

CHAPTER – III
ADEQUACY OF INFRASTRUCTURE
FACILITIES

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Brief Snapshot

This Chapter examines the suitability of Anganwadi Centre (AWC) buildings and the availability of essential infrastructure within them, as infrastructure plays a crucial role in providing services under the ICDS Scheme. The area of AWC buildings, their maintenance, the presence of basic amenities such as drinking water, toilets and ramps for children with disabilities as well as equipment like weighing scales, utensils, water purifiers and medicine kits are all important determinants of service quality under the Scheme.

Out of the 53,029 AWCs in the State, 3,381 AWCs were functioning in temporary structures such as kutcha/semi-pucca, while 30 AWCs were situated in open spaces. Additionally, 8,452 AWCs had dilapidated buildings indicating that the WCD Department is yet to ensure safe and secure pukka AWC buildings for service delivery under the Scheme to the beneficiary children and women of the State. In the State, 1,299 AWCs (2.45 per cent) had no toilets and 1,032 AWCs (1.95 per cent) lacked drinking water facilities.

Furthermore, none of the AWCs in the State, including the 1,759 AWCs built between 2015 and 2023, met the requirement of a covered area of 600 square feet (for 30 children) specified by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, GoI in March 2011. Overcrowding of children in AWC premises was evident with 22,550 AWCs having more than 30 enrolled children (3y-6y) but with less than the prescribed area.

Only 220 AWCs (27.26 per cent) had ramps with railings constructed to ensure easy access for children with disabilities, compared to the target of 807 AWCs in 2019-20.

During the visits of the 99 selected AWCs, Audit noticed a shortage of cooking and serving utensils, storage facilities for Take Home Ration (THR) packets, growth measurement devices and medicine kits. Audit also observed that 6,709 units of water purifiers costing ₹3.82 crore were lying idle in AWCs due to a lack of requisite infrastructure i.e. water and electricity connections.

In most of the 99 physically visited AWCs, inadequate storage facilities (wooden racks, containers, pest control measures) resulted in bags/packets of THR being contaminated by rodents in 11 AWCs. Non-adherence to FIFO (First-in-First-out) method in distribution of THR and utilisation of food grains for preparing HCM resulted in 25 kg of expired fortified flour and 40 kg of contaminated rice in four of the 99 visited AWCs.

3.1 Physical infrastructure at Anganwadi Centres (AWCs)

AWCs are the focal points for delivery of various services under the ICDS. The GoI instructed (March 2011) that each AWC must have a separate sitting room for children and women, a kitchen, a storeroom for food items, child friendly toilets, drinking water facility and space for playing.

3.1.1 Physical condition of AWC buildings and adequacy of infrastructure

(i) Physical Condition of AWC Buildings:

An AWC requires adequate area and a building in good condition so that quality services can be delivered to the ICDS beneficiaries.

Scrutiny of the data relating to infrastructure of AWCs in the State revealed that of the 53,029 AWCs in the State (as of March 2023), 3,381 AWCs (6.38 *per cent*) were functioning in temporary structures (kutchha/semi pucca). In the 10 selected DPOs, 1,076 (7.66 *per cent*) of the 14,045 AWCs were functioning in temporary structures. Similarly, of the 99 selected AWCs visited by Audit, four AWCs (four *per cent*) were functioning in temporary structures. Thus, the Department is yet to ensure that AWCs of the State operate in secure and well-constructed buildings.

Further, as per the information furnished by the WCD Department, several AWCs in the State and selected districts were functioning in dilapidated buildings as shown in **Table 3.1** below:

Table 3.1: AWCs functioning in dilapidated buildings in the State and selected Districts

	Number of functional AWCs (as of March 2023)	AWCs with their own buildings		AWCs without their own buildings	
		Number of AWCs	In dilapidated condition	Number of AWCs	In dilapidated condition
In the State	53,029	41,344	8,452	11,685	Data not available with the Department
In the 10 selected DPOs	14,045	10,382	1,932	3,663	

(Source: As per the information furnished by the Department and data collected during the joint physical visits of selected AWCs)

Data in **Table 3.1** reveal that of the 41,344 AWCs having their own buildings in the State, buildings of 8,452 AWCs (20.44 *per cent*) were in dilapidated state. Similarly, in the 10 selected DPOs, buildings of 1,932 AWCs (18.61 *per cent*) out of 10,382 AWCs having their own buildings were in dilapidated condition.

