



ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF ICDS CENTRES: A CASE STUDY OF THREE DISTRICTS OF WEST BENGAL, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Aims of ICDS programme is the holistic development of the child and empowerment of the mother. The primary target group encompasses Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers and Children 0-6 years aged group. The Anganwadi worker (AWW) is the community based voluntary frontline worker of the ICDS programme. She play important role related to perform various services like supplementary nutrition, non-formal pre-school education, immunisation, health check-ups, referral services, nutrition and health education with her educational knowledge and social knowledge in Anganwadi centre. Completion of ICDS programme is based on Anganwadi worker's (AWW's) and Anganwadi helper's (AWHs) educational qualification, training, and skills also. With this background the present study have been designed to know different parameter of Anganwadi worker and Anganwadi helper like educational qualification, training and remuneration and as well as to know the key issues of ICDS centres in rural areas of Jhargram district, industrial areas of Purba Medinipur district and semi-urban areas of Howrah district of West Bengal, India. The study has been conducted during the month of June, 2024 to August, 2024 in Purba Medinipur, Jhargram and Howrah districts of West Bengal, India. It has been found that the major ICDS centres (8.11%) do not have their own building. Some of Anganwadi helpers passed below IV class. Some ICDS centres (8.11%) also spend below 1 hrs. for early childhood care education. It has been revealed from the present study that most of Anganwadi Worker's (42.24%) demand the amount of remuneration money should be increased to Rs. 20,001 to Rs. 25,000 monthly. So infrastructure and basic facilities need to be strengthened in ICDS centres. AWW's and AWH's need to set more in service educational programmes and training camp along with high remuneration so that they can encouraged to take concentration in all activities of ICDS scheme.

KEYWORDS: Anganwadi Worker, Anganwadi Helper, ICDS Centre, Issues and Challenges

INTRODUCTION

In 1975, on the auspicious day of Gandhi Jayanti, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme had started its odyssey with an aspiration to make our country a more habitable place for mother and children. Launched with two ICDS Projects, viz., Manbazar of Purulia and Khidirpur in Kolkata, at present all the Blocks, Municipalities and Corporations of West Bengal have subsequently been brought under ICDS fold. It aims at the holistic development of the child and empowerment of the mother. The primary target group encompasses Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers and Children since birth up to the age of 6 years. The Scheme is jointly sponsored by the Government of India and Government of West Bengal.

Anganwadi worker (AWW) is the community based voluntary frontline worker of the ICDS programme. Selected from the community, she assumes a fundamental role due to her close and continuous contact with the beneficiaries. She play important role related to performance various services like supplementary nutrition, non-formal pre-school education, immunisation, health check-ups, referral services, nutrition, and health education with her educational knowledge and social knowledge in Anganwadi centre. Completion of ICDS programme is based on AWW's educational qualification, training and skills. Although, lots of research studies have been made on early childhood education, nutritional states under ICDS scheme, but very few studies have focused on AWW's

different parameter like educational qualification, training, skills, and remuneration also. With this background the present study have been designed to know the educational qualification, training, and remuneration of Anganwadi worker and Anganwadi helper (AWH) of ICDS centres and as well as to enquire the key issues and challenges faced by the ICDS centres in rural areas of Jhargram district, industrial areas of Purba Medinipur district and semi-urban areas of Howrah district of West Bengal, India.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the present study are -

- 1) To know the educational qualification, training, and remuneration of Anganwadi worker and Anganwadi helper of ICDS centres in West Bengal, India.
- 2) To know the matters related with Non Formal Pre-School Education or Early Childhood Care Education in ICDS centres
- 3) To enquire the key issues or challenges faced by the ICDS centres.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study is survey type research. The study has been conducted during the month of June, 2024 to August, 2024 in Purba Medinipur, Jhargram, and Howrah districts of West Bengal, India. We have applied multilayer stratified sampling



method to determine the require sample size among the large number of sample. We have taken one rural block from Jhargram district namely Sankrail development block, an industrial area from Purba Medinipur district namely Haldia Municipality and a semi-urban area from Howrah district

namely Bally-Jagacha block in West Bengal. The data have collected from the following ICDS centres, which have been shown district wise in the following table 01:

Table 01: District Wise List of ICDS Centres covered in the Present Study

NAME OF DISTRICT	Sl. No.	NAME OF ICDS CENTRE	Located At
HOWRAH	1	Jagadishpur Majerhat AWC	Primary School
	2	1 No Debirpara AWC	Sub-health Centre
	3	Matribhumi AWC	Club
	4	Majerhat khirodmoyi AWC	Primary School
	5	Ramkrishnapara khagendranath AWC	Primary School
	6	Debirpara AWC	Primary School
	7	Ramkrishna AWC	Club
	8	Biswaspara AWC	Club
	9	Debirpara Makaltala Sishualaya	Own Premises
	10	Uttaran AWC	Club
JHARGRAM	1	Bamun-Mara AWC	Own Premises
	2	Gurpukursai AWC	Own Premises
	3	Rangamatiya AWC	Own Premises
	4	Nekrasole AWC	Own Premises
	5	Ragra 2 no AWC	Own Premises
	6	Kaptidanga AWC	Own Premises
	7	Josuya AWC	Own Premises
	8	Digarbandh AWC	Own Premises
	9	Haripal AWC	Own Premises
	10	Kathuyapal AWC	Own Premises
	11	Kuchladanri AWC	Own Premises
	12	Nepura AWC	Own Premises
	13	Ragra Purba AWC	Own Premises
	14	Bagansai AWC	Own Premises
PURBA MEDINIPUR	1	Uttar Bhabanipur AWC	Own Premises
	2	Bhabanipur Nibedita Colony AWC	Own Premises
	3	Bajitpur Berapally ICDS School	Own Premises
	4	Bijoy Rampur AWC	Own Premises
	5	Kalipur AWC	Own Premises
	6	Khudiram Bose AWC	Own Premises
	7	Bhabanipur Matangini AWC	Own Premises
	8	Radhaballavchak AWC	Primary School
	9	Chakdipa Purbapally AWC	Club
	10	Dighasipur AWC	Club
	11	Chakdipa AWC	Primary School
	12	Dakshin Krishnanagar AWC	Own Premises
	13	Uttar Ranichak Muslimpally AWC	Own Premises

From each selected ICDS centre data have collected through the self-made interview scheduled from Anganwadi workers. The secondary data have been collected from different sources like research articles, government reports, news-paper articles, website etc. Then the collected data have been analyzed qualitatively.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study along with discussion are given below:

A) Educational Qualification of Anganwadi Worker: It has been revealed from this present study that the major portion of the Anganwadi Workers (AWW) (43.24%) have passed secondary examination. 13.51% AWW also has passed class VIII. Some of Anganwadi Worker has passed Higher Secondary, B.A. /B.Sc. Degree and M.A. /M.Sc. Degree which are 29.73%, 10.81% and 2.70% respectively. There are no AWWs found who has B.Ed. or D. El. Ed. Professional degree. The majority (43.24%) AWWs were educated up to secondary level and some

have also class VIII passed certificate. We have been seen that AWWs do not have any kind of teaching professional degree. So, government take action to upgrade them to minimum higher secondary level and teaching

professional degree through open distance learning (ODL) mode for better performance in early childhood care education (ECCE) in ICDS centres.

