

A STUDY ON THE NONFORMAL PRE SCHOOL EDUCATION IN MALAPPURAM DISTRICT

Abdussammed. P.

Research Scholar, Rabindranath Tagore University
Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India
samadmankada@gmail.com

Abstract

One of the biggest and most distinctive early childhood care and development projects in the world is India's Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). In general, ICDS is understood as an integrated intervention approach for the young child's holistic development within the white family and greater social group that the child resides in. The goal of the current study is to determine the different facets of the Anganwadi education programme and the resources accessible to Anganwadis, including land, building supplies, and equipment. Studying Anganwadi's educational programs—including their content, methods, and kinds of activities—as well as its facilities for kids' mental development, was deemed important. Programmes for Anganwadi health care were also given attention. 200 Anganwadis in the Malappuram district who are part of six ICDS initiatives were chosen at random to serve as the study's sample. The main instrument for gathering data for the study was a questionnaire that the investigator had created. Finding the percentage is the statistical process used to analyse the data that was obtained. The results indicated that the physical facilities of the Anganwadis in Malappuram district are satisfactory to a certain extent. The study results revealed that the Anganwadi supervisor visits once in a month. The data revealed that almost all the Anganwadis provide adequate health care services. The community's involvement in every stage of health activities, along with the health department's coordinated work and local self-government, all contribute to the quality of the services provided.

Keywords: Integrated Child Development Scheme, Early Childhood Care and Development, Anganwadi Education Programme

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a child's most dynamically impressionable and educationally influential stage of development. The child is well equipped for future education throughout this time. For the child's receptive mind, an enriched environment must be supplied. The National Policy on Education 2020 places a strong emphasis on the value of early childhood education and works to give kids in the three to six year old age range a fundamental education through Anganwadis and preschools. Opportunities to guarantee equal access to high-quality pre-school education are made possible by the National Education Policy 2020, the nation's commitment to achieving UN Sustainable Development Goal Target 4.2 by 2030, and the guarantee that all boys and girls have access to pre-primary education.

An integrated set of basic services for young children and expectant and nursing women was conceived in the context of the fifth five-year plan. As a result, 33 pilot programmes, including the Vengara Project in the Malappuram District of Kerala, were included in the 1975 launch of Integrated Child Development Services, or ICDS. As of right now, the largest Early Childhood Care and Education initiative is called ICDS.

ICDS focuses on early childhood education in nonformal preschool settings, nutrition, and health, particularly for children from urban slums, tribal communities, and rural areas. Additionally, the ICDS Programme aims to provide pre-schoolers, expectant mothers, and nursing moms with an integrated package of basic health, nutritional, and educational services. Child development experts around the world have acknowledged the value of preschool education. Thus, Non-Formal Pre-School Education is a crucial part of ICDS.

A three-month training programme is provided to Anganwadi workers, who are chosen from the local community to deliver the entire package of services, of which Non Formal Pre School Education is a component. Anganwadi encompass a wide range of early childhood amenities offered under the direction, control, and financial support of the government. Food, nutrition, and education are prioritised in Anganwadi education programmes for the holistic development of children aged three to six.

A study on the current status of Non formal Preschool Education in ICDS by Jairam, Monica & Chopra, Geetha (2020) reviewed 21 published studies related to Anganwadi centres: their physical layout, informal preschool programmes, and the availability of educational resources. The lack of physical infrastructure, such as rental buildings, inadequate electricity, and seating arrangements, is indicated by the results. While some centres continued to offer no-fee preschool programmes, others did so with domain-specific or indoor/outdoor

activities. Learning resources in the form of stationery, printed materials, and manipulatives were readily available. Adequate or proper use of the available material appeared to be a problem, nevertheless.

