



A Study of Korutla Mandal Anganwadi Teachers' Perceptions on ICDS Services and Work Conditions

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Abstract: This study examines the perceptions and experiences of Anganwadi teachers regarding the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program and their working environment in India. Through a survey of 41 teachers, the research explores their views on the overall status of ICDS services, infrastructure, training effectiveness, and other relevant aspects. The analysis utilizes descriptive statistics, tables, and figures to present the findings, highlighting key areas of concern and positive feedback.

Keywords: Anganwadi, ICDS, teachers, perceptions, working environment, India.

Introduction:

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program plays a crucial role in promoting the early childhood development of children from disadvantaged communities in India. Anganwadi workers and teachers form the backbone of this program, delivering essential services like supplementary nutrition, preschool education, and healthcare interventions. However, their experiences and perspectives on the program remain crucial to understanding its effectiveness and areas for improvement. This study aims to investigate the perceptions and experiences of Anganwadi teachers regarding the ICDS program and their working environment.

Review of Related Literature

Parupally Anjaneyulu (2023) Role of Preschool Teachers in Early Childhood Care and Education: A Study of Anganwadis /Anganwadi Schools Located in Scheduled Caste Colonies of Telangana State. In this paper, the authors conducted a study to identify the most difficult challenges for SC AWTs in organizing preschool education are as follows: insufficient space for class activities, material storage and indoor games; children irregularities, other responsibilities; parental migration, English medium schools and a lack of basic amenities, all of which impede proper pre-school education implementation. In India, ICDS provides early childhood education to children (3–6 years) under the supervision of Anganwadi Teacher (AWT). The study concluded that out of 42 AWTs, the majority are Schedule caste (SC) teachers and have more than 10 years of experience and only half of the AWTs have an intermediate and above qualification.

Harikrishna Bn, Kishore Yadav Jothula, K Nagaraj (2020) Utilisation of Anganwadi Services among Pre-School Age Children in Rural Telangana: A Cross Sectional Study. Apart from supplementary nutrition and immunisation, there is a need to sensitise and motivate beneficiaries to utilise the other services offered by anganwadi centre. Background: Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) was launched in 1975 with the objectives to improve the nutritional and health status of children in the age group 0-6 years, to lay the foundations for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child, to reduce mortality and morbidity, malnutrition and school drop-out by delivering a package of services. It has been found that there is a gap in expected and actual delivery of services and less than expected utilisation of services from beneficiaries.

Kartik Sudhakar Patil, Meenal V. Kulkarni (2016) Knowledge and Utilization of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme among women in an urban slum- a community-based study. Background: ICDS is the largest government run health program for children with its foot spread across complete Indian Territory. Objective: Study was aimed to obtain information about the knowledge, level of awareness and utilization of the services provided under ICDS among women living in the urban slum.

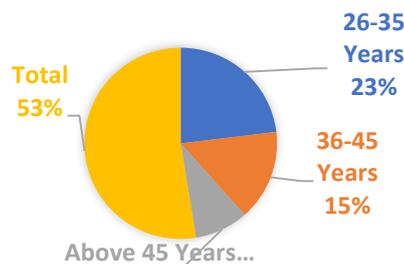
Methodology:

A sample of 41 Anganwadi teachers was drawn from different districts of India through a purposive sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was administered to collect data on their socio-demographic characteristics, perceptions of ICDS services, infrastructure, training effectiveness, and job satisfaction. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to analyze the data. Tables and figures were employed to visualize the findings.

Results:

Shows the age wise distribution of the sample (teachers)

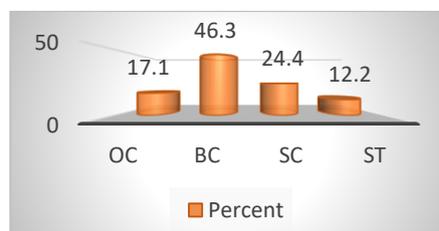
Age	Frequency	Percent
26-35 Years	18	43.9
36-45 Years	12	29.3
Above 45 Years	7	17.1
Total	41	100.0



- The majority of the teachers were female (97.5%).
- Age distribution showed a range from 26 to 52 years, with the highest concentration in the 26-35 years age group (43.9%).

