



EVOLUTION OF ICDS NUTRITION FOR GIRL CHILDREN-HEALTH POLICIES AND PROGRAMS IN INDIA SINCE INDEPENDENCE

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Abstract

Indian government has played major role in ensuring health and nutrition for the girl children. Integrated Child Development Service/Scheme(ICDS) which was introduced in the year 1975 has been established and working across the country as Anganwadi Centres(AWC) in village level. It is constantly working to ensure girl children's nutrition and health at various age group of 0-6, for adolescent girls age group from 11-18 and also for pregnant and lactating mothers. The scheme focuses on not just the health of the children but also on development of the educational, nutritional, mental and social skills of the children. Thus, services also help the mothers learn the art of parenting and upbringing the children while providing enough nutrients for the children. This project focuses on the issues, importance and features of ICDS in girl children nutrition and health with its evolution at each time period.

Key Words: ICDS, Girl Children Nutrition, Government Schemes, Benefits, Welfare of Women

INTRODUCTION

Indian government has played major role in ensuring health and nutrition for the girl children. Integrated Child Development Service/Scheme(ICDS) which was introduced in the year 1975 has been established and working across the country as Anganwadi Centres(AWC) in village level. It is constantly working to ensure girl children's nutrition and health at various age group of 0-6, for adolescent girls age group from 11-18 and also for pregnant and lactating mothers. The scheme focuses on not just the health of the children but also on development of the educational, nutritional, mental and social skills of the children. Thus, services also help the mothers learn the art of parenting and upbringing the children while providing enough nutrients for the children. This project focuses on the issues, importance and features of ICDS in girl children nutrition and health with its evolution at each time period.

India got its independence from the British Raj, colonial rule in the 1947. During the colonial rule the nationalist leaders continued to portray on how the human rights had been exploited. Women and children were affected the most. Therefore, safeguarding the human rights was given priority while framing the Indian constitution.

FIVE YEAR PLANS AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Development programmes in the country, including those for children, are carried out within the framework of the Five-Year Plans which are implemented through Planning Commissions. Some of these programmes are wholly funded by the Central Government, some by both Central and State Governments, and some entirely by the State Government, depending on whether the programmes are classified as Central, centrally sponsored or State sector schemes.

Planning commission of India was established in the year 1950 under prime ministership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. It is the National Development Council that guides the planning commission of India towards efficient functioning of the country's expenditure by focusing on each field in proficient manner. Under the planning commission, depending on the needs of human and resources, capital is allotted for each sector. These sectors are divided into two categories namely, general and subject divisions. Under each division, we have many sectors like health and family welfare division, education division, transport division which fall below subject divisions and project appraisal and management division, socio-economic research unit. etc. under

general division. The planning commission thus formulates various programs and schemes for the general welfare of the public. The planning commission of India formulates the five-year plans of India. The Program Evaluation Organization which undertakes evaluation studies to assess the impact of selected Plan Programmes/ Schemes in order to provide useful feedback to planners and implementing agencies¹.

Over 75 years of Indian independence, many a government have been established under each Prime Ministers. Thus, several schemes and programs have been dedicated to protect and enhance the nutrition and health of the girl children of India under each five-year plan, implemented under each prime ministers. This planning commission after 2012, came to be renamed as “niti aayog” under the prime ministership of Narendra Modi.

Under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, two five-year plans were formulated and implemented in the years 1951-1956 and 1956-1961 respectively. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, Human Rights were given importance. The government had the pressure to tackle the partition and providing the fundamental needs for migrating people. Also in a worldwide scope, the UN had established UN human rights which asked of the member countries to protect the rights of women and children while protecting human rights of people in general as it was totalitarianism which led to second world war. Thus, Indian government was making all due arrangements to tackle and protect the human rights. Special committees were set up to bring about a nutritional board and protection of women and children.

FORMATION OF ICDS UNDER PRIME MINISTERSHIP OF INDIRA GANDHI

During the Shastri's governance, India had to face famine and drought for which the prime minister had brought a new policy of “jai Jawan jai kisan” where agriculture and hunger, starvation and death by starvation issues mitigating program was introduced. However, Women and Child Development Department was yet to be introduced.

Following Shastri government, Indira Gandhi's government had to face the continuing hunger, starvation and malnutrition in the country. The child mortality rate had increased. People of poor locality were not getting access to the hospitals and sanitation facilities. This need to eradicate hunger could be seen in Indira Gandhi's

¹ Planningcommission.gov.in Accessed on 15 April 2021

famous election campaign slogan “Garibi Hatao” which meant eradicate poverty. In 1975, after much committees and boards set, ICDS or Integrated Child Development Service or Scheme was established to provide nutrition and health development for children of 0-5 years of age mainly to eradicate child mortality rate.

DEVELOPMENT UNDER RAJIV GANDHI’S REGIME

Soon, with the following years, the project was extended to pregnant and lactating mothers. Also, during Rajiv Gandhi’s prime ministership, the hospital facilities were extended and more scientific development was introduced in the country. Educational infrastructure too was extended through Black Board Scheme. In 1986, national policy on education was to be provided even for Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) was made compulsory. The preparation of ECCE Programme owes its origin to a workshop conducted by UNICEF in Agra in 1984 in which several noted experts & practitioners of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in the country participated & presented papers on Pre-school curriculum. This has been further reinforced through National².