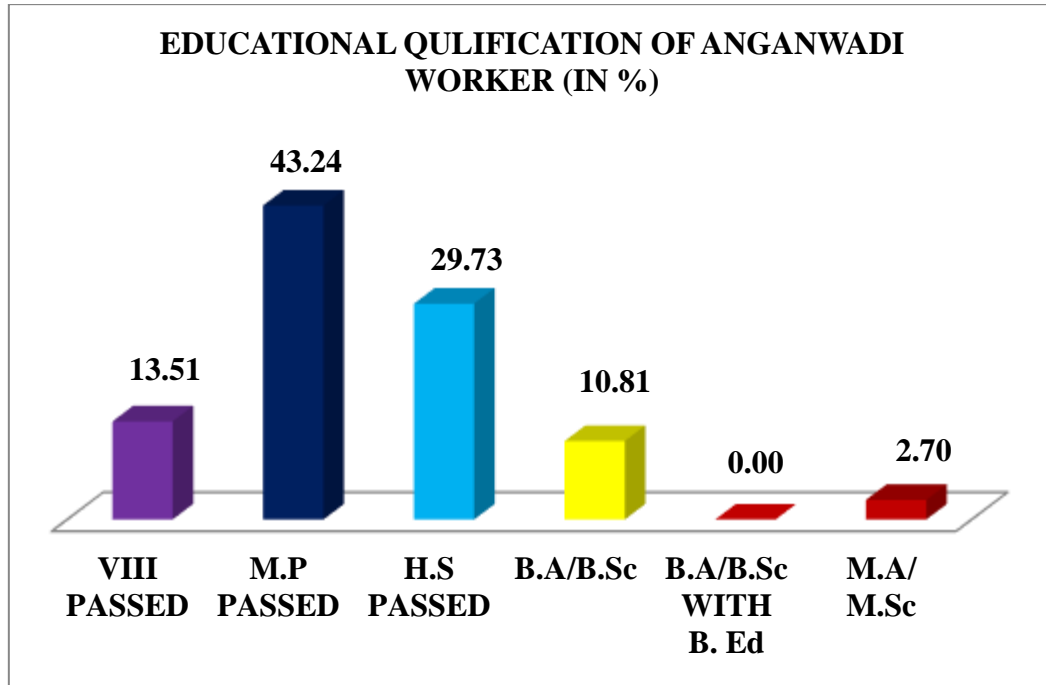


Figure 01: Educational Qualification of Anganwadi Worker (AWW) Source: Primary Data

B) **AWW and AWH Attended Training Camp in Last One Year:** It has been seen that 59% AWWs and Anganwadi Helpers (AWH) told that they have attended training camp regarding ICDS scheme in last one year. 41% AWWs and AWHs said that they have not attended any kind of training

camp regarding ICDS scheme in last one year. Concerned department need to arrange more in service educational programmes and training camp for better performance of AWWs and AWHs in ICDS centres.

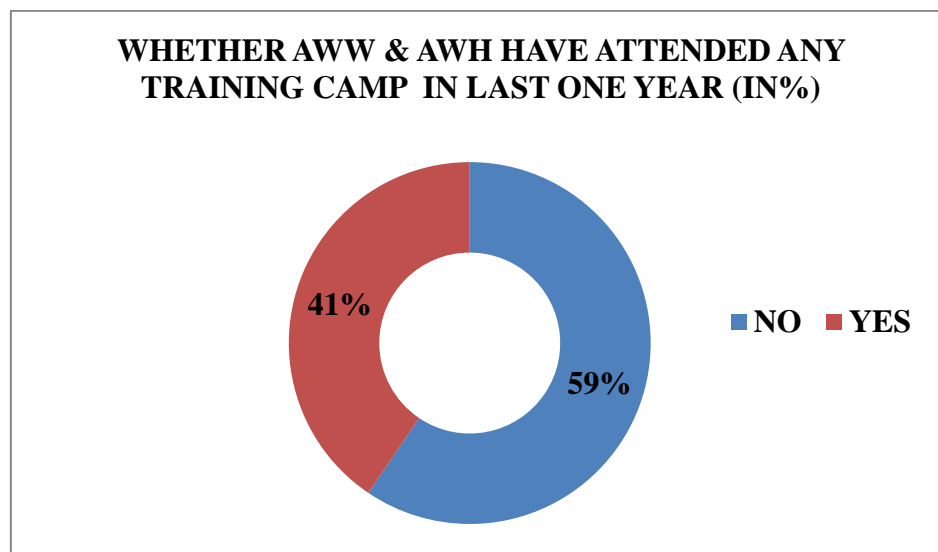


Figure 02: AWW and AWH Attended Training Camp in Last One Year Source: Primary Data

C) **Satisfaction of Anganwadi Worker with Amount of Remuneration They Get:** In this present study, it has been seen that 27% Anganwadi Workers are satisfied with their remuneration, which they have been paid monthly by the government for their services provided to the ICDS centre. 73%

Anganwadi Workers expressed that they do not happy with their monthly amount of remuneration. To encourage the AWWs to take more focus in ICDS centres, the monthly amount of remuneration should need to increase immediate.

