

Pre-School Activities Conducted at ICDS

Priyanka A. Kausadikar¹ and Surekha R. Gaikwad²

Ph. D. Research Student, Department of Home Science¹

Research Guide, Associate Professor and Head²

Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded

Swatantrya Sainik Suryabhanji Pawar Mahavidyalaya College, Purna, Maharashtra, India

Abstract: *The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme, flagship programme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development launched in 1975 is one of the prime programmes for women and children in age group of 0 – 6 years. Pre-school education is an important aspect of ICDS activities as it is closely related to educational ideals on one side and to the attainment of educational objectives on the other. Assessing the readiness of entering pre – school children to succeed in school has become an increasing concern for policy makers, pre – school staff, parents, administrators and many others. Present study was undertaken to know pre – school activities conducted at Anganwadi centers and give suggestions for betterment of these pre – school activities. The results revealed that the activities such as introduction to numbers, stories and indoor games were conducted in cent percent Anganwadi centers. Whereas, post – training suggestions such as finger printing (98 %), building blocks and origami (97.33 % each) were incorporated by most of the Anganwadi Workers. There is a need for refresher training for AWWs to help them develop skills to plan and conduct non-formal preschool activities and to enhance the budget of AWCs for preparing play equipment.*

Keywords: Anganwadi Workers, ICDS, Non – Formal Education, Pre – School Activities.

I. INTRODUCTION

Planning Commission suggested the implementation of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme in all the States of India to improve the nutritional and health status of children below 6 years of age in 1972. The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme was sponsored by the Government of India in 1975 with the major objective of providing opportunities of physical and psycho-social development to children in the age group of 0-6 years through an integrated package of early childhood services. Every child must get opportunities to develop to his/her full potential. It is imperative that families, societies and the State make it possible for every child to get this opportunity for optimum development. The AWW is the key front line worker who plays a crucial role in promoting child growth and development. One of their important roles is to detect childhood disabilities at an early stage, provide referral services, and parent education. The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme is today the major national programme in the country, addressed to the weakest sections of the community.

The AWs with the cooperation of the community are expected to function in the school building, panchayat building, or in any other place provided by the community with indoor as well as outdoor space to conduct their activities. One Anganwadi worker and a helper is allotted to each anangwadi. Under ICDS scheme, a package of services, consisting of supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check-up, referral services, health education and non-formal pre-school education is provided to children below 6 years of age and pregnant women & nursing mothers in the age group of 15-45 years in an integrated manner. As non – formal pre – school education is one of the important services provided in these centers, it was felt that school readiness of children attending those centers be assessed and necessary information related to this be given to the Anganwadi Worker so as to improve children's learning in the areas they are lacking. Hence, the present research investigation has been conducted with following objectives:

1. To know the socio – personal characteristics of AWWs
2. To get information about pre – school activities at Anganwadi centers
3. To suggest better pre – school activities in addition to existing activities to AWWs

II. METHODOLOGY

The present study comprised of the study of anganwadies from Parbhani district. The sample consists of randomly selected 600 anganwadi workers from Parbhani city. The data have been collected by structured questionnaire. The information regarding socio-personal characteristics of anganwadi workers, occupational experience and knowledge level, etc. have been collected. The methodology of the present study was as follows:

1. **Locale of the Study:** The present study was carried out in Parbhani district. Parbhani is one of the district from Marathwada. Presently population of city is more than eighteen lakhs. Several anganwadies are working in the city.
2. **Sample Selection and Sampling:** A total of 600 anganwadi workers have been selected by random sampling technique from Parbhani district.
3. **Survey and Personal visit of Anganwadi:** A survey have been carried out to know the anganwadies from Parbhani district. After selection of anganwadi, personal visit to each anganwadi have been given one after another. During the visit data have been collected regarding socio-personal characteristics of anganwadi workers, occupational experience and pre – school activities conducted at ICDS center etc. through structured questionnaire.
4. **Suggestions given by researcher to the Anganwadi Workers:** Researcher has given suggestions to the Anganwadi workers about educational activities to be conducted for pre – school children in order to equip them with better knowledge and information. Suggestions were given at the time of first interview and its utilization was reviewed at the time of second visit.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Explains Distribution of Anganwadi workers according to age. More than half of the Anganwadi workers (51.33%) were middle aged followed by young (46%) and old (2.67%). The results are in confirmation with the results of Gotarkar and Ingole (2018), Patil and Doibale (2013) and Thakare et al (2011).

