

Assessment of Growth Monitoring and Promotion Programme of the Integrated Child Development Services in Maharashtra

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Growth Monitoring and Promotion (GMP) Programme is primarily a preventive and promotive activity carved by ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) to capture inadequate growth early enough and take the required action before the child suffers undernutrition. This study explores its functioning in Maharashtra. Data is collected in rural, urban and tribal settings from three districts. It includes observations during 93 GMP sessions and interviews of 100 AWWs, 78 supervisors and 500 mothers. The study reveals unavailability of proper child weighing scales and sometimes sophisticated instruments with inadequately trained staff. None of the workers plots the growth charts then and there and children are weighed in chaotic conditions during the session, resulting in incorrect weights. Most mothers have neither seen the growth charts nor do they understand it. Effective interaction with mothers is lacking which defeats the Programme. ICDS should try to improve this well-thought programme.

I Introduction

Maharashtra has significantly reduced undernutrition. All three components, underweight (29.6 to 22.6 per cent), stunting (39.0 to 23.0 per cent) and wasting (19.9 to 16.3 per cent) among children in less than two years have shown significant decline between National Family Health Survey-3 and Comprehensive Nutrition Survey, Maharashtra. Despite this progress, one-fifth of the children under two years in Maharashtra are still not growing up to their full potential (IIPS, 2012). They are undernourished and their height and weight *vis-à-vis* age are inadequate. Matters will improve if they are free from illness and receive optimal nutrition.

Undernutrition happens early in life in Maharashtra as in India. Thus, 1,000 days comprising of prenatal period and the first two years of life are crucial.

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