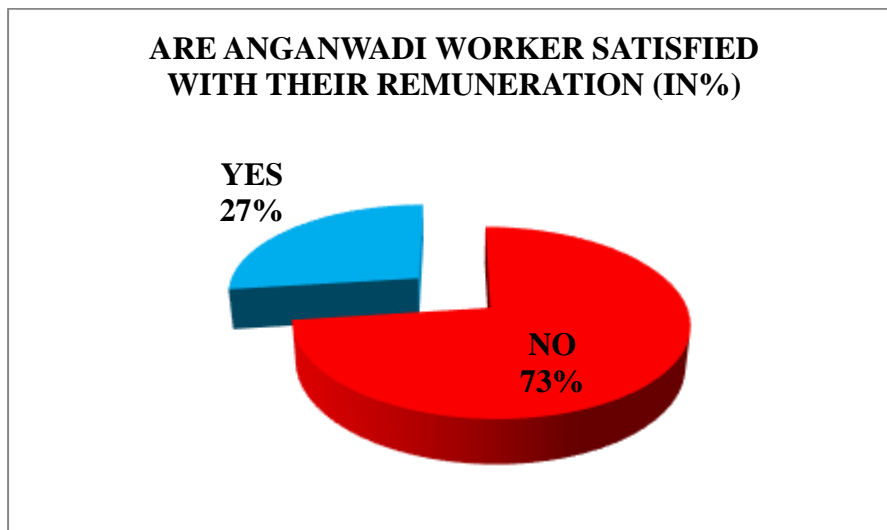


Figure 03: Satisfaction of Anganwadi Worker with Amount of Remuneration Source: Primary Data

C) **Anganwadi Workers' Expectation on their Monthly Remuneration:** It has been revealed from the present study that most of Anganwadi Workers (42.24%) demand the amount of remuneration money should be increased to Rs. 20,001 to Rs. 25,000 monthly. Some of Anganwadi

Workers (21.62%) express that the amount of remuneration should be increased to Rs. 15,001 to Rs. 20,000 monthly. The government should need to attention about the amount of remuneration money of AWWs.

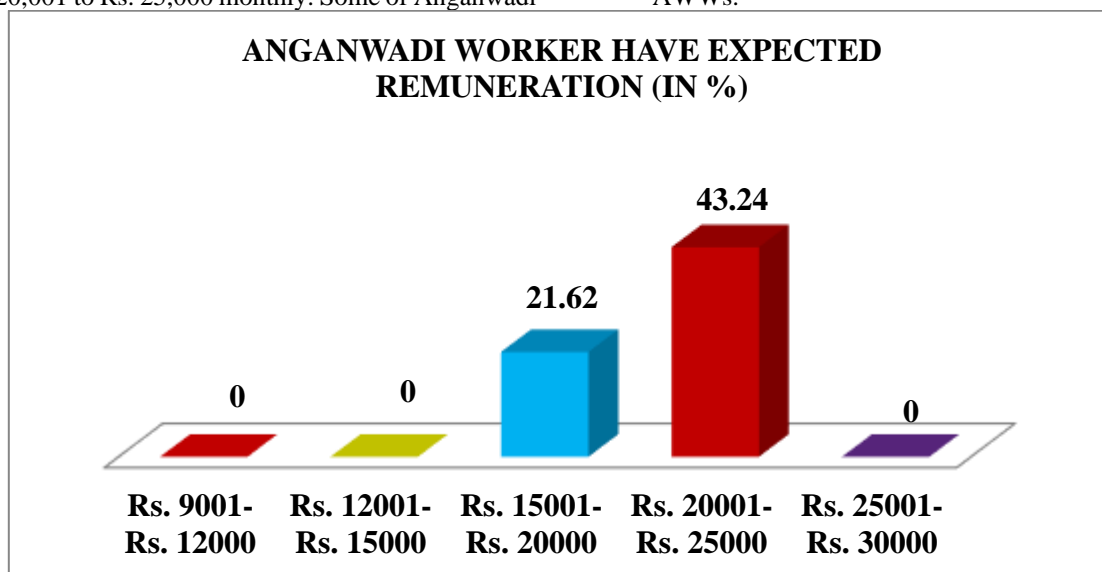


Figure 04: Anganwadi Workers' Expectation on their monthly Remuneration Source: Primary Data

D) **Non Formal Pre-School Education Time in ICDS centre:** It has been revealed from the present study that major portion of the Anganwadi centre (ICDS centre) (64.86%) expend between 1 hrs. and 2 hrs. for non formal pre-school education for the children. 27.03% ICDS centres provide above 2 hrs. for school readiness. Some

ICDS centres (8.11%) spend below 1 hrs. for early childhood care education. A Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) is responsible for the health, education, and safety of children. So the CDPO and others official persons must visit and inspect the ICDS centres for smooth and proper running of this scheme.

