

Mainstreaming Crèches to Reduce Malnutrition in Odisha

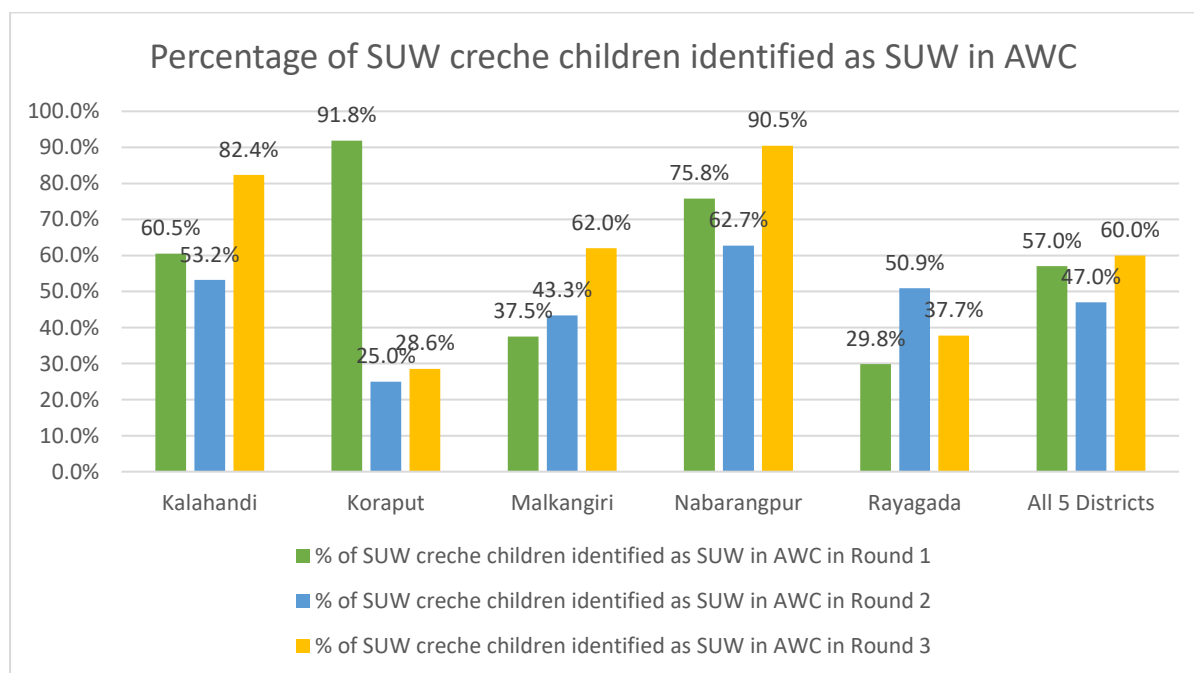
A collaborative initiative between PHRS and APPI, supported by Government of Odisha

Tracking of Take-Home Ration (Red Sattu) Provision of Severely Underweight Children

Background

Underreporting of severely underweight (SUW) children was identified as a problem during a field visit to Nabarangpur district in January 2019. An exercise was undertaken to understand the situation of identification of SUW children and provision of red sattu in all five districts where the programme “Mainstreaming Crèches to Reduce Malnutrition in Odisha” has been running. This was conducted in March-April 2019 (Round 1) with data from March. The findings were alarming and were discussed with the ICDS functionaries. A follow-up exercise was conducted in July-August 2019 with data from June 2019 (Round 2). Another round of follow-up exercise was done in July 2020 (Round 3). The findings from the three rounds have been compared and presented below.

Identification of SUW children



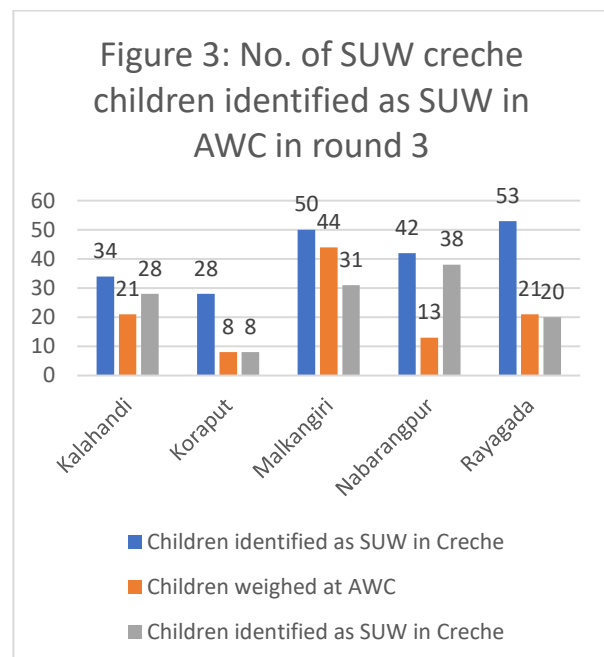
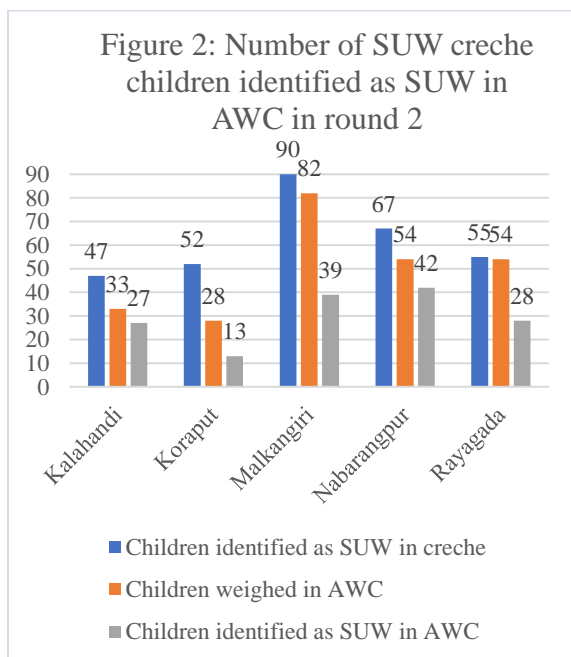
Diff in Kalahandi round 2 and all districts round 2 nos when compared to old document

