

Assess the Quality of Services and Nutritional Status Among Anganwadi Children: A Review of Evidence

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Malnutrition in children under five years is a pressing issue in India and globally, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. It manifests as stunting (low height for age), wasting (low weight for height), and underweight. Rising childhood obesity adds to the double burden of malnutrition. Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) are critical for providing food and healthcare to combat this issue. However, challenges in service quality and implementation limit their effectiveness.

Aim: This review evaluates the quality of services delivered by AWCs and the nutritional health of children using these 23 centres, focusing on rural and urban India.

Materials and Methods: The review draws on data from research articles and the National Family Health Surveys (NFHS-4 and NFHS-5). Key indicators like stunting, wasting, underweight, and obesity were analysed, along with factors such as maternal education, dietary habits, and access to AWCs.

Results: In Haryana, stunting affects 27.5% of children, wasting 11.5%, and 21.5% were noted to be underweight, with improvements in some districts but persistent disparities in others. In urban areas like Rohtak, stunting is at 24.1%, wasting at 14.1%, and there were 20% underweight children. This review shows the data of 12 screened studies and the inclusion of five research studies that have the similar criteria to our parameters. Maternal education, birth weight, birth order, and regular use of AWC nutrition services significantly influence outcomes. Children who regularly consumed AWC nutrition were less likely to be malnourished. However, service gaps and low community awareness hinder optimal outcomes.

Conclusion: AWCs play a vital role in tackling child malnutrition, but gaps in service delivery and inequalities persist. Strengthening ICDS programmes, engaging communities, and educating mothers can significantly improve outcomes.

Keywords: Anganwadi centres, Malnutrition, Nutrition, Stunting, Supplementary, Underweight, Wasting

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