IN THE WAKE OF 21ST CENTURY

While looking at important developments through the ages in ICDS, from 1985, 1990 onwards national vaccination programs were held and extended to children and women for various diseases which were new at that time of period like measles, chicken pox. 1994- polio immunization program was extended across to tackle polio cases among the people. Today it is being given regularly for children. Until the 2005, the fund allocation for the ICDS centers was solely on the shoulders of the state. However, after the 2005, the center government took 60:40 percentage ratio of fund provision for supplementary nutrition program. In 2006, ICDS was added to the women and child development department. 2007, under initiation of Women and Child Development in India, a new scheme called “Kishori Shakti Yojana” shortly as KSY was implemented in Government of Odisha which ensured, protection, health care, hygiene and exposure to society for juvenile girl children for age group between 11-18 and added under ICDS. This scheme was initially extended only for few selected blocks. Continued by that, in 2009, NPAG or Nutrition Program for Adolescent Girls was implemented by Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Program under ICDS to provide free rice, and other special nutrition to

² icds-wcd.nic.in Accessed on 15 April 2021

be provided for adolescent girls for the families living under BPL or Below Poverty Line. These two schemes however in 2011, under Ministry of WCD and ICDS merged to Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls Sabla, to protect, promote and provide awareness to the adolescent girls on their hygiene, improvement on nutrition and health status, upgrading of home, life and vocational skills for girl children from age group of 11-18. It focused on providing iron folic tablets, sanitary napkins, nutritional provisions, periodic health check-ups, providing counselling and vocational training to adolescent girls. These services were to be provided to the girl children under guidance of ICDS by the AWC/Anganwadi Centres of their locality. Also, to provide an awareness on the menstrual cycle. As mentioned, this scheme promotes and provides vocational training to adolescent girls from age group of 16-18 thus added to the Skill Development sector/ National Skill Development Program. Sabla scheme was launched under prime ministership of Manmohan Singh.

ANGANWADI CENTRES

In 2013- Indira Amrutha Hastham program was introduced to provide nutritious food for the mothers. During the 12th Five Year Plan (2012-2017), Integrated Child Development Services Scheme has been restructured to carry out, programmatic, management and institutional reforms in a phased manner, where Anganwadi Centers are repositioned as a “vibrant early childhood development center” to become the “first out post” for learning, health and nutrition by providing additional human resource and infrastructure.

ICDS/AWC UNDER PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

For the year 2013 - 2014, restructured pattern of Integrated Child Development Services Scheme was implemented in thirteen districts and during the year 2014 - 2015, the entire State has been covered. For the state government, the Central Government has formed new features of State Mission Steering Group (SMSG), State Empowered Programme Committee (SEPC) and State ICDS Mission as per G.O.(Ms).No.67 to monitor the state unit of ICDS mainly to keep a check on how the schemes are being efficiently implemented. Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme (SW-7-1) Department, dated 10.7.2013 and the State Government have also established in the State and District Child Development Society with its Governing Body and Executive Committee vide G.O.(Ms).No.68, Social welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme (SW-7-1) Department to check on the nutritional provisions being distributed across the states.³ From the year 2013

³ *Integrated Child Development Scheme: Manual for District-Level Functionaries 2017*. ICDS-DARPG, darpg.gov.in

onwards, AWCs are conducting ECCE day on 19th of every month⁴. These are discussed in the following chapters in detail.

DIGITALIZATION OF ICDS/ANGANWADI

From the year 2019 onwards, the ICDS has begun to provide a separate smart phone with a SIM card for the Anganwadi teachers of each locality and has also created an app named “ICDS CAS-AWW” app which gives them all the details and notifications on the upcoming events which keeps the AWC teachers connected with their other AWC staffs. Therefore, the ICDS has been functioning and developed to make complete use of social media for efficient functioning.

COLLABORATION OF ICDS WITH WHO

The ICDS is also closely working alongside of WHO norms to eradicate malnutrition and hunger. The weight and BMI standards are set as per the WHO norms. Also, the UNICEF and UNHDR are working and helping India in upbringing a healthy child growth. They have also through various missions and programs spread awareness on protecting girl children and reducing gender discrimination. Today, there is an awareness on gender discrimination and girl children are open to access of nutrition and health programs and are treated equally. Female infanticide, child marriage and other social discriminations have also been completely eradicated or reduced to great extent through activities of ICDS. Details of various activities and functioning of ICDS are mentioned in the following chapters. Thus, is origin and growth of ICDS in Indian government since Indian independence.

CONCLUSION

ICDS has over the years has been constantly developing and changing its features for the welfare of ensuring nutritional, health and educational services for women and children through various activities. The ICDS under the prime ministership of Narendra Modi has reached a its height by going digital and easily accessible for every section of the country. The care that is taken by the ICDS to ensure regular health check-ups, provision of nutritious food and supplements for children and tracking pregnant women’s monthly growth by providing all nutritional sources yet again proves the government’s care and the its responsible governance.

Accessed on 28 March 2021.

⁴ icds-wcd.nic.in, *Op.cit.*,

Also the constant support provided by the state government's in implementing and taking this scheme across has helped in benefitting the next generation.

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