



## Universalisation of ICDS Scheme

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### 3.1 Need for universalisation of ICDS

The Ministry decided (1995) to universalise the Scheme by covering all the 5239 Community Development blocks and 684 identified major urban slums in the country by the end of the Eighth Plan (1992-1997). In our previous Audit Report (2000), we had pointed out that universalisation plan was contemplated without carrying out systematic assessment of infrastructural requirements. Only 4200 projects were made operational against the requirement of 5618 to cover the entire country.

The universalisation of the ICDS Scheme was imperative in view of the fact that out of 15.78 crore children aged 0-6 years (census 2001), only 7.90 crore (50 *per cent*) children were covered under the Scheme as of 31 March 2012.

National Family Health Survey-3 (NFHS-3)<sup>1</sup> revealed that about 43 *per cent* children below five years in the country were underweight and out of these, about 16 *per cent* were severely malnourished.

### 3.2 Supreme Court directives on universalising ICDS Scheme

The Hon'ble Supreme Court, vide its interim orders dated 28 November 2001, 29 April 2004, 07 October 2004 and 13 December 2006, had directed the GOI to universalise the coverage of ICDS Scheme. The universalisation involved extending all services<sup>2</sup> offered under the Scheme to every child under the age of six and all pregnant and lactating mothers. The directives of the Court on issues relating to universalisation of the Scheme, action taken by the Government and audit findings thereagainst are discussed in paragraphs 3.2.1 to 3.3.

#### 3.2.1 Sanction of additional ICDS Projects and Anganwadi Centres (AWCs)

The Hon'ble Supreme Court directed the GOI in April 2004 to state the period within which number of AWCs would be increased so as to cover 14 lakh habitations. In December 2006, the Court directed the Government to sanction and operationalise a minimum of 14 lakh AWCs

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<sup>1</sup> Conducted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2005-06, NFHS-3 provides data on malnourishment among children in 0-5 age group.

<sup>2</sup> Supplementary nutrition, pre-school education, nutrition and health education, immunisation, health check up and referral services

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by December 2008 in a phased and even manner. The Court also directed the GOI to ensure that population norms for opening of AWCs must not be upwardly revised.

The Ministry, in turn, revised the population norms for setting up new AWCs twice, as depicted below:

**Table 3.1: Norm for setting up new AWCs**

Period	Rural and Urban Projects	Tribal Projects/ hilly/ desert/ riverine areas
	(one AWC could be set up for a population of)	
Prior to November 2005	1000	700
Revision of norms in November 2005	500-1500	300-1500
Revised norms since March 2007	400-800	300-800

Besides, for the habitations having population lower than the floor prescribed in the population norms, a mini AWC can be set up for a population of 150-400 (150-300 in tribal/desert/hilly/riverine areas).

In compliance with the directives of the Court for opening of additional AWCs, the Ministry obtained requirement of Projects<sup>3</sup> and AWCs from the States/UTs based on revised population norms and got the approval of the Cabinet for sanction of additional Projects and AWCs in three phases. Accordingly, the Ministry was to sanction new Projects and AWCs and the State Governments were required to operationalise them. Table 3.2 chronologically depicts approval of the GOI for expansion of ICDS Scheme during the period 2005-08:

**Table 3.2: Cabinet approval for expansion of ICDS Scheme**

Expansion phase	Date of Cabinet approval	ICDS Projects		AWCs		Mini-AWCs	
		New approvals	Total approved	New approval	Total approved	New approval	Total approved
Already existing			5,651		7,58,000		10,886
Phase 1	July 2005	467	6,118	1,88,168	9,46,168		
Phase 2	November 2006	173	6,291	1,07,274	10,53,442	25,961	36,847
Phase 3	October 2008	792	7,083	2,13,859	12,67,301	77,102	1,13,949

### 3.2.2 Anganwadi on Demand (AOD)

The Hon'ble Supreme Court order dated 13 December 2006 stipulated, *inter alia*, that rural communities and slum dwellers should be entitled to an Anganwadi on demand, not later than three months from the date of

<sup>3</sup> The administrative unit for the ICDS Project is the Community Development Block in rural areas, Tribal Development Block in predominantly tribal areas and slums in urban areas. As per the norms of the Scheme, a rural/ urban project is to cater to a population of one lakh. A tribal project is required to cater to a population of 35,000.

demand in cases where a settlement has at least 40 children under six but no Anganwadi.

