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### An observational study on the facilities of Anganwadi centers for early childhood education in Chamba block of Tehri Garhwal district, Uttarakhand

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#### Abstract

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is pivotal in laying the foundation for a child's cognitive, social, and emotional development. In India, Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) are critical institutions for delivering ECE, especially in remote places. Despite their importance, there is limited research on the adequacy and quality of facilities provided at these centres, particularly in geographically challenging areas. This study addresses this gap by observing the facilities available at AWCs in the Chamba Block of Tehri Garhwal district, Uttarakhand, a hilly region where accessibility and infrastructure pose unique challenges.

The study employs an observational research design to evaluate the physical facilities of 20 AWCs, representing 10% of the total 199 centres in the Chamba Block. The centres were chosen using purposive random sampling to ensure a diverse representation of Mini and Full AWCs. Data was collected using a self-developed observation checklist based on the Guidelines for Preschool Education by NCERT (2019). The checklist assessed eight key parameters which include Secure and Safe Environment, Accessibility, Arrangement of rooms, arrangement in the Classroom, conditions of a classroom, Facilities, Activities Related Facilities and Records and Registers.

The study investigates the need for targeted interventions to ensure the quality and adequacy of ECE facilities in AWCs located in hilly and remote regions, indicating the potential for broader improvements in early childhood education within such challenging contexts.

The study reveals strengths in safety measures but highlights major gaps in infrastructure and facilities. Issues like poor ventilation, inadequate space, and limited play equipment affect the learning environment. Additionally, the lack of progress records indicates a need for better monitoring and improvements in infrastructure and facility provisions.

**Keywords:** Anganwadi centres (AWCs), Early childhood education (ECE), facility assessment

#### Introduction

Anganwadi centres, established in 1975 as part of India's Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program, are vital institutions in the nation's efforts to address child hunger, malnutrition, and promote early childhood development. These centres are crucial for providing essential services such as healthcare, nutrition, and education to children under six years old, as well as pregnant and nursing mothers. In addition to addressing physical health needs, Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) serve as a symbol of community welfare, offering a safe space where children and mothers can access crucial services in rural and underserved areas. The cornerstone of this system, Anganwadi workers, actively engage with the community to provide health education, nutritional guidance, and preschool education, bridging the gap between the local population and the public health system.

The significance of AWCs in early childhood education is particularly pronounced in rural India, where access to formal education is often constrained. Through the ICDS scheme, these centres offer a comprehensive suite of services, encompassing pre-school education for children aged 3-6 years. This non-formal education is tailored to prepare children for formal schooling and foster their holistic development. The educational initiatives at AWCs are thoughtfully curated to augment basic literacy and numeracy skills, in addition to instilling knowledge about the environment, personal hygiene, and social interactions.

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The child-centred, interactive teaching methodologies employed, such as games, songs, and storytelling, furnish an engaging learning milieu that nurtures cognitive and social development. The amenities available at AWCs wield a decisive influence on the triumph of their educational mission. A well-equipped centre furnishes a conducive learning environment that significantly impacts a child's cognitive, linguistic, and social development. Studies have evinced that AWCs equipped with adequate infrastructure, encompassing educational toys, books, and learning materials, can lay a robust foundation for the future academic accomplishments of children. Moreover, the provision of clean drinking water, sanitation facilities, and a safe play area is imperative for preserving the health and well-being of the children. These facilities not only buttress physical development but also cultivate an environment where children can thrive socially and emotionally. Furthermore, the integration of technology, such as computers and tablets, can further enrich learning experiences by offering diverse educational content and stimulating cognitive skills.

In the context of the hilly regions of Uttarakhand, particularly in the Chamba Block of Tehri Garhwal district, the availability and quality of amenities at AWCs assume heightened significance. The geographical exigencies of this area can impinge upon the accessibility and sufficiency of resources at these centers, potentially impeding their capacity to deliver quality early childhood education. This study endeavors to evaluate the amenities available at AWCs in Chamba Block, presenting a critical appraisal of their ability to address the educational and developmental requisites of children in this distinctive milieu. By apprising the strengths and weaknesses of these centres, the study aims to illuminate forthcoming endeavors to augment the quality of early childhood education in rural and hilly regions, ultimately contributing to the overarching objective of educational equity in India.

### Objective of the Study

To observe and evaluate the availability and quality of infrastructure, facilities, and teaching-learning materials at Anganwadi Centers (AWCs) for Early Childhood Education in Chamba Block of Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand.

### Purpose of the Study

To provide an assessment of current resources and infrastructure at AWCs, identify strengths and deficiencies, and offer insights for improving early childhood education services in the region.

