The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme has completed a journey of four and half decades in the development of women and child health across the country. It targets a number of important issues such as nutritional and health development of children from 0-6 years and women at various stages of their lifecycle (adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers). Despite all these processes being in place, there are gaps in health and nutrition levels mainly with regard to malnutrition and mortality rates (maternal, infant and child etc.) in certain geographies.

This is true not only in the national context but also in the State of Karnataka. To combat these problems, the state has introduced schemes that run under the ICDS umbrella. These include Srushti (provision of eggs on certain days), KsheeraBhagya (provision of milk), Mathrupoorna (hot meals for pregnant women and lactating mothers) etc. which try to address these gaps to the best possible.

The Public Affairs Centre (PAC) through its contribution to this project has emphasised upon the involvement of the community at different levels of the scheme implementation. The current project tries to build a strong linkage between the community and other stakeholders including the government so that the sustainability is assured.

**Stakeholder Experience**

**Interned with PAC on the WCD Project**

“Karnataka among the other southern states in India has the highest percentage of children (between the age of 0-5 years) stunting which means children are not growing to the appropriate height for their age. Stunting indicates issues with malnutrition and the delivery of ICDS to the children. Anganwadi Centres are the key actors in delivering or implementing the ICDS in villages but it has been noticed that the delivery has not been uniform and the quality of the delivery has also been low. My suggestion to improve the functioning of the scheme would include increasing accountability and defining the role each individual needs to play and making them aware of their responsibilities. Secondly, to ensure that the Centre and its services are accessible to the service receivers and if it isn’t then how that could be rectified”.

**Project Updates**

While the PAC project on the ICDS service delivery aims to improve the implementation process adopting a holistic approach, specific actions are being designed as follows:

A. Studying separate interventions for different targeted beneficiaries under the scheme.

B. Laying emphasis on 5 specific components that includes malnutrition, immunisation, health, pre-school education and early childhood care.

C. Designing a broad-based process-outcome framework for each of the components that will cover a detailed study of infrastructure, services provision to the beneficiaries, community mobilisation and household dynamics to ensure effective implementation of the scheme throughout the state.

D. Analysing roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders involved in the implementation of the scheme and the norms with regard to infrastructure among other important aspects while illustrating the process-outcome framework, from the existing guidelines.