According to Sarbjit Singh Kular's 2020 study, "Pre-School Education Programme for Children under ICDS In Rural Punjab," Just 43.70 per cent of the recipient children were registered as AWWs for pre-school education. Merely 6.66% of kids were able to recognise five or six images of veggies. Only 2.50% of the kids were able to name three or four of the colours. The findings suggested that in order to provide Anganwadi Workers with the required abilities to deliver pre-school education at AWCs more successfully, the government should take the appropriate steps to ensure that they receive enough training regarding the pre-school education components of the ICDS system. It is a fact that the research and investigations that support any project have a significant impact on its efficacy. The researcher chose to analyse the Anganwadis of the Malappuram District after realising there weren't many studies on the Anganwadi Education Programme.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The goal of the current inquiry is to examine the Anganwadis' current living circumstances in the Malappuram District. The goal of the study is to determine the different facets of the Anganwadi Programme, as well as the resources available in Anganwadis to support it, including land, buildings, equipment, and supplies. Studying the Anganwadis' educational program—including its content, methods, and activities—as well as its resources for kids' physical and mental growth, parent participation, community involvement, and other aspects—was important. Programmes for Anganwadi health care were also given attention. The study also sought to identify the issues facing Anganwadis and offer potential solutions, as well as to learn what suggestions Anganwadi personnel had for improving the Anganwadi programmes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study is entitled as “**A STUDY ON THE NONFORMAL PRE SCHOOL EDUCATION IN MALAPPURAM DISTRICT**”.

DEFINITION OF THE KEY TERMS

Anganwadis

Anganwadi means ‘Courtyard Garden’ or Pre-school centre under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS). The term ‘Anganwadi’ covers a broad spectrum of facilities provided for pre-school children through which the programmes of Integrated Child Development Services - ICDS – are launched. An Anganwadi is the focal point for delivery of ICDS package of services.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives set for the present study.

1. To study the existing conditions and functioning of the Anganwadis in Malappuram District regarding
 - Physical facilities in Anganwadis
 - Facilities for children’s development and learning
 - Anganwadi Education Programme
 - Parental Cooperation and Community participation
 - Anganwadi Health Care Programme
2. To study the profile of Anganwadi workers in Malappuram District
3. To find out the reactions of Anganwadi workers about the existing conditions of Anganwadis in Malappuram District.
4. To obtain suggestions from Anganwadi workers of Malappuram District regarding the improvement of the Anganwadis

METHODOLOGY

a) Sample

The Anganwadis in Malappuram District constitute the population for the present study. The investigator selected six projects, including the Vengara Project, the first ICDS project in Kerala. The other projects selected for the study are Kondotty Project, Perinthalmanna Project, Malappuram USNP Project, Wandoor Project and Mankada Project. The sample for the present study constitutes 200 Anganwadis under these six ICDS Projects in Malappuram District selected randomly.

b) Tools for the study

For the present study, the investigator developed a questionnaire for Anganwadi workers to obtain the details of existing conditions of Anganwadis, Profile of Anganwadi workers and the Reactions of Anganwadi workers towards the existing condition of Anganwadis. The questionnaire consisted of a sequence of both closed and open questions to collect the necessary information.

c) Statistical Technique Used

The statistical procedure used for analysing the obtained data is finding the percentage.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The following are the major findings of the study

1. Majority of the Anganwadis sampled, that is, about 46 percentages were established during the period 1991-95. 69.53 per cent of Anganwadis are functioning in its own building, while 30.47 per cent are functioning in rented or in temporary arrangements. The study revealed that majority of the Anganwadis have concrete roof. Almost equal number of boys and girls seek admission in Anganwadis sampled
2. The study revealed that only about ninety six percent of Anganwadis are electrified, about 69 per cent have drinking water supply and about 78 per cent of Anganwadis have sanitary facilities. It was found that arrangements for electricity, water supply and sanitary facilities are inadequate in Anganwadis sampled. Facilities for cleanliness of the premises of the Anganwadis, cooking utensils and buckets or vessels for preserving water in Anganwadis are satisfactory to a certain extent
3. The study revealed that the furniture's such as chair or stool, desks for the use of both Anganwadi workers and children are insufficient. About 85 per cent of the Anganwadis have been provided with Blackboard.
4. Majority of the Anganwadis are keeping the records and registers properly.
5. In almost all Anganwadi children have enough freedom to play. Story telling method is used as the teaching strategy in 73 per cent of Anganwadis. Pre arithmetic experience and General knowledge are given in 73.25 per cent of Anganwadis.
6. To check the undesirable behaviour of children more than one technique was seen adopted in many Anganwadis. Discussing the undesirable behaviour of children with parents and finding appropriate solutions and positive reinforcement for desirable behaviour are the common measures.
7. It was found that almost all the Anganwadis provide chances for co-curricular activities and in about 91 per cent of Anganwadis distribute prizes to the participants.
8. About 34 per cent of the Anganwadis in the sample were affected by wastage of children. According to the opinion of Anganwadi workers, lack of facilities in the Anganwadis, practical difficulty to reach Anganwadis, children attracted to other Nursery schools for better reasons constitute the reason for wastage of children in Anganwadis.
9. Majority of the Anganwadi workers reported that Anganwadi supervisor visit the Anganwadis once in a month
10. The data revealed that almost all the Anganwadis provide advices to parents regarding immunization and health care of children. About 94 per cent of the Anganwadis advice the parents about the educational matters of their children
11. It is revealed that health care services are satisfactorily given in most of the Anganwadis sampled. Almost all the Anganwadi provide health education to pregnant mothers and inform parents if their children show symptoms of illness and abnormalities
12. It was revealed that almost 80 per cent of Anganwadi workers had received Anganwadi workers Training and only 6.39 per cent of the Anganwadi workers had undergone Nursery Teacher Training.
13. It was found that 29.65 per cent of Anganwadi workers are members of social organisations such as Youth Club, Mahila Samajams etc and 4.65 per cent of workers got part time job as Mahila Pradan Agent.