### Research Methodology

#### 1. Study Area

- **Location:** The study focuses on the Anganwadi Centers (AWCs) in Chamba Block, which is part of the Tehri Garhwal district in Uttarakhand State, India.
- **Geographical Context:** Chamba Block is situated in a hilly region, which may affect the accessibility and availability of facilities at the AWCs.
- **Population:** The study area includes a total of 199 Anganwadi Centers (both Mini and Full AWCs), as

reported by the ICDS Project Office, Chamba.

#### 2. Research Design

- **Type of Study:** The research employs an observational study design. This approach is suitable for assessing the physical facilities and resources available at the AWCs without intervening in their functioning.
- **Objective:** The primary objective is to evaluate the facilities available at the AWCs under the NCERT Guidelines for Preschool Education.

#### 3. Sampling Methods and Sample Size

- **Sampling Frame:** The sampling frame consists of all 199 AWCs in the Chamba Block.
- **Sampling Technique:** Purposive Random Sampling was used to select a representative sample. This method was chosen to ensure that the sample includes a variety of AWCs (both Mini and Full) that may have different levels of facilities.
- **Sample Size:** 10% of the total AWCs were selected for the study. Therefore, approximately 20 AWCs (10% of 199) were included in the sample. This sample size was deemed adequate for providing a reliable assessment of the facilities.

#### 4. Tools and Techniques

- **Data Collection Tool:** Data were collected using a self-made observation checklist. The checklist was developed concerning the NCERT Guidelines for Preschool Education, ensuring that the evaluation criteria are aligned with recognized standards.
- **Parameters Assessed:** The checklist included 8 specific parameters, as outlined in the NCERT Guidelines. These parameters cover essential aspects of preschool facilities, such as secure and safe environment, accessibility, arrangement of rooms, arrangement in classrooms, conditions of classroom, provided facilities and other relevant factors.
- **Data Collection Process:** Observations were made on-site at each selected AWC. The data collector(s) filled out the checklist during the visit to each center, ensuring that the assessment was based on real-time observations.

#### 5. Data Analysis

- **Quantitative Analysis:** The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, to summarize the availability and condition of the facilities across the sampled AWCs.
- **Qualitative Insights:** In addition to quantitative data, qualitative observations and notes were taken to provide contextual insights into the conditions at the AWCs, which may not be fully captured by the checklist alone.

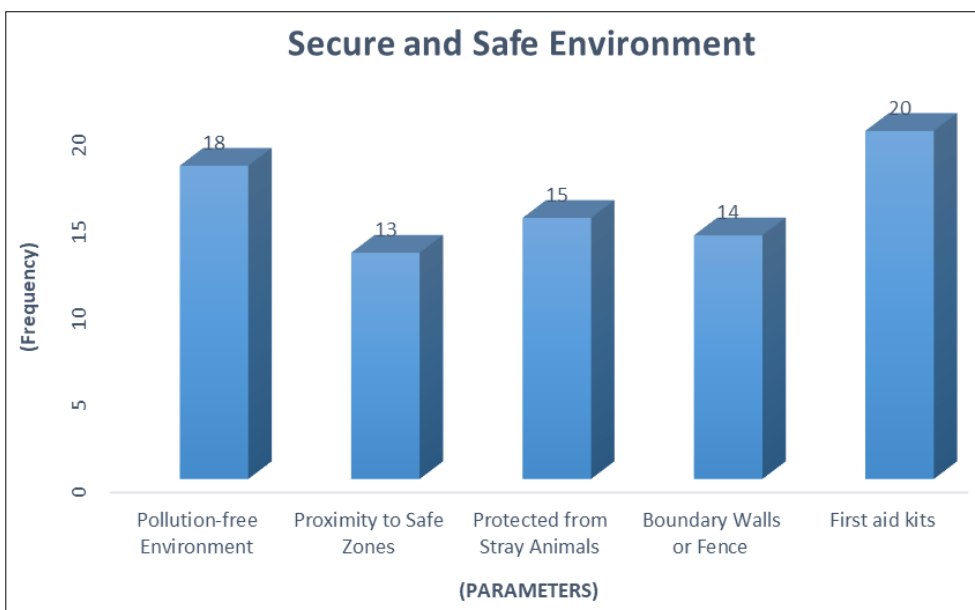
This methodology ensures a systematic approach to assessing the facilities at AWCs in the Chamba Block, providing a comprehensive understanding of their current state in alignment with national preschool standards.

### Results and Discussion

These are the research findings based on 8 basic parameters.

