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Study on Implementation of Anganwadi Curriculum in Tribal Areas of Visakhapatnam District

M Aruna Kumari, S Prasanthi, Bilquis and M S Chaitanya Kumari

College of Comunity Science, APGC, Lam, Guntur, A. P.

ABSTRACT

The study was designed to assess the implementation of Anganwadi curriculum in tribal areas of Visakhapatnam district. The sample consisted of 30 Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and 30 Anganwadi Helpers (AWHs) who were selected from thirty Anganwadi centers using random sampling method. Questionnaire on knowledge levels of Anganwadi workers and Anganwadi helpers along with an observational checklist was developed for assessing the performance of AWWs on implementing the curriculum. Data was collected by interview method and observation method. The results revealed that majority (86.70%) of Anganwadi workers had average knowledge level on preschool curriculum. Among the different areas of curriculum majority of Anganwadi workers were not capable to perform activities related to cognitive development (75.90%) & language development (62.50%). Maximum percentage (70.00%) of Anganwadi workers conducted the preschool curriculum activities effectively. The Performance levels of AWHs showed that all the Anganwadi helpers (100.00%) were maintaining good level of personal hygiene. Similarly in child care and storage area component the Anganwadi helper's (93.00%) level of performance was found good. Majority of the AWWs (90.00%) attended job course training and refresher trainings which helped them in developing their knowledge and skills related to preschool education. The results of the study revealed that the implementation of preschool curriculum by Anganwadi workers in cognitive and language development area needs improvement for optimal growth and development of children. The major constraint of Anganwadi workers for implementing preschool curriculum was extra workloads. Anganwadi workers must be reduced in order to performed better on preschool education component and focused more on the performance of the prescribed curriculum.

Keywords: *Anganwadies, Anganwadi workers, Anganwadi Helpers, Curriculum and Knowledge levels*

Early childhood Education (ECE) contribute towards the universalization of primary education by providing essential preparation for primary schooling. Early childhood education (ECE) for the children aged 3-8 years is one of the services provide under the Integrated Child Development services (ICDS). Its prominence on necessary input focussed towards providing a natural, joyful & stimulating atmosphere for growth and development of children. Anganwadi workers (AWW) are most important functionary of ICDS scheme who are working as front line volunteers in ICDS programme. AWW play a pivotal role in functioning of services provide under ICDS due to their close and continuous contact with the community. AWW must have the knowledge on organizing preschool educational activities based on

given curriculum to promote the overall development of children through play way method.

"Curriculum is the knowledge and skill teachers are expected to educate and children are expected to learn and the plans for experiences through which learning take place (*Ann Epstein*, 2007)". Curriculum designed for preschool is not just a syllabus or course of study but a collection of total life experiences of a learner leading to his or her all round development. It aims at developing the child as a "whole person". It should represent both the society and child's need. The importance of preschool education is largely child-centered education and it should focus on play as it is nature of child. Play allows the child to experiment with the world around him and the emotional world inside him. Play provides children the chance to enthusiastically explore, manipulate and interact with environment. Preschool period is a time of significant transition in a child's life. Children learn and master motor abilities that help them interact and correspond with their social environment (Mia Masnjak, 2017).

