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Examine the Effectiveness of Health Check-Up Services Under ICDS

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ABSTRACT

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme is India's flagship programme for improving the health, nutrition, and development of children below six years of age, along with the well-being of pregnant and lactating women. This paper examines the effectiveness of health check-up services provided through Anganwadi Centres under ICDS in Village Mehma Sarja, Punjab. The paper evaluates beneficiaries' perceptions regarding the availability of health check-up services and their satisfaction with the functioning of Anganwadi Centres. Using a descriptive research design, primary data were collected from 100 respondents through a structured questionnaire, supported by secondary data from government reports and published literature. The findings indicate that a majority of beneficiaries are satisfied with the health services provided; however, gaps related to infrastructure, service regularity, and awareness remain. The paper suggests strengthening monitoring mechanisms, improving infrastructure, and enhancing community participation to improve the effectiveness of Anganwadi Services.

1.Introduction

The health and well-being of mothers and children are fundamental to sustainable human development. Recognizing the importance of early childhood care, the Government of India launched the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme in 1975 to provide integrated services including supplementary nutrition, immunization, health

check-ups, referral services, preschool education, and nutrition and health education. These services are delivered through Anganwadi Centres, which serve as the primary institutions for maternal and child welfare at the grassroots level.

Among the various services offered under ICDS, health check-up services play a vital role in ensuring early detection of diseases, growth monitoring, antenatal and postnatal care, and referral for specialized treatment. These services contribute significantly to reducing maternal and child morbidity and improving nutritional outcomes. Despite considerable progress, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, shortage of trained personnel, and irregular service delivery continue to affect programme effectiveness in many rural areas.

The present paper examines the effectiveness of health check-up services and beneficiary satisfaction with the functioning of Anganwadi Centres in Village Mehma Sarja, Punjab. The paper aims to identify existing strengths and implementation gaps to provide suggestions for improving service delivery.

2.Review of Literature

Previous studies have highlighted the significant role of ICDS in improving maternal and child health outcomes. Chudasama et al. (2016) found that Anganwadi Centres substantially increased access to supplementary nutrition, immunization, and health services, although infrastructural deficiencies affected programme implementation. Heckman (2006**)** emphasized that investment in early childhood development produces long-term educational, health, and economic benefits. Similarly, Grantham-McGregor et al. (2007**)** reported that integrated nutrition and healthcare interventions significantly improve children's physical and cognitive development.

The NITI Aayog (2015) evaluation identified several operational challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, shortage of trained workers, weak monitoring systems, and regional disparities in service quality. Likewise, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (2023) emphasized strengthening Anganwadi infrastructure, digital monitoring through Poshan Tracker, and convergence with the health system to improve programme effectiveness.

The study is based on **Amartya Sen's Capability Approach**, which emphasizes that development should be measured by the expansion of individuals' capabilities and access to essential opportunities rather than solely by economic growth (Sen, 1999). In this context, Anganwadi Services contribute to enhancing human capabilities by improving access to healthcare, nutrition, and early childhood development. Although previous studies have examined the implementation of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme, limited research has focused on the effectiveness of health check-up services and beneficiary satisfaction at the village level in Punjab. Therefore, the present paper addresses this gap by evaluating the effectiveness of health check-up services and beneficiary satisfaction with Anganwadi Services in Village Mehma Sarja.

3.Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the effectiveness of health check-up services provided through Anganwadi Centres under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS).
2. To evaluate the level of beneficiary satisfaction with health check-up services provided through Anganwadi Centres.

4.Research Methodology

The present paper adopts a descriptive research design to examine the effectiveness of health check-up services provided through Anganwadi Centres under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme in Village Mehma Sarja, Punjab. The paper aims to assess the availability, accessibility, utilization, and quality of health check-up services and to evaluate the level of beneficiary satisfaction with these services. The village was selected to assess the implementation of health check-up services at the grassroots level.

