



Strengthening and improving the quality of community based events and capacity building of frontline workers to conduct the events for increasing awareness amongst mothers

Dr Vijayata Sengar¹ and Ms Monika Malviya²

¹Assistant Professor (CES), ²Research student

Department of Foods and Nutrition, Faculty of Family and Community Sciences, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, Gujarat, India

Email – ¹vijayata.sengar-fn@msubaroda.ac.in, ²mmalviya@gmail.com

Abstract

Introduction

Community based events (CBE) provide an opportunity of face-to-face interaction between the beneficiaries, community representatives and facilitators. Thus, present study was planned with the broad objective of strengthening and improving the quality of CBEs and capacity building of frontline workers to conduct the events for increasing awareness amongst mothers and care givers of children (<5 years) regarding under nutrition.

Methods

All the children (<5y) registered in 5 randomly selected anganwadis were enrolled and anthropometric data was obtained. Mothers were interviewed about socio economic status, knowledge, attitudes and practices on IYCF practices, under nutrition, management of diarrheal episodes, growth monitoring and community-based events.

Results

High prevalence of stunting (40%), underweight (44%) and wasting (33%) was observed. Majority of the mothers reported of no counselling being given to them regarding undernutrition, sanitation, hygiene etc.

Tools were developed for conducting CBEs and frontline functionaries were trained for the same, using props in an interactive way for organizing Annaprashan Diwas, Mamta Diwas, WASH day and Suposhan Diwas. Activities were planned using the stipulated budget as mentioned in the CBE guidelines, 2018 to ensure sustainability.

Each activity was conducted thrice in each anganwadi. After completion of all the activities results showed that activities helped in improving the knowledge levels and attitude of mothers towards undernutrition and its management. Findings also showed that interactive CBEs were more popular amongst mothers.

Conclusion

Thus, to conclude CBE can be used as a platform for disseminating essential messages and to counsel mothers to reduce under nutrition amongst children.

Key Words: Undernutrition, Community-based events, Village Health, sanitation and nutrition days (VHSND), Mamta Diwas, Annaprashan, WASH day.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Undernutrition distresses many aspects of children's development such as retarding physical and mental progression. undernutrition corroborates itself in separate ways in children such as wasting or stunting or underweight (1). Strategy focused on nutrition education and counselling enhanced the knowledge and attitude towards daily practices that affects child's nutritional status (2). In order to address the immediate and underlying causes of undernutrition as mentioned by UNICEF (2013) one of the key strategies identified under Poshan Abhiyaan is behaviour change communication (BCC). BCC has proven effective in several health areas. Among the powerful tools employed by BCC programmes are



mass media, community-level activities, interpersonal communication, and information and communication technologies. A cross cutting strategy as mentioned in NNM is Community based events' for creating enabling environments for the functionaries in order to increase awareness amongst the beneficiaries (CBE guidelines, 2018). As facilitators of development, it is the responsibility of frontline workers of ICDS and Health to provide the appropriate environment for this to happen. Platform or the routes through which communities participate is also important for the outcome. The community-based events provide opportunities to learn together in smaller groups. The methodology used in community participation exercises is equally important and targets the affective domain of learning for the communities. A way to get the community to persuade young mothers to bring their children to the anganwadis regularly and attend the sessions as a part of their routine and to get advice and care of themselves and their child as appropriate.

Thus, the present study was planned with the broad objective of **'Strengthening and improving the quality of community based events and capacity building of frontline workers to conduct the events for increasing awareness amongst mothers'**

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Western zone was randomly selected under which one of urban health centre (UHC) was chosen randomly. Five anganwadis were selected under the UHC. All the 16 frontline functionaries and mothers of 366 children below 5 years of age were enrolled for the study. Mothers were interviewed about socio economic status, knowledge, attitudes and practices on IYCF practices, under nutrition, management of diarrheal episodes, growth monitoring and community-based events namely Annaprashan Diwas, Mamta Diwas, WASH day and Suposhan samvad.