Anganwadi Workers require sufficient training and refresher training at appropriate interval of time about preschool education in order to enhance their skill for impart preschool education and to improve efficiently at Anganwadi centers by involving children and enlighten their curiosity in learning. Majority of AWWs (75.00%) had good knowledge about Integrated Child Development Services but most of them (90.00%) faced various problems in implementing the scheme (Sarbjit, 2013; Baliram and Uday, 2019). In adding, there should be proper supervision on AWWs because of which they will dedicate sufficient time to preschool educational activities which helps in building a quality foundation for the children's further education. Emphasis should not be laid only on nutrition and immunization. Early years of children need proper formal schooling to have a bright future which is also one of the objectives of ICDS. Good nutrition, immunization, quality formal schooling will make the children healthy and educated citizens who will build the nation.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Tribal areas of Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh was selected as the area of study. Ex-post facto research design was used for the current study. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select 30 Anganwadi centers and their respective Anganwadi workers (AWWs) and Anganwadi helpers (AWHs). The study was conducted in the year 2019-2020. The tools used were prepared by investigator which includes a questionnaire on knowledge levels related to Anganwadi curriculum and observational checklist to assess the performance of the prescribed curriculum by AWWs and AWHs. The results of Knowledge level of Anganwadi workers was scored as Above Average, Average and Below Average and Activity performance was divided in two categories- Performed and Not Performed. For Anganwadi Helpers a questionnaire on knowledge levels was used to know the maintaince of personal hygiene, child care and storage area component. The responses were grouped in two categories - Good and Poor. Frequency and percentage were used to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from Anganwadi Workers and Anganwadi Helpers was analyzed, tabulated and presented in table and graph forms. The Table no: 1 represents Knowledge levels of Anganwadi Workers on Preschool Curriculum. About 86.70 per cent of Anganwadi workers had average level of knowledge, 10.00 per cent had above average level of knowledge followed by 3.30 per cent in below average level of knowledge. These results are in line with Prithutam *et*

al., (2017) who stated that maximum number of AWWs had average knowledge score regarding ICDS components and it is essential to organize frequent refreshers training course to enable them to give best of services.

The Knowledge level of Anganwadi workers were at average level on various areas of child development which is helping them to perform their preschool activities effectively because of the trainings they received. However due to the additional work load and duties assigned to the Anganwadi workers they were not capable to implement the curriculum effectively. Most of the Anganwadi workers attended short term trainings such as job course and refresher trainings and their educational qualification is low and they need regular refresher trainings for efficient delivery of services. Anganwadi workers are burdened through extra duty and facing many field level problems while implementing the preschool activities. Baliram and Uday, (2019) revealed that 75.00% AWWs had good knowledge about Integrated Child Development Services however, 80.00% to 90.00% faced various problems in implementing the scheme.

Apart from administration/implementation of preschool curriculum activities majority of anganwadi workers are not able to give their best intended for optimal growth and development of children. Anganwadi workers having knowledge on growth monitoring, immunization, educational level & trainings. They require more training to develop their knowledge and moreover need to strengthened infrastructure and supplies. A similar study by Simon, (2016) showed that Knowledge in the early childhood curriculum serves as impediment for successful functioning of the early childhood curriculum among the preschools.

The Areas of Knowledge levels of Anganwadi workers included the five areas such as Good habits/ Science & Experiment/ Introducing new topics, Developmental based, Material based, Activity based and Monthly theme based.

The data given in Table no.2 shows that more than half (53.00%) of AWWs had Average level of knowledge in Good habits/ Science & Experiment/ Introducing new topics. They were able to answer items like "Keeping things/items in their own positions", "Saying thank you", "and Answering attendance". But Anganwadi workers were not aware of activities like "Identifying sounds & differences", "Methods of Introducing Alphabets" and "Thinking in a rational manner". Regarding developmental based activity majority (70.00%) of Anganwadi workers had average level of knowledge. They had knowledge on activities like "Walking on line", "playing train game", "Hide & seek" but could not differentiate outdoor and indoor play".

Regarding Teaching Material based and Monthly theme based areas about (80.00%) of the Anganwadi workers were found to have average level of knowledge respectively. They were aware of Teaching Material used for "creative activities", "Science experiments" but were not having knowledge related to measuring the children's "growth & development", using visual aids such as "Stick & finger puppets", "Flash cards and Picture books".

With regard to Monthly theme most of the AWWs were aware of activities to be done according to monthly theme given in "Preschool Education Curriculum". But they were not aware of distribution of activities based on age of children.

