The present chapter constitutes the core of the study. It consists of the empirical research carried by the researcher in the Barabanki district of Uttar Pradesh with regard to the different aspects of the scheme of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) in the district. The range of the data generated as part of the empirical research for the present research work has been quite large and varied. Such a wide ranging survey has been carried out in order to make sure that the findings of the research are as nearer to the truth as possible given the sanctity of such a high level of researches. The responses generated from the surveyed households truly held out the hope that the people are really aware of the governmental developmental efforts and they really have their own opinions and ideas on the idea and working of the different developmental schemes of the government. The findings of the survey go a long way in substantiating the hypothesis set out in the introductory chapter of the present work. The broad research objectives set as part of the present research have by and large been met in the aftermath of the empirical inputs obtained in the course of the field work.

6.1 Profile of Barabanki District

Barabanki is one of the relatively less developed districts of the state of Uttar Pradesh, administratively forming part of the Faizabad division of the state. It borders with the capital city of Lucknow and originally part of the Awadh princely state for a long period of time. Running in the south easterly direction, the natural extension of the district generally runs parallel to the two major rivers of the state – Ghaghara and Gomati. The boundaries of the district overlap with a number of other district such as Sitapur in the west, Sultanpur in the north, Baharaich and Gonda in the east and Faizabad in the south. Its geographical location is 27°19' and 26°30' north latitude, and 80°05' and 81°51’east longitude. The extension of the district in the east west direction is for ninety two kilometers where in the north south direction, it extends for ninety three kilometers. Thus, the total area of the district ranges for three thousand nine hundred square kilometers. Total population of the district is 2, 673,581. The
Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) In Barabanki District

Administrative headquarters of the district is the Barabanki city. Thus, Barabanki constitutes one of the important districts of the state of Uttar Pradesh in its central zone centred around its nucleus in Lucknow, the capital city.

Administratively, Barabanki district is divided into six sub-divisions popularly known as tehsils. These tehsils are: Nawabganj, Fatehpur, Ramsanehi Ghat, Haidergarh, Ram Nagar, Sirauli Ghauspur. All the tehsils have substantive population including that of minorities. For developmental purposes, the district has been divided into fifteen developmental blocks each headed by an office called the Block Development Officer (BDO). It is in fact, the BDO that has been assigned the major responsibility for carrying out the basic developmental activities in his or her block as the nodal officer for almost all the departments and agencies of the government. The apex body for carrying out the developmental activities in the district is the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) working under the overall supervision, control and guidance of a senior member of the Indian Administrative Service called as Chief Development Officer or the District Development Officer. All the developmental activities in the district are conceptualized, designed, implemented, evaluated and monitored by this omnipresent body that has been constituted in all the districts of the state as part of the developmental framework designed in the aftermath of the adoption of the Panchayati Raj system in the state. Thus, the ICDS activities are also monitored at the top by the office of the Chief Development Officer and at the block level by the office of the BDO. But with the implementation of the Panchayati Raj system, now the elected representatives are also in the loop to take care of the effective implementation of the developmental programmes and projects in their areas.

The socio-economic profile of the district presents a typical case of the majority, if not all of the areas constituting part of the eastern part of the state. As a matter of fact, the eastern part of the state is considered quite backward in comparison to the western part of the state. The district is predominantly agriculture in terms of the economic activities of the people. On the development indices, the state presents a picture of being relatively performing poorly in the state. For instance, the rate of literacy in the district is just 47.39 which is much below the national average. The less rate of literacy means that the people in district are not able to access the basic amenities offered by the government in terms of the health and educational support. As a result,
the children in the district would in most probability be either left out of the school or would drop out of the school in case of their admissions in the school. Similarly, on another important indicator of human development, that is, sex ratio, the district presents a rate of just 887 per one thousand males in the district.\(^5\) Again, the less number of females in the district indicate that the birth of the girls in the district would not have been preferred by the people due to the traditional perceptions of the girls as well as the contemporary scenario of the district. In such a situation, the social and economic development in the district is likely to be less than average even for the state if we do not count that for the national average.\(^6\)

The relatively backward position of the district on the counts of both rate of literacy as well as sex ratio throw the women and children of the district in a great risk of getting neglected. As far as the story of the ICDS is concerned, much of the population of the district remains unaware of the fact that the government has been providing all kinds of health and nutritional support to the women and the children in the district.\(^7\) This relative unawareness of the majority of the population eventually turn out to the ground for their being left out of the purview of the scheme despite the ambitious plans and expectation with which it has been put into practice. At the same time, even the children and the women who happen to go to the health and the nutrition centers, the regularity of their visit has not been maintained for the reasons associated with both their personal as well as social status in the society.\(^8\) For instance, in many of the cases, the women are not able to take their children to the center or go themselves to the center due to the constraints of time and support. As a result, once their regularity of visiting the health and nutrition centers get disturbed, the foolproof support they are likely to get with regard to their health and nutritional status also get disturbed. Moreover, lack of public awareness amongst the people regarding the value of the health and nutritional support available through the scheme has turned the district into a kind of dark spot in the region with regard to the health of the women and the children.