After in-depth observations of the understanding of beneficiaries, activities and props were developed keeping illiterate and literate women in mind. Different set of props were developed for different anganwadis to strengthen the CBEs and thus create an enabling environment for FLWs to deliver messages effectively. All activities were planned keeping in mind the budget mentioned under the guidelines for each activity in order to ensure sustainability of the activities (3).

Following activities were planned:

Annaprashan Diwas: To create awareness amongst mothers regarding initiation of breastfeeding and complementary feeding.

First activity was to show a picture of an undernourished and a well-nourished baby and talk to the mothers regarding what could be the possible reason.

Second activity conducted was to identify the grain or food material. Easily and indigenously available grain sachets were kept in the front of beneficiaries and functionaries and they were asked to identify it along with the benefits. Once they were able to identify then they were asked to make recipes using these grains and next week the subject who made most nutritious and tastiest recipe among all was awarded with her picture and details of the recipe displayed on anganwadi board for next 1 week.

Third activity was named as 'What picture depicts?' To further enhance the knowledge of mothers regarding complementary feeding and to keep the do's and don'ts in mind. A series of pictures showing good and bad practices regarding complementary feeding and their consequences were shown to mothers. Then, they were asked to share what they understood after seeing all those pictures and arrange it accordingly that creates a chain of messages regarding do's and don'ts and create a story out of it. If the beneficiaries were not able to do so, researcher helped them in creating the correct sequence and make them repeat it one after the other. So that they can memorize the differences.

Mamta Diwas: To improve mother's understanding regarding undernutrition, appropriate weight of the child and importance of regular growth monitoring.

First activity dealt with healthy baby prize. After analysing the anthropometric measurements, the child found healthy as per height, weight was awarded as healthy baby prize. As a prize the name of baby along with his mother's name and photo was displayed on the anganwadi board till the time next event happens.

Second activity was related to understanding undernutrition in children. Since, there were mixed groups of women who were literate and illiterate thus, this activity was again picture based. Women were divided in the groups of two and both the groups were given pictures related to undernutrition.

They were asked to arrange pictures in sets based on the following:

Undernutrition, Causes and consequences

Combating undernutrition?

The group who arranged it correctly were declared winners and awarded for the same.

WASH ceremony: To teach the beneficiaries regarding WASH practices and its importance.



First activity was to teach the mothers steps of hand washing. All the women were gathered in anganwadi and they were divided in the group of 5 to 10. They were taught about steps of handwashing. Pamphlets demonstrating the steps of handwashing were given to subjects.

Props were developed for various steps and the women were asked to arrange these steps in correct order. The woman who did correctly and in least time was declared the winner.

The second activity was story telling. All the beneficiaries were narrated story of a women named Sejalben (fictional character) whose child got sick because of faulty WASH practices. Later on she finds out the causes of diarrhoea and frequent illness of her child with the help of AWW and ANM of her area and during this process she learns that her carelessness in not washing hands before cooking meal and feeding her child, let her child play with mud and putting anything inside his mouth led to frequent diarrhoeal infections that caused Pinakin (her son) lose weight and strength and she also learns that not only treatment of diarrhoea through diet and medicines is necessary but it is also important to give Zinc tablets to stop the recurrence of diarrhoea.

A lot of women were able to relate to this story and not only learnt the correct handwashing steps but also understood the importance of WASH techniques to maintain good hygiene practices.

Suposhan Diwas: To educate the family members about relevance of maternal and child nutrition

This activity was planned to educate the family members who are also caregiver to a child after mother as the care of the child is highly affected by the opinions of the family members.

Suposhan Diwas was compilation of all the suitable activities done in other three events.

Also, family members were asked to utilise the seeds and develop kitchen garden in the available space to grow the vegetables and try to eat fresh foods as much as possible

3. RESULT:

According to NNM guidelines, 4 CBEs are to be conducted at every Anganwadi per month to counsel women and family members regarding IYCF practices, under nutrition, management of diarrheal episodes and growth monitoring. Data on knowledge, attitudes and practices of mothers showed that nearly 40% of the mothers used to treat water before drinking while the rest did not.

