

Nutritional status of pre-school children of ICDS: An assessment using new W.H.O. growth standards

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■ **ABSTRACT** : India accounts for more than 3 out of every 10 stunted children in the world. Undernutrition is substantially higher in rural than in urban areas. Short birth intervals are associated with higher levels of undernutrition. More than half (54 %) of all deaths before age five years in India are related to malnutrition. To combat undernutrition in young children, the Government relies largely on the ICDS. Begun in 1975, the scheme provides health and nutrition education for mothers and young children, along with other services, such as supplementary nutrition, basic health and antenatal care, growth monitoring and promotion, preschool non-formal education, micronutrient supplementation and immunization. In 2008, the Government of India introduced the new WHO Growth standards through ICDS and NRHM. For the assessment of nutritional status, anthropometry measurement, WHO growth standards were used. The data were analysed according to New WHO Growth standards 2006 and compared to data of NFHS-3(2005-06). More than 60 per cent pre-school children of AWCs of Banka district were undernourished *i.e.* 68 per cent children underweight, 64 per cent stunted and 54 per cent wasted, which was more than ratio of India. The measurement of MUAC, BMI, HC, CC, showed that girls were 5-10 per cent more undernourished than boys. In General appearance 21 per cent children were thin whereas 48 per cent children sickly. Only 26 per cent children were getting adequate diet in which only 9 per cent children were getting balance diet, 74 per cent children were not getting adequate diet. Only 38 per cent children in AWCs were found to get benefit of Supplementary nutrition in which only 11 per cent AWCs maintained recommended norms of SNP of ICDS. To find the true picture and combat undernutrition the new WHO Growth chart standards in ICDS should be strictly implemented in proper way, then ensure the balance diet and improve the quality and quantity of supplementary nutrition.

■ **KEY WORDS** : Growth standards, W.H.O., Nutrition, ICDS, Diet

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