RESEARCH ARTICLE

Study on the status and functioning of AWCs in Hisar district of Haryana

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ABSTRACT

The present study was carried out to monitor the status and functioning of AWCs in Hisar district of Haryana. A total of 100 AWCs were selected. The data were collected personally through interview-cum-questionnaire method by paying repeated visits to the study area. From the study, it was found that 45% *anganwadis* were running in buildings specially constructed for *anganwadis.* Scarcity of drinking water and toilet facilities were noticed. Sitting facilities for visitors were also lacking. Growth monitoring chart was accurately plotted by 76 % of the *anganwadi* workers. It is recommended that for proper functioning of AWCs, the existing training of AWWs needs to be evaluated and infrastructure facilities should be improved.

INTRODUCTION

Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS) in India today represents one of the world's largest programmes for early childhood development. ICDS scheme has played a significant role in improving the nutritional status of preschool children. This programme was started in 1975 by the Government of India, with the main objectives to improve the health of mothers and children under age six by providing health, nutrition education, health services, supplementary foods and preschool education. One of the main objectives of ICDS is to improve nutritional and health status of children 0-6 years through *anganwadi* centres. There are an estimated 1.053 million *anganwadi* centres employing 1.8 million mostly-female workers and helpers. These *anganwadis* cover about 58.1 million children and 10.23 million pregnant or lactating women across the country. The ICDS team comprises the *Anganwadi* workers, *Anganwadi* helpers, Supervisors, Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs) and District Programme Officers (DPOs). *Anganwadi* worker, a lady selected from the local community, is a community based frontline honorary worker of the ICDS Programme. Other objectives of this programme are to lay the foundation for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child, to reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school dropout, to achieve effective co-ordination of policy and implementation amongst the various departments to promote child development and to enhance the capability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child through proper nutrition and health education. They provide outreach services to poor families in need of immunization, healthy food, clean water, clean toilets and a learning environment for infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers. They also provide similar services for expectant and nursing mothers. No study has been conducted recently to monitor and evaluate this programme in Haryana state. Therefore, the present study was conducted to monitor the present status and functioning of existed *anganwadi* centres of Hisar district of Haryana.

METHODOLOGY

Hisar district of Haryana state was selected purposively. From Hisar district, four blocks *viz.,* Agroha, Adampur, Uklana and Barwala were selected randomly. Fifteen villages from Agroha, ten villages from Adampur, ten villages from Uklana and fifteen villages from Barwala

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blocks were selected randomly. Thus, a total of 100 AWCs were selected. Keeping in view of the objectives of investigation, a well structured questionnaire was prepared in accordance with methodological procedure which was pretested initially based on the responses obtained and later the modifications were made to make it more functional. With the help of the questionnaire infrastructure facilities like type of accommodation, toilet facilities, drinking water facilities, sitting facilities for children, workers and visitors, store room, availability of weighing machine, enrollment efficiency of children, growth monitoring chart etc. were observed and compared with the register maintained by the *anganwadi* workers. The data were collected personally through interview-cum-questionnaire method by paying repeated visits to the study area. Appropriate statistical analysis of the data was done to interpret the results.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The findings obtained from the present investigation have been discussed in the following sub heads:

Infrastructure facilities available in AWCs:

In Hisar district, maximum *anganwadis* were running in buildings specially constructed for *anganwadis* (45%) followed by other buildings (26%), panchayat buildings (14%) and community buildings (10%) and rented buildings (5%) (Table 1). Almost similar trend was observed block-wise where majority of *anganwadis* were being run either in own buildings or in other buildings. The percentage of *anganwadi* centres having own building were maximum in Adampur (60%) followed by Uklana (45%), Barwala (43.34%) and Agroha (36.7%).

Majority of the *anganwadis* in Hisar district were found to have the toilet facilities (72%). Block-wise trend indicated that maximum toilet facilities were in Agroha block (86.7%) followed by Barwala (76.7%), Adampur (65%) and Uklana (50%) in descending order (Table 1).

Scarcity of drinking water facilities was noticed in Hisar district (Table 1). On an average, only 54 per cent AWCs were found to have this facility. Minimum number of *anganwadis* in Agroha block had drinking water facilities (36.7%). The blocks like Adampur (50%) and Uklana (55%) stood comparatively better in terms of water facilities. In Barwala block, 73.3 per cent AWCs had drinking water facilities.

