



AT A GLANCE

# District Report on Nutrition Services



Kishanganj, Bihar  
2023

ACCOUNTABILITY  
INITIATIVE



15  
years

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RESEARCH

During Financial Year (FY) 2022-23, against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Accountability Initiative (AI) at the Centre for Policy Research (CPR) undertook a rapid assessment on the status of nutrition-related services under Saksham Angwandi and Poshan 2.0 (previously Integrated Child Development Services) scheme across two districts of Bihar, namely Purnia and Kishanganj. This factsheet presents the findings of the study for the Kishanganj District in Bihar.

## Methodology

The selection of Kishanganj was due to its relatively poor performance on nutrition indicators. As per NFHS-5, Kishanganj has considerable cases of malnutrition in the State – almost 67.5 per cent of children aged 6-59 months, and 68.4 per cent of pregnant women are anemic. Within the district, the survey was undertaken in 2 blocks of Kishanganj District – Kishanganj and Kochadhaman.

The survey was conducted during May 2022 and was undertaken at two levels: a) Anganwadi Centers (AWCs) and b) households. Surveys were conducted on a tablet/smartphone by village level volunteers who were trained for 2 days by the Accountability Initiative team. Data collected was then cleaned and analysed using STATA.

A total of 31 AWCs and 150 households were surveyed across the two blocks.

### *Number of Respondents for the survey*

	<b>Amour</b>	<b>Baisa</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Anganwadi Workers (AWWs)</b>	21	10	<b>31</b>
<b>Households</b>	96	54	<b>150</b>

## Respondent Groups

AWCs are the last-mile service-delivery centres under the Saksham Angwandi and Poshan 2.0 scheme, which integrate the delivery of services related to the provisioning of supplementary nutrition, monitoring of the growth of children, pre-school education for children, facilitating immunisations, counselling and health check-ups.

The households enrolled in an AWC and considered for the survey can be of five categories: (a) Children aged 6 months to 3 years, (b) Children aged 3 to 6 years, (c) Adolescent girls, (d) Pregnant women, and (e) Lactating mothers.

## Findings

The findings from the survey have been divided into 3 broad categories

- a. Infrastructure Availability;
- b. Service Delivery, and;
- c. Specifics related to AWCs and AWWs.

## INFRASTRUCTURE AVAILABILITY IN ANGANWADI CENTERS

The availability of basic infrastructure was mapped by the survey team. Further, if the infrastructure was available, its functionality was measured.

	Kishanganj			Kochadhaman		
	Available and Functional	Available and Non-Functional	Not Available	Available and Functional	Available and Non-Functional	Not Available
<b>Basic Infrastructure</b>						
Food Storage Facility	40%	0%	60%	34%	9%	57%
Toilet	50%	10%	40%	34%	9%	57%
Drinking Water	32%	8%	60%	48%	19%	33%
Electricity	20%	0%	80%	9%	5%	86%
Kitchen	50%	0%	50%	38%	14%	48%
<b>Other Infrastructure</b>						
Device Storage Facility	20%	0%	80%	34%	9%	57%
Cooking Utensils	50%	10%	40%	38%	10%	52%
Toys and Playthings	80%	0%	20%	85%	10%	5%
Pre-school Kit	80%	10%	10%	43%	9%	48%
Electric Fan	13%	7%	80%	5%	0%	95%
Handwashing Facility	30%	0%	70%	38%	5%	57%
Playing Space	70%	0%	30%	38%	5%	57%
Weighing Machine	70%	20%	10%	56%	30%	14%
<b>Posters</b>						
Child Development	50%	0%	50%	28%	5%	67%
Mothers' Health	30%	10%	60%	33%	5%	62%
Children's Health	50%	0%	50%	14%	0%	86%
Immunisation Poster	20%	10%	70%	15%	15%	71%

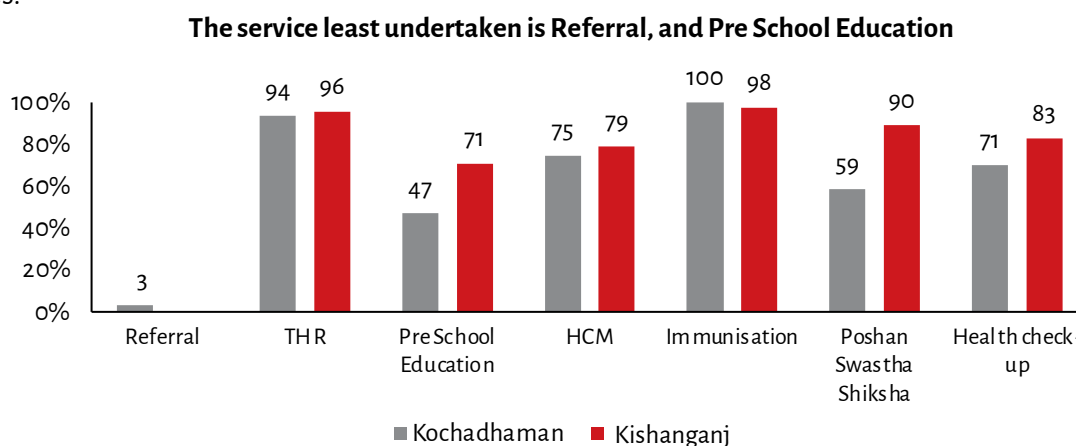
Source: Survey findings across 31 AWCs.