Sr. No.	Parameters of Secure and Safe environment	Frequencies of facilities provided by AWCs (n) (N=20)	Percentage (%)
1	Pollution-free Environment	18	90%
2	Proximity to Safe Zones	13	65%
3	Protected from Stray Animals	15	75%
4	Boundary Walls or Fence	14	70%
5	First Aid Kits	20	100%

**Secure and Safe Environment**



The table presents data on various factors contributing to a secure and safe environment of Anganwadi Centers, highlighting their frequency and percentage. Among the factors, "First Aid Kits" stands out with a perfect score of 100%, indicating that every respondent considers this a crucial element for safety. "Pollution-free Environment" follows closely with 90%, reflecting its high importance in ensuring a safe setting. "Protected from Stray Animals" is also significant, with 75% of respondents deeming it essential. The "Boundary Walls or Fence" is considered important by 70% of those surveyed, underscoring its role in maintaining safety. Lastly, "Proximity to Safe Zones" is valued by 65% of respondents, suggesting it is also a relevant factor but slightly less critical compared to the others. This data collectively underscores the importance of these safety measures in creating a secure environment, with first aid readiness being the top priority. Children in hilly areas must traverse rough terrain to reach Anganwadi Centers (AWCs) without proper roads. The lack of boundary walls in these AWCs poses a potential danger to animals and creates an unsafe environment

for children. While first aid kits are regularly supplied to AWCs by the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), substantial quantities of medicines have also been found in some locations.

**Accessibility of Anganwadi Centres**

The present accessibility of Anganwadi centers for children stands at approximately 55%, and there is a noticeable deficiency in the registration of children with special needs. It is crucial to enhance the accessibility of Anganwadi centers to accommodate all children, particularly those with special needs. In regions lacking proper roads, children in hilly areas are compelled to traverse rugged terrain to reach Anganwadi Centers (AWCs). This necessitates addressing the challenging mountainous terrain and rough roads in the area, as improved accessibility would significantly benefit children with special needs in the future.

**Arrangement of Rooms**

Parameters for Assessing the Facilities of AWCs	Frequencies of facilities provided by AWCs (n) (N=20)	Percentage (%)
Arrangement of Rooms	Staff room	2 10%
	Separate classroom	5 25%
	Separate kitchen	5 25%
	Storeroom	4 20%
Arrangements in Classrooms	Availability of electricity	15 75%
	Provision of dustbin	14 70%
	Furniture	8 40%
	Carpet	12 60%
	Boards (green/black)	20 100%
	Display Material	14 70%

The data reveals that only 10% of the sampled AWCs (2 out of 20) have a designated staff room, indicating a scarcity of separate spaces for staff activities within the centres. Furthermore, 25% of the AWCs possess a separate classroom, reflecting a limited provision of dedicated learning spaces for children. Similarly, 25% of the centres are equipped with a separate kitchen, essential for maintaining hygienic and safe food preparation. Additionally, 20% of the AWCs have a store room.

It is noteworthy that none of the AWCs features a

multipurpose room, indicating a deficiency in flexible spaces that could accommodate a diverse range of activities, thereby potentially restricting the services or programs offered by these centres.

In summary, the data highlights that a minority of the AWCs have dedicated spaces for staff, classrooms, kitchens, or storage, and none have multipurpose rooms, suggesting areas for potential improvement in the physical infrastructure of these centres.

AWCs operating within primary schools used staff rooms of

the primary schools. Most AWCs conducted their activities in a single room, with some having only one kitchen and one room. Only 5 AWCs had separate classrooms for teaching and indoor activities, whereas most AWCs used their classrooms for multipurpose activities.

#### Arrangement in Classrooms of Anganwadi centres

The survey revealed that 75% of the AWCs have electricity available in the classrooms, indicating that the majority of the centers are equipped to provide basic electrical amenities such as lighting and fans. Additionally, 70% of the AWCs have dustbins in the classrooms, showing a strong focus on cleanliness and waste management. However, only 40% of the centers have furniture available in the classrooms, which could impact the comfort and learning experience of the children. Furthermore, 60% of the centers have carpets in their classrooms, which could create a more child-friendly environment for activities.