As far as the economic development of the district is concerned, it needs to be pointed out that the industrial development in the district is again very less in comparison to the many other districts of the state.\(^9\) In other words, the majority of the people in the district have to depend on the agriculture and the activities related to agriculture. However, the critical issue in this regard is the geographical location of the district.
As a matter of fact, the district lies in both the flood as well as drought prone areas of the country. A number of rivers crisscross the state in such a way that the district becomes prone to heavy inundation due to the excessive rains that lead to the rivers turning in swollen. Thus, there is always the fear that the standing crops of the people might get destroyed in the wake of the heavy flooding. On the contrary, in the years when there is the failure of the rains, large part of the state becomes prone to drought leading to famine like situations in the district. That way, the people of the district are thrown into a sort of vicious circle in which they either have to suffer from flood or drought. Consequently, the economic conditions of the people remain on the lower side of the scale. 

This naturally leads to the migration of a large part of the population of the district to the urban centers or the metro cities like Delhi. Obviously, this leaves the women and the children in the district fend for themselves in the absence of the support and assistance of the male member of the family.

The sample size for carrying out the empirical research in the district was taken to be one hundred and fifty, taking ten persons from each of the fifteen developmental blocks of the district. Of the ten samples from each of the developmental blocks, three major subdivisions have been made in the respondents - the beneficiaries of the scheme of ICDS, the officials involved in the implementation of the ICDS and the elected representatives who have been given the onerous responsibility for looking after the implantation of the scheme in their respective areas with a view to make sure that not only the scheme is effectively implemented but also the benefits of the scheme can be reached to all in the district without any kind of difficulty in establishing last mile connectivity with the beneficiaries. In carrying out the field work and to generate responses from the respondents, the help of both the structure questionnaire as well as personal interviews have been taken. While most of the respondents appeared positive in replying to the questions and interviewing by the researcher, a few of them showed certain degree of anxiety as to the nature and purpose of the research. It was only when they were told categorically that the present research is basically for the purpose of a research degree and the responses of the respondents would not be shared with any governmental or non governmental agency that they agreed to share their opinions and views on different aspects of the working of the ICDS scheme in the district.
In the first part of the chapter, the basic findings of the study are presented in the tabular formats along with the crisp and brief explanation for the facts and data generated out of the field visit. This is followed by general analysis of the status of the implementation of the ICDS in the district and its implications for the working of the scheme in the entire state of Uttar Pradesh and for that matter in the country as a whole. Though the aim of such generalizations is not go for any kind of construction of any meta narrative on the working of ICDS in the country but it is surely the objective of the researcher that some kind of general tendencies in the working of the prime schemes of the government such as the ICDS must be pointed out so that certain policy perspectives are available to the policy makers of the country to fall back upon while revisiting the whole idea of child welfare in the country.

### 6.2 Awareness about ICDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nos.</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first question posed to the respondents was about their awareness regarding the scheme of ICDS being implemented in the district. As the figure in the table shows, an overwhelming majority of 80% of the respondents responded in the positive on this question. The basic reason for such a high level of awareness about the scheme in the district may be explained with reference to the three factors that lay at the root of people flocking to the ICDS centres in the district. To begin with there appeared a very high level of conscious amongst the people in the district regarding the protection of the life of the new born babies so as to make sure that the infant mortality is reduced to the maximum extent possible in the district. In other words, the people especially the women do not want that their child die due to the non availability of the medical care or other nutritional requirements on the part of the baby. Hence, they would make sure that the child is taken to the ICDS centre on the date and time given by the centre in charge without fail. Thus, the concern of the parents to save their child from any untimely death or physical incapacity has been at the root of their high level of awareness regarding the ICDS scheme in the district.
At the same time, secondly, the provision of free and active help and support from the staff and officials of the ICDS centre has been quite encouraging for the people to visit the centre with regular frequency. In fact, there appeared a kind of grapevine in the different villages of the district whereby the beneficiaries of the schemes under the ICDS would spread the work regarding the ICDS scheme to other people so that they are also not left behind in availing the services. Finally, the public awareness campaigns have also been started and conducted at regular intervals by the staff of the ICDS center in the different villages of the district in order to make people aware of the schemes and services being provided under the scheme so that people can come and avail of the services at their own volition. Such an initiative on the part of the ICDS centers must be considered as a positive intervention in the project of ICDS as it is the awareness of the people about the scheme that would lead them to visit the centers and avail services.

Amidst such a positive sign on the issues of the awareness of the people regarding the ICDS services, there also existed a miniscule percentage of 20 of such people who were not aware of the ICDS in the district. Such people consisted mainly of two categories of the people. On the one hand there were a good number of people in the district who have been well off enough to avail of the services provided by the government. For them, taking care of the children right from their birth to the different stages of their growth would entail going to the private clinics and baby centers where the private doctors would provide them with all the facilities needed by the children. Hence, when such people were asked about the ICDS scheme, they simply refused to say yes and conceded that they did not know that ICDS centers provide so much of services to the children. The second group of people consisted of such population who were very poor in terms of their economic status and would keep on moving from one place to another in need of jobs or other avenues of employment so that they could manage their livelihood. For such people, any kind of awareness about child welfare policies such as ICDS did not seem to be quite probable in view of the temporariness of their habitations.

On the whole, the basic question regarding the awareness of the people produces quite expected result as majority of the people responded in affirmation to say their familiarity with the flagship governmental scheme of child welfare in the country. As a matter of fact, it is remarkable to point out that the success or failure of a
governmental scheme depends to large extent on the public awareness of that scheme. For instance, if the majority of people at a place are not aware of a government scheme, how it is expected that they would avail of the benefits of such a public oriented scheme. Hence, on that count, the working of the ICDS in the Barabanki district seems to be quite effective as majority of the people in the district were aware of existence of the scheme in the district. Such people consisted mainly of the mainstream population of the district who fall in the middle range of income as well as status of life in the district. On the other hand, the extreme economic status people of the district such a very rich as well as very poor were not found to be aware of the scheme as either they did not need that or they did not get an opportunity by any means to know of the scheme. Hence, the efforts need to be redoubled to make sure that even the poorest sections of the society are also aware of the flagship schemes of the government.

