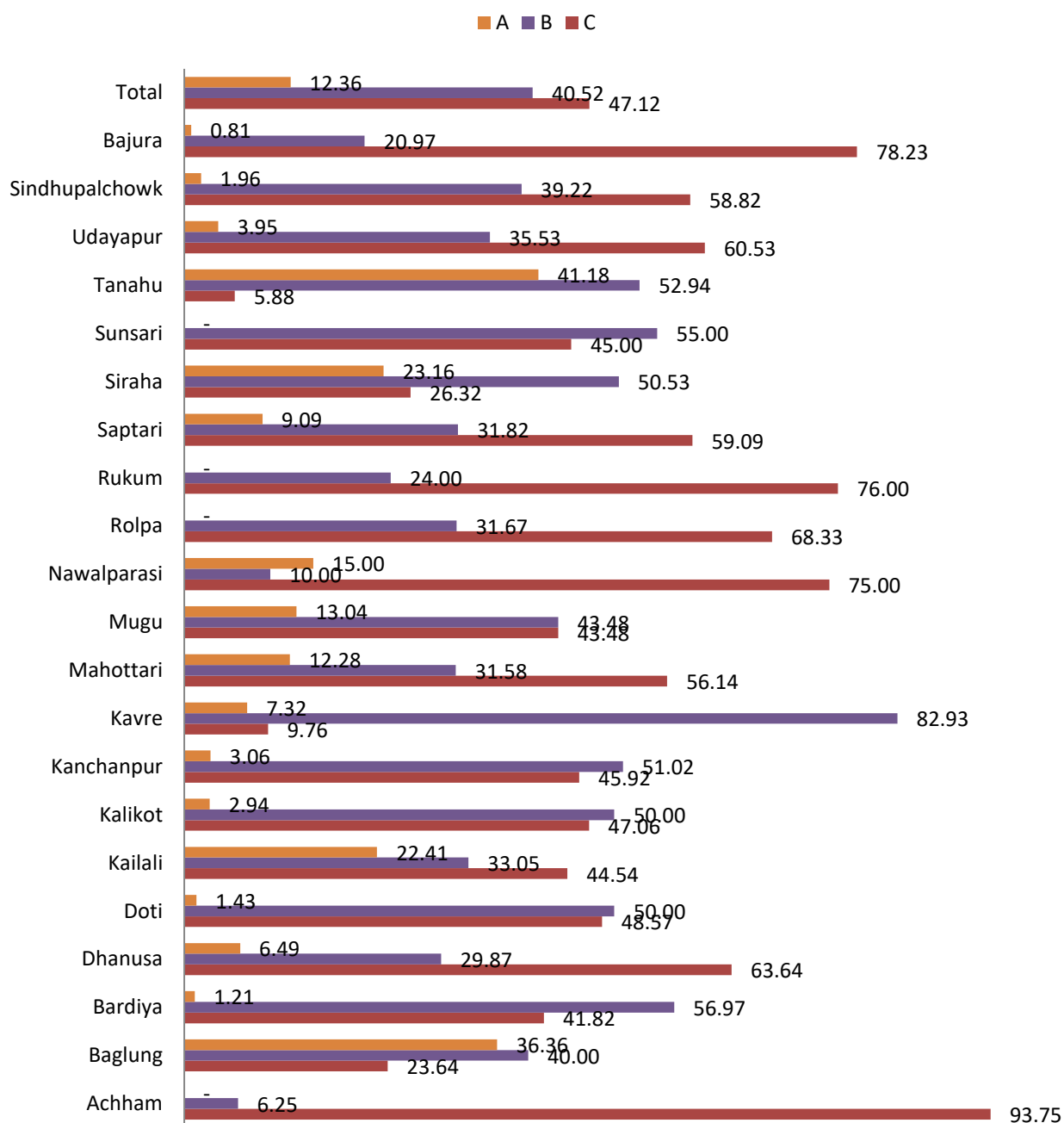


Annex-II

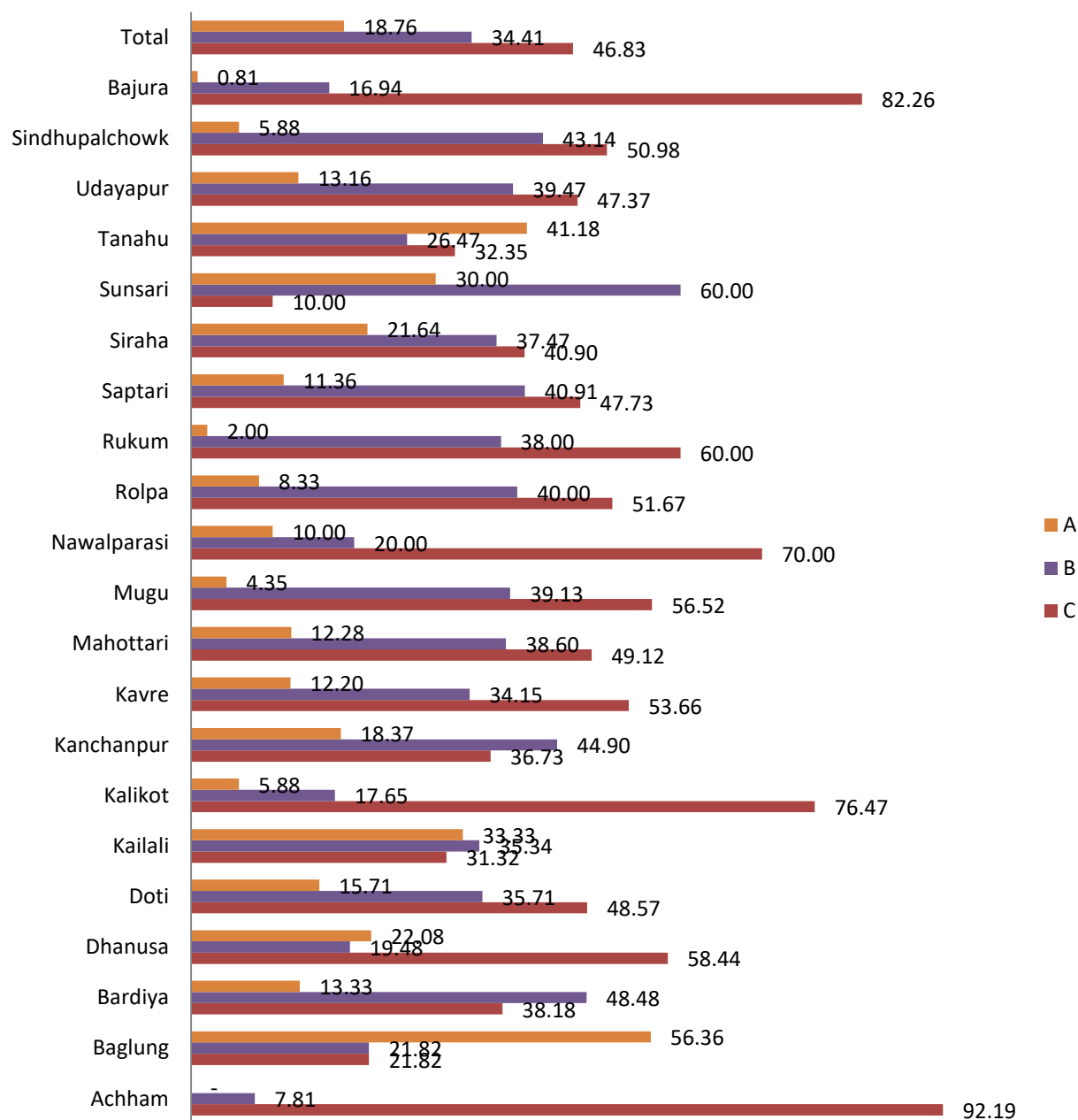
Category of ECD centers by districts