- There was a large discrepancy between the number of children identified as SUW in creche and those identified as SUW at the Anganwadi Centre (AWC). Only 60.5% of SUW children were

identified at AWC. This rate of identification worsened overall between round 1 and round 2 (57.4% to 47.9%). But the rate has raised between round 2 and round 3 (47% to 60%) Although it is still far from ideal.

- In Kalahandi, only 60.5%, 53.2% and 82.4% of those children who were identified as SUW at the creches were identified as SUW at the AWCs during round 1, 2 and 3, respectively.
- In Koraput, about 91.8% of those children who were identified as SUW at the creches were identified as SUW at the AWCs during round 1. However, during round 2, only one-fourth (25%) has been identified at the AWCs. In round 3 there has been a slight improvement from 25% to 28.6%.
- In Malkangiri, only 37.5%, 43.3% and 62% of those children who were identified as SUW at the creches were identified as SUW at the AWCs during round 1, 2 and 3, respectively.
- In Nabarangpur, a slight deterioration was seen with respect to the number of children who were identified as SUW by AWCs in comparison to at the creches, from 75.8% in round 1 to 62.7% in round 2. But there has been a good improvement in the 3rd round with 90.5%.
- Rayagada district saw an improvement between rounds 1 and 2. The rate of identification went up from 29.8% to 51%. But it again wet down in round 3 from 51% to 37.7%.