The study is based on both primary and secondary data**.**

- Primary data were collected from beneficiaries of Anganwadi Centres, including mothers of children below six years of age, pregnant women, and lactating mothers, using a structured questionnaire.
- Secondary data were obtained from reports published by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), National Health Mission (NHM), Poshan Tracker, UNICEF, World Health Organization (WHO), books, peer-reviewed journals, research articles, and other government publications. Sample- A total of 100 beneficiaries of Anganwadi Centres were included in the study

Table 1 Immunization and Health Check-up Services

Response	**Male (M)**	**Male (%)**	**Female(F)**	**Female (%)**
Properly provided	34	68%	40	80%
Partially provided	10	20%	08	16%
Not provided	6	12%	02	04%
Total	50	50%	50	100%

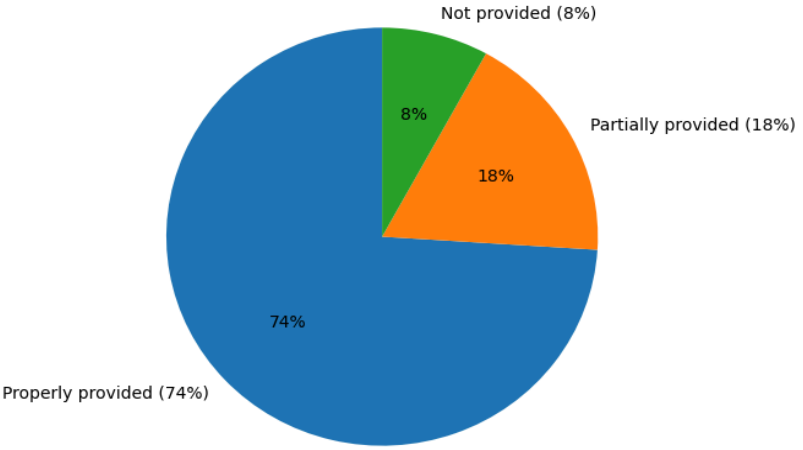

Fig 1.0

As seen from the above graph, the data collected from 100 respondents shows that immunization and health check-up services are largely perceived as being provided through Anganwadi centers. Out of the 50 male respondents, 34 (68%) reported that immunization and health check-up services were properly provided, while 10 (20%) stated that the services were partially provided. However, 6 (12%) respondents indicated that these services were not provided. Among the 50 female respondents, a higher proportion, 40 (80%), reported that the services were properly provided. 8 (16%) respondents felt that the services were partially provided, whereas only 2 (4%) stated that the services were not provided. Overall, the findings indicate that immunization and health check-up services under the scheme are being implemented effectively, with a majority of respondents expressing satisfaction. The higher percentage of female respondents reporting proper service delivery (80%) compared to male respondents (68%) suggests relatively better coverage and accessibility for female beneficiaries. Nevertheless, the responses indicating partial or non-provision of services, particularly among male respondents, highlight the need for strengthening outreach, monitoring, and regular health service delivery to ensure that all beneficiaries receive timely and comprehensive immunization and health check-up services.

Table 2.0 Satisfaction with Anganwadi functioning

Response	Male (M)	Male (%)	Female(F)	Female (%)

Satisfied	28	56%	32	64%
Neutral	14	28%	11	22%
Dissatisfied	08	16%	07	14%
Total	50	100%	50	100%

