



Empowerment programmes for adolescent girls and women through Anganwadi centres in Kerala

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Abstract

Adolescent girls and women are the most vulnerable groups of the society. In view of UN millennium development goals, various empowerment programmes were in force at national and state level in India. Anganwadi centres are functioning as the nodal agency for actualizing most of such programmes. Hence, a survey was conducted to analyze various programmes for the empowerment of adolescent girls and women conducted in anganwadi centres in the state of Kerala. A questionnaire each was developed to collect data from adolescent girls and women, an interview was conducted with anganwadi workers, and observation of facilities in anganwadi centres were done with the help of an observation schedule. Tabular interpretation and percentage analysis was used for analysis of data.

Keywords: adolescent girls, women, empowerment programmes, anganwadi centres

Introduction

Repeated and untimely pregnancies, short inter pregnancy intervals; early marriage, low birth weight and pre-term birth are all part of syndrome which we have to fight. In first five year plan a number of programmes were launched by the government for the welfare of the children, adolescent girls and women particularly in the field of health, nutrition and education. To provide all basic services to the child as well as to the mother for proper growth and development. Government of India's sponsored programme is India's primary social welfare scheme to tackle malnutrition and health problems in children, adolescent girls and women.

The battles for safe motherhood and for the survival of the child are the two sides of the same coin. In this situation the schemes of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) plays an important role. The main beneficiaries of the programme were aimed to be the children, adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating mothers. The programme adopt a multi sector approach to adolescent girls and women well being in cooperating health education and nutritional interventions and implemented through the net work of Anganwadi centres at the community level.

For any worthwhile study in any field of knowledge, the researcher needs to update the particular area from which has taken a problem to research. It provides a link between the present and past. A number of studies have been made to examine the various aspects of child welfare. Studies relating to the working of Anganwadi programmes in Kerala are limited. However, a number of studies about this in all India level have already been made in recent years.

Bindu (2007) studied counselling needs of secondary school students in Kozhikode and Malappuram district and found out that, there are a number of needs in the area of education social vocation, health and personal which require counselling for remediation among secondary school students. The counselling needs of the students can be labelled under to

broad categories viz, socio –psychological needs and to tackle behaviour problems ^[1].

Anupama purushothaman (2009) studied about the impact of Kishori Shakthi Yojana (KSY) on school going adolescent girls in Malappuram and Kozhikode districts. This study about KSY, is essential for knowing the progress of KSY and correcting its drawn back in the educational field. The major findings of the study are some of the selected government schools did not have separate room for counselling, the counselling programmes under KSY has been implemented in some of the Govt. school selected by ICDS, and there are not implemented fully in any of the Govt. school selected by ICDS ^[2]. These studies signified the need of this investigation.

Objectives of the Investigation

The objectives of the investigation were the following,

- To study the empowerment programmes available for adolescent girls and women through Anganwadi.
- To examine the facilities of Anganwadi in providing various empowerment programmes.
- To study the financial assistance available for organizing various programmes for girls and women.
- To find out the problems faced in the implementation of different empowerment programmes.

Methodology

Methodology is an important part of research in education. Methodology is systematic, theoretical, analysis of the methods applied to a field of study. It comprises the theoretical analysis of the body methods and principles associated with a branch of knowledge. In this study the investigator followed the procedure of descriptive research for collecting relevant data.

Design of the Investigation

The investigation focused on various programmes for

empowering adolescent girls and women through Anganwadi. It is a descriptive one. The method adopted in this study was survey method. Making this study precise the investigator used a questionnaire each for adolescent girls and women; conducted an interview with Anganwadi workers for getting detailed information about various programmes for adolescent girls and women; attempted observation of the activities of the anganwadi centres to identify the facilities available. Percentage analysis and descriptive analysis were adopted for analyzing the data.

Tools and Techniques Used in the Study

The investigator developed the following tools for gathering information from adolescent girls, women and, Anganwadi workers.

The following tools and techniques were used for the study:

- a) Questionnaire to adolescent girls on Empowerment Programmes.
- b) Questionnaire to the women Empowerment Programmes.
- c) Interview schedule for Anganwadi worker.
- d) Observation schedule to ascertain the facilities in Anganwadi.

a) Questionnaire for adolescent girls Empowerment Programmes

The investigator developed a questionnaire for adolescent girls for gathering information about different programmes conducted by ICDS through Anganwadi. It includes financial assistance to girls, empowerment programmes and programmes for enhancing their health

b) Questionnaire for women Empowerment Programmes

The questionnaire for women was used to gather information about various programmes conducted through Anganwadi. It includes financial assistance to women, empowerment programmes, problems if any in getting the facilities, etc.

c) Interview schedule for Anganwadi worker

An interview schedule was prepared and interviewed Anganwadi workers for obtaining information about various programmes implemented by government and non government organizations for the upliftment of adolescent girls and women. Investigator also collected data about success of these programmes and suggestions for the improvement of those programmes.

d) Observation Schedule to ascertain the facilities in Anganwadi.