Table1: Distribution of Anganwadi Workers according to age

Sr. No.	Age group	No of Anganwadi workers N = 600	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Young (35 and below)	276	46
2.	Middle (36 – 55)	308	51.33
3.	Old (Above 55)	16	2.67
	Total	600	100

Table 2 explains distribution of Anganwadi workers according to education. Majority of the Anganwadi workers were educated upto secondary level (43.33%) followed by higher secondary (29.33%) and graduation (24%). Very few were educated upto post graduation (3.33%). The findings are in line with the findings of Manzoor and Khurshid (2014), Patil and Doibale (2013) and Thakare et al (2011).

Table 2: Distribution of Anganwadi workers according to education

Sr. No.	Educational Level	No of Anganwadi workers N = 600	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Secondary (10th)	260	43.33
2.	Higher Secondary (12th)	176	29.33
3.	Graduation	144	24
4.	Post –graduation	20	3.33
	Total	600	100

Table 3 elaborates distribution of Anganwadi workers according to their total length of service. Near about one third of the Anganwadi workers were having 10 – 15 years work experience, whereas more than one fourth of them were having work experience upto 5 years. Least number of them were having more than 20 years work experience (9.33%). Similar results were found by Gotarkar and Ingole (2018), Taha Ayub et al (2017) and Thakare et al (2011).

Table3: Distribution of Anganwadi workers according to their total length of service

Sr. No.	Length of service	No of Anganwadi workers N = 600	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Upto 5 years service	172	28.67
2.	5 – 10 years	100	16.67
3.	10 – 15 years	188	31.33
4.	15 – 20 years	84	14
5.	More than 20 years	56	9.33
	Total	600	100

Table 4 depicts distribution of Anganwadi workers according to number of trainings received. It was found that majority number of the Anganwadi workers have completed two trainings i.e. one basic and one refresher(44.67%). Near about same number of them have completed only one training i.e. basic (44%). Only few number of them have completed three and more trainings (11.33%).

Table 4: Distribution of Anganwadi workers according to number of trainings received

Sr. No.	No. of trainings received	No of Anganwadi workers N = 600	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Less (1 training)	264	44
2.	Medium (2 trainings)	268	44.67
3.	More (3 and above trainings)	68	11.33
	Total	600	100

Table 5 reveals different activities conducted for pre – school children by Anganwadi workers. It was found that the activities introduction to numbers, stories and indoor games were conducted in cent percent Anganwadi centers. On the other hand, the activities handicrafts (60.67 %), reading and vocabulary (53.33 %) as well as mathematics (50.67 %) were conducted in less percentage of Anganwadi centers. These findings are in line with the findings of Mary (1988).

Table 5: Activities conducted by Anganwadi Workers for pre-school children

Sr. No.	Activities conducted by Anganwadi Workers	No. of Anganwadi Workers N = 600	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Introduction to numbers	600	100
2.	Introduction to alphabets	596	99.33
3.	Writing	452	75.33
4.	Reading and vocabulary	320	53.33
5.	Mathematics	304	50.67
6.	General Knowledge	384	64
7.	Rhymes and poems	584	97.33
8.	Stories	600	100
9.	Indoors games	600	100
10.	Outdoor games	544	90.67
11.	Drawing	484	80.67
12.	Handicrafts	364	60.67

Table 6 elaborates post training suggestions given by researcher about activities for pre – school children and their utilization by Anganwadi Workers. Activities such as finger printing (98 %), building blocks and origami (97.33 % each) were incorporated by most of the Anganwadi Workers. Whereas, rollograph (84.5 %), science experience (83.83 %) and collage making (81.67 %) were adopted by comparatively less percent of Anganwadi workers. Similar findings were revealed by Mary (1988).