On the items related to Activity based area majority (76.70%) of AWW were aware of daily activities such as "Crayoning, colouring and printing with vegetables, leafs", "Jumping in & out". But they did not have knowledge related to storytelling ("Kothi pillalu - Roetey mukhaa") and rhymes ("Hai hai theepii", "Eedhuru gaali veechindhi" and "Frog jump" activity. A study by Sulakshana and Padmaja, (2017)

revealed that 30.00% of AWWs know how to present formal preschool education in a play way manner, immunization, nutrition & health education and further services provided at Anganwadi centers. Anganwadi workers had best knowledge regarding the supplementary nutrition (70.00%). Totally the Areas of Knowledge levels of Anganwadi workers come under average level of knowledge on preschool curriculum. To enhance AWWs knowledge providing periodic training programme and suitable literature are necessary.

The above information depict that the majority (70.00%) of the Anganwadi workers were conducted activity while 30.00 per cent of Anganwadi Workers were did not conducted activity.

The results indicated that AWWs are conducting activities such as Informal talk, Rhymes, Indoor play, outdoor play, Storytelling, Science experiment, School Readiness and creative activity which shows that their performance in preschool curriculum activities are effective. This is due to the implementation of planned schedule given to anganwadies to improve growth and developmental requirements of children. The teaching methods of Anganwadi Workers need improvement which can be attained by regular trainings. Activities which motivate anganwadi workers are to be conducted to execute well in implementing the activities of the ICDS project.

Isaiahkiplangat Melly and Dr. Boniface, (2018) in their study revealed that 53.70% variation in the level of implementation of creative activities curriculum was observed while implementing the curriculum. In order to provide material for conducting creative activities, there must be a vote head in all schools budget exclusively to provide for ECDE creative resources. The study recommended teachers to use fun learning, employ holistic hands-on approach, provide incentives and rewards, and capitalise on the student's culture and language (Abdul and Mustaphab, 2014).

Teachers and parents have optimistic approach towards Early Childhood Development Programmes, lack of resources affected teaching and learning processes, Lack of qualified teachers affected professional conduct of Early Childhood Development programmes and the children were vulnerable to deprivation of appropriate experiences because ECD centres were not well equipped, Para professionals are supposed to remunerate salary similar to those of temporary teachers (Moyo *et al*., 2012). Damanpreet Kaur *et al*., (2016) exposed that the time spent on preschool education was not as much of as the recommended time (23.00%) because rest of the time was spent on records maintenance by Anganwadi worker, in dealing with beneficiaries, filling up forms, clarifying beneficiaries' doubts on schemes. The Early Childhood Education delivered through AWWs under ICDS scheme is providing a good teaching learning opportunity towards the children of weaker section of our society before they enter in primary school at their door step (Deepmala Shrivastav and Bharti Sagar, 2012).

The areas of activity performance of anganwadi workers were given in the table no: 4. The activities performed by AWWs includes the eight areas which are Informal talk, Rhymes, Indoor play, outdoor play, Storytelling, Science experiment, School Readiness and creative activity. Majority of AWWs were conducting Science experiment (93.30%), School Readiness (93.30%) and Informal talk (80.00%). Most of the AWWs were not conducting Outdoor play (90.00%) and Creative activity (86.70%).

A study by Akshatha and Surekha, (2019) showed that anganwadi workers had good knowledge regarding developmental activities provided to the children like outdoor games and exercises for physical development, providing knowledge regarding sizes, shapes and story-telling technique used for cognitive

Table 1. Knowledge levels of Anganwadi workers on preschool curriculum (N=30)

S. No.	Knowledge levels of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs)	Below Average		Average		Above Average		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
1		1	3.30	26.00	86.70	3.00	10.00	30	100

Table 2. Areas of knowledge levels of AWWs (N=30)

S. No.	Areas of knowledge levels of AWWs	Below Average		Average		Above Average		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
1	Good habits/Science and experiments/Introducing new topic	2	6.7	16	53.3	12	40	30	100
2	Developmental based	8	26.7	21	70	1	3.3	30	100
3	Activity based	2	6.7	24	80	4	13.3	30	100
4	Material based	3	10	23	76.7	4	13.3	30	100
5	Monthly theme based	4	13.3	24	80	2	6.7	30	100

Table 3. Activity Performance of Anganwadi Workers in implementation of curriculum

(N=30)