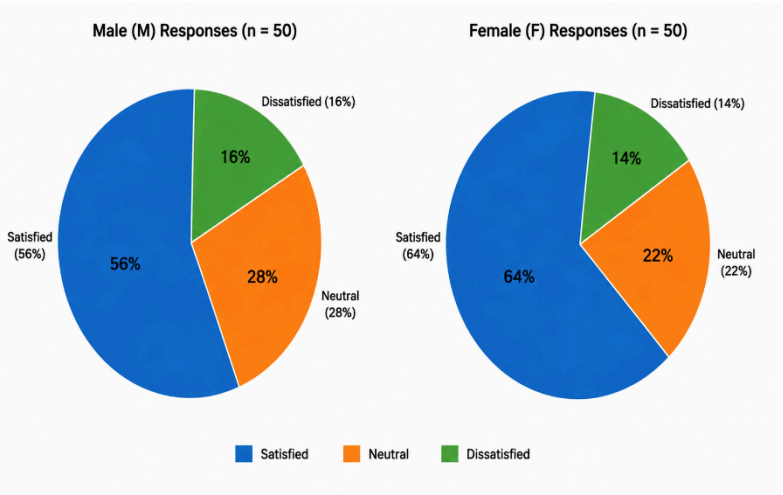

Fig 2.0

The table presents the level of satisfaction among male and female respondents regarding the functioning of Anganwadi Centres. Among the 50 male respondents, 28 (56%) expressed that they were satisfied with the functioning of Anganwadi Centres. 14 (28%) respondents remained neutral, while 8 (16%) reported that they were dissatisfied with the services and overall functioning. Similarly, out of the 50 female respondents, 32 (64%) indicated that they were satisfied with the functioning of Anganwadi Centres. 11 (22%) respondents expressed a neutral opinion, whereas 7 (14%) stated that they were dissatisfied. The findings reveal that a majority of respondents, particularly female respondents, are satisfied with the functioning of Anganwadi Centres. The higher satisfaction level among females (64%) compared to males (56%) may be attributed to their more frequent interaction with Anganwadi workers and greater utilization of maternal and child welfare services. However, the presence of neutral and dissatisfied respondents indicates that there are still areas requiring improvement, such as the quality of services, regularity of activities, infrastructure, availability of resources, and responsiveness of Anganwadi staff. Strengthening service delivery and addressing these concerns can further enhance the effectiveness and public confidence in the Anganwadi system.

5.Result and Discussion

The results indicate that health check-up services provided through Anganwadi Centres under ICDS are largely effective, as the majority of respondents reported that immunization and health check-up services were properly provided. Female respondents (80%) expressed a higher level of positive response than male respondents (68%), suggesting better accessibility and utilization among women. However, the responses indicating partial or non-provision of services highlight the need for improved outreach, regular monitoring, and consistent service delivery.

Second, the study reveals a moderate to high level of beneficiary satisfaction with the functioning of Anganwadi Centres. Overall, 56% of male and 64% of female respondents were satisfied with the services, while a smaller proportion expressed dissatisfaction. These findings suggest that Anganwadi Centres are effectively meeting the health needs of beneficiaries, although improvements in infrastructure, service quality, and regularity of health check-ups are still required.

The findings are consistent with previous studies that recognize the positive role of ICDS in improving maternal and child health through immunization and health services (Chudasama et al., 2016; Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2023). They also support Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (1999)**,** which emphasizes that access to quality healthcare enhances people's capabilities and overall well-being. Overall, the study concludes that Anganwadi Centres in Village Mehma Sarja are making a significant contribution to healthcare delivery and beneficiary satisfaction, while continued improvements in infrastructure and monitoring can further enhance programme effectiveness.

6.Policy Implications

The study recommends strengthening monitoring mechanisms to ensure regular and effective health check-up services through Anganwadi Centres. Improving infrastructure, increasing community awareness and participation, providing regular training and supportive supervision to Anganwadi Workers, and enhancing coordination with health functionaries will further improve the effectiveness of ICDS services.

7.Conclusion

The study concludes that health check-up services provided through Anganwadi Centres under ICDS are generally effective and have improved maternal and child healthcare in Village Mehma Sarja. Most beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with the services, though some gaps in service delivery remain. Strengthening infrastructure, regular monitoring, coordination among health workers, and community awareness will further enhance the effectiveness of Anganwadi Services and improve health outcomes.

8.References

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