The GOI, during third phase of expansion of ICDS Scheme (October 2008), approved 20,000 additional Anganwadi on Demand (AOD). The Ministry directed the States (May 2009) to submit the proposal relating to opening up of AOD within 45 days from the date of demand after observing all formalities. The States were required to submit consolidated proposal mixing two criteria, i.e. (i) the habitations without AWCs having more than 40 children and (ii) requirements as per child population norms as well as overall population norms.

Audit however, noted that only 2,030 AODs were sanctioned to six states<sup>4</sup> by the Ministry in 2011-12. The Ministry attributed the reasons for delay in sanction of AODs to the failure of State Governments to send their proposal for the same in prescribed format. The State Governments mixed the proposals for AODs with the proposals for setting up new AWCs under third phase of expansion.

In Odisha, 4,427 applications for AODs were received from the District Programme Officers (DPOs) on the recommendation of Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs) during the year 2010-11. However, the State Government sent proposals for 3,859 AODs to Central Government with a delay ranging between 90 to 570 days. The delay was attributable to the delay in convening the meeting of Block Level Coordination Committee as per the convenience of the Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) who are the members of the said committee which is chaired by the Sub-Collector.

The lackadaisical approach of various stakeholders such as State Governments, Block Level Coordination Committee etc. resulted in non-implementation of the novel concept of Anganwadi on demand for the habitations not covered under the Scheme. Thus, the goal of universalisation of the Scheme is yet to be achieved.

### 3.2.3 Coverage of all habitations

The Hon'ble Supreme Court, in November 2001, directed the Central Government and the State Governments that ICDS Scheme be implemented in full and a disbursement centre (AWC) established in every human settlement.

The Ministry, however, informed Audit that the State Governments were responsible for confirming whether all the habitations had been covered

<sup>4</sup> Madhya Pradesh: 1231, Gujarat: 339, Karnataka: 232, Haryana: 185, Meghalaya: 41 and Tripura: 02

under the ICDS Scheme. The Ministry had no information on the coverage of habitations under the Scheme.

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**3.2.4 Coverage of Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC) and minority population**

As per National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-3 (2005-06) 47.9 *per cent* SC children in 0-5 age group and 54.5 *per cent* ST children were malnourished against the national average of 42.5 *per cent*. The Supreme Court order dated 13 December 2006 stipulated, *inter alia*, identification of SC and ST hamlets/habitations for opening of new Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) on a priority basis.

The Ministry, in turn, issued sanctions for opening of additional AWCs to States/UTs with the conditions that (a) villages pre-dominantly inhabited by population belonging to SC/ST and minority community should be given priority and (b) within a village also location of an AWC, as far as feasible should be the areas inhabited by population from SC/ST and minority community. The State Governments were to certify that all SC, ST, OBC and minority community habitations had been saturated.

From the records examined in the Ministry, audit noted that only 14 States/UTs<sup>5</sup> had furnished the requisite certificate regarding full coverage of SC/ST and minority areas under the Scheme till March 2012. The data regarding coverage of all habitations predominantly inhabited by SC, ST, OBC and minority communities in remaining States/UTs was not available with the Ministry.

Audit further noted that mapping of the project area required for identifying the habitations/villages inhabited by malnourished and weaker sections of society before setting up new AWCs was not done in test-checked projects in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha (two districts). In Gujarat, the mapping of the project area was in the process of being taken up in January 2012. Thus, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha Governments certified the full coverage of SC, ST and minority habitation under the Scheme without conducting the necessary mapping of project areas in the State.

The Ministry was not in a position to give assurance that the order of the Court in this regard had been fully complied with and all the predominantly SC/ST/other weaker section habitations were covered under ICDS scheme.

<sup>5</sup> Goa, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttarakhand, A&N Islands, Chandigarh and Lakshadweep.

**Recommendation**

- **The Ministry should conduct a survey to have an assurance that all habitations, especially those inhabited by SC/ST/OBC/minority community population have been covered under the Scheme.**

**3.2.5 Other directives of the Supreme Court**

The status of compliance of the Supreme Court's other interim rulings is given below:

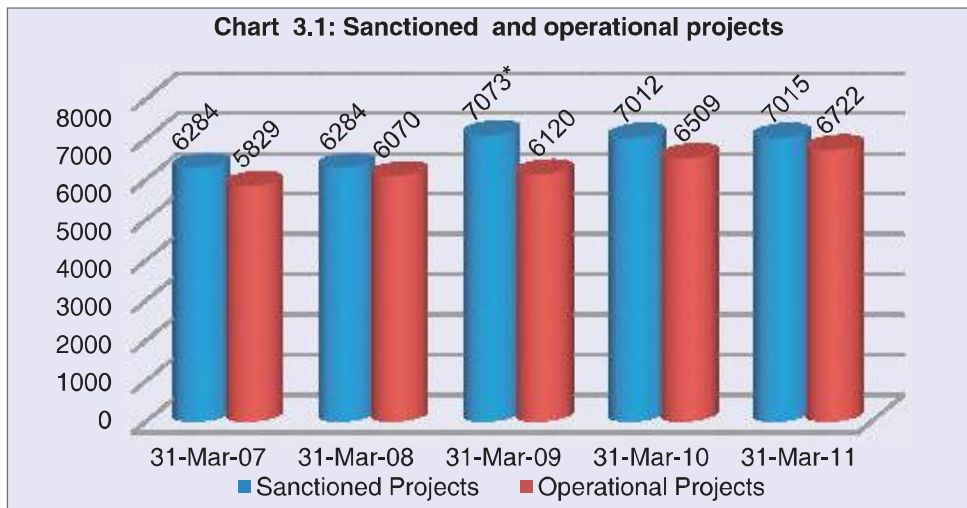
**Table 3.3: Details of Supreme Court rulings on implementation of ICDS Scheme**

Supreme Court ruling	Action taken by the Ministry	Remarks
<b>November 2001:</b> To implement the ICDS Scheme in full and to ensure that every ICDS disbursing centre (AWC) in the country provides to each child up to 6 years of age 300 calories and 8-10 grams of protein and each pregnant woman and each nursing mother gets 500 calories and 20-25 grams of protein).	The Ministry revised the nutritional and feeding norms for supplementary nutrition in February 2009, i.e. more than eight year after the Courts' order.	The shortcoming in the implementation of revised norms has been commented in paragraph 6.4.1 of this report.
<b>April 2004:</b> To revise norm of ₹ 1 for every Child for supply of nutritious food prevailing since 1991.	The Ministry revised the financial norm in October 2004 and again in November 2008.	The shortcoming in the implementation of revised financial norms has been commented in paragraph 6.2 of this report.
<b>October 2004:</b> That below poverty line (BPL) should not be used as eligibility criteria for ICDS.	The Ministry issued instructions to all States/UTs in 2005.	-

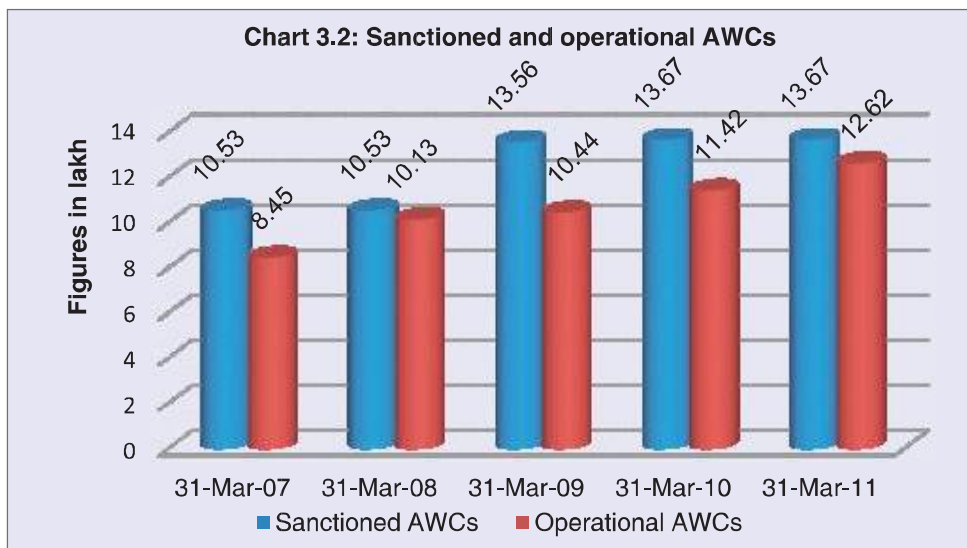
**3.3 Shortfall in implementation of the universalisation plans**

Audit noted shortfall in the implementation of the expansion plans chalked out in compliance with the Hon'ble Supreme Court's directions. The Ministry failed to operationalise the sanctioned number of ICDS Projects and the Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) during the years 2006-07 to 2010-11, as depicted in the charts 3.1 and 3.2:

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*[\*The reduction in the number of projects from 7073 to 7012 was on account of withholding of 123 projects by the Ministry in 2009-10 sanctioned to Chhattisgarh and sanctioning 62 additional projects to other States/UTs.]*



Thus, in compliance with Supreme Court’s direction to operationalise 14 lakh AWCs by December 2008 for universalising the Scheme, the Ministry sanctioned 13.67 lakh AWCs but could operationalise only 12.62 lakh AWCs by March 2011. The shortfall in operationalisation of sanctioned AWCs was significant in Chhattisgarh (39 per cent), Uttarakhand (31 per cent), Manipur (14 per cent) and Bihar (13 per cent).

Similarly, out of 7,015 sanctioned ICDS projects, 6,722 projects were operationalised. The maximum shortfall in operationalisation of projects occurred in Delhi (42 per cent), West Bengal (28 per cent) and Chhattisgarh (26 per cent). The State-wise and year wise details of sanctioned and operational projects and AWCs are given in **Annex 3.1** and **Annex 3.2**.



Audit noted the following reasons for non-operationalisation or delay in operationalisation of all the sanctioned projects and AWCs in nine test-checked States:

- Shortage of staff due to non selection of Anganwadi Worker (AWW)/ Anganwadi Helper (AWH) in Rajasthan and West Bengal, prolonged recruitment process and non-availability of eligible persons for AWW/AWH in Gujarat;
- Delays in demand survey before allotment of Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) in minority areas in Gujarat;
- Delay in sanction for setting up AWCs by State Government were noted in Uttar Pradesh and Meghalaya (in Uttar Pradesh time lag between the sanction issued by the Ministry and the sanction accorded by the State was up to 17 months);
- Delay in submission of proposals for sanction of additional AWCs based on mapping of uncovered habitation by the Director in Andhra Pradesh;
- Sanction of new AWCs without proper survey in Jharkhand; and
- Delay in operationalisation of sanctioned AWCs in Haryana (13 to 18 months) and Odisha (11 to 28 months).

Non operationalisation of projects/AWCs indicated that the universalisation of the ICDS Scheme is yet to be achieved even four years after the target date of 31 December 2008 prescribed by the Supreme Court. The failure of the Ministry/States to sanction and operationalise the required number of AWCs and ensuring the selection of required number of AWW/AWH in time was tantamount to depriving intended beneficiaries of ICDS services in uncovered areas.

The Ministry stated (November 2012) that the progress in sanction and operationalisation of ICDS Projects/AWCs was slow in the initial stages. The ICDS Projects/AWCs were sanctioned to the States/UTs by the Ministry on need basis and the proposals received from them. Their operationalisation took time due to administrative issues, court cases and financial processes involved. Against 7075 sanctioned projects and 13.71 AWCs, 7005 Projects and 13.17 lakh AWCs were operational as on June 2012.

#### **Recommendation**

- ***The Ministry may analyse the reasons for delays in sanction and operationalisation of new AWCs and Projects and ensure timely operationalisation of all sanctioned additional Projects and additional AWCs.***

### 3.4 Data discrepancy in number of projects/Anganwadi Centres (AWCs)

The Ministry maintains data of sanctioned and operational projects and AWCs on the basis of sanctions issued to all the States/UTs and periodical progress reports received from them. The States/UTs are also required to furnish quarterly/annual Statement of Expenditure (SoE) giving *inter alia* the details of sanctioned and operational AWCs.

The number of projects/AWCs sanctioned by the Ministry was verified by Audit against the number of sanctioned projects/AWCs reported by the State Governments in their SoEs. This showed a difference of 222 projects and 7,126 AWCs in 12 States as detailed in **Annex 3.3**.

Similarly, in respect of the Projects and the AWCs actually operational variations were noticed in four and 17 States respectively. The number of the operational projects and the AWCs as per the records of the Ministry as on 31 March 2011 differed from the number of operational projects and the AWCs reported by the States/UTs in the SoEs by 55 and 56,258 respectively. The State-wise variations are depicted in **Annex 3.4**.

Audit noted that there was no system of reconciliation of data between the Ministry and the State/UT Governments in respect of sanctioned and operational Projects/AWCs. This was significant because the number of operational projects/AWCs formed the basis of financial support to the States under the scheme.

The Ministry stated (July 2012) that compilation of data on operational projects and AWCs by the States/UTs was a time consuming process. Most of the States/UTs submitted these reports to the Ministry with a delay resulting in mismatch in figures shown by it. These figures indicated the last reported figures while preparing the consolidated report at the national level.

