

# An Assessment on the Status of Nutrition Services, Behaviours, Practices and Activities in Districts in Chhattisgarh state in Context of COVID 19

20-30<sup>th</sup> April 2020

## Background

In the state of Chhattisgarh, the first case of COVID 19 was reported from the state capital city of Raipur on 19 March 2020. Subsequently, there were a total of 5 districts that together had 10 active cases of CORONA virus. Of these, 9 have been discharged to go home, as they have recovered after the treatment provided in AIIMS Raipur. At present only one case is under treatment in Chhattisgarh.

While addressing the nation, Hon'ble Prime Minister ordered a 21-days lockdown on 24th March 2020, to slow the transmission rate amongst the population. This emergency undoubtedly will swiftly impact the nutritional status of children due to immediate precautionary measures bringing down sudden closure of all services from the ongoing interventions of the government programmes. The simultaneous response to curb the spread of virus is also depriving vulnerable groups to access food and the basic amenities which in every likelihood shall give rise to acute malnutrition in children due to food availability, increasing illnesses and changes in caring practices directly related to the availability/labor demands of caregivers.

The department of Women and Child Development (WCD) issued orders to close all AWCs and suspend all services thereby. However, the Anganwadi Workers (AWW) were guided to visit homes of every house of beneficiaries to distribute supplementary nutrition along with counseling on behaviours to prevent themselves from infection of COVID 19. On 25 April, another order issued by WCD instructing field functionaries of ICDS to extend distribution of supplementary nutrition to children 3 to 6 years of age through house-to-house visits.

In view of the above, it is thought to be a worthwhile exercise to undertake an assessment of the extent of services reaching the functionaries in the lockdown state on account of COVID spread in the state by telephonic contacts made by the Consultants under Nutrition programme of UNICEF Raipur Office.

A Checklist was prepared in this regard which is annexed along with this Report. The findings are discussed followingly.

## Findings

A total of 33 ICDS functionaries were contacted for telephonic interview and their distribution is in Table 1. The three consultants divided 27 districts into 9 districts each within themselves. A total of 11 District Programme Officers (DPOs), 15 CDPOs and 1 Lady Supervisor were contacted over telephone to get their responses.

**Table 1. Distribution of Respondents from 27 districts**

Sl. No	Respondents (ICDS)	Total no of Districts=27
1.	DPO	11
2.	CDPO	15
3.	Supervisors	1

### Distribution of THR/ Supplementary Food

All ICDS functionaries reported that their districts were distributing THR as dry fortified packaged multi-mix to mothers - pregnant and lactating and children- 7m-3 years. However, the older age group of 3 to

Sl. No		Districts Reporting Yes (N=27)	%	Frequency	Amt/week
1.	P mothers	27	100	15 days	2 packets
2.	L mothers	27	100	15 days	2 packets
3.	7-36 months	27	100	15 days	2 packets
4.	3-6 years	25	93	15 days	2 packets

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years which started receiving food from 21<sup>th</sup> March 2020, had two districts that did not initiate the distribution of supplementary nutrition for children 3-6 year of age. (Table 2).

Under *Mukhya Mantri Suposhan Abhiyaan*, District Collectors are providing a package of cereals, grains, dry vegetables, oil, soya *badis*, peanuts and jaggery.



In schools, MDM programme is closed, however, children continue to receive dry ration to last for two weeks.

### Distribution of IFA supplements

Under Anemia Mukt Bharat (AMB) supplementation of iron folic acid (IFA) is to be received across life cycle including children 2-5 years with IFA syrup, pink tablets for children 6 to 10 years, blue IFA supplements to Adolescents from class 6 onwards and red tablets for mother during pregnancy and lactation periods. The data collected from ICDS functionaries revealed that 13 (48%) the districts were distributing IFA only to mothers and 59 % of districts i.e.16 districts were additionally giving tablets to adolescents. The rest of the districts said that it was mainly due to the supplies of IFA not available with AWWs/AWCs. The same is presented in

Table below 2.

