

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3702

ANSWERED ON:16.12.2011

ICDS

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Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the benefits accrued are commensurate with funds allocated under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme;
- (b) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (d) the corrective steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH)

(a) to (d): The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme is one of the flagship programmes of the Government of India and is largest community based outreach programme for early childhood development. It is implemented by the State Governments/UT Administrations by providing a package of services such as supplementary nutrition, pre-school non-formal education, nutrition & health education, immunization, health check up and referral services. The scheme is a well-conceived one to address health, nutrition and developmental needs of under-six children as well as pregnant and lactating women.

Initiated on a pilot basis in 1975 with 33 projects and 4891 Anganwadi Centres (AWCs), the Scheme expanded to 5652 projects and about 6 lakh sanctioned AWCs in the country by the end of IXth Plan. In 2008-09, the Scheme was universalized with approved number of 7076 projects and 14 lakh AWCs.

Over the years, the ICDS Scheme has registered significant progress in terms of increase in number of operational projects, Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) and coverage of beneficiaries. The figures for the last 5 years are given at Annex I. As may be seen, 4.44 lakh new AWCs/ mini-AWCs have become operational during XI Plan (as on 30.9.2011) compared to 2.99 lakh during Xth Plan. Number of beneficiaries for supplementary nutrition has increased from 705.43 lakh at the end of X Plan to 950.35 lakh during XI Plan (as on 30.9.2011). The increase in the number of beneficiaries is an indicator of the acceptability of the Scheme. Further, several studies including National Family Health Survey-3 (NFHS-3) have revealed that the programme has contributed positively towards achieving some of the key programme objectives such as reduction of child malnutrition, improvement in caring practices and improved early child hood development outcomes including quality pre-school education.

There are no doubt challenges in the implementation of the scheme in regard to convergence in the health system and community participation. There are also issues relating to infrastructure and drinking water supply, building for Anganwadi centres, sanitation facility at the AWCs, etc.

There is also an erroneous perception that the Anganwadi Centre is only a feeding centre which in fact is a centre for holistic child development. Due to this as well as programmatic and operational gaps, there has been unevenness in implementation of the Scheme across the States/UTs. This is reflected in mixed results and outcomes among the States/UTs.

However, to make good these gaps and weaknesses, Government has decided to strengthen and restructure the Scheme including re-designing and defining of the set of services. This is proposed to be achieved through a range of programmatic, managerial and institutional reforms. It is also envisaged to put ICDS Scheme in Mission Mode on the lines of SSA and NRHM. All this is at an advanced stage of consideration.