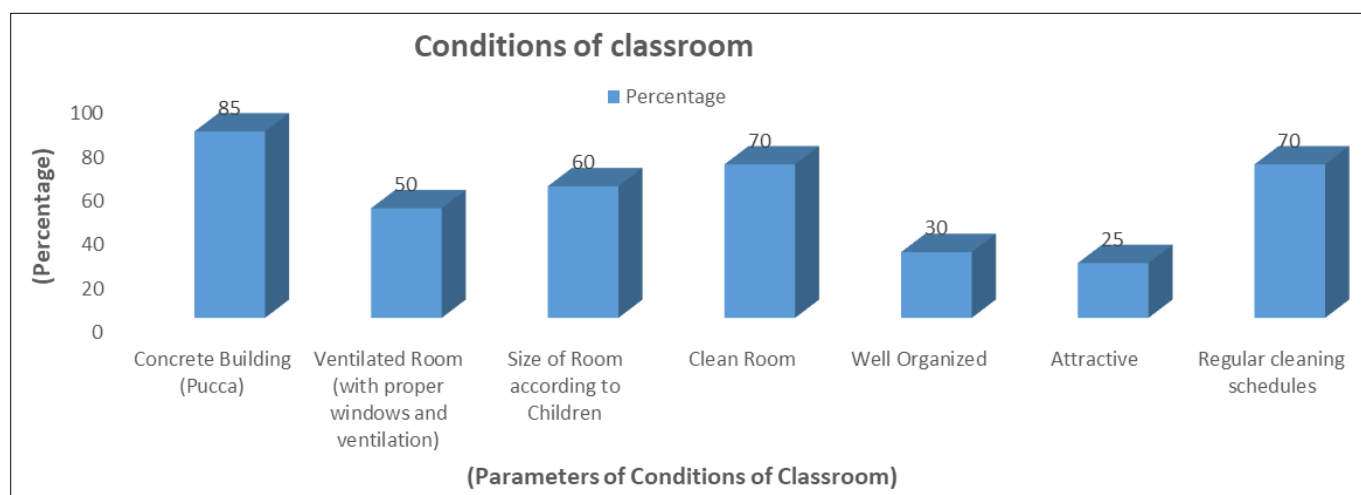
All the AWCs have boards available in the classrooms, with 75% having greenboards and 25% having blackboards. Additionally, 70% of the centers have display materials in the classrooms, indicating a widespread use of visual aids to enhance the learning environment and engage children.

Notably, none of the AWCs have dedicated storage space in the classrooms, which could make it challenging to organize and store educational materials and supplies. Furthermore, none of the centers have integrated ICT tools or technology into their classrooms, limiting the use of modern educational resources and digital learning opportunities.

In summary, while the majority of AWCs are equipped with basic classroom facilities like electricity, boards, and display materials, there are significant gaps, particularly in the availability of furniture, storage space, and technology integration.

Some AWCs had electricity arrangements, the supply had not reached the centres. Additionally, some centres did not take responsibility for repairing broken dustbins. This led to instances of dust being thrown in some corner of the room or outside, potentially providing children with incorrect teachings. While display material was present in all centers, the quality was not always suitable for children. In many instances, only ready-made charts unrelated to early childhood education (ECE) were put up on the walls. Some centers lacked suitable charts for children's attention.

#### Conditions of Classrooms in Anganwadi Centres



The assessment of classrooms at various AWCs (AWCs) revealed several key findings. Out of the 20 sampled AWCs, 85% were found to be housed in sturdy, permanent concrete buildings, providing a safe and durable environment for children. However, only 50% of the AWCs have classrooms with proper windows and ventilation, indicating a need for improvement in ensuring adequate airflow and natural light, essential for a healthy and comfortable learning environment. Additionally, 60% of the AWCs were observed to have appropriately sized classrooms for the number of attending children, demonstrating efforts to provide ample space and reduce overcrowding.

Notably, 70% of the AWCs maintain clean classrooms, reflecting a strong emphasis on hygiene and cleanliness. Nevertheless, opportunities for improvement were identified in the organization and aesthetic appeal of the learning environments. For instance, only 30% of the classrooms were deemed well-organized, and a mere 25% were described as attractive. These findings suggest a need to focus on better organization and efforts to create visually appealing and engaging spaces for the children. Moreover, 40% of the classrooms were found to lack proper ventilation, which could impact the comfort and health of the children, indicating a need for improvement in this area to ensure a conducive

learning environment.

The absence of proper facilities often leads to overcrowded classrooms, negatively impacting the quality of education and care provided. Issues such as poor lighting, inadequate ventilation, and a shortage of educational materials hinder the development of early childhood skills and may contribute to reduced engagement and learning levels.