**Table 2: No of districts reporting distribution of IFA supplementation.**

Sl. No		N	P/ L Mothers		IFA Syrup-U 5 y		School children %		Adolescent	
			Y	%	Y	%	Y	%	Y	%
1.	DPO	11	4	36	0	0	0	0	7	64
2.	CDPO	15	8	53	0	0	0	0	8	53
3.	LS	1	1	100	0	0	0	0	1	100
<b>Total</b>		<b>27</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>59</b>

### Status of NRC and Referral service

The functioning of NRCs was seen to be only in 12 out of the total 27 (44%) of districts in the state with at least one NRC functioning. Also, none of the districts reported of any referral services offered to children or mothers. (Table 3).

**Table 3: Status of NRCS and Referral service in the state.**

Sl. No		N	NRC open		Any referral of child		Any referral of Mother	
			Y	%	Y	%	Y	%
1.	DPO	11	7	64	0	0	0	0
2.	CDPO	15	4	27	0	0	0	0
3.	LS	1	1	100	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>27</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## Status of PDS Shops

The information on functioning of PDS with ration shops providing food and essential commodities to villagers was collected from all 27 districts which revealed that all districts had PDS shops functional and had stocks in adequate quantities. The people too had enough cash to buy adequate ration for their families. During lockdown due to COVID 19, government was distributing food grains and ration free of caste. Thus, availing ration was not a problem. The issue was serious with those who had migrated and or did not have ration cards.



these were mostly those who carried out petty trade or were daily wage earners. (Table 4).

**Table 4: Status of PDS shops in all 27 districts**

Sl. No		N	PDS Open		Adequate stock		People have enough money to buy	
			Y	%	Y	%	Y	%
1.	DPO	11	11	100	11	100	11	100
2.	CDPO	15	15	100	15	100	15	100
3.	LS	1	1	100	1	100	1	100
<b>Total</b>		<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>

Moreover, 55% of the districts reported that villages had Anaaj Banks that provided grains to those who could not purchase or did not possess ration cards.

## Counselling and Advice by field functionaries

During home visits, AWWs are directed to extend counselling on breast feeding, IYCF and COVID related precautions to be taken. Data showed that while IYCF was being talked about in all 85% of districts, hand washing was being re-enforced in all 27 districts and that was considered as the priority to be practiced in the context of COVID 19.

As can be seen from Table 5, hand washing was the top priority of the counselling by field functionaries who also reported that even families were concerned about purchasing soap and in some tribal districts availability of water was posing problem to continue practicing frequent washing of hands.

Sl. No		N	IYCF counselling (Y)	%	Advice on hand washing	%
1.	DPO	11	11	100	11	100

2.	CDPO	15	14	93	15	100
3.	LS	1	1	100	1	100
<b>Total</b>		<b>27</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>

#### Counselling on safeguarding from COVID 19

The districts were indeed aware of what they should be doing to keep themselves safe from the infection due to COVID 19. As can be seen from Table 6 all districts reported to see AWWs wearing masks, counseling on cleaning surface touched, keeping social distance and that disinfectants had been sprayed in areas. (Table 6).

**Table 6: Status of Precautionary Advice on COVID 19.**

Sl. No		N	AWW wears mask		Counselling on cleaning surface		Advise on social distancing		Spray of disinfectant	
			Y	%	Y	%	Y	%	Y	%
1.	DPO	11	11	100	11	100	11	100	5	45
2.	CDPO	15	15	100	15	100	15	100	9	60
3.	LS	1	1	100	1	100	1	100	0	
<b>Total</b>		<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>52</b>

## Summary of the Assessment

1. All districts and block officers contacted telephonically reported that mothers and children were receiving THR except that 2 districts who have yet to start for 3.6 years.
2. IFA is reported to be given in 13 districts to mothers which is 48% and to adolescents in 16 districts (59%).
3. Twelve districts (44%) reported that at least one NRC is open in their district. But no referral of children and mothers are happening.
4. All districts have PDS shops open and are distributing food items to people which is in adequate amounts.
5. 15 out of 27 districts have Anaaj banks.
6. The counseling was extended to communities by field functionaries related to IYCF, hand washing, and precautions related to COVID 19.

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