

# PERFORMANCE OF PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRES: A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO VADAKARA PHC

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## ABSTRACT

Health is an important part of human resources development. For creating healthy citizens in a society authorities should provide essential health care facilities and services. The essential step for provision of good health care is active working of the primary health centers. Primary health centres are designed for combined curative and preventive health needs of the rural people. Services of Primary health centers are availed by the people of all ages. The services included provision of vitamin tablets, iron tablets for pregnant woman, testing blood pressure, diabetics, vitamin deficiencies and immunization for infant and citizen. Additional physicians, health assistants and infrastructures facilities are vital in the primary health center in order to minimize the gap between supply and demand for health care. Access to health services, provision of essential medicine and security doctors are other bottlenecks in the primary health care scenario. Government should promote health care programs for deprived sections along with mass immunization and fertility control measures through primary health centers.

**Keywords:** Primary Health Center, Health, Health Care, Immunization, Vaccination

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Health is defined as physical, mental and social well-being by World Health Organization. Alma Ata Declaration of 1978 by WHO adopted Primary Health Care (PHC) program as a strategy for 'health for all.' Primary health care is essential health care that can be universally accessible to individuals and families in the community at an affordable cost. Overall social and economic progress of the community will be attained through a well-developed health system of the country.

The national health policy (NHP) 2001 of the Government of India aims to achieve adequate standard good health among the public through the establishment of sophisticated technologies in unprovided areas. Government of Kerala adopted the concept of primary health care through the implementation of ten-point programs, including immunization of all children under five, supply of nutritious food and provision of health education. The Primary health Centres provides accessible, affordable and essential health facilities throughout the life. It should focus on health promotion, palliative care and disease prevention. Health sector achievement in Kerala has made a typical position in the world. According to a latest study by the World Bank and Niti Ayog, Kerala is ranked first in primary health care in the country. As a part of the AARDRAM mission, the Kerala government is upgrading the existing PHCs to Family Health Centres (FHCs) for fulfilling the family health care requirements to address the preventive, promotive, and rehabilitative health

care interventions of the local community. Progress in health indicators is done through the primary health centres at the grassroots level.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rahi Jain and Rao (2018) explored the vulnerability of health facilities in primary health centers in the form of inadequate laboratory services. Research has consistently shown that negative relation between inadequate importance and consideration and health target achievement.

Rao and Sheffel (2018) attempted to examine the quality of care and structural quality of health center on evading behavior. The study indicates that negative relation between regular presence of doctors and bypassing behavior. The study proposed that efforts to strengthen capacity based primary care services.

Sathyananda et al. (2018) attempted to analyze the performance assessment of primary health centers in developing countries. The study observed that many developing countries were facing a deficiency of suitable resources to assess the performance of PHC. The study revealed that there is no disparity in performance measurements in developed and developing countries.

Asaah Kofi (2017) investigated the equity and accessibility of health care facilities. It was observed that inequality in the spatial distribution of and disparity in spatial accessibility of health facilities are in the study area.

The study by Rajpurohit and Srivastava (2013) indicates that in rural communities, literacy is linked to the utilization of primary health center services. The majority of the people are aware of the existence of a primary health center in their area, but their utilization is very small.

## 3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The target of good health care can be achieved if the primary health centres are well equipped in terms of medical personnel, medicines, and infrastructure facilities. The primary health centre provides efficient and quality health care and family welfare services to the rural community. Information required for the study was collected from the experiences and perceptions of the 75 beneficiaries of the Vadakara taluk of the Kozhikode district of Kerala state.

**Table 1.1:** Number of children Vaccinated at Vadakara PHC

Year	Number of Children Vaccinated
2018	535
2019	445
2020	827
2021	330
2022	949

Source: PHC Records

The above table reveals the total number of children who got vaccinations from the primary health center from 2018 to 2022. The covid-19 period was the time when the least number of children got vaccinated as per the records.

**Table 1.2:** Number of Pregnant women reported at PHC

Year	Number of Pregnant women
2018	75
2019	82
2020	88
2021	117
2022	113

Source: PHC Records

Table 1.2 reveals that the total number of pregnant women reported in the last five years is as per the records. In the year 2021, a large number of pregnant women were registered in the Primary Health Centre.