MAJOR PROBLEMS IN THE FUNCTIONING OF ANGANWADIS SUGGESTED BY ANGANWADI WORKERS

1. Lack of permanent building and inadequacy of facilities
2. Lack of interest in the parents in the Anganwadi programmes
3. Lack of community support
4. Lack of inadequacy of teaching learning materials
5. Lack of space for play and leisure activities
6. High work load of Anganwadi workers and insufficient honorarium

MAJOR SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING ANGANWADI EDUCATION PROGRAMME SUGGESTED BY ANGANWADI WORKERS

The suggestions offered by the Anganwadi workers for improving the present conditions of Anganwadis are given below:

1. Work load of Anganwadi workers should be lessened.
2. Anganwadi workers should be recognised as Government Employees.
3. The amount of Honararium and Allowances of Anganwadi workers might be increased.
4. Effective refresher courses to Anganwadi workers ought to be conducted periodically.
5. Permanent building should be made for all Anganwadis.
6. Adequate teaching learning materials would be provided to all the Anganwadis.
7. All the Anganwadis should be facilitated with playground and gardens.
8. Water supply and sanitary facilities should be provided in all Anganwadis.
9. All the Anganwadis in Kerala should have uniform syllabus for pre-school activities.
10. Annual festivals both for Anganwadi children and workers must be conducted.
11. In all Anganwadis medical inspection to be conducted at least once in a month.
12. Basic training to Anganwadi workers in Health Care Activities ought to be given.
13. Enough First aid facilities would be delivered in all Anganwadis.

EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The present study put forward the following suggestions to be implemented for the effective and useful functioning of the Anganwadis

1. Permanent building should be provided to all Anganwadis
2. Atleast 3 cents of land should be allotted to each Anganwadis from Gramma Panchayat or by voluntary donators for constructing the building
3. Water supply, electricity, kitchen equipments should be provided in all Anganwadis
4. Toilet and Urinal facilities should be provided in all Anganwadis
5. Facilities for child's all round development should be provided in all Anganwadis
6. Play and study materials should be should be distributed periodically by ICDS in all Anganwadis at free of cost
7. More Anganwadis should be opened in tribal and rural areas
8. All the Anganwadis in Kerala should have a uniform syllabus for pre-school activities
9. More importance should be given to educational aspects of Anganwadi programmes. Teaching method in the Anganwadis should be made effective
10. Attractive honorarium should be provided to all Anganwadi workers and incentives like pension and other benefits should be given
11. Adequate training atleast for one year for all Anganwadi workers should be conducted periodically
12. In all Anganwadis medical inspection should be conducted atleast once in a month
13. Make assurance on community participation for the smooth running of Anganwadis
14. Make awareness among people about the importance of Anganwadi education through the mass media and film shows in rural and tribal areas should have priority
15. Research and investigation in this field should be encouraged by the Government
16. Awards at all level should be offered to motivate the officials in this field for the effectiveness of the Anganwadi programmes

CONCLUSION

Our nation's Anganwadi Services Scheme aims to improve children's health and nutrition, set the groundwork for their holistic development, lower rates of morbidity, mortality, malnutrition, and school dropout among women and children, achieve effective departmental coordination for the achievement of nutrition outcomes, and strengthen mothers' and carers' capacity to comprehend the health and nutrition needs of their charges. The investigator made an earnest effort to make the study comprehensive, objective, precise and accurate. It is anticipated that the study will produce trustworthy and valuable results for enhancing Anganwadis' living conditions and encouraging more research in this area.

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