6.3 Services Offered Under ICDS

Table: 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services offered</th>
<th>Immunization</th>
<th>Supplementary Nutrition</th>
<th>Health Check</th>
<th>Public awareness and advocacy</th>
<th>Referral Services</th>
<th>Preschool Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After ascertain the profile of the people who were aware of the scheme of ICDS being provided in the district, the next question posed before them pertained to the types of services being provided under the scheme of ICDS. This question seemed to be quite baffling to the respondents as they were not able to understand the question in the first instance. But when they were told the question again with the explanation that what services they have availed for their children till date from the ICDS centers, only then the respondents were able to put up an answer to the question. But there emerged two patterns amongst the respondents as far as the types and categories of services provides under ICDS scheme were concerned. The majority of the respondents were able tell about only those services under the ICDS scheme which they had availed till
date. When asked about other services which they might not have availed till date but still available under the rubric of the ICDS scheme, they were not able to provide concrete and definite answer and only tried to make a guess. Such a response on the part of the respondents amply make it clear that though they have been made aware of the ICDS scheme through the Anganwadi and other social welfare workers, the entire gamut of the services provided under the scheme still remained out of their bound.

When asked about the type of services that the respondents have availed from the ICDS centers, the majority of them replied on the pattern which seems to be quite common even on the all India level. That response pertained to the immunization that happens to be the trade mark of the ICDS scheme in all parts of the country. As a matter of fact, the challenge of very high rate of infant mortality rate in the country over the years had made the government agencies focus on the issue of vaccination and immunization to save the children from the fatal disease that would prove life threatening for them. Hence, for quite long period of time, the thrust on immunization was so profound as part of the ICDS services that the scheme had in fact become synonymous with the idea of immunization. It is for this reason that in the rural household, the people particularly the females bearing the babies would flock to the ICDS centers to get their babies vaccinated and immunized so that they can be saved from untimely death as well as other health related issues that may prove fatal for them. Thus, in so far as the services being provided under the ICDS scheme are concerned, the majority of the respondents of the district of Barabanki would name only the immunization drive to almost complete exclusion of similar or more significant services that have been part of the ICDS package in the different parts of the country.

When the respondents were helped to get slightly a better idea of the range of services being provided under the scheme such as supplementary nutrition, and overall health check and referral services, the reaction of the people was quite perplexing and smacked of their sheer lack of awareness of these issues and their importance in the health of a child. The parents of the many of the stunted children in the district did not go to the ICDS centers to get for their babies supplementary nutrition at the ICDS centers though the Anganwadi workers would inform them of the need for the supply of supplementary nutrition to the child in order to check of any kind of stunted growth in them. In fact, the basic concept of keeping the babies hale and hearty through the
efforts of the ICDS centers make it imperative on them to have a framework for overall health check up of the children. But the majority of the respondents in the district went to the ICDS centers just to get their children immunized and vaccinated so that the child could be saved from untimely death and other health related issues that could have cost them their life. Thus, the overall health of the children did not get much benefit from the ICDS services as a result of which the much needed effectiveness of the scheme proved to be a partial success only. And since the people did not turn up for overall health check, the other basic services such as referral services also did not go down well to the nooks and corners of the district.

Another set of services being offered at the ICDS centers were in the nature of preschool education in the nature of informal mode as well as general nutrition and health information for the children enrolled in the ICDS center. When the respondents were asked these two sets of services being offered at the ICDS centers, they again were left in awe as they very seldom availed these services. As a matter of fact, very few people were aware of the fact that the ICDS centers could also act as preschool education centers for the children. The parents responded that they would send their children to the nearby primary or the public school as there was no other option than doing so. But such a facility was surely available for the children of the district as had been informed by the officials and staff of the ICDS center. Finally, it was quite pathetic to know that the majority of the people did not take the utmost benefit of the ICDS services and did not take care that their tender age children are able to take the maximum benefits of the services offered at the ICDS centers. Hence, in the awareness drives being undertaken by the staff and people associated with the ICDS scheme in the district, it must be made sure that they are able to inform the people about the services of the ICDS in their entirety so that people are persuaded to take the maximum advantages of such services.
6.4 Services Availed from ICDS Centers

Table: 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Immunization</th>
<th>Supplementary Nutrition</th>
<th>Health Check Up</th>
<th>Referral Services</th>
<th>Preschool Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Beneficiaries</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More interesting facts about the working of the ICDS services in the Barabanki district of Uttar Pradesh were found during the survey on the issues of services availed by the respondents. As the facts given in Table 2 shows, the responses of the respondents on the issue appeared to be on the expected lines for most of the services. As has been explained in the previous paragraphs, the basic perception of the people in the district regarding the services offered at the ICDS centers have been that of the immunization for the children ranging from the new born ones to that of the children up to the age till which they were in the need of vaccination or immunization. Thus, the facts in the table show that as large a number as 93 respondents out of 120 informed the researcher about their availing the services of the immunization at the ICDS centers for their kids. They categorically stated that when the ladies in the surveyed villages of the district conceived babies and were to deliver them, the time for the regular visit to the ICDS centers began and they continued to visit the centers as long as the child was in need of such services.