**Table 1.3:** The Gender of respondents

Gender	Number of responses	Percentage (%)
Female	50	66.7
Male	25	33.3
Transgender	0	0
Total	75	100

**Source:** Primary Data

The above table reveals the gender of respondents. Out of the 75 individual participants, 66.7 percent of individuals are females and there are no transgender persons in the sample.

**Table 1.4:** Opinion of the respondents about PHC

Facilities	Available (%)	Not Available
Availability of Drugs	57(76%)	18(24%)
Availability of free treatment	65(86.7%)	10(13.3%)
Accessibility of health personals	55(73.3%)	20(26.7%)
Immunization Service	63(84%)	12(16%)
Advice and Counselling of staff	58(77.3%)	17(22.7%)
Quality of the treatment and nursing care	55(73.3%)	20(26.7%)
Cleanliness	65(86.7%)	10(13.3%)
First Aid	65(86.7%)	10(13.3%)
Services of the ASHA worker	62(82.7%)	13(17.3%)
Better Services	59(78.7%)	16(21.3%)

**Source:** Primary Data

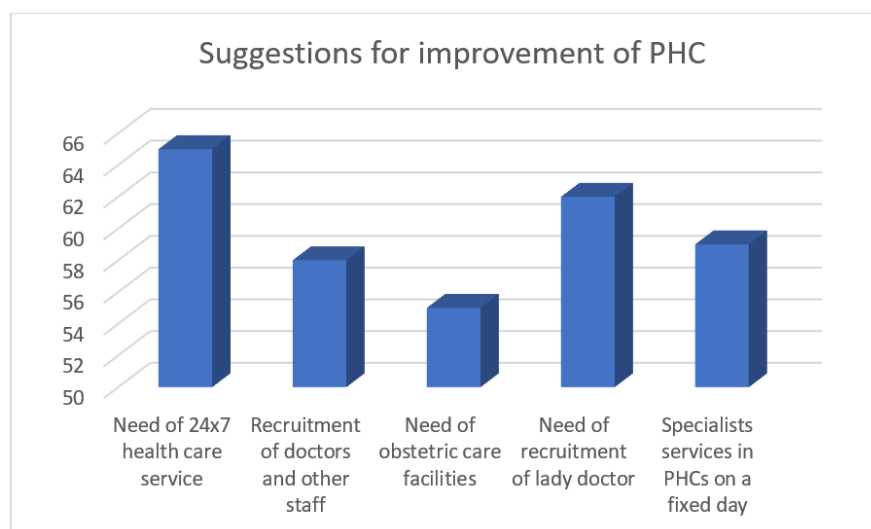
The above table reveals that the perception of the respondents about primary health Centre. 76 percentage of respondents opined that they have enough drugs in the health Centre. 86.7 percentage of respondents opinioned that free treatment is available in PHC. The services provided by the PHC such as immunization services, cleanliness and Accredited social health activist (ASHA) are supported by more than 80 percentage of the respondents.

**Table: 1.5:** Suggestions to improve the level of performance of primary health Centre

Suggestions	Needed (%)	Not Needed
Need of 24x7 health care service	65(86.7%)	10(13.3%)
Recruitment of doctors and other staff	58(77.3%)	17(22.7%)
Need of obstetric care facilities	55(73.3%)	20(26.7%)
Need of recruitment of lady doctor	62(82.7%)	13(17.3%)
Specialists services in PHCs on a fixed day	59(78.7%)	16(21.3%)

**Source:** Primary Data

The above table reveals the suggestions of respondents to improve the services provided by the primary health center. Most of the respondents (87%) recommended the requirement of 24 hour availability of PHC. The necessity of obstetric care facilities and the recruitment of lady doctors was demanded by most of the respondents. Primary health centre should provide the services of specialist doctors on a fixed day.



#### 4. CONCLUSION

Primary health centers (PHCs) are crucial medical establishments that operate at the grassroots level for health care. They are effectively applied for enlightening the health of rural society. Nowadays lifestyle diseases are expanding along with escalating medical expenses. Many families become impoverished due to the impact of chronic diseases. Primary health centers are essential in advancing the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Perceptions exhibited the mismatch between the demand for and supply of health care services. It was observed that construction of health infrastructure in rural areas was sometimes unutilized or underutilized. It is essential for the recruiting of medical and paramedical staff so as to ensure the purpose of their establishment. Irregular supply of essential medicines and essential checkups reduces the quality of health care services. Mere establishment of PHCs is not sufficient; it is the active interference of the people that improves the health status of the society.

#### CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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