and areas of ECD



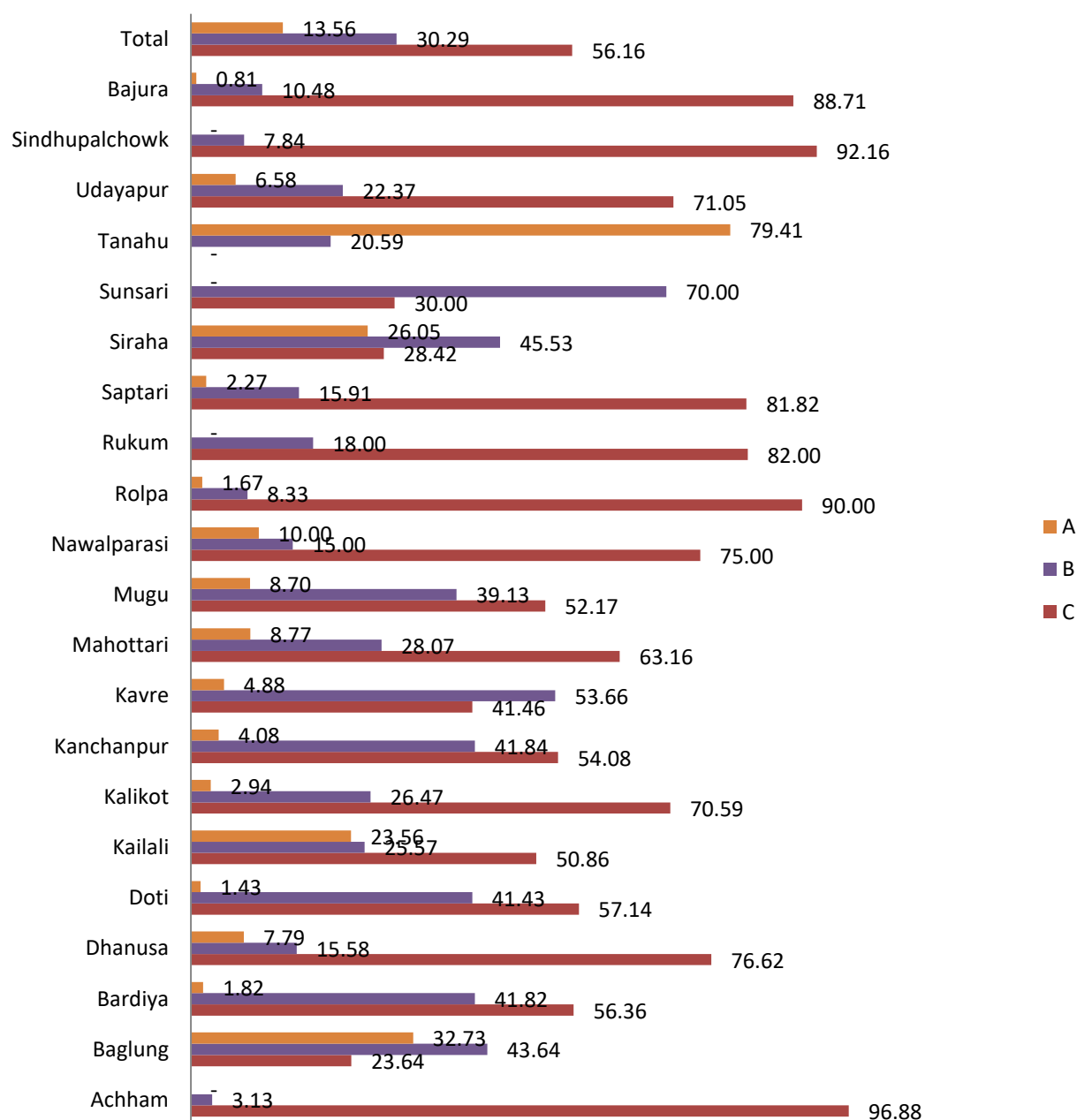
Status of Physical Infrastructure of ECD Centers in % (N=1925)