Only 10% of the mothers believed that food should be kept safely and around 45% people were having the food which was exposed to air and microbes.

Almost 70% of the mothers were counselled regarding initiation of breastfeeding. Two third of the mothers were counselled regarding positioning while breastfeeding and majority were counselled by the doctors. Majority (93%) of the women were aware that mother's milk should be the first feed that should be given to child after birth. Around 70% of the women gave initial breastfeed to their babies just after birth that shows the high awareness level among mothers. Nearly 70% women were aware that solid and liquid foods are required for the growth of the child but they were not sure about the timing while 13.4% women were aware of it. On further enquiring about practices, nearly 60% of the women said that they started feeding complementary foods to their child after completion of 6 months.

Nearly 80% of the women had poor knowledge regarding undernutrition and its identification parameters, causes and consequences that itself depicts the lack of knowledge among mothers.

Nearly 73.5% women were not counselled about the weight of the child. Also 96.4% respondents did not knew about the growth belt and the belt in which their child lies in.

It was also seen that 45.4% children were fully immunized and 21% children were partially immunized because either they were below 9 months of age or they missed the immunization date of the child.

Nearly 15% of the women considered home remedies as a primary treatment to diarrhoea which can turn out to be fatal sometimes. Only 0.8% of the women were aware that ORS should be given to treat diarrhoea along with Zinc to prevent the recurrence of diarrhoea.

However, 70.2% mothers said that poor hygiene and sanitation causes undernourishment in children. Majority of the respondents also said that they were not counselled about hygiene and sanitation.

Majority of the women said that they didn't know about CBEs only 0.5% of the women were able to answer correctly about community-based events. Only 6.0% mothers heard about AnnaprashanDiwas and out of which only 0.3% said that they were counselled regarding initiation of complementary feeding. Most of the mothers 97.3% were not aware about WASH day. In context with Mamta Diwas 0.3% women were counselled regarding breastfeeding, immunization, complications in pregnancy, dietary diversity in meal and to keep dietary diversity in meal, 0.8% were counselled regarding other aspects and 6.8% did not attended the event and 36.6% women were completely unaware of the event itself.



The activities were implemented at the anganwadis for three months (Table 1) and feedback from the attendees were obtained. Feedback of the mothers are shown in Figure 1-4.

Table 1: Activities for strengthening CBEs

S.no.	Month	CBE event	Attended by
1	FIRST	Annaprashan Diwas	38.2(21)
2		Mamta Diwas	41.8
3		WASH Day	47.3
4		Suposhan Diwas	12.7
5	SECOND	Annaprashan Diwas	36.4
6		Mamta Diwas	43.6
7		WASH Day	64.9
8		Suposhan Diwas	32.7
9	THIRD	Annaprashan Diwas	43.6
10		Mamta Diwas	60
11		WASH Day	54.5
12		Suposhan Diwas	83.6