An observation schedule was used to ascertain the physical facilities available in Anganwadi centres.

Sample and Sampling

In this study the investigator randomly selected 100 school going adolescent girls and 50 women from 20 selected Anganwadis in Palakkad and thrissur districts of the state of Kerala. A sample of 20 Anganwadi workers was selected for interview.

Techniques for Statistical Analysis

In this study the investigator conducted preliminary analysis,

percentage analysis, and verbal descriptions as methods for analysing the data.

Findings of the Investigation

The study on the empowerment of adolescent girls and women through angawadi centres revealed the following factors with respect to the objectives. It includes financial assistance to girls, empowerment programmes and health programmes for promoting their health.

Findings Based on the Questionnaire for Adolescent Girls

- Among (52%) adolescent girls are belong to the age group of 14-16, 28(28%) are in 11-13 age groups and between the age of 17-19 adolescent girls are 20(20%).
- About 90% adolescent girls are studying in school and 10% adolescent girls are not going to school
- Most of the adolescent girls come from the nuclear family (77%) and 23(23%) adolescent girls are belongs to the joint family.
- About 95% adolescent girls are aware about the girls empowerment programs under SABLA scheme and 5% adolescent girls are not aware about the girls empowerment programs
- SABLA program improve adolescent girls confidence and to develop learning abilities and good personality and behaviour
- Adolescent girls received counselling classes under SABLA scheme, once in a month.
- No adolescent girls received the counselling classes once in a week.
- All of the adolescent girls are of the opinion that, in this age an adolescent girl should concentrate in her studies.
- All adolescent girls opined that, as part of SABLA scheme, the Anganwadis in their area provided them counselling classes and nutritional food.
- About 65% adolescent girls usually visit Anganwadi to attend the awareness program and 35% adolescent girls can't usually visit their nearest Anganwadi to attend the awareness programs.
- All adolescent girls receive Iron tablets once in a month and medical check up through Anganwadi
- All adolescent girls are usually paying more attention in their health. They concentrate their health status. They spent enough time to concentrate in their health.
- About 68% adolescent girls are didn't get all the facilities of SABLA scheme like vocational training, nutritional programs etc. Only 32% adolescent girls got all the facilities of SABLA scheme.
- All adolescent girls said that they knew about facilities in Anganwadi to help to solve their problems

Findings Based on the Questionnaire for Women

- About 94% women beneficiaries are belong to the age group of 18-30, and only 6 % women beneficiaries are above 31 years of age.
- All women are registered their name in the nearest Anganwadi and all of them are IGMSY beneficiaries
- All the women beneficiaries know about the details of IGMSY scheme. All women beneficiaries attended the awareness' class, and receive nutritional food and medical

check up through IGMSY scheme. All of them are getting various facilities like nutritional food, free health check up, free health education, life skill education, blood test, amrutham powder, immunization, iron tablet and financial assistance through Anganwadi centres. All women beneficiaries are getting money of IGMSY scheme through their bank account as in 3 instalments during their pregnancy period. About 48(96%) women beneficiaries belonged to the sample got 4000 Rupees through IGMSY scheme and now this amount is enhanced into 6000 rupees. All women have health card through IGMSY scheme. All of them submitted the certificates like medical certificates, hospital bills, copies of S.S.L.C book, marriage certificate, Aadhar card /identity card and bank pass book number in their nearest Anganwadi to become a member of the Anganwadi. Financial assistance through this scheme reached their bank account after their delivery, for all the respondents.

- All women beneficiaries are get various types of health education programmes through Anganwadi. The programme of health education include, health and hygiene of children, diet during pregnancy period, child caring, on safe motherhood and new born care and breast feeding, and right to information.

Findings Based on Observation of Anganwadi Centres

- Among the sample five (25%) Anganwadis were established in the period 1980-90, nine (45%) Anganwadis established during 1991 – 2000, four (20%) Anganwadis were established in the period 2001-2010 and there were two (10%) Anganwadies established after 2010.
- The location of an Anganwadi should be decided by the availability of safe drinking water and availability of road and transportation facilities. There are 14 (70%) Anganwadis having drinking water facilities and six (30%) Anganwadis are not self sufficient in drinking water facilities. The classroom facilities are almost in good condition. Only 12(60%) Anganwadis are electrified, and eight (40%) Anganwadis are not electrified. Among the sample 14 (70%) Anganwadis are functioning in own building, four (20%) Anganwadis are in temporary building and two (10%) Anganwadis are in rented buildings. All Anganwadis (100%) are provided with kitchen facilities. About (80%) Anganwadis are provided with store room while four (20 %) Anganwadis do not have store room facilities. Eighteen (90%) Anganwadis are provided with toilet facility, while two (10%) Anganwadis are not provided with latrine facility. All the Anganwadis having various items in kitchen such as plates, spoon, cooking vessels, stove, gas connection, bucket, broom sticks, glass etc. Other items like shelf, soap, towel, rack, mats and washbasin are available in all Anganwadis. Among the sample 14 (70%) Anganwadis having good play ground and six (30%) Anganwadis are not having play ground.
- All the Anganwadis having weighing machine in working condition. All anganwadis are provided with first aid box with necessary inclusions. Among 11 (55%) Anganwadis are fully equipped with leisure items and nine (44%)