Moreover, Department planned to reconstruct only 858 of these dilapidated AWCs during 2015-23, of which 408 AWCs (47.55 *per cent*) were constructed. In 2019-20 and 2020-21, no dilapidated AWCs were planned to be reconstructed due to budgetary constraints. The Department did not maintain the data of dilapidated buildings for the AWCs functioning in the rented/other buildings.

Further, in the 99 selected AWCs visited by Audit, six³⁸ AWCs were functioning in damaged/dilapidated buildings as shown in **Picture 3.1** to **Picture 3.4**.



Picture 3.1: AWC running in AWW's house in the Varandah AWC: Parnera-11, Urvinagar, CDPO: Valsad-3, (17-09-2024)



Picture 3.2: AWC functioning in a kutchha house AWC: Bhadbhunja 3, Uchchhal, Tapi (20-09-2024)



Picture 3.3: AWC with a dilapidated thatch roof (made of plant material) AWC: Parvadi 3, Godahra, Godhara (11-09-2024)



Picture 3.4: Dilapidated building of an AWC AWC: Barwala, Jasdan, Rajkot (Rural) (19-09-2024)

The State Government accepted the audit observation and stated (October 2024) that all kutchha and dilapidated AWC buildings would be constructed/renovated on priority basis.

(ii) Adequacy of basic amenities in AWCs

Audit observed that as of March 2023, 1,299 AWCs (2.45 per cent) in the State did not have toilets and 1,032 AWCs (1.95 per cent) did not have drinking water facilities. 30 AWCs in the State were functioning in open spaces, of which 19 were in Valsad, a tribal district, as shown in **Picture 3.5** and **Picture 3.6** below:

³⁸ Asalgam-1 and Vekariya-2 (Viramgam, Ahmedabad Rural), Sector-14 (Gandhinagar-1, Gandhinagar), Pekhed Chikhlapada Faliya (Dharampur-3, Valsad), Navagam Raveri Road (Gogamba-1, Godhara), Barwala (Jasdan, Rajkot Rural)



Picture 3.5: AWC functioning in open space
AWC: Pardi Brahmdev Dungri, Block- Pardi, Valsad (19-09-2024)



Picture 3.6: AWC functioning in open space
AWC: Chanod, Amarnagar 5, Vapi-1, Valsad (05-05-2022)

Similarly, it was also observed that in the 10 selected DPOs, 313 AWCs (2.23 *per cent*) did not have toilets and 264 AWCs (1.88 *per cent*) did not have drinking water facilities.

The status of facilities in the 99 selected AWCs is detailed in **Table 3.2** below:

Table 3.2: Deficiencies with respect to essential infrastructure facilities in the 99 selected AWCs

Sl. No.	Infrastructure component	Number of AWCs physically visited	Number of AWCs not fulfilling the required norms for the infrastructure component
1.	Playground	99 AWCs	55
2.	Boundary wall		42
3.	Separate kitchen		07
4.	Electricity connection		09
5.	Drinking water facility		23
6.	Toilet		07

(Source: As per the data collected during the joint physical visits of 99 selected AWCs)

Further, in 92 AWCs where toilets were available, seven AWCs (7.61 *per cent*) did not have running water connections in toilets whereas the toilets in five AWCs (5.43 *per cent*) were in damaged/choked condition.

The State Government accepted the observation and stated (October 2024) that sanitation and drinking water facility would be ensured in all AWCs. It was also stated that AWCs running in open spaces would be shifted to schools/community halls or rented premises and would be facilitated with required infrastructure.

Recommendation 5: Steps may be taken to shift the AWCs running in open spaces to community buildings/rented premises. An assessment with respect to basic infrastructure facilities in the AWCs may be carried out and corrective actions may be taken in case of deficiencies.

3.1.2 Construction of Anganwadi Building in area less than prescribed

As per the notification (March 2011) of the MoWCD, GoI, it was emphasised that an AWC should have covered an area of not less than 600 square feet with a suggestion of having at least one multipurpose room of size 517 square feet to cater to 30 children for multipurpose activities.

As per the information furnished by the Department, no AWC in the State had covered an area of 600 square feet. Audit observed that the aforementioned norms for minimum covered area in an AWC were not being adhered to by the WCD Department even for the 1,759 AWCs constructed during the period 2015-2023, *i.e.*, after the notification (March 2011). Instead, a type design with a covered area of 510.74 square feet with one room of 220 square feet, as per the earlier notification (2010), was being followed for the construction of new AWCs.