It has been a general global standard that apart from the basic immunization and vaccination services, any child welfare scheme must include the provisions for supplementary nutrition and other such support services that would have helped in preventing the stunted growth of the child. Hence, under the ICDS scheme, the most important services after the immunization happened to be the supplementary nutritional services that the children in the villages of the district needed for an overall development of their babies. However, for obvious reasons, the people of the district did not follow such an important stipulation under the scheme with full support and commitment. As a result, out of the 120 surveyed families only 17 have been found to
have availed the services of the supplementary nutrition for their kids. When asked about the reason for such a state of apathy and lack of interests in getting their children the basic nutritional support, the respondents showed their utmost lack of information on the vitality and significance of such nutritional support for the development of the overall personality of the children. Since, they did not realize the importance of supplementary nutritional support, they did not feel it imperative to visit the ICDS centers to avail the services of supplementary nutrition.

Another important service that is offered under the framework of the ICDS scheme is the overall health check up in order to not only maintain a good working health of the children but also keep the parents informed about the status of health of their children and the prevalence of any disease or disorder in their babies. But again the respondents in the villages of the district did not feel encouraged to visit the ICDS centers and avail the services of the free health check up for their children. However, it is still reassuring that in comparison to the date on the supplementary nutritional services, the families availing the services of the free health check up appeared to be better placed. Thus, in comparison to only 17 respondents saying to have visited the ICDS centers to get their child supplementary nutrition, the number of respondents having visited the ICDS for the overall health check up of their babies have been 23 which showed that they felt compelled to visit the ICDS centers to get their children examined for any health related disorder as a precautionary measure.

In the scheme of the ICDS, referral services refer to the suggestion of the ICDS center for the availing of other higher and more complicated services at the higher levels of institutions or organisations as such services would not have been available at the village or block level ICDS centers. Such services have mainly, if not exclusively, been related to the health issues that have been of higher order or relating to more complicated or advanced stages in the personality of the child. Such services have generally been offered after the routine health check up of the child at the ICDS centers as part of their regular mandate of providing for regular health check up of the child. Thus, the provisions of the referral services in the main depended on the pre requisite of the families having visited the ICDS centers for the regular health check up of the child. Thus, as has been shown in the table, out of the 23 respondents who did visit the ICDS centers to avail the services of the regular health check, only 7 availed of the referral services as their kids were found to be suffering from certain
inbuilt genetic disorder that could have turned into more serious complication at later stages of their life.

Amidst such a lukewarm response to the services being offered at the ICDS centers, the more encouraging results came in the case of the preschool facilities that are being offered at the ICDS centers especially for the villages which are located in the remote areas with very less accessibility and other infrastructural facilities. But in the case of the villages in the Barabanki district, the ladies tool their children to the preschool centers of the ICDS scheme less in order to make their children learn the basics of literacy and more to take time off from their responsibilities to take care of their children amidst their tasks of working in the fields or at other remunerative schemes. Thus, for whatsoever reason, it was quite comforting to find that a large number of people in the villages opted for sending their children to the ICDS centers. Such availing of the facilities by the parents of the children in the district also proved that the parents were getting gradually ready for sending their children for the educational institutions that could later build up the opportunity for spread of universal literacy and educational status of children in the country.

6.5 Satisfaction with the Services

Table: 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction with the Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From amongst those who have availed one or the other services under the ICDS scheme, the next question posed to them related to their satisfaction with the services being availed at the ICDS centers. As a matter of fact, the government of India as well as the state governments in the country offers a host of services for various sections of society. Such services are also availed by the people in large numbers given their compulsion to fall back upon the government services as there is no other option for them. However, the moot point on the issue of the peoples satisfaction with such services have been studied and reported by a number of researchers out of which
majority, if not all, of them suggested that people in overwhelming number felt quite dissatisfied with both the quality as well as quantity of the services. In such a situation the basic purpose behind making the provision for such services get by and large defeated because the joy and contentment on the availing of such services do not stay for long with them and they tend to forget the stupendous efforts of the government in providing such a range of service to the people. Thus, the public dissatisfaction with a host of government has been a marked character of the Indian development discourse that needs to be rectified.

When asked about the level of their satisfaction with the services availed under the ambit of ICDS, the data for the respondents was strangely fifty–fifty. In other words, out of the 120 respondents who were asked about their opinions on the satisfaction level about the services of the ICDS, sixty and sixty each group of people gave their opinion. In other words, 60 people out of 120 of all the respondents came out with the answer that they were satisfied with the services that had been offered or availed under the ambit of the ICDS. When asked about the basic spectrum of their expectations around which they would retain their levels of satisfaction, they came out with the crisp response that they did not expect much as their only concern was that their child was taken care of in such a manner that the baby survived and his or her medical fitness needed to be beyond any kind of doubt. This much of service was surely provided by the staff available at the ICDS centers and their kinds did not meet the fate of either getting dead or suffering from any untoward disease or ailment such as polio or likewise.