Anganwadis kept items like story books, novels, carromboard etc.

- Almost all Anganwadi workers are aware of inculcating healthy habits and personal cleanliness in children.
- All the anganwadi centres have attendance register of the adolescent girls.

Findings Based on Interview with Anganwadi Workers

- The scheme (SABLA) focuses on all of the out of school adolescent girls; and women beneficiaries who would assemble at the anganwadi centres as per the time table and frequency decided by the state government of Kerala.
- A training kit is provided at every AWC to assist AGs to understand various health, nutrition, social and legal issues by conducting activities in an interesting and interactive manner.
- Give life skill education like problem solving, critical thinking, self awareness skills, fitness, yoga, awareness of child labour act, RTI act etc.
- Counselling has helped a lot to bring changes in many families and to lead them in regular path
- Each AG is given supplementary nutrition containing 600 calories, 18-20 grams of protein and micro nutrients, per day for 300 days in a year.
- Grant in aid is given as advance from state IGMSY cell to district and from District / Project level to General post office / bank on quarterly basis. Based on utilization certificate received from post office/bank, next quarter funds may accordingly be disbursed to them. The fund of SABLA scheme will provided by ICDS and state government
- Facilities are inadequate for the effective implementation of the IGMSY scheme through anganwadi.
- Nutritional food is given through anganwadi to pregnant and lactating women. Awareness classes are conducted in every month. After delivery the women who gave timely immunization to child and continue breast feeding till 6 months are given 4000 rupees through IGMSY scheme. Now this amount is raised up to 6000 rupees. All pregnant and lactating women are not members of the IGMSY scheme.
- Health card is provided to women (beneficiaries of IGMSY scheme). In this health card the name and other details of the IGMSY beneficiaries are recorded.
- Adolescent girls have given classes through anganwadi in every month. Adolescent girls are given raw food (hot cooked meal) according to this scheme. Vocational training like paper printing, sari printing, etc. is also given.
- Health card for all AGs is maintained at AWC. Information about the weight, height, Body Mass Index (BMI) IFA (iron folic acid) supplementation, deworming, referral services and immunization etc. are recorded on the card
- All pregnant and lactating women are not members of the IGMSY scheme. This scheme is for those who become pregnant after 19 years and is not given to government employees.
- Problems such as lack of proper awareness about the aims and objectives of SABLA scheme and IGMSY scheme,

lack of raw materials for vocational training, poor turnout of girls and women at anganwadi centre due to lack of interest, lack of utilization of the programs for adolescent girls and women were also reported.

Conclusion

The aim of this investigation was to analyze the empowerment programs for adolescent girls and women through anganwadi centres by studying data collected from adolescent girls, women and anganwadi workers and by analyzing carefully the different aspects of the programs under SABLA and IGMSY scheme. SABLA scheme seeks to empower adolescent girls so as to enable them to take charge of their lives; it is viewed as a holistic initiative for the development of adolescent girls. The programme through its intervention aims at bringing about a difference in the lives of the adolescent girls. It seeks to provide them with an opportunity to realize their full potential. Empowerment of women is the prime objective of IGMSY scheme. The programs under IGMSY could be planned properly and implemented effectively in order to attain self sufficiency and self reliance among women in the present scenario. Women need to be considered as a special target group by scheme like IGMSY scheme. They need a maximum package of services and facilities, which will enhance their capacity for advancement and enable them to become capable citizens.

The study also gave emphasis that every adolescent girl and women in a learning society has to be empowered. To justify any society, the adolescent girls and women could realise that how important the adolescent girls and women programs are in removing the numerable hurdles in their life. Sincere involvement and deeper interest on the part of the persons involved in the organization and implementation of SABLA and IGMSY scheme will also help in the improvement and the success of the programmes.

Reference

1. Bindu. Counselling needs of secondary school students in Kozhikode and Malappuram districts. M.Ed dissertation, University of Calicut, 2007.
2. Anupama Purushothaman. Impact of Kishori Shakthi Yojana on school going adolescent girls in Malappuram and Kozhikode districts. M. Ed dissertation, University of Calicut, 2009.