Table 6: Post training suggestions by researcher about activities for pre – school children and their utilization by Anganwadi Workers

Sr. No.	Post training suggested activities by researcher	Utilization by Anganwadi Workers No. of Anganwadi Workers N = 600	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Science Experience	503	83.83
2.	Rollo graph	507	84.5
3.	Puzzles	519	86.5
4.	Building blocks	584	97.33
5.	Finger printing	588	98
6.	Block printing	580	96.67
7.	Collage making	490	81.67
8.	Clay modeling	568	94.67
9.	Origami	584	97.33

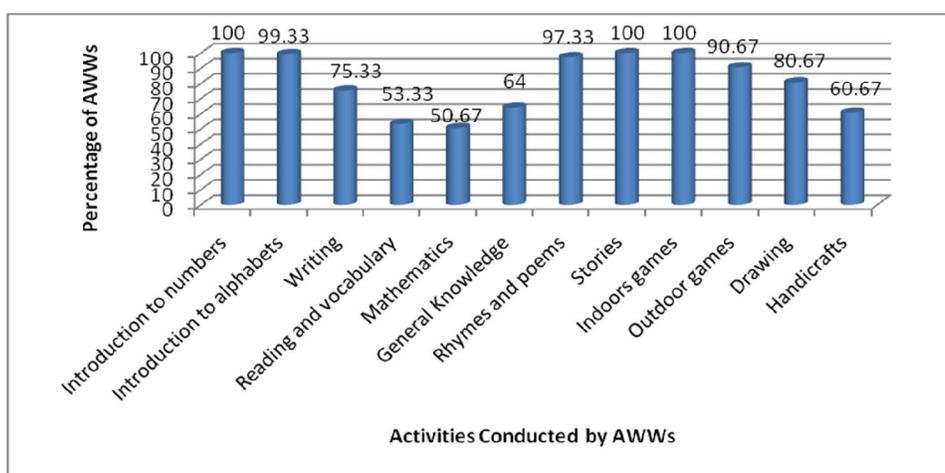


Figure 1: Bar diagram elaborating activities conducted by Anganwadi Workers for pre-school children

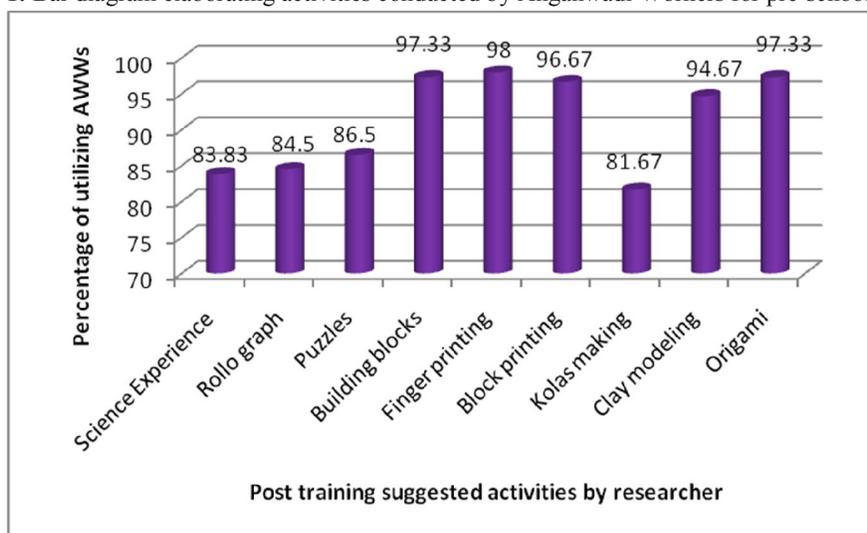


Figure 2: Bar diagram depicting post training suggestions by researcher about activities for pre – school children and their utilization by Anganwadi Workers

IV. CONCLUSION

The present research focuses on pre – school activities conducted for children attending Anganwadi Centers of Integrated Child Development Services. As non – formal pre – school education is one of the important services provided in these centers, it was felt that the school readiness of children attending those centers be assessed and necessary information related to this be given to the Anganwadi worker so as to improve children’s learning in the areas they are lacking. The research findings indicated that the activities such as introduction to numbers, stories and indoor games were conducted in cent percent Anganwadi centers. Whereas, post – training suggestions such as finger printing (98 %), building blocks and origami (97.33 % each) were incorporated by most of the Anganwadi Workers. These findings will help in preparing children for school and provide a feedback to help administrators and policy makers in improving the programme.

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