On the other hand, when we look at the responses of the group of people who would show their dissatisfaction with the services being offered at the ICDS centers, their basic premise for dissatisfaction was rooted in their high levels of expectations from the services which were being provided with the ICDS centers. In other words, when these people went to the ICDS centers, they would have the impression that the ICDS centers would be so much efficient and effective that their services would be world class and as per the standard of the private clinics or health centers working in the different parts of the country. Amidst such an exalted expectations, when the people went to the ICDS centers they did not find the quality and measure of services as per their satisfaction, they surely felt dissatisfied with the services which would get reflected in their responses. Thus, out of the total respondents of the study, half of the
people said that they are not at all happy with the quality of services and would not like to visit the ICDS centers again for such services unless suitable rectifications are brought about in them.

Along with such people who went to the ICDS centers with some degree of exalted expectations, there would also be certain genuine low expectation people whose visit to the ICDS centers would be to take the bare minimum help available to them. In such a group of people, their visit to the ICDS centers was meant for just securing the bare minimum services for their kids such as vaccination and immunization along with other routine medical health check up. Here the moot point is that at quite a number of times, the quality of services of the ICDS centers was found to be wanting for the number of reasons ranging from unavailability of supplies to the absence of the staff from duty or the misbehavior of the staff of the ICDS centers with the beneficiaries who went to the ICDS centers for availing its services. Such complaints of the respondents appeared to be quite genuine and there is urgent need for the government to take care of the concerns of the people so that they could have been uprooted and the ICDS centers could be really made the centre of health and nutrition of the children in the rural India.

On the whole the responses of the people on the issue of the quality of the services being available at the ICDS centers for the clients, two general observations could be made by way of policy suggestions for the government. At the one level, the quality of services being provided in the ICDS centers needed to be continuously monitored in such a way that all of the issues related to the working of the ICDS centers in the rural areas needed to be taken care of so that they continue to keep on their vitality as the nodal centers for health and nutrition of the children. At another level, it must also be pointed out that the public satisfaction with the quality of the services available at the ICDS centers must be ensured to the extent possible in order make sure that the people’s faith in these ICDS centers remain intact and they keep on coming to the centre for taking necessary care of their kids. Unless these two interrelated issues are examined in detail at the comprehensive level, the fate of the ICDS centers as the focal points for the protection and promotion of the child rights in the country would not remain viable. Hence, taking clue from the present research, more elaborate and comprehensive survey on the status of functioning of these ICDS centers must be taken up. On the basis the findings of the supplementary surveys, if the findings of the
current research are validated beyond doubt of the policy makers and the general public as well, earnest efforts must be made on the part of the both the official as well as the non official stakeholders to plug the loop holes of the system and make the ICDS centers true hubs of child care in the country.

6.6 Reasons for Dissatisfaction

Table: 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Apathy of Staff</th>
<th>Lack of effective redressal of the problem</th>
<th>Lack of adequate supplies</th>
<th>Frequent referring of cases</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Respondents</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given that substantive number of respondents felt dissatisfied with the services being offered at the ICDS centers, obviously the next question posed to them pertained to the their perception of the reasons for such a state of things. In this regard, the responses received from the people could be divided two distinct sets. First set of reasons pertained to the institutional, logistical, supplies and issues related to the public interaction with the ICDS centers. More importantly, the second set of reasons related to the issues that are rooted in the broader social, economic and political dynamics of the people in the district which got reflected in their interaction with the ICDS centers as well. The answers to this question were generated through the personal interviews that the researcher conducted with the respondents who expressed their dissatisfaction with the state of things at the ICDS centers. Most of the respondents complained about the missed opportunities that they suffered when they visited the ICDS centers for some of their requirements. For instance, quite often they were told at the health centers that the supplies of nutrition, vaccines, or doses of the medicines or drops that their children would need was out of supply at the center as a result of which their purpose of visit remained unfulfilled at that point of time. At the same time, other problems associated with the behavior of the ICDS centers as well as
the range of services provided at different points of time were also a big bone of contention for the beneficiaries in the district.

However, more important than the logistical inadequacies at the ICDS centers, what has been found to be more pressing challenge of the society in the district of Barabanki may be said to the caste ridden social system whose economic and political ramifications could also be very easily observed. As a matter of fact, being typical district of the central Uttar Pradesh with all sorts of issues and challenges associated with the social immobility for different sections of society especially the people belonging to the lower castes of the society, the caste seems to play an important role in almost all aspects of public life in the district. Hence, when it came for the ICDS centers to act as the modern administrative units to provide state ordained social welfare services to the people, the play of the caste dynamics was at its full play. For instance, people were discriminated on the caste basis while prioritizing the delivery of services. Similarly, when it came for the treatment to the children belonging to the economically upper echelons of the society, the poor and disempowered people were found at the receiving end of the discriminatory behavior of the staff of the ICDS centers. Finally, there was also flagrant interference of the political class of the district in the working of the ICDS centers as they would dictate terms to the staff of the ICDS centers as to the beneficiaries, and the level of treatment to be meted out to them when they visited the ICDS centers.

6.7 Raising of Issues with the Competent Authorities

Table: 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
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</table>

In view of the fact that a large number of people suffered one or the other kinds of difficulties during their visits to the ICDS centers, the next question posed to them related to the eliciting of their responses on the issues of their awareness and promptness to be able to take up their complaints with the competent authorities in the
district. On this issue, the responses of the people appeared to be on the expected lines as majority of ninety percent of the respondents did not bother to lodge their complaint or put a word with the competent authorities as regards the state of things in the ICDS centers. Only a minuscule percent of 10 percent of people came out the positive response to make sure that they did go the competent authorities with their complaints as regards the state of affairs at the ICDS centers. Such a level or kind of responses in the district rightly express the feeling or the ability of the people of the district to take recourse to the corrective measures on the issues and challenges that could have been used to make sure that their grievances are heard and attended to at the hands of the authorities of the district. But sadly the people of the district appeared to be inert enough to desist from taking any proactive measure to get their grievances redressed.