Values in parenthesis indicate per cent:

With regard to sitting facilities for children, it was noted that 86 per cent AWCs in Hisar district were equipped with sitting facilities like durries, mats etc. for children. The percentage was maximum in Agroha block (90%) followed by Barwala (86.7%), Uklana (85%) and Adampur (80%). For workers and visitors about one fourth AWCs *i.e.* 23 per cent had chairs. Sitting facilities were maximum in AWCs of Uklana block (30%) followed by

Table 1: Infrastructure facilities available in *anganwadi* centers (AWCs) (n=100)

Sr. No.	Infrastructure	Agroha (n=30)	Adampur (n=20)	Uklana (n=20)	Barwala (n=30)	Total (%)
1.	Type of accommodation					
	Own building	11(36.70)	12(60.00)	9(45.00)	13(43.34)	45
	Rented	2(6.67)	0(0.00)	1(5.00)	2(6.67)	5
	Community building	2(6.67)	3(15.00)	2(10.00)	3(10.00)	10
	Panchayat building	5(16.70)	3(15.00)	2(10.00)	4(13.34)	14
	Other	10(30.30)	2(10.00)	6(30.00)	8(26.67)	26
2.	Toilet facilities	26(86.70)	13(65.00)	10(50.00)	23(76.70)	72
3.	Drinking water facilities	11(36.70)	10(50.00)	11(55.00)	22(73.30)	54
4.	Sitting facilities for children (*Durrie*, mat etc.	27(90.00)	16(80.00)	17(85.00)	26(86.70)	86
5.	Sitting facilities for workers and visitors (chairs)	6(20.00)	4(20.00)	6(30.00)	7(23.40)	23
6.	Store room	24(80.00)	11(55.00)	13(65.00)	18(60.00)	66
7.	Kitchen					
	Separate	4(13.40)	3(15.00)	2(10.00)	6(20.00)	15
	Open space	16(53.40)	16(80.00)	13(65.00)	21(70.00)	66
	Not available	10(33.30)	1(5.00)	5(25.00)	3(10.00)	19
8.	Availability of weighing machine for mothers	21(70.00)	13(65.00)	15(75.00)	22(73.30)	71
9.	Availability of weighing machine for children	22(73.30)	14(70.00)	16(80.00)	27(90.00)	79

Note : Values in parenthesis indicate per cent

Table 2: Enrollment efficiency of children

Block	Total no. of children surveyed (1-3 years)*	Total no. of children enrolled at AWCs**	Total no. of children attended AWCs
Agroha (n=30)	574	432(75.26)	248(57.41)
Adampur (n=20)	507	312(61.53)	170(57.48)
Uklana (n=20)	416	298(71.63)	162(54.36)
Barwala (n=30)	492	327(66.46)	208(63.60)
Total	1989	1369(68.82)	788(57.56)

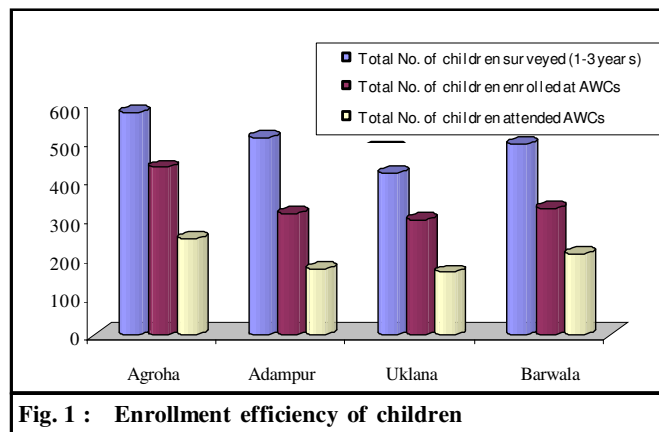Values in parenthesis indicate per cent

* As per ICDS   ** As per observation of investigator

Barwala block (23.4%). Agroha and Adampur blocks stood last in terms of sitting facilities (20%). Storage facilities for utensils, mid-day meal, food items etc. were available in 66 per cent of *anganwadi* centres. In majority of AWCs there was no separate kitchen for preparing mid-day meal and cooking was done in open space (66%). Separate kitchen was available only in 15 per cent *anganwadis* while 19 per cent of the *anganwadis* had no kitchen.

Table 1 further reveals that weighing machine for taking weight of mothers was available in 71 per cent of *anganwadis* of Hisar district. Block-wise availability of this facility ranged between 65 to 75 per cent. Uklana block had the maximum number of weighing machines for mothers (75%) followed by Barwala (73.3%), Agroha (70%) and Adampur (65%) in descending order. Weighing machine for children was available in 79.00 per cent *anganwadi*. The number was maximum for AWC of Barwala block (90%) followed by Uklana (80%), Agroha (73.3%) and Adampur (70%). Regarding general information of AWCs, it can be concluded that maximum *anganwadis* had their own building but facilities regarding drinking water, toilets, storage rooms, separate kitchens, weighing machines and sitting facilities for visitors were not proper. These improper facilities may be the constraints for the development of children.