In terms of overall basic infrastructure, facilities in Kochadhaman are comparatively better than in Kishanganj. Basic services, such as drinking water, electricity, and food storage facilities are not available.

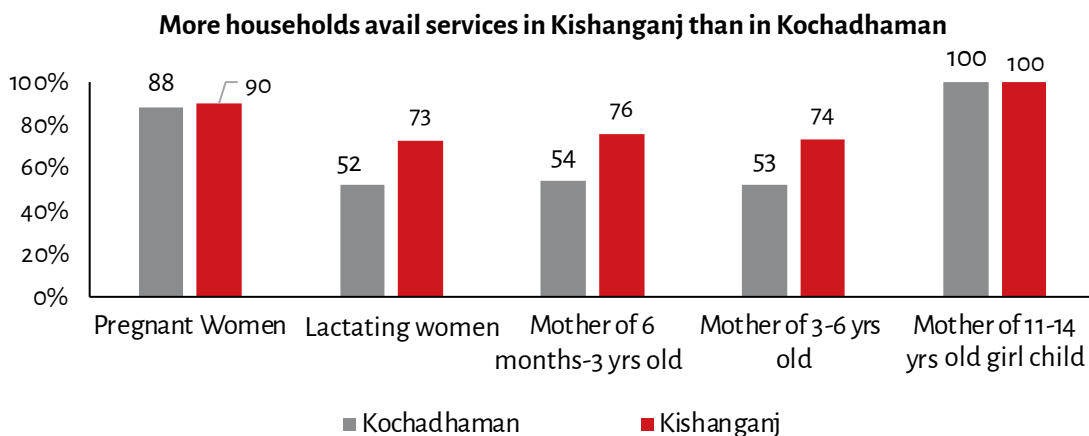
Electric Fan seems to be a major challenge across both the blocks. Only 13 per cent and 5 per cent of responses from Kishanganj and Kochadhaman indicate to have functional electric fans in the AWCs. Handwashing facilities are also available with limited functionality only in 30 per cent of the AWCs in Kishanganj, and 57 per cent of AWCs in Kochadhaman.

## SERVICE DELIVERY TO HOUSEHOLDS

Households were asked about the services they are receiving from the AWCs, depending on their eligibility for the particular service. As can be seen in the graph below, THR and immunisation were most taken services.



Given that different households are eligible for different services, the responses were further segregated based on the respondent categories. Two key highlights can be seen. Firstly, more people avail services they are eligible for in Kishanganj compared to Kochadhaman. Secondly, lactating woman avail relatively fewer services they are eligible for – this was true for both blocks.



**Nutrition Service Delivery**  
 As per the state guidelines and notifications issued, in 2021-22 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, children availing Take Home Ration (THR) and Hot Cooked Meal (HCM) were given money directly into their accounts through Direct Benefit Transfers. It was stated that the AWCs will remain closed but the services provided at the AWCs will not be blocked. However, challenges were observed in this with regards to transfers as several children indicated to not have a bank account.

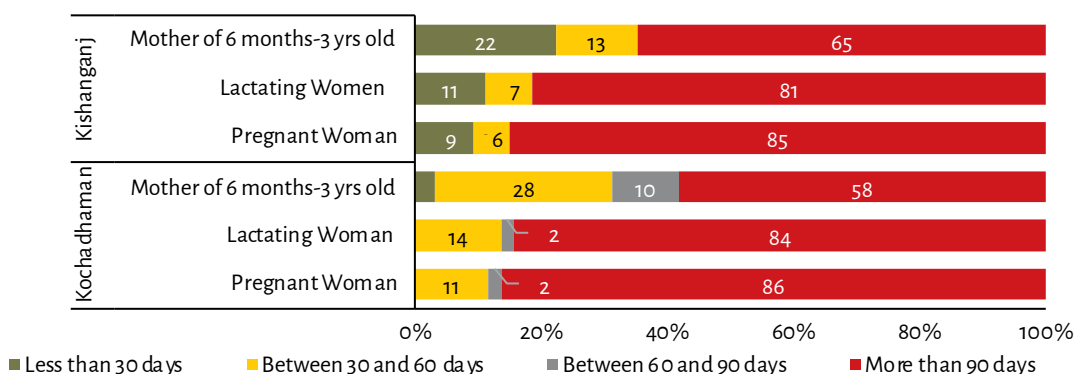
### Take Home Ration (THR)

THR is meant to be given to children aged 6 months to 3 years, pregnant women and lactating mothers. The survey tried to understand the receipt of services across the different types of groups.

The majority of the households from both blocks (80 per cent in Kishanganj and 62 per cent in Kochadhaman) had received THR only. Money in lieu of THR was received by a higher number of eligible citizens in Kochadhaman (14 per cent). In Kishanganj, another 20 per cent of AWCs reported receiving both THR and money. This figure was at 24 per cent for Kochadhaman.

At the household level, there were differences in the timing of receipt of THR. In both Kishanganj and Kochadhaman, the frequency of receipt of THR was highest for mothers of children from 6 months to 3 years old with more than 35 per cent receiving the THR between 30 days to 60 days. In contrast, receipt of THR among lactating women and pregnant women was typically every 90 days.