Further, the data furnished by the Department revealed that of the 53,029 AWCs in the State, 22,550 AWCs (42.52 *per cent*) had more than 30 enrolled children (3y-6y), with their enrollments ranging between 31 and 432. Similarly, during joint physical visit of 99 selected AWCs, Audit observed that 58 AWCs were found to be serving a population in excess of the population norms, ranging between 812 and 2,025 people. However, of these 58 AWCs, 29 AWCs had more than 30 enrolled children (3y-6y), with their enrollments ranging between 31 and 71. More than 30 children (3y-6y) attending the AWCs with built-in area less than prescribed norms indicates overcrowding. This underscores the need for establishing more number of AWCs in the State, as highlighted in **Paragraph 2.1; Chapter II.**

The State Government accepted the audit observation and stated (October 2024) that type design and area of AWCs would be followed during the construction of new AWCs as per the GoI norms.

3.1.3 Non-availability of ramps with railings in AWCs for easy accessibility for the children with disabilities

The ICDS Mission Guidelines, 2012 state that the Scheme would strive to remove architectural barriers in AWCs by constructing ramps to ensure easy accessibility to children with special needs/disabilities. Subsequently, the GoG fixed (August 2019) an amount of ₹24,800 per AWC for the construction of ramps with railings in the AWCs of the State.

In 2019-20, the WCD Department released grants of ₹200.13 lakh to 11 districts³⁹ for the construction of ramps with railings at 807 AWCs, of which only 220 AWCs (27.26 *per cent*) had constructed ramp facilities (as of September 2024). In six⁴⁰ of these 11 districts, no ramps were constructed at any of the AWCs.

³⁹ Anand, Aravali, Botad, Chhota Udaipur, Gir Somnath, Junagadh, Kutch, Mahisagar, Surat, Tapi and Vadodara.

⁴⁰ Anand, Botad, Gir Somnath, Junagadh, Kutch and Vadodara.

Thus, the non-construction of ramps with railings despite the availability of funds defeated the scheme’s objective of providing the children with special needs with barrier free access to the AWCs.

Further, during physical visits of 99 AWCs, Audit found that ramps (without railing) were available at only 13 AWCs (13 *per cent*), while at only two of the AWC, ramps with railing had been constructed.

The State Government stated (October 2024) that an assessment of all AWC buildings would be carried out and ramp with railings would be constructed.

3.1.4 Other facilities and amenities at AWCs

The guidelines of the ICDS Mission Framework and the National Nutrition Mission provide for availability of various amenities, *viz.* appropriate kitchen equipment and utensils for cooking and serving food to beneficiaries, baby and adult weighing scales, infantometers⁴¹ and stadiometers⁴² for the measurement of height of children and women, medicine kits and safe drinking water facility. The Operational Guidelines for food safety and hygiene in the ICDS provide for appropriate pest control measures and availability of pallets/wooden racks to protect THR bags from rodents. The deficiencies with respect to these facilities and amenities have been detailed in the succeeding paragraphs:

(i) Non-functional water purifiers – In order to ensure access to safe drinking water and reduce the prevalence of water-borne diseases among the ICDS beneficiaries attending AWCs, the WCD Department decided (November 2012) to procure and install water purifiers in the AWCs functioning in their own buildings and having regular water supply connections. Grants amounting to ₹35.50 crore⁴³ were allocated during 2013-17 for procurement of water purifier systems, and 44,910 units of UV water purifiers were procured at a cost of ₹26.43 crore during 2014-17.

Scrutiny of the records relating to procurement, delivery, installation and payment for these purifiers revealed that 6,709 UV units costing ₹3.82 crore were lying idle in AWCs for want of required infrastructure – water and electricity connection. During physical visits of 99 selected AWCs, Audit found purifiers in uninstalled/non-functional state in 94 AWCs.

The State Government admitted this violation and stated (October 2024) that assessment regarding functioning of water purifiers, availability of water and electricity connection at AWC, *etc.* would be done and action would be taken accordingly. However, it is worth mentioning that these purifier units procured at a cost of ₹3.82 crore would present a challenge to the WCD Department to make them functional after remaining idle for more than five years.

⁴¹ An infantometer is used to measure the length/height of an infant in lying position.

⁴² A stadiometer is used for measuring the height of a human standing in upright position.

⁴³ 2013-14: ₹10.5 crore; 2014-15: ₹4.0 crore; 2015-16: ₹10.5 crore; 2016-17: ₹10.5 crore.