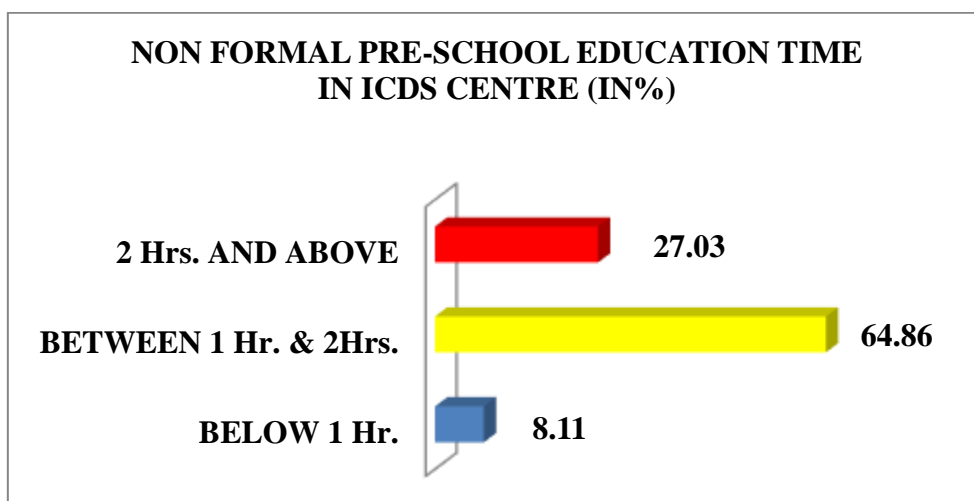


Figure 05: Non Formal Pre-School Education Time in ICDS centre Source: Primary Data

E) Educational Qualification of Anganwadi Helpers (AWH):
 It has been revealed from present study that major portion of Anganwadi Helpers (AWH) (72.97%) passed VIII class. 16.22% AWH passed secondary examination. Some of Anganwadi helpers passed below IV class, IV class and M.A.

/M.Sc. Degree which are 2.70%, 5.41% and 2.70% respectively. There are many AWHs are below IV class passed, IV and VIII class passed. So, government proceed to upgrade them to minimum higher secondary level through open schooling.