### Majority of Households indicate to have received last THR more than 90 days



## Hot Cooked Meals (HCM)

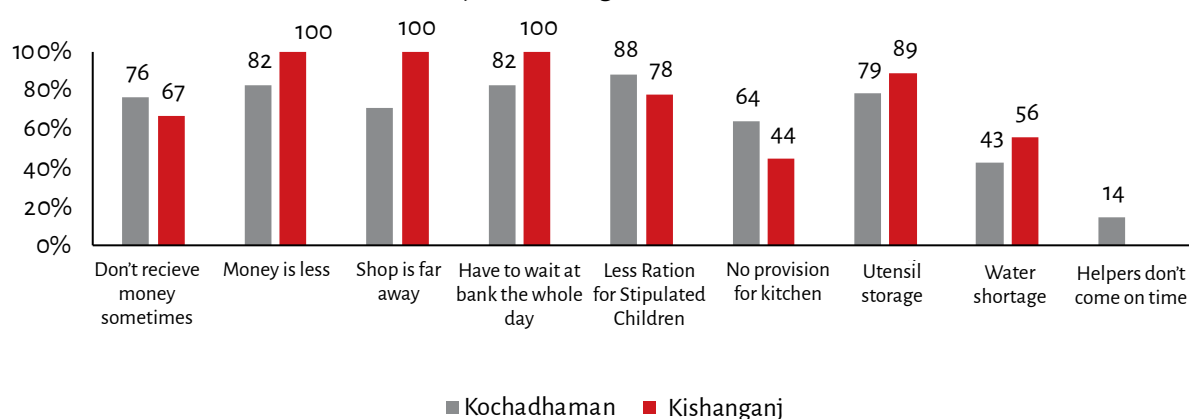
As per state-level norms, HCM is supposed to be prepared inside the AWCs by the Anganwadi Helper. The food is served to the children enrolled in the AWCs aged 3-6 years (up to 40 children) daily. During the COVID-19 pandemic, while the AWCs were closed for some time, the services provided at the AWC were not blocked. Our survey, however, found significant delays in the receipt of HCM across both blocks.

The majority of respondents in Kishanganj indicated having received HCM between 30 to 60 days, while in Kochadhaman before at least 60 days.

A majority (90 per cent) of AWWs in Kishanganj indicated facing problems in purchasing raw materials to prepare HCMs, and 90 per cent reported problems in cooking the meals within the premises. On the other hand, 81 per cent AWWs reported challenges of purchasing raw materials in Kochadhaman and 67 per cent reported challenges in cooking food.

The reasons for the challenges were further analysed. Receiving less money than stipulated children, distance to shop, and long wait hours at bank are major challenges with purchasing food. Lack of kitchen space, utensils and lacking ration for stipulated number of children were the most common reason for difficulties in cooking food.

**Less money, distance to shop, long wait hours at bank, and utensil shortages are major challenges related to HCM**

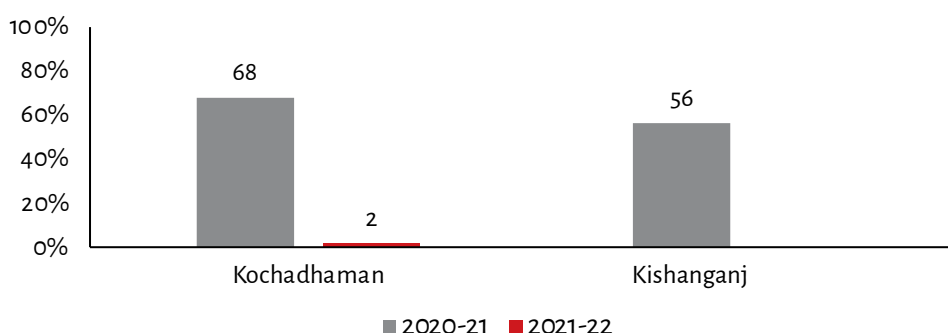


## Pre-school Education

Children in the age group of 3-6 years undergoing Pre-School Education (PSE) at AWCs are given ₹400 to purchase uniforms. This amount is given by Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs) and payment is made directly in the account of the children.

Households reported that most of the children out of the total registered received a grant for uniforms in FY 2020-21, but the same was not observed in FY 2021-22. A considerable proportion (11 per cent to 28 per cent) also reported receiving less money than the guidelines required, in FY 2020-21.