Enrollment efficiency at AWCs:

Table 2 shows that the total number of children reported under survey in the age group of 1 to 3 year were 1989 out of which total number enrolled at AWC (Hisar) were 1369 *i.e.* (68.82%). The enrollment efficiency of Hisar district ranged from 61.53 to 75.26 per cent. Maximum number of children *i.e.* 432 (75.26%) were enrolled in Agroha block followed by Uklana (71.63%), Barwala (66.46%) and Adampur block (61.53%). Total number of children in this age group who attended AWC (Hisar) on the day of data collection was 57.56 per cent. Similarly, if we see block-wise, maximum children were present in Barwala (63.60%) followed by Agroha block (57.41%) (Fig. 1). The number of children

Fig. 1 : Enrollment efficiency of children

actually attending AWCs was very less.

Weighing efficiency at AWCs:

Number of children weighed at AWCs has been reported in terms of weighing efficiency. Weighing efficiency at different AWCs of Hisar district was between 60.35 to 72.47 per cent (Table 3). Total 1300(65.35%) children were weighed in various AWCs of Hisar district. The percentage of children weighed was maximum at AWCs of Agroha block (72.47%) followed by Uklana (65.38%), Barwala (62.19%) and Adampur (60.35%). It was noticed that children used to come in AWCs mainly at the time of food distribution only. They were not taking the benefit of other facilities and services provided at

Table 3: Weighing efficiency of children

Block	Total no. of children surveyed (1-3 years)*	Total no. of children weighted at AWCs**
Agroha (n=30)	574	416(72.47)
Adampur (n=20)	507	306(60.35)
Uklana (n=20)	416	272(65.38)
Barwala (n=30)	492	306(62.19)
Total	1989	1300(65.35)

Values in parenthesis indicate percent

* As per ICDS   ** As per observation of investigator

AWCs.

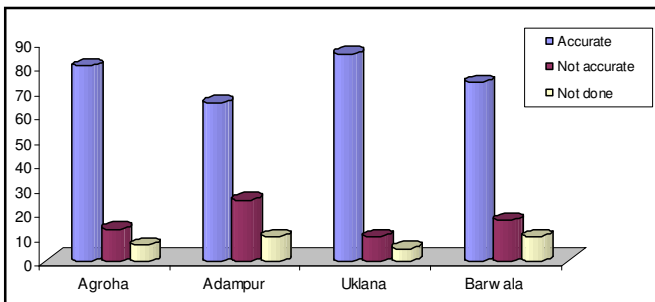**Plotting of growth monitoring chart:**

Plotting of growth monitoring chart was observed to be accurate in 76 AWCs. In 16 AWCs though the plotting was done but it was not accurate and in 8 AWCs, plotting of growth monitoring chart was not complete (Table 4). Accurate plotting of growth monitoring chart was maximum in Uklana block (85%) followed by Agroha (80%), Barwala (73.3%) and Adampur (65%).

Table 4: Plotting of growth monitoring chart (n=100)

Block	Accurate	Not accurate	Not done
Agroha (n=30)	24(80.00)	4(13.00)	2(6.60)
Adampur (n=20)	13(65.00)	5(25.00)	2(10.00)
Uklana (n=20)	17(85.00)	2(10.00)	1(5.00)
Barwala (n=30)	22(73.30)	5(16.70)	3(10.00)
Total	76	16	8

Values in parenthesis indicate per cent

Adampur block topped the list of blocks in which inaccurate plotting of growth monitoring chart was observed (25%) followed by Barwala (16.7%), Agroha (13%) and Uklana (10%). The Blocks Adampur and Barwala (10%) topped the list where plotting of growth monitoring chart was not done at all, followed by Agroha 6.6 and Uklana 5 per cent (Fig. 2). This was found to be a major drawback , may be due to lack of knowledge or practical skills of the *anganwadi* workers to plot the growth monitoring chart which leads to misinterpretation of the results.

Fig. 2 :   Plotting of growth monitoring chart

Conclusion:

The results showed that the maximum AWCs were running in the buildings specially constructed for *anganwadis*. Toilet facilities were found in maximum AWCs whereas drinking water facilities were available in only 54 per cent of AWCs. Sitting facilities for children were found in all the *anganwadis* but for visitors sitting facilities were not proper. Availability of separate kitchen and store rooms was not proper. Weighing efficiency of children was found to be only 65.35 per cent. Data showed that maximum *anganwadi* workers had plotted the growth monitoring chart accurately. Therefore, it is recommended that toilet facilities, drinking water facilities, sitting facilities for visitors should be improved. Regarding plotting of growth monitoring chart, findings suggest that continued education and training on various aspects of growth monitoring are urgently required for *anganwadi* workers.

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