S. No.	Activity Performance of Anganwadi Workers in implementation of curriculum	ACTIVITY				Total	
		Not performed		Performed			
		n	%	n	%	N	%
1	Activities to be conducted by Anganwadi Workers	9	30	21	70	30	100

Table 4. Areas of activity performance of AWWs (N=30)

S.No.	Areas of activity performance of AWWs	Not performed		Performed		Total	
		n	%	n	%	N	%
1	Informal talk	6	20.00	24	80.00	30	100
2	Rhymes	13	43.30	17	56.70	30	100
3	Outdoor play	27	90.00	3	10.00	30	100
4	Indoor play	11	36.70	19	63.30	30	100
5	Story telling	17	56.70	13	43.30	30	100
6	Creative activity	2	6.70	28	93.30	30	100
7	School readiness	2	6.70	28	93.30	30	100
8	Science experiments	26	86.70	4	13.30	30	100

Table 5. Anganwadi Helpers based on Knowledge levels (N=30)

S. No.	Components of knowledge levels of Anganwadi helper	Poor		Good		Total	
		n	%	n	%	N	%
1	Personal Hygiene	0	0	30	100	30	100
2	Child care & storage area	2	7	28	93	30	100

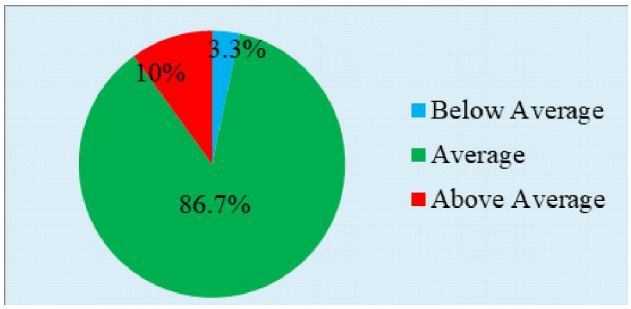

Fig 1. Knowledge levels of Anganwadi workers on preschool curriculum

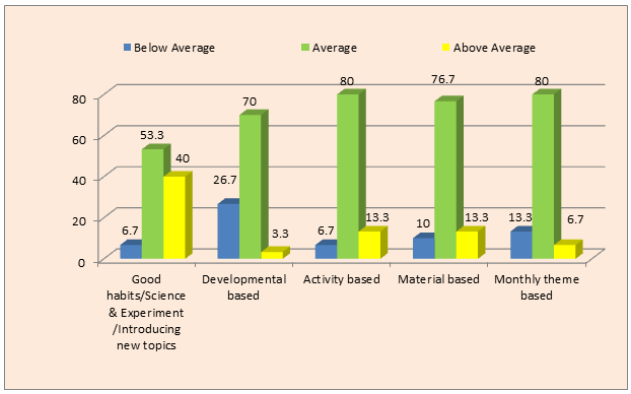

Fig 2. Areas of Knowledge levels of Anganwadi workers based on Preschool curriculum

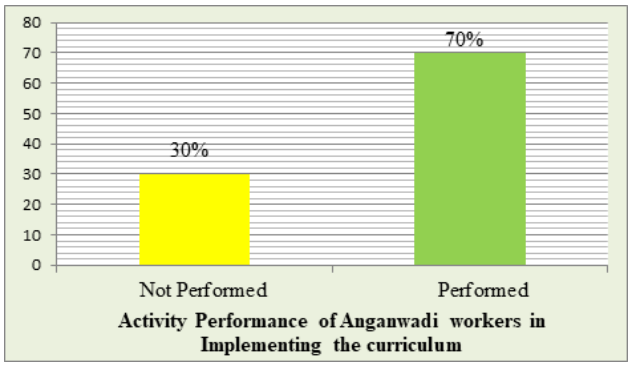

Fig 3. Activity Performance of Anganwadi Workers in implementation of curriculum

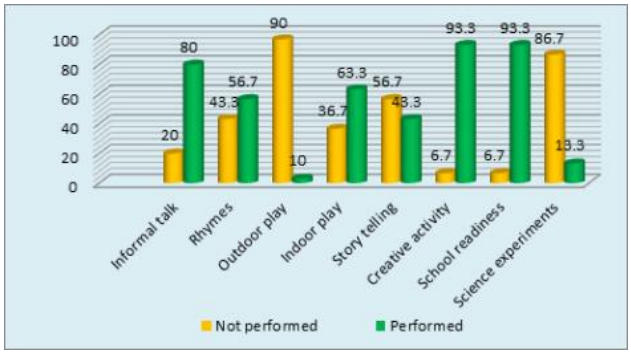

Fig 4. Areas of activity performance of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs)