**More than half of households in both blocks reported having received grants for uniform**



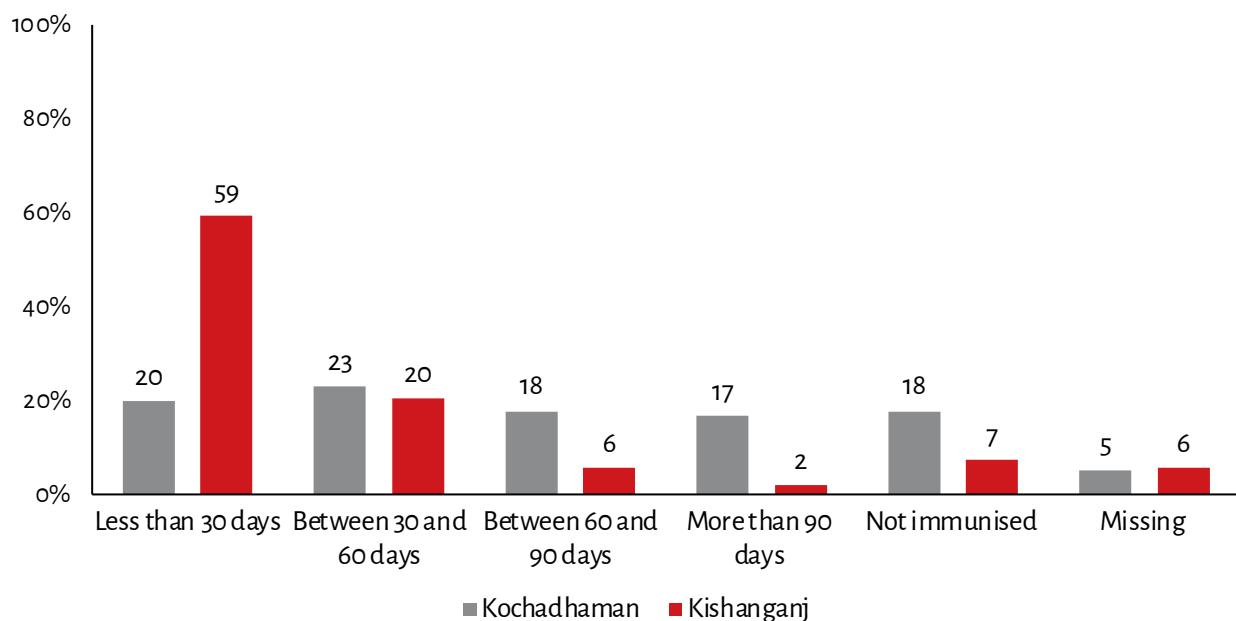
Further, in terms of educational support, AWCs are usually provided support through edu-kit/ materials. As was showcased above under Infrastructure availability with AWCs, 80 per cent AWCs in Kishanganj and 43 per cent AWCs in Kochadhaman had PSE kits available with them. While a majority of AWCs reported receiving PSE kits/materials in FY 2020-21, only 38 per cent reported receiving the grants in FY 2021-22 in Kochadhaman, and 40 per cent in Kishanganj.

## Immunisation

In terms of immunisation, the Government of Bihar has indicated a specific schedule for children 0-6 years in the catchment area of ICDS, and pregnant women.

In addition, during the survey, both AWWs and households were asked about the time the most-recent immunisation had been conducted. There were similarities in responses between AWWs and households. Most AWWs (more than 75 per cent) in both blocks reported the recent immunisation round was held less than a month ago. Similarly, while majority of households in Kishanganj reported the same time period, responses for Kochadhaman indicate responses spread between 30 days and 90 days. A large proportion of households in Kochadhaman (18 per cent) also indicated that no immunisation had taken place.

**For Kishanganj, almost 60% of households indicate the last time of immunisation as less than 30 days ago; for Kochadhaman responses are spread across**

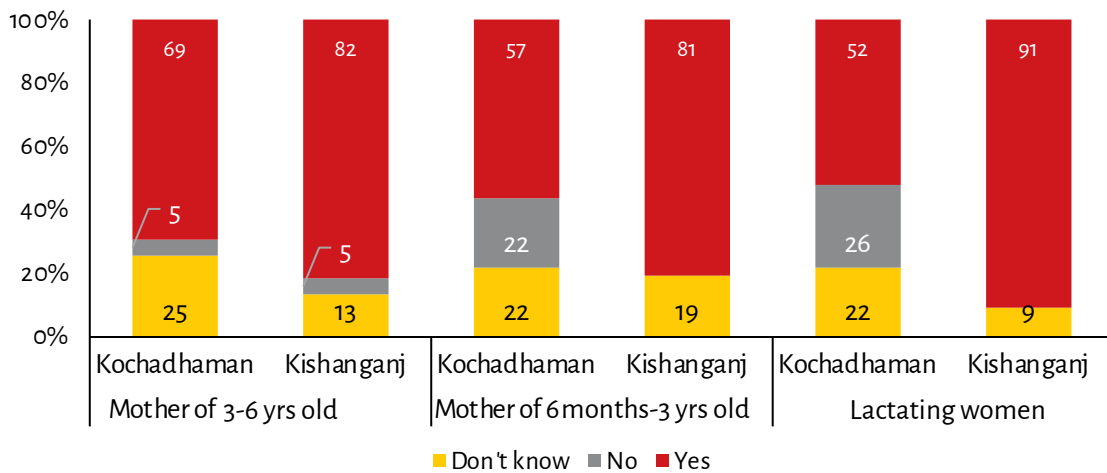


## POSHAN Swastha Shiksha Meeting with Mothers for Guidance

AWWs are meant to have monthly meetings with mothers for guidance. Almost 86 per cent of AWWs in Kishanganj and 60 per cent of AWWs in Kochadhaman reported that these meetings do happen with the most common frequency reported being 3 times in 3 months.