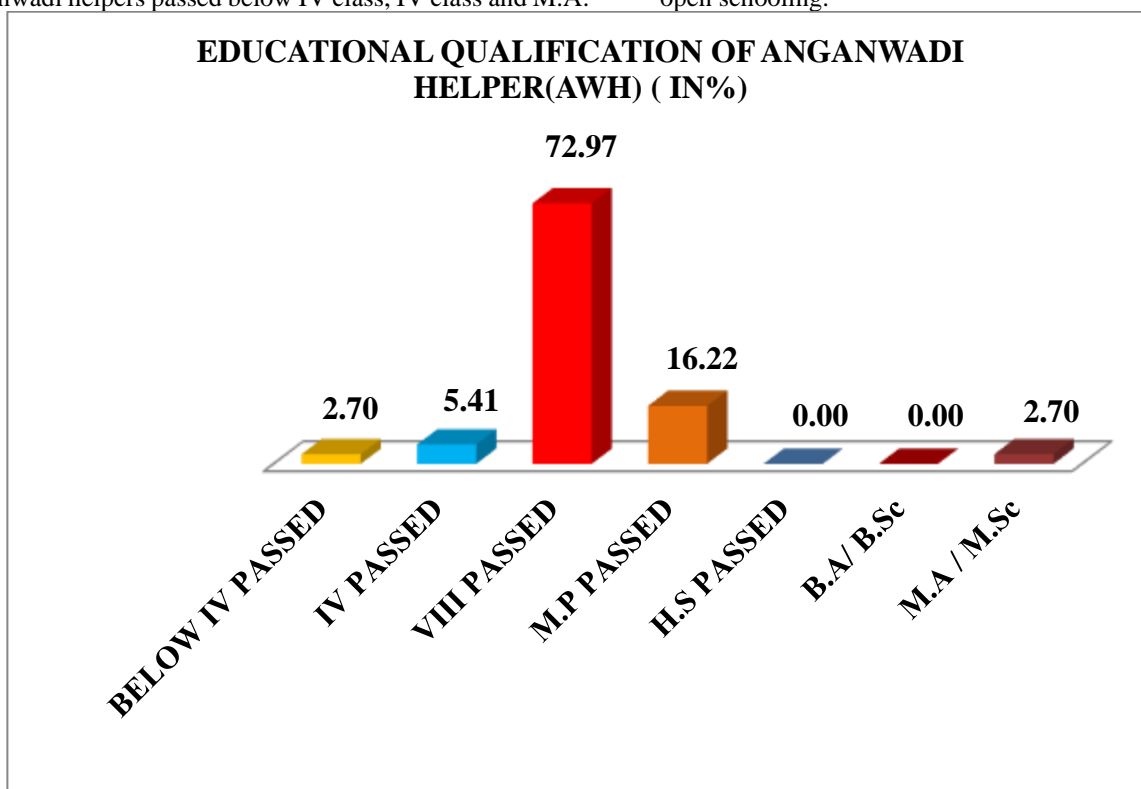


Figure 06: Educational Qualification of Anganwadi Helpers (AWH) Source: Primary Data

F) Satisfaction of Anganwadi Helpers with Their Monthly Amount of Remuneration: Analysing figure 07, It has been seen that 27% Anganwadi helpers are pleased with their monthly remuneration that they get through the ICDS scheme for their services. 73% Anganwadi helpers express that they

are downhearted with this amount of monthly remuneration. We revealed from the present study that the majority of AWHs are unhappy with their monthly remuneration. So, the concerned department need pay attention in the amount of monthly remuneration of AWHs.

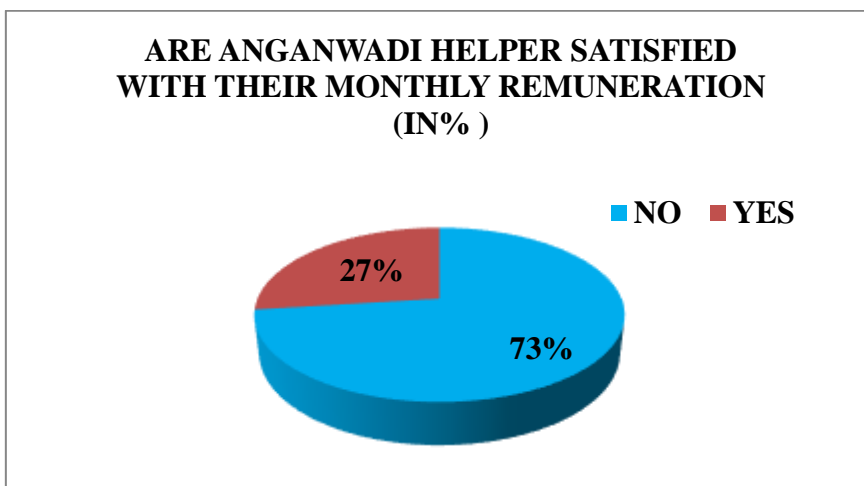


Figure 07: Satisfaction of Anganwadi Helpers with Their Monthly Remuneration Source: Primary Data

G) **Anganwadi Helpers' Expectation on their Monthly Remuneration:** It has been revealed from the present study that most of Anganwadi helpers (AWH) (27.03%) demand the amount of remuneration money should be increased to Rs. 15,001 to Rs. 20,000 monthly. Some of Anganwadi

Helpers (24.32%) express that the amount of remuneration should be increased to Rs. 9,001 to Rs. 12,000 monthly. There are some AWHs (5.41%) express that the amount of monthly remuneration should be increased to Rs. 12,001 to Rs. 15,000 and Rs. 20,001 to Rs. 25,000 monthly each.