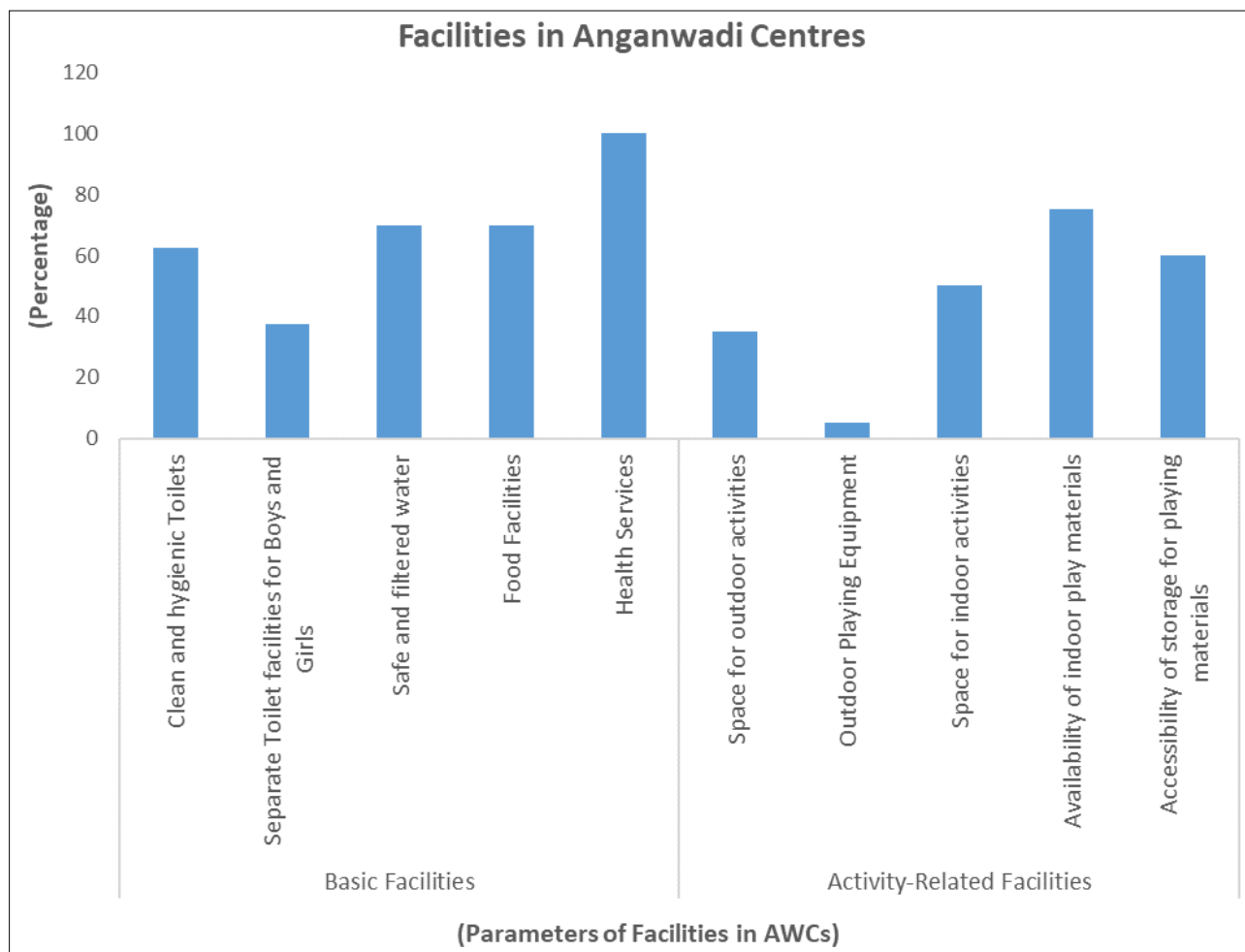
In summary, while the assessment revealed positive aspects such as sturdy infrastructure, appropriately sized classrooms, and a focus on cleanliness, there are notable areas for improvement. The findings indicate a need for better organization and efforts to make the learning spaces more engaging for children. Additionally, the lack of proper ventilation in 40% of the classrooms highlights the importance of addressing this issue to enhance the comfort and health of the children within the AWCs.

The rooms designated for classes were also used for other purposes, such as storing kitchen items or other referral services. Two AWCs operated in rooms of the Panchayat Ghar, where items of the Panchayat Ghar were stored. In one observed instance, the AWC had to be shifted to the primary school whenever there was a program in the Panchayat Ghar. Most AWCs were housed in the same building, and some suffered from poor conditions. Some buildings had excessive

dampness, while others were too small to accommodate more than five children. Lime was peeling off the walls of some centres, and some centres had rodent' burrows. The AWCs also lacked proper air conditioning and had broken windows. There was a pressing need for thorough cleaning and proper

room arrangement. Only a few AWCs were attractive in terms of space and resources.