Shows the caste wise distribution of the sample (teacher)

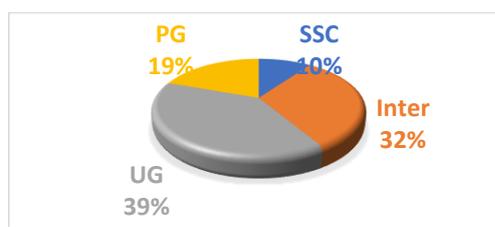
Caste	Frequency	Percent
OC	7	17.1
BC	19	46.3
SC	10	24.4
ST	5	12.2
Total	41	100.0



- Caste distribution revealed a diverse representation, with the largest group belonging to Other Backward Classes (BCs) (46.3%), followed by Scheduled Castes (SCs) (24.4%), Scheduled Tribes (STs) (12.2%), and Other Castes (OCs) (17.1%).

Shows the educational qualification distribution of the sample (teacher)

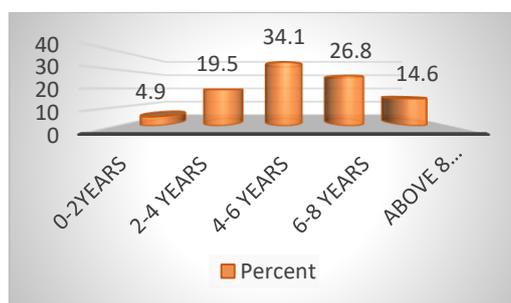
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percent
SSC	4	9.8
Inter	13	31.7
UG	16	39.0
PG	8	19.5
Total	41	100.0



- Educational qualifications indicated a mix of levels, with UG degrees being the most common (39.0%), followed by Inter (31.7%), PG (19.5%), and SSC (9.8%).

Shows the teaching Experience distribution of the sample (teacher)

Experience	Frequency	Percent
0-2Years	2	4.9
2-4 Years	8	19.5
4-6 Years	14	34.1
6-8 Years	11	26.8
Above 8 Years	6	14.6
Total	41	100.0

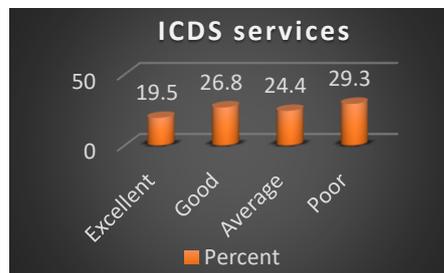


- Work experience ranged from 0 to 24 years, with the majority having 4-6 years (34.1%) or 6-8 years (26.8%) of experience.

Perceptions of ICDS services:

Shows the perceptions of teachers on overall status of ICDS services

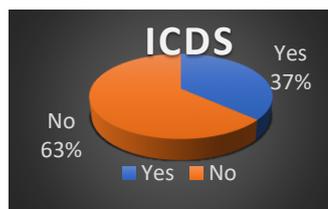
How would you rate the overall status of ICDS services?		
	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	8	19.5
Good	11	26.8
Average	10	24.4
Poor	12	29.3
Total	41	100.0



- When asked about the overall status of ICDS services, 29.3% of teachers rated it as poor, 24.4% as average, 26.8% as good, and 19.5% as excellent. This suggests mixed opinions on the program's effectiveness.

Shows the teacher’s satisfaction with ICDS infrastructure

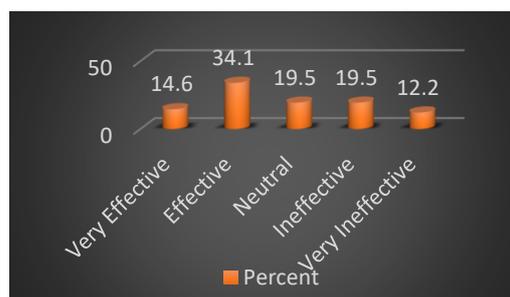
Are you satisfied with the infrastructure provided by ICDS?		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	15	36.6
No	26	63.4
Total	41	100.0



- Infrastructure satisfaction was lower, with 63.4% of teachers expressing dissatisfaction and 36.6% expressing satisfaction. This highlights concerns about the physical facilities available for delivering ICDS services.