The reply of the Ministry is not acceptable. In respect of 15 out of 17 States the number of operational AWCs as per records of the Ministry exceeded the number of AWCs reported by the States. The excess number of operational AWCs in the records of the Ministry cannot be on account of the time lag in reporting. In that case it would indicate the closure of AWCs during the intervening period. The discrepancy in data indicated weaknesses in control structure under the Scheme.

### 3.5 Convergence of services under ICDS with Schemes of other departments

The ICDS scheme envisages an integrated delivery of a multiplicity of services which are handled by different departments at different levels. Three of the six services under ICDS namely immunization, health



check-up and referral services are delivered through public health infrastructure under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare as discussed in Paragraph 1.3 of the report.

The convergence among various departments and programmes for the delivery of ICDS requires constitution of coordination committees at the Central, State, District, Block and Village levels to review the progress of the ICDS Scheme. Under State Level Coordination Committee (SLCC), joint meeting of State Nodal department with National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) functionaries was required to be held in every quarter to discuss about different health aspects of ICDS and to gather inputs on immunization and other health concerns of the ICDS from State on regular basis.

Test-check of records for the period 2006-11 in sample States revealed that the convergence among various programmes/departments at the State and the lower levels was inadequate, as detailed below:

**Andhra Pradesh:** State Level Coordination Committee (SLCC) was constituted but no meeting was held. The coordination committee at block level was not constituted in any test-checked project.

**Bihar:** The coordination committee was constituted with other departments but meetings were infrequent.

**Chhattisgarh:** The meetings of coordination committees at various levels were held, but no record in this regard was available.

**Gujarat:** SLCC meetings were not held by the State Nodal Department. At district and block levels, ICDS officers participated in the meetings held by Director of NRHM. However, details of meetings held, actual participation of ICDS officers in NRHM meetings and proceedings of meetings were not available with the Director.

**Haryana:** Out of the requirement of 20 meetings of SLCC during the period 2006-11 only three meetings were held. No records regarding holding of district/block level coordination committee meetings were maintained in test-checked districts.

**Karnataka:** The details of joint meetings of the functionaries of the ICDS and the NRHM were not available at the State and test-checked districts.

**Madhya Pradesh:** The joint evaluation and field inspections by the Department of Women and Child Development with State Health Department was not conducted during the period covered by audit.

**Meghalaya:** The coordination committees were constituted at the State, district and block levels. However, the minutes of the meetings were made available to Audit by only one district.

**Odisha:** Out of the requirement of 20 meetings of State Level Coordination Committee (SLCC) during the period 2006-11 only five meetings were held. No information was available on the total number of District Level Coordination Committee meetings between the ICDS and National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) functionaries. Further, 12 Block Coordination Committee meetings between ICDS and NRHM functionaries were required to be held in each project annually. Against this, only two such meetings were held in one district (Cuttack) during 2006-07 and 2009-10.

**Rajasthan:** SLCC was constituted only in March 2011. District Level Coordination Committees were not constituted during the period under review.

**Uttar Pradesh:** Out of the requirement of 20 meetings of SLCC during the period 2006-11 only two meetings were held.

**West Bengal:** Meetings were not held at either district or block levels in Bardhaman district during 2006-11. In three<sup>6</sup> out of five test checked districts, 130 meetings of District Health and Family Welfare Samity (DHFWS) were held during 2006-11, DPOs were present in 114. District Programme Officer (DPO), Malda did not attend any of the DHFWS meetings.

Thus, the inter-departmental convergence required for coordinated policy of integrated delivery of multiplicity of ICDS Scheme was not effective. Further, the objective of the ICDS Scheme to achieve effective coordination of policy and implementation amongst the various departments to promote child development remained unaccomplished for want of effective inter-sectoral convergence.

The Ministry stated (November 2012) that new guidelines on convergence dated 31 March 2011 had been shared with the States/UTs. A five-tier monitoring and review system, which inter-alia, provided for block level committees was proposed in the guidelines for coordination and convergence with line Ministries/Departments/ Programmes.

#### **Recommendation**

- ***The Ministry should develop guidelines for inter-departmental convergences for providing multiple ICDS services in a coordinated manner and monitor its implementation.***

<sup>6</sup> Bardhaman, Paschim Medinipur and South 24 Parganas. Information was not available in respect of Jalpaiguri.