If we try to go deeper into the state of things in the district as regards the public perception of the governmental services and their anxiety to go for some kind of redress system, two things become quite clear. On the one hand, the public at large in the district are by and large involved in the activities of life and livelihood in such a way that they find it very difficult to spare time on regular basis to visit the government offices to not only get the required services to them but also to give their feedback and obtain effective redress to their grievances. Hence it was sufficient for them to visit the ICDS centers once or twice to get their babies treated or vaccinated and that would have been sufficient for them as their purpose in visiting the ICDS centers become served sooner or later and they did not expect more than that from the ICDS centers. However, more significant than that has been the public disaffection from the governmental machinery’s ability to deliver the perfect response to their grievances as and when complained is filed with them. People expressed their utter disappointment with the working of the ICDS centers for quite some time without the requisite supplies or without the trained or skilled professional staff. But when they went for at the block or the district levels, their issues seemed to fell on the deaf years as no official was ready to assure them as to when their grievances would be resolved.
6.8 Proper Response of the Authorities

Table: 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nos.</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Though there was a very small number of just 6 persons who responded in positive when asked as if they went to the competent authorities to get their complaints filed with them, it was heartening to hear their version of what happened when they went for that. In other words, the next question posed to them related to the issues of the responses of the competent authorities. The respondents were asked whether they get proper response from the authorities on the issues that they had already raised with them on the state of working of ICDS centers. As the figures in the table reveal, cent percent people came out with the response that there was nothing that could have been called as proper response from the side of the authorities on the issues and challenges they were faced with while going to the ICDS centers. They came out with very heavy heart that when they went to the block or district headquarters to file their complaints with the competent authorities, they were not at all properly entertained at the offices of the officers as they were not supposed to hear anything negative about the ICDS centers working in the district. But when on insistence, they were allowed to sit and give their versions on the state of things at the ICDS centers, they were just asked to give their versions in the form of written complaints which probably would have been thrown in the dustbin once they left the office.

In the bureaucratic culture of the country, it needs to be pointed out that the system of complaint redress and giving proper response to the people who feel dissatisfied with one or the other issues of the governmental services is still very poor and unresponsive. Though in the wake of the neo liberal structural adjust programmes being implemented by the government in different aspects of the life of the people the people are getting slightly close to the administration, the culture of consumer first has still not descended on the Indian soil. It is for this reason that the officials still
consider themselves as the custodian of the governmental policies and programmes in the districts especially backward districts such as Barabanki. Under such a perception of the governmental functionaries, it could very well be imagined that the public functionaries would not at all welcome any aspersion on their style of functioning or modus operandi in the district. Hence, the anguish of the beneficiaries of the policies and programmes launched under the ICDS centers in the district of Barabanki could be quite understandable and appreciated. However, such a state of affairs need not be allowed to persist for long as such a long drawn public dissatisfaction might lead to other kinds of social, economic political and administrative complications in the working of the district administration. Hence, remedial measures must be taken on the part of the competent authorities so that public anger on the subject could have been subsided before it becomes unbearable for them.

6.9 Exploration of Other Avenues to Secure ICDS Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Response</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Respondents</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the majority of the people in the district felt dissatisfied with the quality and nature of services being provided at the different ICDS centers in the district and their queries and complaints were normally going unattended, then the respondents were posed with another related question as to their ability to explore other avenues through which they could get the ICDS centers work in an efficient and effective manner. Though the question was left open ended in order to allow the respondents to add any or many other options of recourse that they would take to make their complaints heard, the basic purpose behind this question was to assess the level of political awareness and if they are sufficiently politically aware, they needed to have taken the help of their political representatives to get their issues and challenges resolved. Hence in the course of interview many a time the respondents were not sure of the answer that they should offer to the researcher. In such cases, certain indicative hints were to be given to them so that they are able to understand the question fully.
and are able to prepare their well considered answer in accordance with their experiences of life. On this, thus, the responses of the respondents had been very illuminating and reflective of the state of things happening in the political landscape of the rural populace in the most populous state of the country.

On repeated prodding and further clearing of the questions, the respondents came out with their version of the feeling and understanding of the other avenues available to them to get their issues and challenges resolved in the district. On this issue, the respondents suggested that three options would have been available to them to fall back upon in case of their grievances not getting fulfilled in the ICDS centers. To begin with, they could have gone to the superior officials of the district who might have been in charge of the ICDS centers or the ICDS scheme. Only two out of the six respondents informed that she went to the block and district level officials to get their issues resolved but the response of such officials were not encouraging and hence she did not feel happy to share her experiences with other co villagers of people associated with the ICDS centers. The other option available to them could have been going to their political representatives at different levels in order to put forward their opinion on the state of affairs in the ICDS centers effectively. As a matter of fact, the political class was found to be quite divided in the district on the caste lines and hence it also did not seem to be preferred choice of the people to fall back upon. And, hence, finally, they had no other option than to go to their caste chieftains who would take up the matter at the appropriate forums sooner or later.