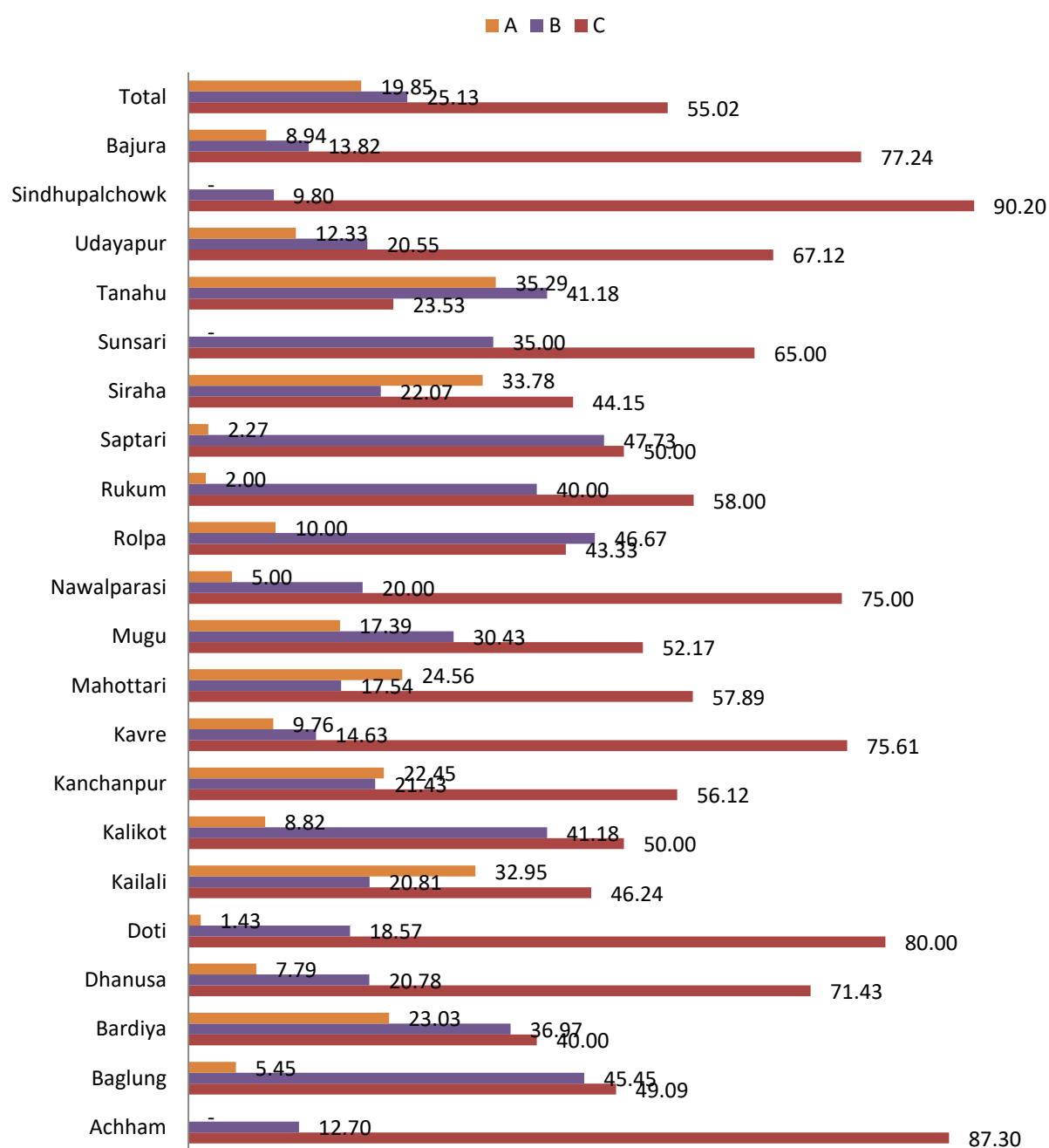
Status of Health, Nutrition, Safety and Sanitation of ECD Centers in % (N=1924)