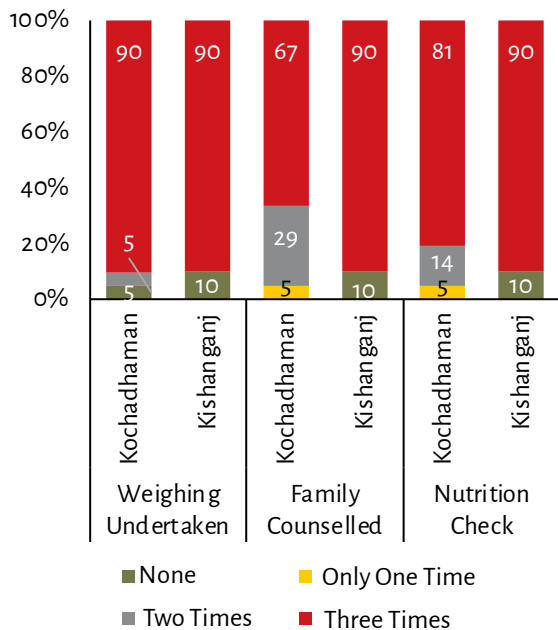
Majority of households also indicate that Guidance Meetings were organised. However, a considerable proportion of responses from Kochadhaman - 25 per cent of mother of children between 3 and 6 years old, and 22 per cent of lactating women mentioned to not be aware of such meetings. Further, 26 per cent of lactating women also stated that such meetings were not held.

### Majority of households also indicate that Guidance Meetings were organised

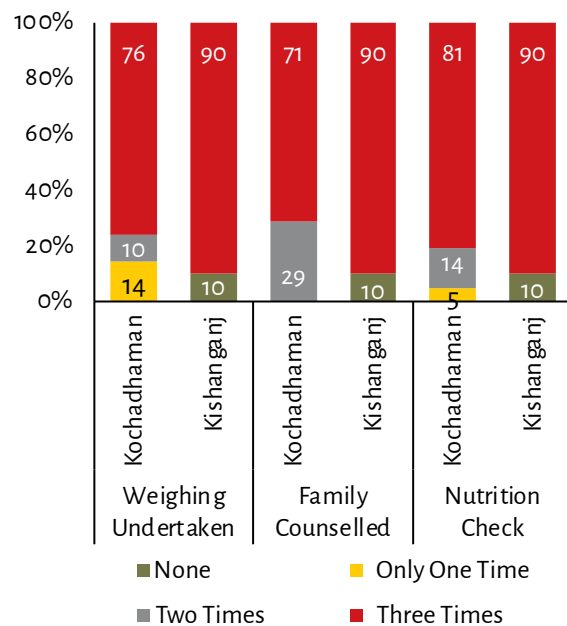


AWWs are also instructed to undertake other health-care activities such as weighing, nutrition checks, and counselling of families. These are usually for mothers and families with children in the age group between 0-3 years and 3-6 years respectively. To investigate the same, AWCs were asked about the frequency of these activities in the last 3 months.

### Frequency of activities conducted for mothers of 0-3 year olds



### Frequency of activities conducted for mothers of 3-6 year olds

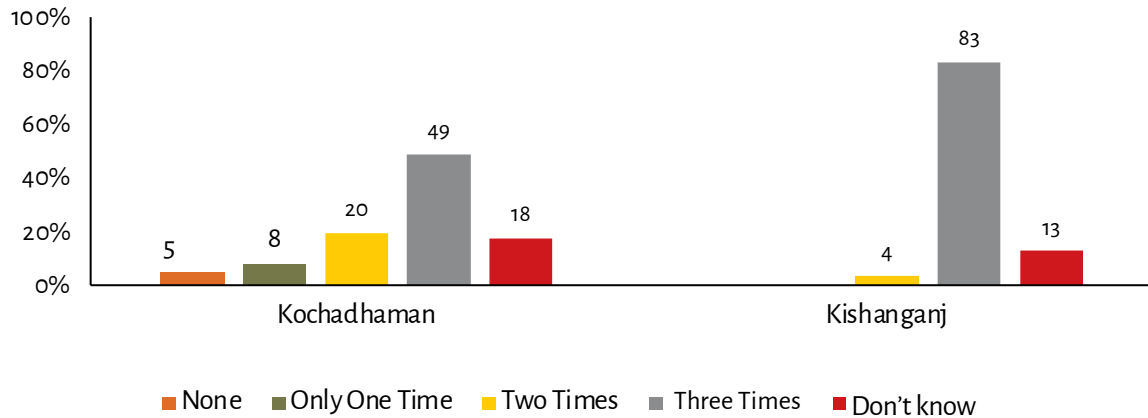


## Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Day (VHSND)

VHSND is an important platform to provide services to the community through several flagship programmes introduced by the government. As per the mandate, VHSND is to be organised in every village once a month at the Anganwadi/identified centre. In our survey, AWWs were asked when the most-recent VHSND had been organised. Similarly, households were asked about the frequency of these in the previous three months.

While a majority of AWWs reported that the last VHSND was conducted less than a month ago, only 58 per cent households in Amour and 21 per cent in Baisa reported that a VHSND had been organised monthly.