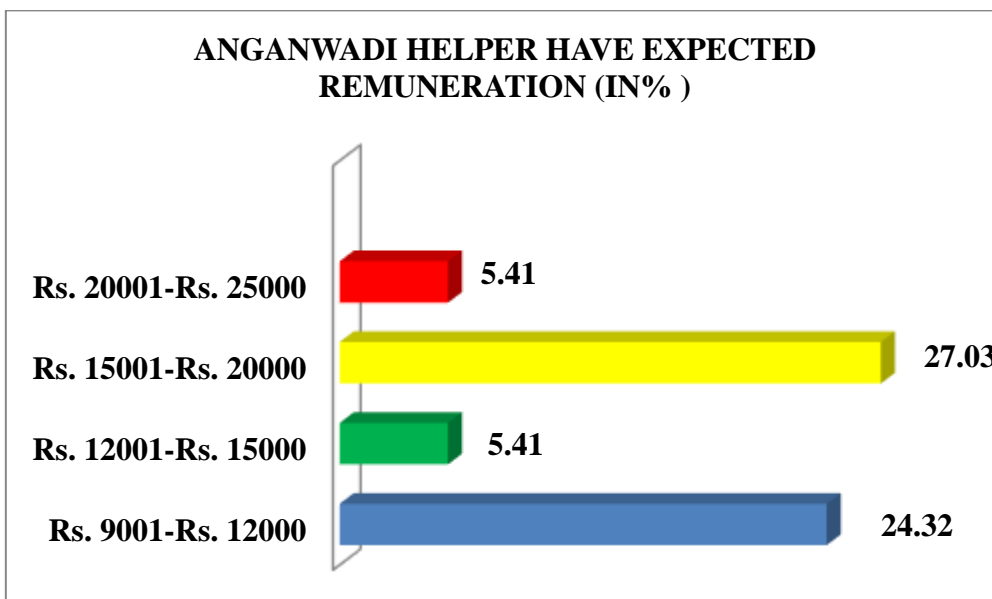


Figure 08: Anganwadi Helpers' Expectation on their monthly Remuneration Source: Primary Data

H) **Key Issues of ICDS Centre:** In this present study, it has been seen that 8.11% ICDS centres have not own building. It has been found that kitchen needed major of ICDS centres (21.62%). Infrastructure related problems and inadequate supply of drinking water facility as their major problem is reported by (5.41%) of the AWWs. 10.81% have express that they need a toilet in their ICDS centres on urgent basis. Toilet and drinking water facilities are not available in 18.92% of

ICDS centres. Due rent of ICDS centres which are run in non government building and ICDS centres play ground are major problems of 2.70% ICDS centres each. At first government needs to construct own building of ICDS centres. There are several problems like kitchen, store room, toilet, and drinking water related to ICDS centres. So, this problems are need to solve urgent basis by local administration.