### Basic Facilities Provided by AWCs and Activity-Related Facilities



The assessment of facilities at Anganwadi centers provides crucial insights into the availability and quality of basic and activity-related amenities. In terms of basic facilities, it was noted that approximately 62.5% of the Anganwadi centers have clean and hygienic toilets. However, only 37.5% of the centers offer separate toilet facilities for boys and girls. Turning to activity-related facilities, it is evident that only 35% of the Anganwadi centers have designated outdoor activity spaces, and a mere 5% provide outdoor playing equipment for children. When it comes to indoor facilities, half of the centers (50%) have allocated space for indoor activities, and 75% of the centers provide indoor play materials. Additionally, 60% of the centers have accessible storage for play materials, revealing that play materials may not be easily accessible in 40% of the centers.

Overall, the provision and adequacy of facilities present a nuanced landscape. While essential facilities such as health services are universally available, there are significant gaps in crucial areas, particularly in the provision of separate toilet facilities and outdoor play equipment. Activity-related facilities also exhibit disparities, especially concerning outdoor spaces and equipment, which are vital for the physical development of children. Addressing these disparities in a focused manner is essential to ensure a comprehensive and conducive environment for the holistic development of children in Anganwadi centres.

Many centers lacked toilet facilities for children and used the toilets of the primary school. Few centers had provisions for outdoor activities, and those operating in primary schools utilized the premises of the primary school for games, although primary school teachers often prohibited this. Only one Anganwadi center, which conducted Bal Vatika classes, had outdoor equipment, which remained unused, with some staff being unfamiliar with its operation. Many Anganwadi centres were run in a single room in which all the other (referral) services equipment was also kept, which hindered children from moving around freely. The centres had indoor play equipment facilities for children, but in many centres it was found that only a few play equipment were in use by the children and only a few new ones were kept in the centres. Due to lack of space in the classrooms, there was no place to keep the play equipment.

### Records & Registers

The provided data offers a comprehensive overview of the records and registers maintained at the AWCs (AWCs), shedding light on the practices and areas for improvement within these centres. The analysis reveals a strong emphasis on certain essential records, such as health and attendance registers, while also highlighting notable gaps in record-keeping, particularly in documenting children's progress and developmental milestones.

Specifically, the data indicates that all 20 AWCs rely exclusively on AADHAR for admission information, utilizing the age of the child as stated on the AADHAR card. While this uniform practice is noteworthy, it also underscores a limited approach to gathering comprehensive admission records. Additionally, while 19 out of 20 AWCs diligently maintain health records for the children, ensuring the active tracking of their health status and medical history, there is a conspicuous absence of records related to the children's progress across all 20 AWCs. This absence suggests a significant area requiring attention and improvement in terms of formal documentation of the developmental milestones, learning achievements, and overall progress of the children.

Despite the identified gaps, the consistent use of health and attendance registers across nearly all AWCs reflects a commendable commitment to maintaining essential records. Moreover, the presence of Parent-Teacher Meeting (PTM) registers in the majority of AWCs underscores an encouraging focus on engaging families in the education and well-being of their children. However, the data also points to the need for a more standardized and comprehensive approach to record-keeping practices across all AWCs, ensuring the documentation of essential aspects such as children's progress and developmental milestones.

### Interpretation of Data

The data indicates a consensus on the essential elements required for a secure and safe environment at Anganwadi Centers (AWCs). First Aid Kits are universally acknowledged. Most of the AWCs are located in a Pollution-free Environment. Additionally, Mostly (75%) AWCs are protected from stray animals and consider the Boundary Walls and Fences. Proximity to Safe Zones, while still relevant, is regarded as less critical by 65% of AWCs. Mwona, Begi, and Murungi (2018) <sup>[12]</sup> find that the schools faced challenges related to children's safety, such as poor school environments, unfenced compounds, lack of adult supervision, and exposure to the risk of accidents. The data highlights that first aid readiness is paramount, and the importance of pollution control, animal protection, and boundary security is also emphasized. A similar study points out that while first aid kits are universally provided, other safety measures like proper fencing and pollution control are often inadequate, particularly in rural and hilly regions (Sinha and Patel, 2021) <sup>[19]</sup>.