**49% households in Kishanganj, and 83% households in Kochadhaman also indicate that VHSND were held more than 3 times in the last 3 months**

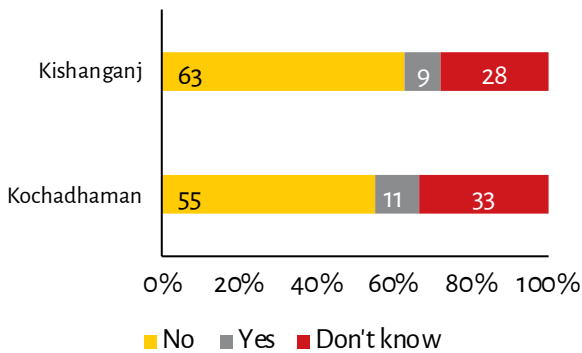


### Referral Services

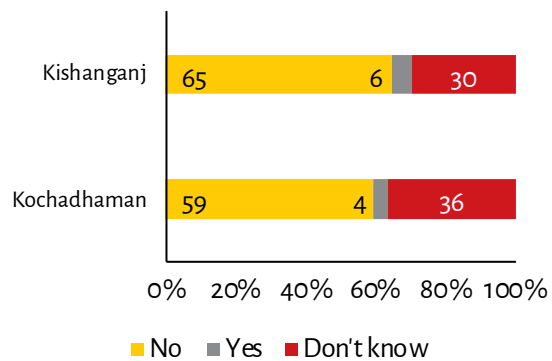
For children in the age group of 0-6 years, and pregnant and lactating women, Referral Services are mandated wherein pregnant & lactating women or children suffering from any critical illness of disease are to be referred to the nearest hospital by the AWWs.

In this context, both AWWs and households were asked if they were aware of referral cases in the village. The responses of both AWWs and households seem to indicate that referral services have been limited.

**More than half of AWWs unaware of any referrals for pregnant woman and lactating mothers**



**Almost 60% of households unaware of referrals for children suffering from disease**



### STATUS OF ANGANWADI CENTRES AND ANGANWADI WORKERS

During the survey, AWWs were asked as to how many work days their AWC was operational in the last month. All AWCs surveyed had operated for at least 25 days, which is the mandate as per the guidelines.

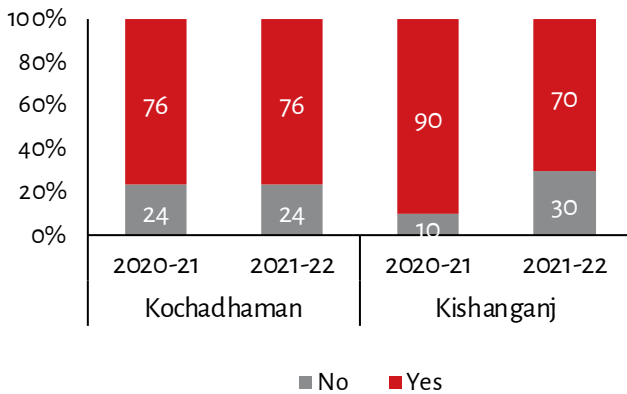
#### Grants

Presently, Annaprashan day is celebrated on the 19<sup>th</sup> of every month and AWCs receive ₹250 per month as grants for it. On that day, katori-chamach are given to the children and Annaprashan is done. Majority of the AWCs mentioned to have received grants for Katori Chamach. However, 30 per cent of AWCs from Kishanganj, and 24 per cent from Kochadhaman indicated to have not received the grant during FY 2021-22.

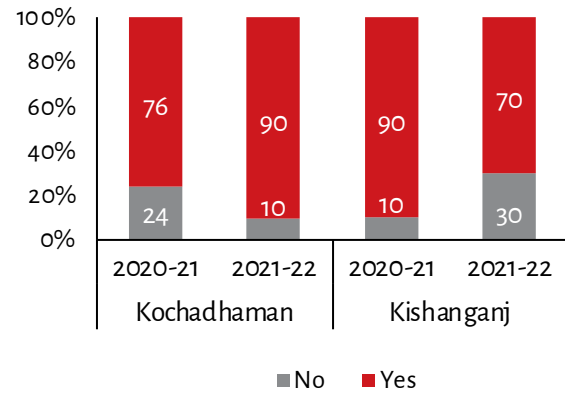
Similarly, Godh Bharai is celebrated on the 7<sup>th</sup> of every month. Here too, AWCs receive ₹250 per month as grants, in which fruits, flowers, and other such materials are included. Here too, 30 per cent of AWCs from Kishanganj to have not received the grant during FY 2020-21.