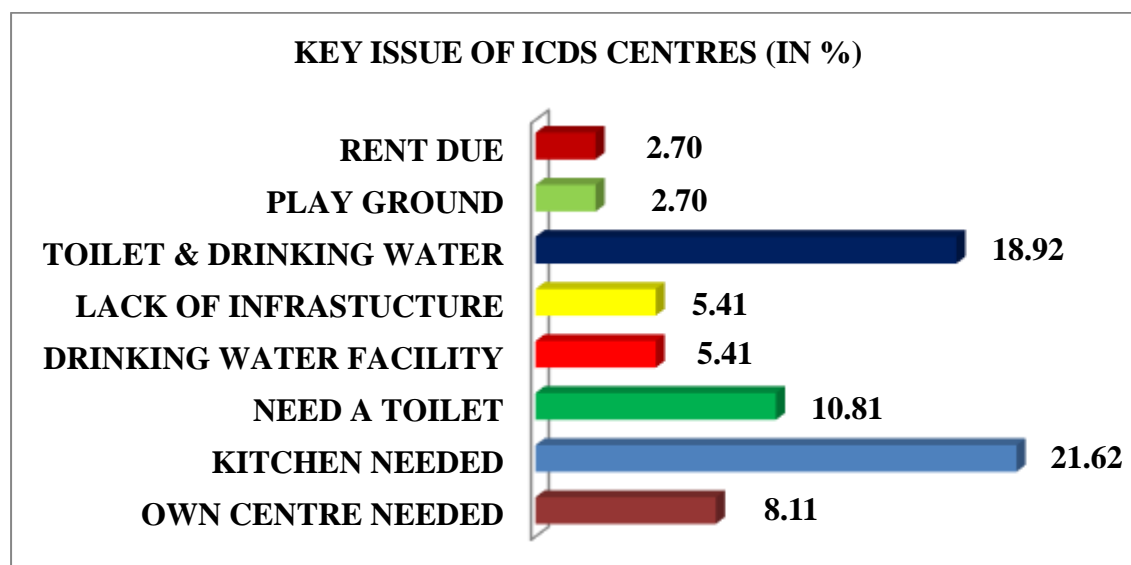


Figure 09: Key Issues of ICDS Centre

Source: Primary Data

MAJOR FINDINGS

The major findings of the present study are-

- 1) It has been revealed from this present study that major of Anganwadi worker (43.24%) passed secondary examination.
- 2) Some of Anganwadi workers have passed Higher Secondary, B.A. /B.Sc. Degree and M.A. /M.Sc. Degree which are 29.73%, 10.81% and 2.70% respectively.
- 3) It has been seen that 59% AWWs and AWHs told that they have attended training camp regarding ICDS scheme in last one year.
- 4) It has been seen that 73% Anganwadi Workers express that they do not happy with this amount of remuneration money.
- 5) The most of Anganwadi Workers (42.24%) demand the amount of remuneration money should be increased to Rs. 20,001 to Rs. 25,000 monthly.
- 6) It has been shown from this present study that major portion of Anganwadi centres (64.86%) expend between 1 hrs. and 2 hrs for pre-school education or early childhood care education.
- 7) It has been revealed from present study that major portion of Anganwadi helpers (72.97%) passed VIII class.
- 8) Some of Anganwadi helpers passed below IV class, IV class and M.A. /M.Sc. Degree which are 2.70%, 5.41% and 2.70% respectively.
- 9) It has been shown from this present study that 73% Anganwadi helpers express that they are downhearted with their monthly amount of remuneration.
- 10) It has been revealed from the present study that most of Anganwadi help's (AWH) (27.03%) demand the amount of monthly remuneration should be increased to Rs. 15,001 to Rs. 20,000.
- 11) In this present study, it has been seen that 8.11% ICDS centres have not their own building.
- 12) It has been revealed from the present study that infrastructure related problems and inadequate supply of drinking water facility as their major problem is reported by (5.41%) of the AWWs.
- 13) In this present study, it has been found that kitchen needed major of ICDS centres (21.62%).
- 14) It has been revealed from the present study that 10.81% have express that they need a toilet in their ICDS centres on urgent basis.
- 15) It has been revealed from the present study that due rent of ICDS centres which are run in non government building and ICDS centres play ground are major problems of 2.70% ICDS centres each.
- 16) It has been shown from this present study that toilet and drinking water facilities are not available in 18.92% of ICDS centres.
- 17) There are no AWWs found who has B.Ed. or D. El. Ed. Professional degree.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion we may highlight that the major ICDS centres (8.11%) do not have their own building. It has been shown from present study 73% Anganwadi Workers express that they do not happy with this amount of remuneration money and some ICDS centres (8.11%) also spend below 1 hrs. for early childhood care education. It has been revealed from the present study that most of Anganwadi helpers (AWHs) (27.03%) demand the amount of honorarium should be increased to Rs. 15,001 to Rs. 20,000 monthly. From the present study it can be inferred that AWWs and AWHs have inadequate salary. In this present study, it has been seen that 8.11% ICDS centres have not own building. Due rent and play ground are major problems of 2.70% ICDS centres each. There are genuine need to repair/new kitchen, toilet and drinking water facilities of AWCs. So infrastructure and basic facilities need to be strengthened. AWWs and AWHs need to set more in service educational programmes and training camp along with high remuneration so that they can encouraged to take concentration in all activities of ICDS scheme.



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