At present, the accessibility of AWCs is about 55%, which means roughly half of the centres are accessible. The challenging mountainous terrain and lack of proper roads exacerbate accessibility issues, particularly for children in hilly areas. Addressing these infrastructural challenges is essential to improve accessibility, especially for children with special needs. Nair and Mehta's (2018) <sup>[13]</sup> study on accessibility in early childhood education facilities reveals that some centers have inadequate physical modifications, such as improperly designed ramps and insufficiently wide doorways, which hinder effective access for children with mobility impairments. Jain and Reddy (2020) <sup>[4]</sup> examine accessibility challenges faced by Anganwadi Centers in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand. The rough terrain and poor transportation infrastructure severely impede access to these centers. The difficult geographical conditions make it challenging for children and staff to reach the centers, which negatively impacts the utilization of services.

The data reveals significant shortcomings in the arrangement of rooms across AWCs. Very few (10%) AWCs have

designated staff rooms, and Some (25%) have possessed separate classrooms and kitchens. Additionally, Few (20%) centres include a store room. A notable gap is the absence of multipurpose rooms, which restricts the versatility of spaces for various activities. Many AWCs operate in primary school facilities, sharing spaces and often using single rooms for multiple purposes, including teaching and storing kitchen items. Similarly Ghosh and Roy (2019) <sup>[2]</sup> study focuses on the spatial arrangement of Anganwadi Centers and its impact on their functionality. The research indicates that most centers lack dedicated spaces for different functions, such as staff rooms and multipurpose areas, which limits their operational efficiency. Patel and Verma (2017) <sup>[13]</sup> examine how the physical arrangement of rooms in early childhood centers influences educational outcomes. Their findings highlight that separate rooms for staff and classrooms are beneficial, yet many centers operate with minimal space, which hampers educational activities.

The survey of classroom arrangements shows that Most AWCs (75% and 70%) have electricity and dustbin arrangements in the classroom respectively, and more than half (60%) of AWCs have carpets. However, less than half of AWCs (40%) have furniture, which could affect comfort and learning. All centres have boards, with most (75%) having greenboards. Most centres (70%) have display materials, although none have dedicated storage or integrated ICT tools. The lack of furniture and storage and limited technology integration indicate areas needing improvement to enhance the learning environment. Singh and Sharma (2019) <sup>[18]</sup> assess how classroom infrastructure affects learning outcomes in Anganwadi Centers. Their study finds that inadequate classroom infrastructure, including outdated furniture and insufficient learning materials, detracts from the quality of education. Khan and Gupta (2021) <sup>[7]</sup> assess classroom facilities in Anganwadi Centers, concentrating on furniture, storage, and technology and reveal that AWCs are significantly lacking in modern educational tools and sufficient furniture. Many centres struggle with outdated or insufficient resources, which hampers effective teaching and learning. Singh and Arora (2020) <sup>[17]</sup> analyze the relationship between classroom arrangements and educational effectiveness. They find that while basic amenities like electricity and boards are commonly available, deficiencies in furniture and storage space can significantly affect the learning environment and student comfort.

Mostly AWC classrooms are generally housed in sturdy, permanent concrete buildings, with 85% meeting this criterion. Approximately 50% of the AWCs have appropriate windows and ventilation, while less than 50% of them possess adequate airflow. While most (70%) AWC classrooms are clean, only a few centres are well-organized and deemed attractive. The findings suggest that improved organisation, aesthetics, and ventilation are needed to create a more conducive learning environment. Bhat and Naik (2019) <sup>[1]</sup> investigate the conditions of classrooms in rural Anganwadi Centers and identify several critical issues. Their study reveals significant problems, including dampness, overcrowding, and poor infrastructure, which adversely affect the learning environment. The presence of damp conditions not only creates an uncomfortable atmosphere but also poses health risks to children. Joshi and Prasad (2018) <sup>[5]</sup> investigate how the physical conditions of classrooms, such as ventilation and cleanliness, impact early childhood education. Their study reveals that while many classrooms are well-maintained, issues like inadequate ventilation and poor