**Majority AWCs indicated to have receiving grants for Katori Chamach in 2020-21 than 2021-22**



**Majority AWCs indicated to have receiving grants for Godh Bharai in 2020-21 in Amour and in 2021-22 in Baisa**



## Help from the community

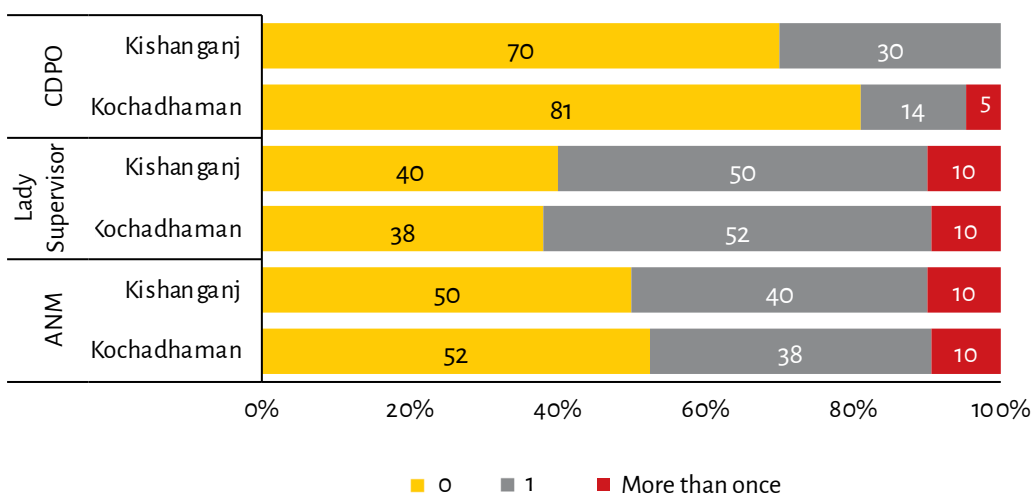
No AWCs reported receiving any support from MLAs or MPs. Moreover, only 30 per cent of AWCs reported receiving support from Panchayats in Kishanganj and 24 per cent in Kochadhaman. This support, however, was primarily in the form of providing masks/ sanitizer given the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Supervision

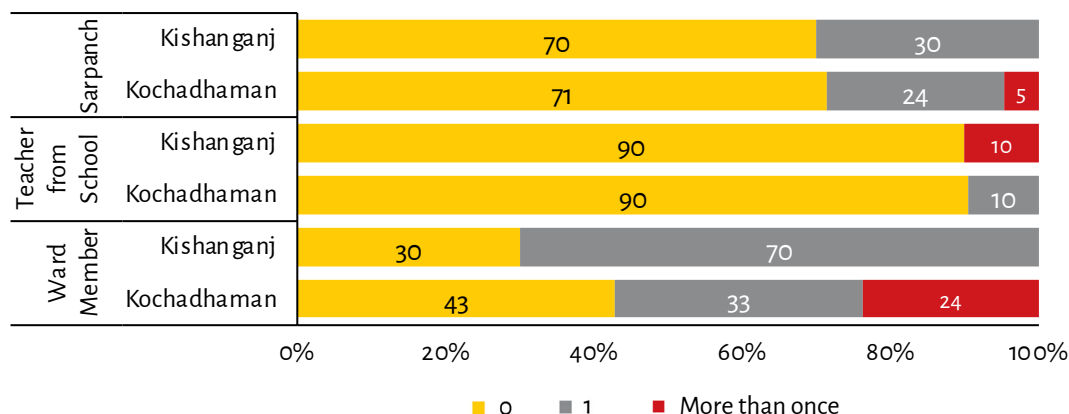
AWW were asked about the frequency and regularity of the visits made by Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs), Lady Supervisors, and CDPOs in the last month.

The survey found that that at least one visit was made by Lady Supervisor. ANMs have made very limited visits, and a large group of AWWs also indicates no visits at all. For the CDPO, however, AWWs responses indicate that very limited visits were made –and this may be directly linked with the distance of the AWC to the CDPO. As mentioned, the CDPO office was at least 10-15 kms away.

**No visits were made from CDPOs in both blocks, while the Lady Supervisor and ANM have undertaken limited visits**



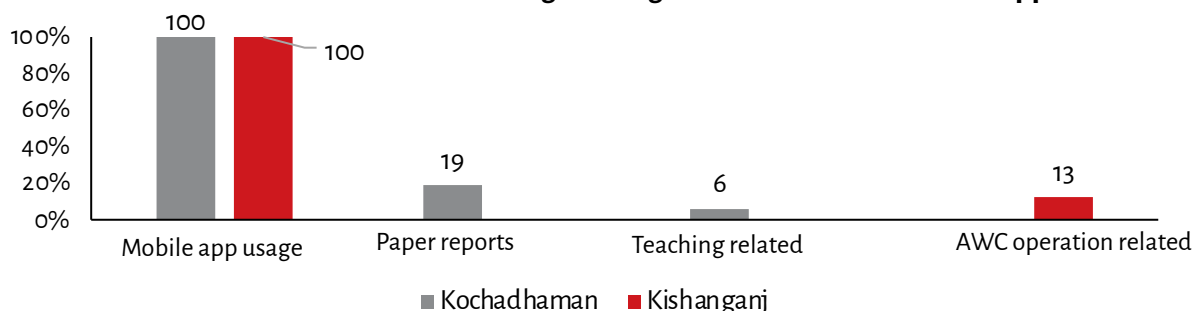
### Very few visits were made by the Sarpanch or Teacher from School reported



## Training

All AWWs reported receiving some training. The training typically covered information on THR, Activity related to children and nutrition related. Relatively fewer AWWs reported Incremental Learning Approach (ILA) training. In Kochadhaman block, fewer AWCs reported receiving training on operations of AWCs. Yet several AWWs also mention additional training needs with a focus on mobile applications. Around 10 per cent of AWWs from Kishanganj responded to have received no training. More than 75 per cent AWWs from both blocks mention that additional training is required.