(ii) **Amenities at AWCs** – The status of other required facilities and amenities in the 99 selected AWCs is detailed in **Table 3.3** below:

Table 3.3: Deficiencies with respect to various other essential facilities in 99 selected AWCs

Sl. No.	Infrastructure component	Number of AWCs physically visited	Number of AWCs that did not have facilities
1.	Installed fire extinguisher	99 AWCs	24
2.	Utensils for serving food		21
3.	Food storage containers		03
4.	Pallets/Wooden racks for THR bags		62
5.	Pest control treatment measures		76
6.	Baby weighing scales		12
7.	Adult weighing scales		15
8.	Infantometers		22
9.	Stadiometers		20
10.	Medicine Kits		59

(Source: As per the data collected during the joint physical visits of 99 selected AWCs)

As evident from the above table, there was significant shortage of essential facilities in the selected AWCs, indicating less than optimal service delivery to the beneficiaries enrolled under the Scheme.

The State Government stated (October 2024) that storage facilities, utensils and medicine kits, *etc.* would be supplied to all AWCs.

(iii) **Storage facility for THR and food grains** – The Operational Guidelines for food safety and hygiene in the ICDS, issued (December 2013) by the MoWCD, New Delhi specify that (i) the stacking of THR bags should be made on pallets/wooden racks so as to protect the bags from rodents and humidity/water, (ii) the height of the pallets/shifting shelves should be at least six inches above the floor, and (iii) AWC building must be repaired and kept in good condition to eliminate potential breeding sites of pests, and holes, drains and places where pests are likely to breed must be kept sealed, (iv) distribution of THR should be done using First-in-First-out (FIFO) method so as to protect the THR packets from potential wastage⁴⁴.

During physical visits of the 99 selected AWCs, it was observed that the pallets/wooden racks were available in only 37 AWCs, pest control treatments were found to have been carried out in merely 23 AWCs and containers for storage of THR packets/bags were not available in any of the 99 AWCs. In absence of pallets/racks in 62 AWCs selected, THR bags were found to be lying on the floor. Due to non-availability of containers for storage of THR packets/bags, they were found to be lying in the open in all of the 99 visited AWCs.

As a consequence of inadequate storage facilities, *i.e.* containers and racks as well as pest control measures, Audit found bags/packets of THR contaminated

⁴⁴ THR premixes have shelf-life of four months.

by rodents in 11⁴⁵ of the 99 visited AWCs as shown in **Picture 3.7** and **Picture 3.8** below:



**Picture 3.7: 40 THR packets bitten and contaminated by rodents
AWC-Laxmipura Ni Chali, Block-08,
Ahmedabad (Urban) (21-10-2020)**



**Picture 3.8: Three THR packets bitten and contaminated by rodents
AWC-Gadhoda-3, Block-Himatnagar
Sabarkantha (16-06-2021)**

In three⁴⁶ of the 99 visited AWCs, Audit found 25 kg of expired (past its safe use date) fortified flour, while in one⁴⁷ AWCs, Audit found 40 kg of rice contaminated with rice weevils.

Further, in two⁴⁸ of the 99 AWCs, visited in 2022, 50 kg of unutilised THR packets lying past their validity, indicating that FIFO method had not been adhered to while the distribution of THR packets in these AWCs.

The State Government stated (October 2024) that instructions for accurate accounting and storage of THR packets would be passed on to all AWWs/AWHs.

Recommendation 6: The Department may evaluate the basic infrastructure amenities available within AWCs and implement necessary measures for improvement.

⁴⁵ (1) Bahurupa-2, (2) Laxmipura ni chali, (3) Gadhoda-3, (4) Nani Vavadi-1, (5) Pernera-7 Limbdi Chok, (6) Pernera-11 Urvinagar, (7) Pishawar, (8) Saraswatanagar, (9) Sector-14 Kalol, (10) Simaliya Mangal Pura and (11) Toranda-2.

⁴⁶ (1) 8.50 kg in Dholakuva-4, (2) 9.50 kg in Bhadbhunja-3 and (3) 7.0 kg in Kalol
⁴⁷ Ishwarpura, Detroj, Ahmedabad (Rural)

⁴⁸ 30 kg of THR in Dalod 1, Mandal, Ahmedabad (Rural) and 20 kg of THR in Bhumi Party Plot, Block 2, Ahmedabad (Urban).