organization remain prevalent, affecting student well-being and learning. Kumar and Sharma (2021) <sup>[8]</sup> in their study Effect of Improved Preschool Education through Anganwadi Centers on Cognitive Development and Intelligence Quotient of Children finds that The room size of the AWCs are small. This indicate that the space available for activities and services may be limited. The findings suggest that many AWCs are lacking in these essential areas, which could hinder their ability to support Child Development affectively. Regarding basic facilities, approximately more than half of AWCs provide clean and hygienic toilets, but only some centres (37.5%) have separate facilities for boys and girls. Activity-related facilities are lacking, with only 35% offering designated outdoor activity spaces and only one centre out of 20 (5%) providing outdoor play equipment. Half of the AWCs have space for indoor activities and most (75%) offer indoor play materials, but less than half (40%) lack accessible storage for these indoor activity materials. It is evident that a focused approach to addressing these disparities is essential to ensure a comprehensive and conducive environment for the holistic development of children in Anganwadi centers. "The shortage of educational resources limits the effectiveness of preschool education in Anganwadi centers" (Gupta & Ghosh, 2017) <sup>[3]</sup>. Enhancing these facilities is crucial for supporting children's physical and developmental needs. Mishra and Pandey (2020) <sup>[11]</sup> evaluate the basic amenities in Anganwadi Centers, focusing on essential facilities such as toilets and play areas. "Enhancing the physical infrastructure of Anganwadi centers is imperative to support effective preschool education" (Sharma & Nagar, 2019) <sup>[16]</sup>. A comprehensive study by Rao and Kaul (2018) <sup>[15]</sup> investigated the physical infrastructure of Anganwadi centers in various states of India. The researchers found significant inadequacies, noting that many centers lacked basic amenities such as safe drinking water, toilets, and proper seating arrangements. They emphasized that "improving the physical infrastructure of Anganwadi centers is essential for creating an environment conducive to early childhood education" (Rao & Kaul, 2018) <sup>[15]</sup>.

The management of records at AWCs has both strengths and weaknesses. All centres use AADHAR cards for admission records and most AWCs maintain health records. However, none document children's progress or developmental milestones. This gap highlights a need for improved documentation practices to comprehensively track children's developmental achievements and learning progress. Kumar and Joshi (2023) <sup>[10]</sup> finds the management of records and registers in Anganwadi centers showed significant variation. Many centers maintained comprehensive records, including attendance, health data, and educational progress. However, some centers faced challenges with record-keeping, including outdated or incomplete records and inadequate training for staff. Kumar and Rani (2018) <sup>[9]</sup> examine similar findings of record-keeping practices in early childhood education centers, with a focus on documenting children's progress and health records. Their study finds that while health and attendance records are generally well-maintained, there are significant deficiencies in tracking children's developmental progress. They find that while health and attendance records are well-maintained, progress records are often lacking, hindering comprehensive monitoring of child development. Joshi and Patel (2020) <sup>[6]</sup> review the documentation practices in Anganwadi Centers, focusing on the importance of maintaining thorough records for tracking children's developmental milestones. Their study also highlights that

while attendance and health records are routinely kept, there is a need for improved documentation of educational progress and developmental achievements.

### Recommendations and Future Suggestions

Based on the findings several recommendations and future suggestions can be outlined to enhance the facilities and overall quality of early childhood education in these centres:

1. **Enhancing Safety Measures:** Prioritize the installation of boundary walls and secure fencing around AWCs, particularly in hilly and rural areas. Ensure that all centers are provided with comprehensive first aid kits and that staff are trained in their use. Implement pollution control measures and enhance protection against stray animals.
2. **Improving Accessibility:** Address infrastructural barriers such as rough terrain and lack of proper roads to improve accessibility. Consider the needs of children with special requirements and incorporate necessary modifications like ramps and wider doorways.
3. **Optimize Room Arrangements:** Develop designated staff rooms, separate classrooms, and multipurpose spaces to enhance functionality and efficiency. Minimize the use of single rooms for multiple purposes and improve spatial arrangements to support various activities.
4. **Upgrade Classroom Facilities:** Provide necessary furniture and storage solutions in classrooms. Integrate modern educational tools and ensure that display materials are appropriate for early childhood education. Address issues with broken dustbins and maintain cleanliness and organization.
5. **Enhance Basic and Activity-Related Facilities:** Ensure all centers have clean, hygienic toilet facilities with separate provisions for boys and girls. Develop designated outdoor activity spaces and provide suitable play equipment. Improve storage for indoor activity materials and ensure these resources are actively used.
6. **Strengthen Record-Keeping Practices:** Establish comprehensive documentation practices to track children's developmental milestones and progress. Regularly update records and ensure that they are complete and accurate.

Future research should explore the effectiveness of implemented improvements and assess their impact on child development and educational outcomes. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into the evolving needs and challenges faced by AWCs in various geographical settings.

### Conclusion

The study on Anganwadi Centers in Chamba Block reveals critical areas for improvement in early childhood education facilities. Findings indicate that while some aspects, like safety and basic amenities, are being addressed, significant gaps remain, particularly in accessibility, room arrangements, and the provision of educational resources. Enhancing safety measures, optimizing classroom setups, and upgrading facilities are essential to create a more supportive environment for early childhood development. Improved record-keeping practices will also contribute to better tracking of children's progress. Addressing these issues will help ensure that Anganwadi Centers are better equipped to support the holistic development of children, particularly in

challenging geographical areas.

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