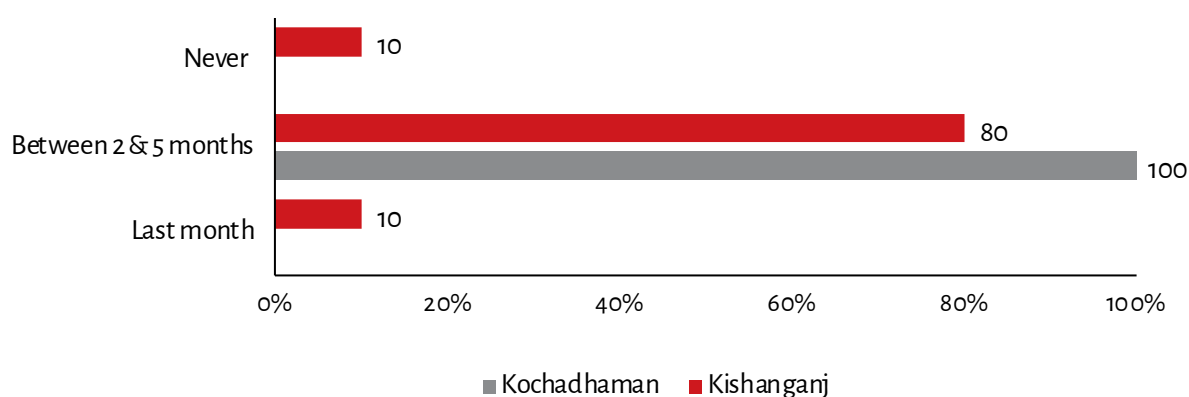
### Most AWWs indicate that training can be given on how to use Mobile Apps



## Honorarium and Responsibilities

The AWWs were asked about the regularity in which they received their salaries. Majority of the AWWs mentioned to have received their last honorarium between 2 and 5 months ago. Additionally, they were asked if they had any additional responsibilities along with their regular tasks under ICDS. More than 75 per cent of AWWs indicate that they have additional responsibilities - mostly related to Elections, and COVID-19.

### 80% of AWWs in Kishanganj, and 100% in Kochadhaman indicated to have received their last salary between 2-5 months

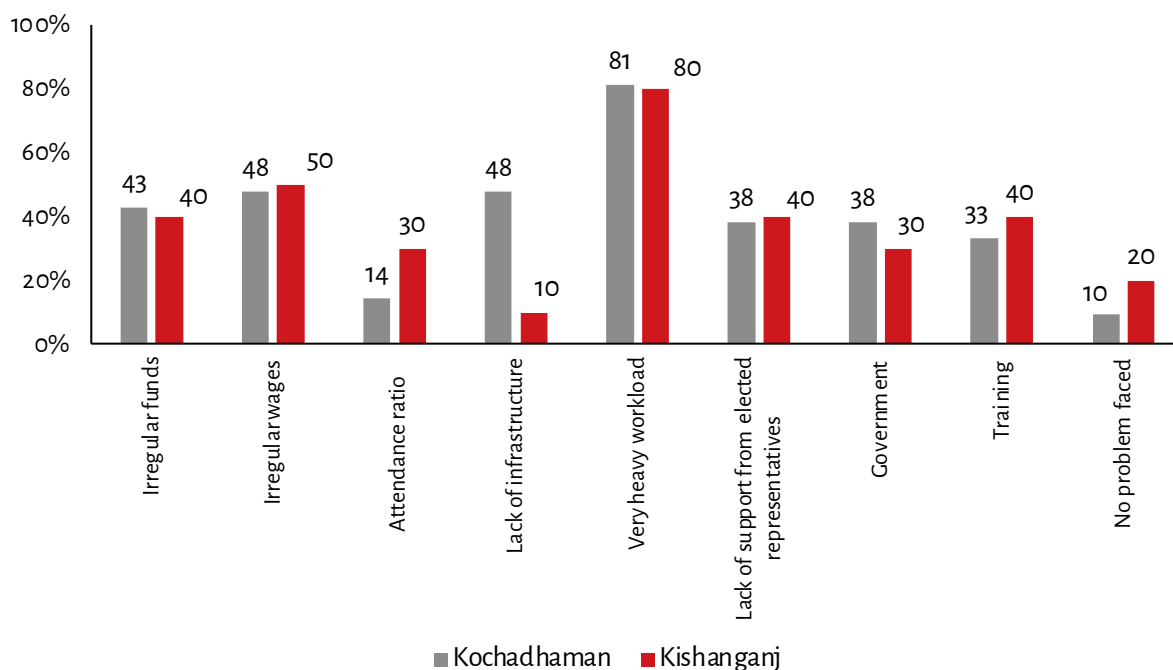


Additionally, they were asked if they had any additional responsibilities along with their regular tasks under ICDS. More than 75 per cent of AWWs indicate that they have additional responsibilities - mostly related to Elections, and COVID-19.

## Challenges

AWWs were asked about the biggest hurdles they faced while undertaking their work. As mentioned, heavy workload is the major challenge in both blocks, followed by irregular wages, and irregular funds.

**More than 80% of AWWs in both blocks indicate to have very heavy workload**



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