Figure 1: Feedback for Annaprashan Diwas

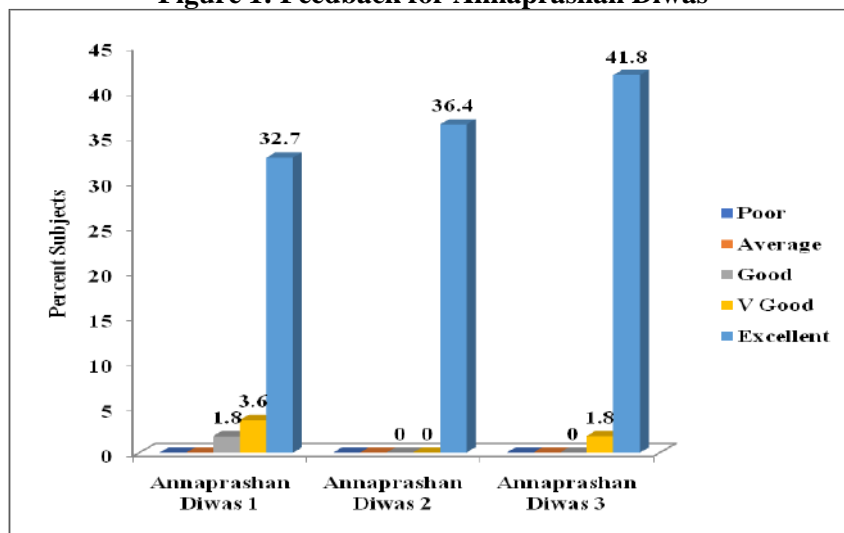


Figure 2: Feedback for Mamta Diwas

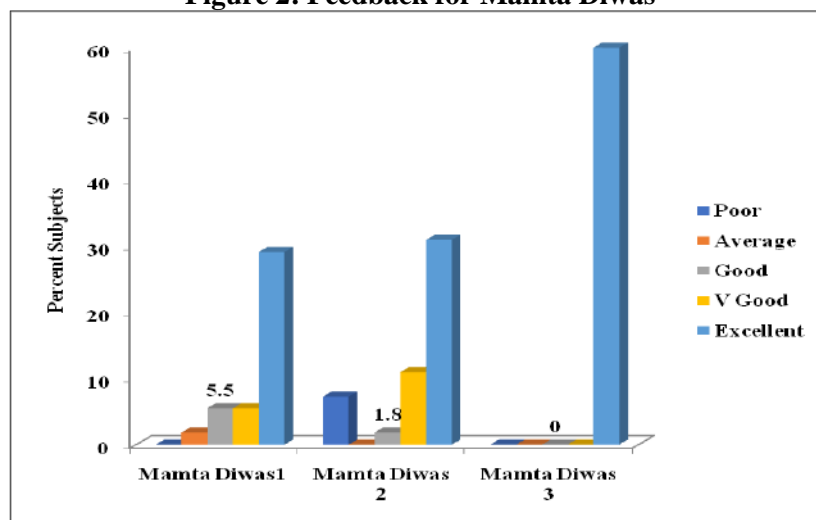




Figure 3: Feedback for WASH Day

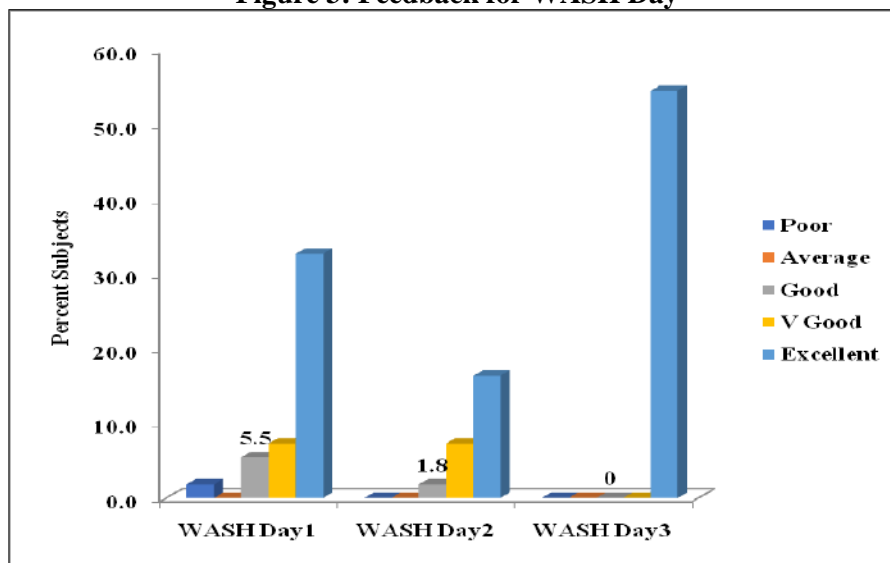
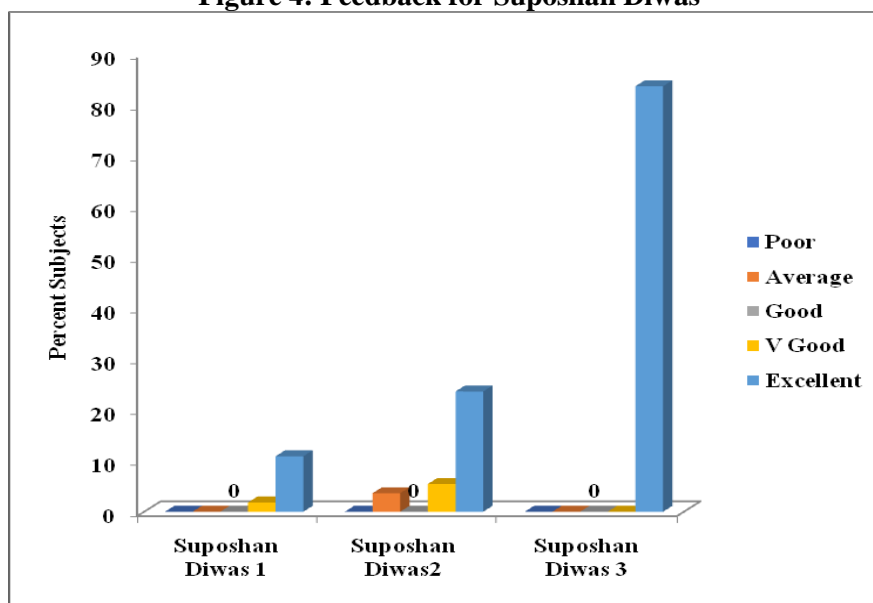


Figure 4: Feedback for Suposhan Diwas



Impact of the activities was assessed post intervention. The knowledge levels regarding exclusive breastfeeding increased from 67.3% to 96% as beneficiaries were counselled about the feeding practices in each session of the activities of community-based events.

About 61.8% women were able to define colostrum pre intervention which increased to 94.5% post intervention.

Nearly, 29.1% of the mothers in pre intervention phase said that they were counselled regarding breastfeeding and post intervention it increased to 89.1% due to the CBE's being conducted.

Only 7.3% women were aware about term under nutrition in pre intervention phase that increased to 85% after the intervention.

100% women responded that they wash their hands but when asked in detail 94.5% women were washing their hands properly and 5.55 women were not washing their hands properly as per the proper hand washing steps.

Almost 89.1% women after the intervention said that combination of ORS and Zinc works well to cure diarrhoea and prevent its recurrence. Earlier only 0.8% was able to answer correctly when asked about treatment and its prevention from recurrence.

No mother was aware about the term community-based events before the intervention while 98.2% women attended at least one of the CBE's in 3 months of intervention.



Figure 5: Changes in Knowledge levels – Post Intervention (N=366)