6.10 Scope for Effective Implementation of ICDS in Barabanki

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nos.</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the pathetic conditions of the implementation of the ICDS in the district, the question was put before the respondents, both the official as well as the general public whether they find any scope for the improvement in the effective implementation of the ICDS in the district. This question appeared slightly uncomfortable to the
respondents probably given the high level of despondency prevalent in the district with regard to the status of the governmental machinery in the district. As a result, in the beginning, a number of the respondents appeared to be hesitant to respond to the question on the ground that the question is not appropriate as that would not lead to any kind of improvement in the status or of the scope for the improvement in the effective implementation of the ICDS in the district. However, on the insistence of the researcher that the findings of the research would be placed before the competent authorities as the policy suggestions for taking of appropriate actions, the people agreed to tick their responses to the questionnaire. But even after their willingness to give their opinion on the potential or the scope for the improvement in the effective implementation of the ICDS in the district, the range of the responses reflected the negative perceptions the people did have with regard to the government support and assistance in the different fields of social support.

Ever since India achieved independence, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary in India have taken several proactive measures to put in place an exhaustive legal and policy framework for safeguarding the rights of children so as to ensure their survival, development, protection and participation. Several new plans, schemes and programmes have been initiated to address issues concerning children. Yet, the plight of children across the country has not got better and continues to be precarious. The burning issues relating to children are the adverse child sex ratio, persistently high infant and child mortality ratios, wide gender gaps in literacy, escalating violence against children especially against the girl child and the rising incidents of female foeticide, female infanticide and child marriage. This apart, the existent loopholes in the laws concerning the definition of the child as well as those laws that try to protect their vulnerabilities are areas that cannot be ignored if at all the best interests of children are to be protected and promoted.

Early child welfare programmes were not proving to be very effective and there was a gap between the objectives of the service provided and the actual provision of services. Lack of coordination between various levels of the programmes was identified as one of the most important cause of inefficient administration of child welfare. During the fourth and fifth five year plans it was felt that there was a need to provide child welfare services in an integrated manner if the country wanted to improve the position of the child.
6.11 Suggestions for Improvement of ICDS in the District

Table: 10
Suggestions for Improvement of ICDS in the District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestions</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Behaviour of Staff</th>
<th>Timely attendance in Centre</th>
<th>Adequacy of Supplies</th>
<th>Door step delivery of services</th>
<th>Measures for public awareness</th>
<th>Counseling for the women</th>
<th>Non-discriminatory behaviour of the staff</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
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As part of the feedback of the respondents on their suggestions for the improvement of the ICDS services in the district, a variety of suggestions were offered by the respondents. To begin with as many as 44 respondents asked for the good behaviour on the part of the staff of the ICDS centers in order get them encouraged to visit the centre in the need of certain assistance from it. This kind of response has come mainly from the people belonging to the poor and marginalised sections of the society as they have to face a number of conduct relates issues and challenges whenever they visit the centre. In this context, the basic parameter of the social behavior in such kind of caste and tradition ridden societies is the social status of a person in the society in such a way that the persons belonging to the upper castes are likely to get better and polished treatment from the side of the government staff in comparison to the people who are not in a position to get same kind of respect from the staff. Hence, when it comes for them to offer their suggestions to make the implementation of the ICDS more efficient and effective in terms of the encouragement for the people to visit them, they invariably would say that the staff must behave in a good manner to them. However, this suggestion has not come from a large number of people indicating that the other people did not face such kind of challenge in their visits to the centers of the ICDS.

In view of the implementation of a number of employment generation schemes in the district such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, a lot of people, particularly women in the district have been found to be visiting the field for getting employment in the projects undertaken under such schemes. But in such cases of employment, the major issues faced them relate to the timings for
reporting to the duty at the field. But when the women along with their children go to
the ICDS centers, quite often they found that the staff of the centre had not been on
their duty and as a result they had to wait for them. This obviously resulted into the
loss of job for them for a day. Given the precarious conditions of the people in the
district, the majority of the people would not be in a position to miss their job even for
a day. So, the only choice left for them is to forgo their day of going to the ICDS
centres in place of their jobs. As a result, their regularity in the visiting of the ICDS
centres gets affected very hardly. Hence, when it came for them to offer their
suggestion for the improvement in the implementation of the ICDS scheme in the
district, they naturally suggested that the staff and other workers of the centers must
be present in their places on time so that the people could get the support and
assistance of the center even without compromising with their job and livelihoods on
regular basis.

A major challenge faced by the people in the district also relate to the inadequacy of
the medicines and other supplies in the centres as per the needs of the people. As has
already been discussed that the majority of the people in the district faced the problem
not being able to go to the centres due to the clash in the timings of their jobs with the
timings of the centres, the inadequacy of the essential supplies in centres further
complicated the problems for them. As a matter of fact, there has been a general
perception amongst the people in the district that the staff of the ICDS centers are not
only inefficient and ineffective but also corrupt and unscrupulous to such an extent
that in many cases they would have siphoned off the essential supplies provided to the
centre to the open markets. As a result, they would just drive away the people from
the centers to go to the open market to purchase of the essential things recommended
at the center. Moreover, the people would not find time to visit the centre for the same
kind of work time and again due to a number of factors. Hence, when asked for their
suggestion to improve the implementation of the ICDS in the district, a large number
of people came out with the suggestion that the essential supplies such as medicines,
nutritional support as well as other things must be kept in sufficient amount in the
centers so that the people need not go back to their homes and come back for the same
task time and again.