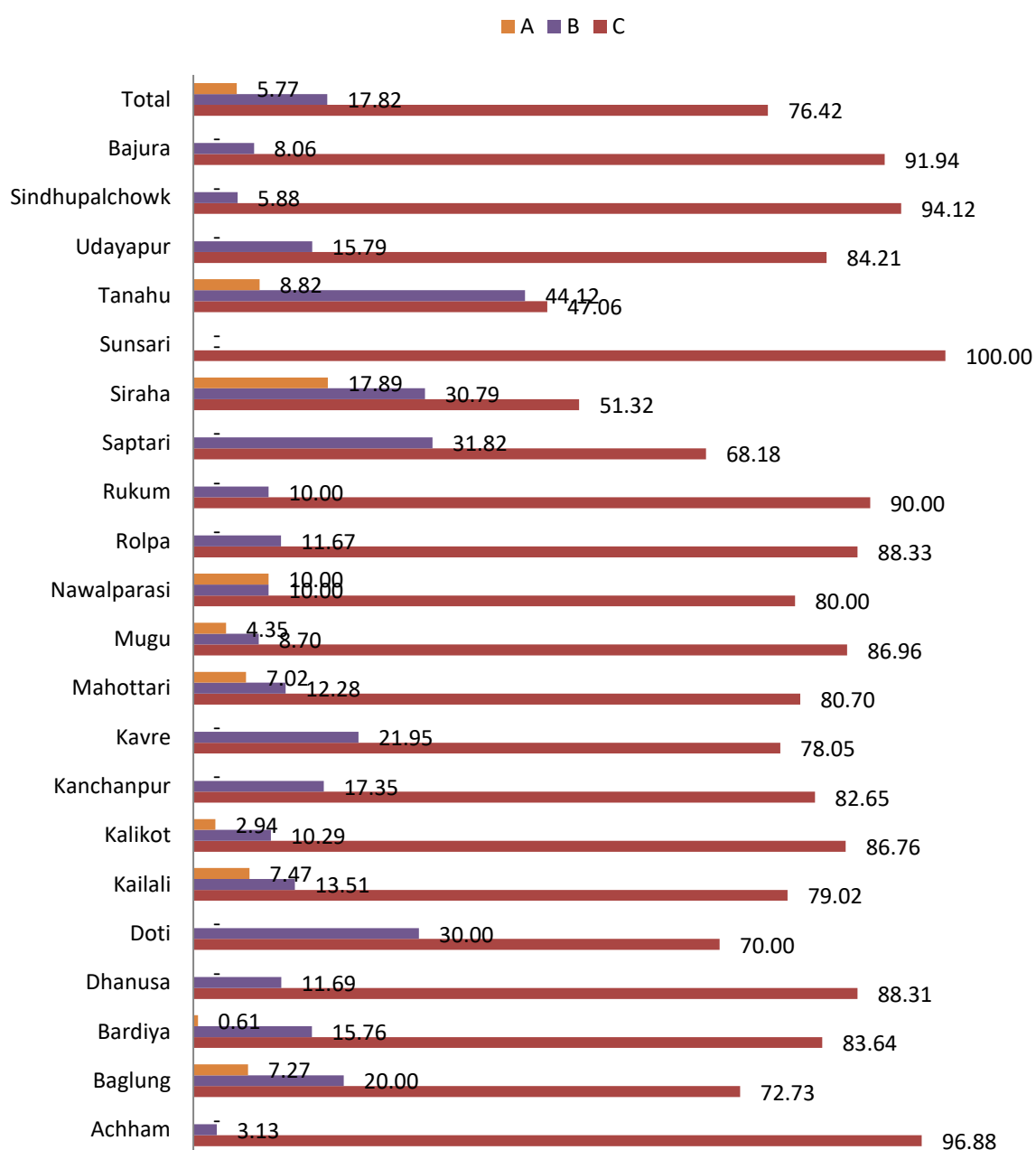
Status of Minimum Required Materials of ECD Centers in % (N=1925)



Status of Outdoor Environments of ECD Centers in % (N=1914)



Status of Human Resources of ECD Centers in % (N=1925)



Annex-III
ECD observation form