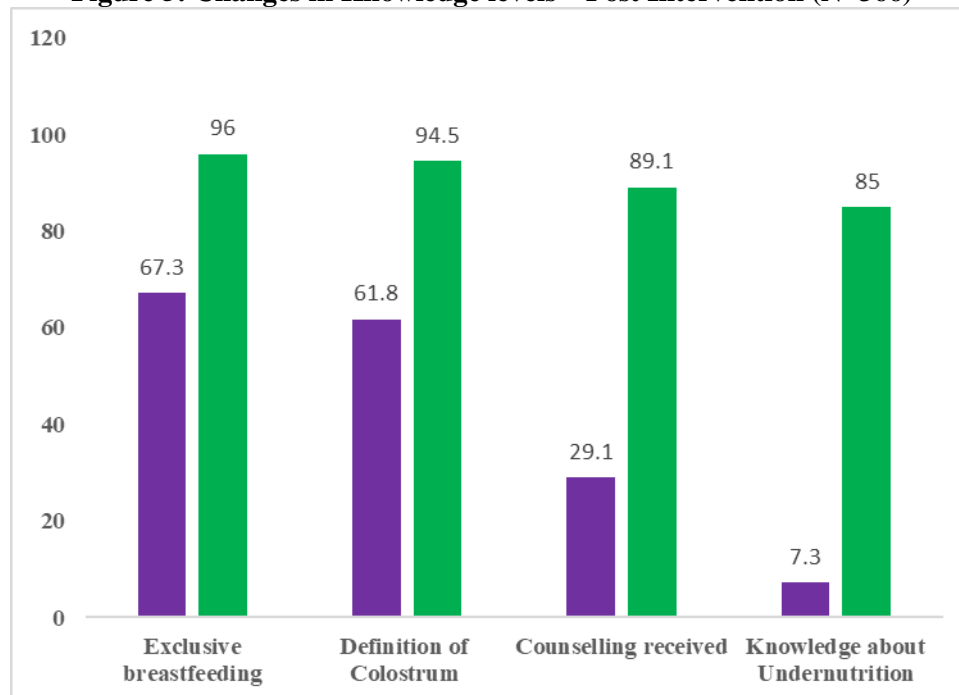
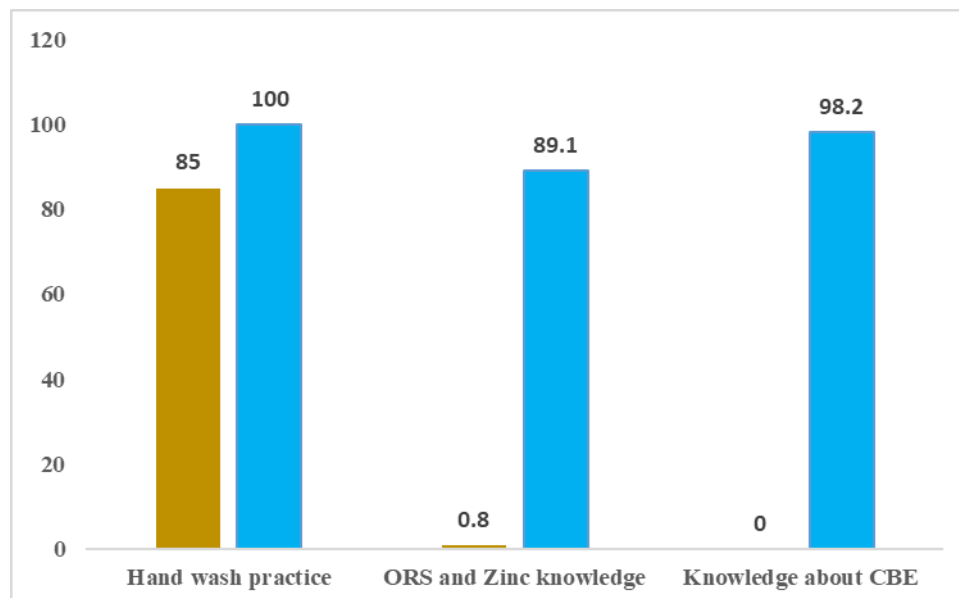


Figure 6: Changes in Knowledge/ practice levels – Post Intervention (N=366)



4. CONCLUSION:

CBEs provide an opportunity of face-to-face interaction between the beneficiaries, community representatives and facilitators. It further provides a forum wherein community support can be mobilised to motivate and enable the mothers to practice the behaviours being recommended for reducing undernutrition amongst children under 5 years of age. The present study also showed that with slight help the functionaries can start organizing these events by themselves. Thus, we can expect these activities to be sustainable in long run even in the absence of the researcher. Another reason for this is that the activities were planned in the stipulated budget of INR 250, which will be provided for conducting these CBEs under National Nutrition Mission.

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