It is common knowledge that the ICDS centres despite their claims of being people
friendly and consisting of the staff and environment in which people feel like coming
their time and again, the majority of the people in the district showed their reluctance to visit the ICDS centres with a happy and cheerful experience of the past. Moreover, there have been a number of practical problems as well for the people especially women to visit the ICDS centres time and again. Hence, the suggestions that would have made their interactions with the ICDS centers more happy and cheerful would have come from the people. One amongst such suggestions was the idea that the services offered through the ICDS centers need to be offered at the door steps of the people in such a way that the people who were not able to visit the centers on the date and time given to them, they must be located and given the services at their home itself. The people's experience during the programmes such as the pulse polio campaign and other such programmes had also come handy for them as the volunteers of the programme used to visit the houses of the people whose ward or children could not go to the polio centres for the administration of the polio drops. Thus, it was one of the preferred options for the people that they would have preferred that the staff of the ICDS centers would have visited the household of the people with the adequate support and supplies to serve their needs and requirements at their houses only that could have saved them from visiting the ICDS centres.

A typical issue faced by the people in the district with regard to the services being offered through the network of the ICDS centers was seen in terms of the lack of awareness of the people with regard to the innovative schemes and programmes initiated by the government for the welfare of the people. As a matter of fact, it has been argued by a number of experts that in the efficient and effective implementation of the different welfare measures of the government, the most important thing could have been the public awareness of that programme or scheme. In other words, in the absence of the public awareness of a particular scheme or the programme, the people would not be expected to avail such services either on their own volition or on the persuasion of the others. Hence, the public awareness has been emphasised by the respondents in the district also as one of the key issues in their availing the full range of the services and support being offered through the network of the ICDS centres. Hence it came for them to offer their valuable suggestions in making the implementation of the ICDS scheme in the district, they asked for the vigorous public awareness campaigns in the district to the maximum extent.
In the end, there has been a general impression on the part of the respondents that the services offered through the network of the ICDS centers are not able to reach to the poor and marginalised sections of the society for two distinct reasons. One, a large number of women are not able to appreciate the value or the importance of the services and support offered through the ICDS centres. In other words, a large number of women are not able to make out that they are in the need of special health and nutritional support at the times of their pregnancy as well as when they are in the family way. Moreover, even after the birth of the baby, the mothers need to have a strong diet rich in fat and protein so as to offer sufficient and nutritious milk to the child. But their ignorance of these things makes them take the services of the ICDS lightly. Two, a number of people belonging to the lower castes as well as other marginalised sections of society faced a lot of discrimination as well as insult in the ICDS centers for the reasons of their social status and economic condition. Such behaviour of the ICDS staff would normally dissuade these people to go to the ICDS centres. Hence, when it came for them to offer suggestions for the betterment of the implementation of the ICDS services in the district, they would insist on the resolution of the problems faced by them.

6.12 Conclusion

The major findings of the study have been presented in this chapter through the methods of data collection, systematization, tabulation and analysis to arrive at certain plausible conclusions regarding the status of the implementation of the ICDS scheme in the Barabanki district of Uttar Pradesh. The respondents of the universe were served with the structured questionnaire through which they were able to offer their inputs and responses to the researcher. In a number of cases, the researcher had to intervene and suggest the plausible options that the respondents could take recourse to give their replies. In the end, is has been able to secure the responses of the required number of the respondents in the district through motivations and persuasions. In certain cases, the interview method of research has also been taken recourse to in order to make sure that the respondents are able to understand the questions and are able to offer their best possible inputs and responses on the given question. Thus, the data generated in the course of the data collection has truly been encouraging and
enriching for the researcher as they give the true picture of the status of the implementation of ICDS in the district.

The analysis of the data has produced a number of startling revelations on the status of the implementation of the ICDS in the Barabanki district of Uttar Pradesh. The findings of the study have indeed been in accordance with the objectives of the research. The hypothesis of the study has indeed got its verification in terms of the inputs offered by the respondents in the district. They were able to provide their valuable inputs as well as responses on almost all the major aspects of the status of the implementation of the ICDS scheme in the district. The range of the inputs of the people spanned right from the basic question as to their awareness to the idea of ICDS in the district to that of the issues and challenges faced in the availing of the services offered under the scheme. There has been general tendency on the part of the respondents that they would not prioritize the issues of their health and nutrition over and above their daily jobs and livelihoods. This reflects the general tendency in the district that the poor social and economic conditions of the people would not allow them to give preference to their health and nutrition over their livelihood issues. But when it came for the people to offer their suggestions for improving the status of the implementation of the ICDS scheme in the district, the responses of the people have been found to be quite encouraging that reflected their anticipation that the services provided under the rubric of the ICDS need to be streamlined and made more efficient and effective.
Endnotes

1 Profile of the Barabanki district is available on the official website of the district administration at: https://barabanki.nic.in/, accessed on 30.03.2018


3 Available at: https://barabanki.nic.in/, accessed on 30.03.2018


5 The health scheme outlays for the district for issues like health of the females is available at: http://upnrhm.gov.in/assets/site-files/dhap/districts/Barabanki/BARABANKI__3_.pdf, accessed on 23.02.2018


7 The status of the implementation of the ICDS in the district is available at: https://icds-wcd.nic.in/issnip/ISSNIP-Web-Contents/RIGHT%20SIDE%20TABS/3-List%20of%20162%20Districts%20under%20ISSNIP/162_districts.pdf, accessed on 21.02.2018

8 Ibid


10 Ibid