Weighing of SUW children in AWC

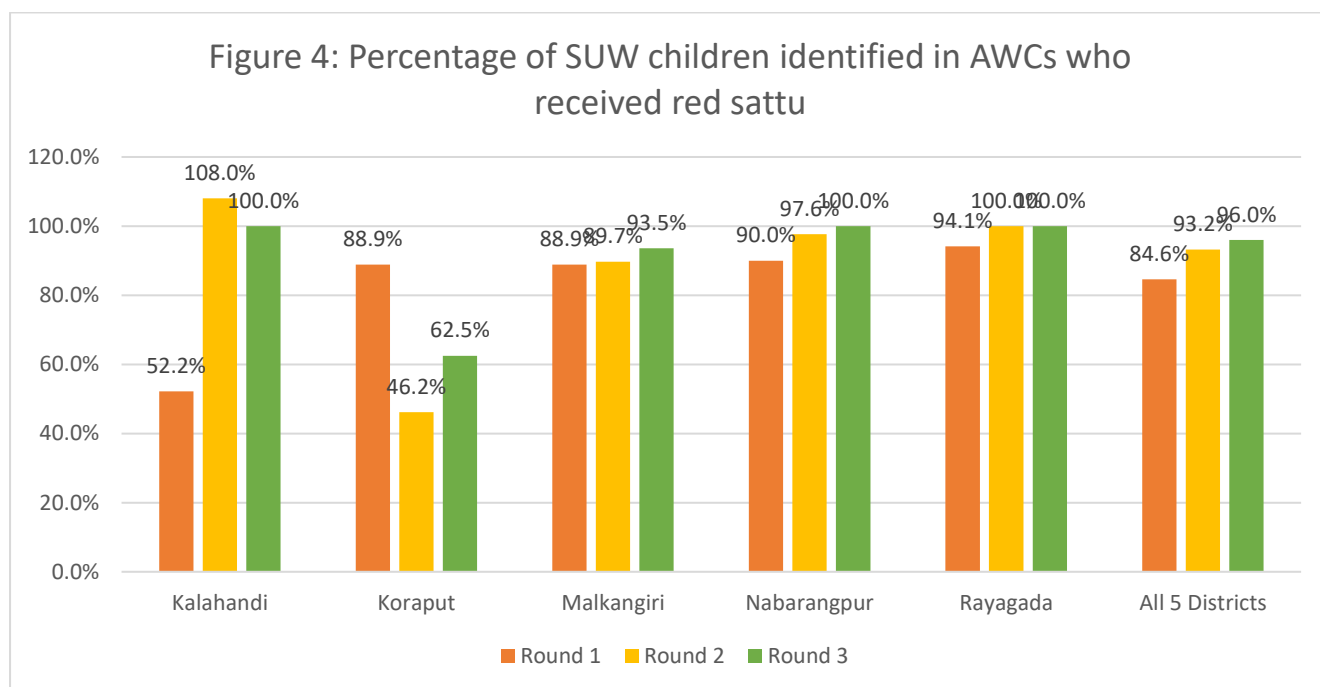


- In round 2 and 3, we specifically attempted to track the number of children identified as SUW in creches who were weighed in the AWCs.
- The results show that in round 2 overall around 80.7% of the children had been weighed (251 out of 311). Nevertheless, about 20% children, that is one out of five children, was not weighed

in the AWCs whereas in round 3 the situation got worsened and only 51.6% of the children were weighed (107 out of 207).

- The fact that children are not being weighed, and consequently are not identified as SUW is of concern to us because these unidentified children are not getting the provisions they should otherwise be getting. This sharp decline between round 2 and 3 can be seen in relation to the nation-wide lockdown and closure of AWCs pertaining to the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - 70.2% SUW creche children (32 out of 47) were weighed at the AWC in Kalahandi in round 2 and 61.7% (21 out of 34) in round 3.
 - In Koraput, 53.8% (28 out of 52) SUW creche children were weighed at the AWC in round 2 which further declined to 28.5% (8 out of 28) in round 3.
 - The majority of the 91% SUW creche children (82 out of 90), were weighed at the AWC in Malkangiri in round 2 while it went down to 88% (44 out of 50) in round 3.
 - In Nabarangpur, 80.6% SUW creche children (54 out of 67) had been weighed in the AWCs in round 2 which declined drastically to 31% in round 3 (13 out of 42)
 - Almost 100% of the SUW creche children (54 out of 55), had been weighed in the AWCs in Rayagada in round 2 whereas it went down to 39.6% in round 3 (21 out of 53)

Provision of red sattu for SUW children



Slight error in all district bar in round 2 it was 92% in old document but its 93 in mine

- The overall percentage of SUW children receiving red sattu has increased from 84.6% in round 1 to 91.9% in round 2 and 96% in round 3.
- In four out of five districts, close to 90% or more children identified as SUW in the AWC received their due entitlement.
 - In Kalahandi, during round 1, only 52.2% of the children who had been identified as SUW by the AWC received the red sattu. However, during round 2 and 3, 100% of the

identified children received it. (In round 2, it was 108% as 25 children were identified as SUW at AWC while 27 received red sattu)

- Koraput showed a sharp decline in the provision of red sattu for SUW children identified at AWCs between the two rounds, from 88.9% to 46.2% which again went up in round 3 to 63%
- In Malkangiri, the percentage of SUW children receiving red sattu increased marginally from 88.9% to 89.7% between round 1 and 2. But there has been a decent increase in round 3 to 94%
- About 90% of the SUW children identified by AWCs in Nabarangpur received red sattu during round 1, which had further increased to 98% in round 2 and a total 100% in round 3
- In Rayagada, the percentage of SUW children identified at AWCs who received the red sattu increased from 94.1% to 100% during round 1 and 2, respectively.

Major issues identified and action points (from round 2)

1. **Children not being weighed:** It is imperative that all eligible children are weighed at the AWCs. This requires that the AWC be appropriately equipped and functioning, as well as that all community members know of the date when the weighing is taking place. Mothers are also more likely to get their children to be weighed if they know that the expected entitlements will be provided.
2. **Low rates of identification in AWC:** The reason for this has to be explored further, especially in Koraput, Rayagada and Malkangiri where the rates are lowest. It could be because the weighing in crèches and AWCs happened on different days. Another reason could be that SUW children in creche are identified by Z-scores, while in AWC they are identified by their position in the growth chart. Our experience indicates that growth chart is not an exact representation of Z-score. In some cases, we have found that borderline Z scores of -3 are often plotted above the reference line. Formal communications must be made with the CDPO/DSWO describing the possible reasons. It is also necessary to determine whether there it is a problem of identification or underreporting. Furthermore, track the SUW children through growth chart as well which will help us understand if the issue is of a method of identification (growth chart versus Z-score) or any other problem.
3. **Unavailability of red sattu:** In Koraput, efforts need to be made to find out the exact reason for unavailability of red sattu. Talk to the CDPO, ICDS Supervisor and DSWO regarding the findings and make formal requests to increase the number of packets available at AWCs. Mobilize communities to participate in community-based monitoring and social audits to identify the gaps in the system and to ensure that community members are able to access their rights and entitlements. Jan sunwais can also be conducted using the findings of the CBM and social audit to highlight the problems. These may help solve the supply-side issues.