Shows the Effectiveness of ICDS Training

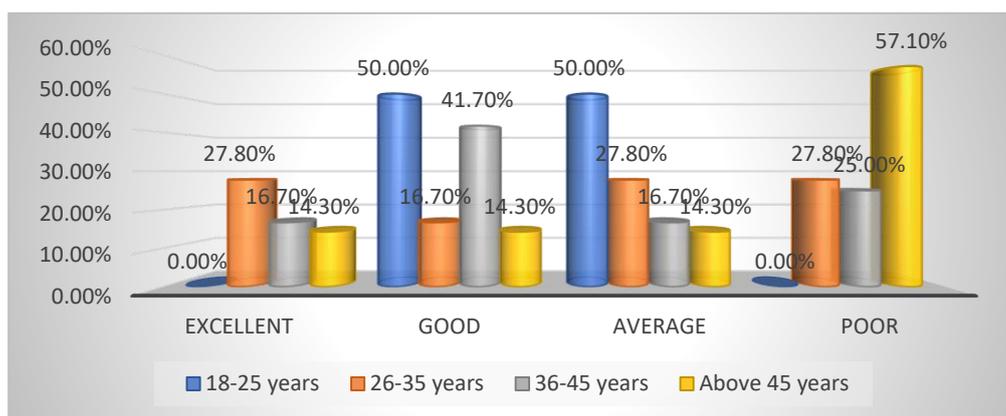
How effective is the training provided by ICDS in your opinion?		
	Frequency	Percent
Very Effective	6	14.6
Effective	14	34.1
Neutral	8	19.5
Ineffective	8	19.5
Very Ineffective	5	12.2
Total	41	100.0



- Training effectiveness received more positive feedback, with 34.1% finding it effective and 14.6% finding it very effective. However, 19.5% expressed neutral opinions and another 19.5% found it ineffective or very ineffective, indicating a need for improvement in training programs.

The table presents an analysis of teachers' perceptions of the overall status of ICDS services categorized by age groups.

Age		How would you rate the overall status of ICDS services?				Total	Chi-Square	Sig. (2-sided)
		Excellent	Good	Average	Poor			
18-25 Years	Count	0	2	2	0	4	9.311	.409
	% within Age	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%		
26-35 Years	Count	5	3	5	5	18		
	% within Age	27.8%	16.7%	27.8%	27.8%	100.0%		
36-45 Years	Count	2	5	2	3	12		
	% within Age	16.7%	41.7%	16.7%	25.0%	100.0%		
Above 45 Years	Count	1	1	1	4	7		
	% within Age	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	57.1%	100.0%		
Total	Count	8	11	10	12	41		
	% within Age	19.5%	26.8%	24.4%	29.3%	100.0%		



- Younger teachers (18-25 years) tend to view the services more positively, with 50% rating them as good and 50% as average. Older teachers (36-45 and above 45 years) have more diverse opinions, with 41.7% of the 36-45 group rating them as good and 25.0% as poor, while 57.1% of the above 45 group perceiving them as poor.

Discussion:

The findings reveal a complex picture of Anganwadi teachers' experiences with the ICDS program. While some aspects received positive feedback, such as training effectiveness, concerns were raised regarding infrastructure inadequacy and mixed opinions on the overall status of ICDS services. These findings align with existing research highlighting challenges like insufficient resources, limited training opportunities, and inadequate infrastructure (Agarwal et al., 2014; Khetan, 2018).

These findings suggest that younger teachers may be more optimistic about ICDS services, potentially due to their recent entry into the field and lack of exposure to long-standing challenges. Alternatively, they might be reflecting more recent improvements in the program. Older teachers, with more experience, may have encountered more significant obstacles in their work and hold a more critical perspective. The high percentage of "poor" ratings in the above 45 age group merits further investigation into the specific concerns of these teachers. It is important to note that the chi-square test indicated no significant difference in perceptions across age groups (p-value > 0.05). This may be due to the small sample size or other factors not captured in the survey.

Implications:

This study underscores the importance of understanding Anganwadi teachers' perspectives to improve the ICDS program. Addressing their concerns regarding infrastructure, providing more effective training, and ensuring adequate resources are crucial for optimizing the program's effectiveness. Additionally, further research is needed to explore specific challenges faced by teachers in different regions and communities to tailor interventions accordingly. Improving communication and engagement between the ICDS program and teachers, especially older teachers, could help address their concerns and improve their perceptions of the services. Providing targeted support and resources to teachers facing specific challenges can also contribute to enhancing their morale and effectiveness. Regularly gathering feedback from teachers of all age groups and actively listening to their concerns can inform program improvements and ensure that ICDS services are meeting the needs of both teachers and children.

Limitations:

This study was limited by its relatively small sample size and purposive sampling technique, which may not fully capture the experiences of all Anganwadi teachers across India. Further research with larger and more representative samples is recommended to generalize the findings.

Conclusion:

This study provides valuable insights into the perceptions and experiences of Anganwadi teachers regarding the ICDS program. While the program holds promise for improving early childhood development, addressing the concerns and needs of teachers is essential for its optimal functioning and sustained impact. Teachers' perceptions of the overall status of ICDS services differ across age groups, with younger teachers generally holding more positive views compared to older teachers.

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