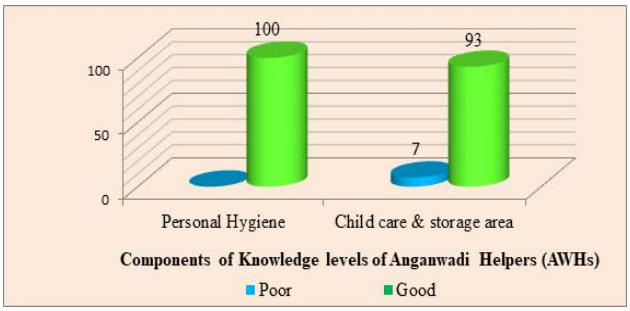

Fig.5 Anganwadi Helpers (AWHs) based on Knowledge levels

development, storytelling techniques and information about colours for emotional development, songs and stories for language development, moral stories and narrating the simple environmental issues like water, soil, air, tree, animals and birds for social development. They followed the principle 'Learn while Play'. A study conducted by Rajesh *et al*., (2014) resulted that the low cost games (66.70%), charts/posters, time table and play way methods (60.00%) were used to provide Preschool education.

The results of the knowledge and performance levels of anganwadi helpers in the area of personal hygiene revealed that all the anganwadi helpers 100.00% were maintaining personal hygiene by cutting their nails, covering hair before starting cooking, washing hands before cooking, using washed hand towel, soaking vegetables in salt water before cutting them for cooking, drying the vessels under sunlight, cleaning the glasses & plates of children and helping each child in washing their hands before & after eating food. The surroundings of the anganwadi center also kept clean and hygiene so, that children may find interest to attend anganwadi centers. Since, it's their responsibilities to provide good hygienic service to the anganwadi centers.

Majority (93.00%) of Anganwadi Helpers were found to have good level of Knowledge in the area of child care and storage area. The anganwadi helpers cleaned storage area once in a week, used

rat traps for storage room, observed into egg trays everyday and removed the spoiled eggs, brings children from home to school every day, and helped worker during class hours and helped anganwadi workers in distribution of Take home ration (THR) in anganwadi center, took care of children in the nonattendance of AWW, cleaned the center once in a week and also took care of children to ensure and provided healthy nurture environment.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the Knowledge level of anganwadi workers have found at average level of category on different area of child development which is portion them to present their preschool performance activities successfully because of the trainings they received. However due to the increased work load and additional duties assigned to the Anganwadi workers; they were not able to implement the curriculum effectively. The majority of the anganwadi workers attended short term trainings such as job course and refresher trainings and educational qualification is low and they require regular refresher trainings for well-organized deliverance of services. The activity performance of Anganwadi Worker's requires improvement and must be given regular trainings; need to be given more salary to Anganwadi workers (AWW's) and also be motivated to take interest in all activities of the plan. The outcome of the present study revealed that the implementation of preschool curriculum by anganwadi workers in cognitive and language developmental areas needs improvement for optimal growth and development of children.

Therefore measures have to be taken by the ICDS services to improve the implementation status of preschool curriculum by anganwadi workers, more focus should be provided on preschool education (PSE) programmes along with the other services provided at anganwadi centers. As the Anganwadi workers have more additional workloads it is difficult for them to focus on the implementation of the curriculum. So, one more helper can be recruited by the government to carry out additional duties of the anganwadi worker and also have more preschool education trainings or Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) training to improve the growth & developmental needs of children in an effective manner.

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