

Do Crèches, Participatory Women's groups and Home visits to prevent child undernutrition benefit the most marginalised?

Analysis from a quasi-experimental study in rural eastern India



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BACKGROUND

- Undernutrition in children <5 years in India: 38% are stunted; 21% are wasted
- Recommended nutrition specific & sensitive interventions:
 - Increasing access to diverse foods for girls and women
 - Delaying first pregnancy, ANC, iron supplementation, IYCF
 - Preventive actions and care seeking for childhood illnesses
 - Treatment of SAM
 - Women's education and empowerment; safe water, sanitation and sustainable livelihood
- Among Scheduled Tribe families, stunting is as high as 44% (NFHS-4)
- There is a need for interventions to reach the most underserved communities

PURPOSE

To test the impact of two interventions:

a) Crèches, participatory women's groups and counselling through home visits

b) Participatory women's groups and counselling through home visits only

on the nutritional status of children under three in underserved areas inhabited by tribal communities



METHODS: INTERVENTIONS

Crèches (Child-centric)



Feeding, Hygiene, Early Childhood Care & Development, growth promotion, mosquito net, smokeless environment

Counselling through home visits with families



Counseling for IYCF, illness prevention, and support for referrals, discussing growth monitoring milestones

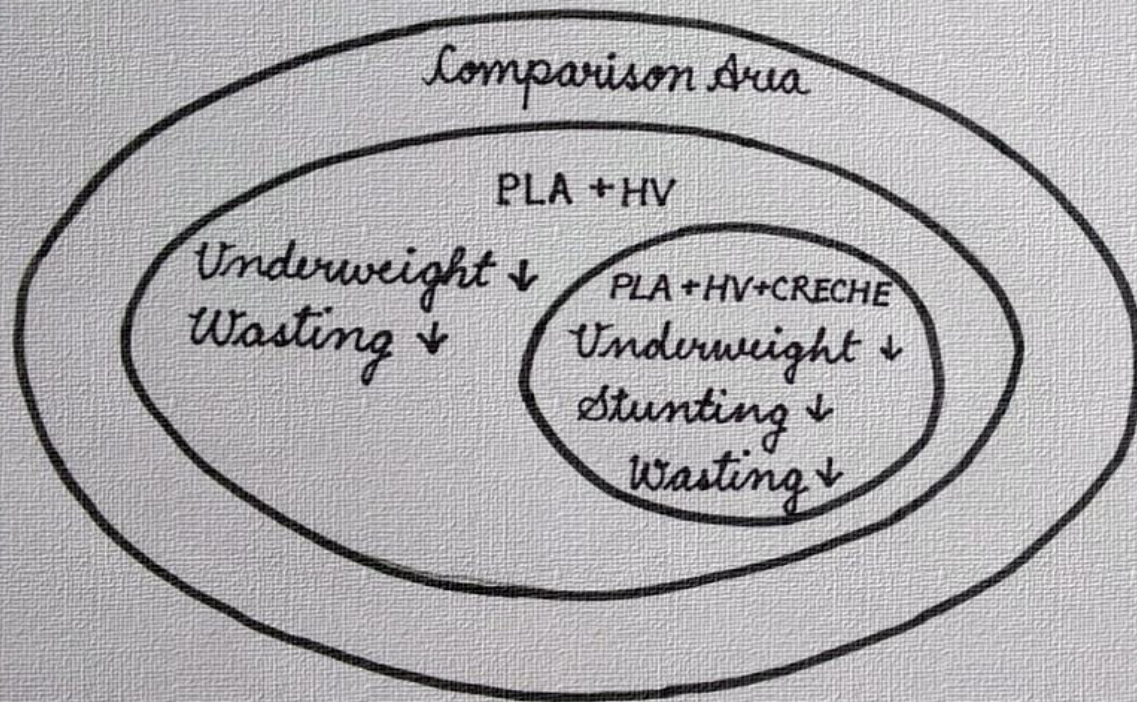
PLA Meetings with Communities



Women's Empowerment, Food diversity, Food frequency, nutrition in pregnancy, Birth spacing, WASH

METHODS: INTERVENTIONS

Action Against Malnutrition



PLA - Participatory Learning And Action

HV - Home Visit



RESULTS: OVERALL – 3868 CHILDREN AT BASELINE; 3563 AT ENDLINE

REACHED 83% OF TARGET SAMPLE AT BASELINE AND 76% AT ENDLINE

Crèches +PLA+Home Visit Vs Control

- 27% reduction in the odds of wasting (aOR = 0.73; 0.55-0.97; $p=0.028$)
- 40% reduction in odds of underweight (aOR=0.60; 0.47-0.75, $p< 0.001$)
- 27% reduction in odds of Stunting (aOR=0.73; 0.57-0.93, $p=0.012$)

Participatory Learning Action(PLA)+Home Visit Vs Control

- 34% reduction in the odds of wasting (aOR = 0.66; 0.51–0.88, $p = 0.004$)
- 25% reduction in odds of underweight (aOR = 0.75; 0.59–0.95, $p = 0.018$)

RESULTS: EFFECTS ON WASTING AMONG MOST MARGINALISED

	% CHANGE	OR (95% CI)	P value
CRECHES, PLA AND HOME VISITS			
All children	-27%	0.73 (0.55-0.97)	0.028
Most marginalised	-56%	0.44 (0.29-0.71)	<0.001
PLA AND HOME VISITS			
All children	-34%	0.66; 0.51–0.88	0.004
Most marginalised	-47%	0.53 (0.34-0.82)	0.005

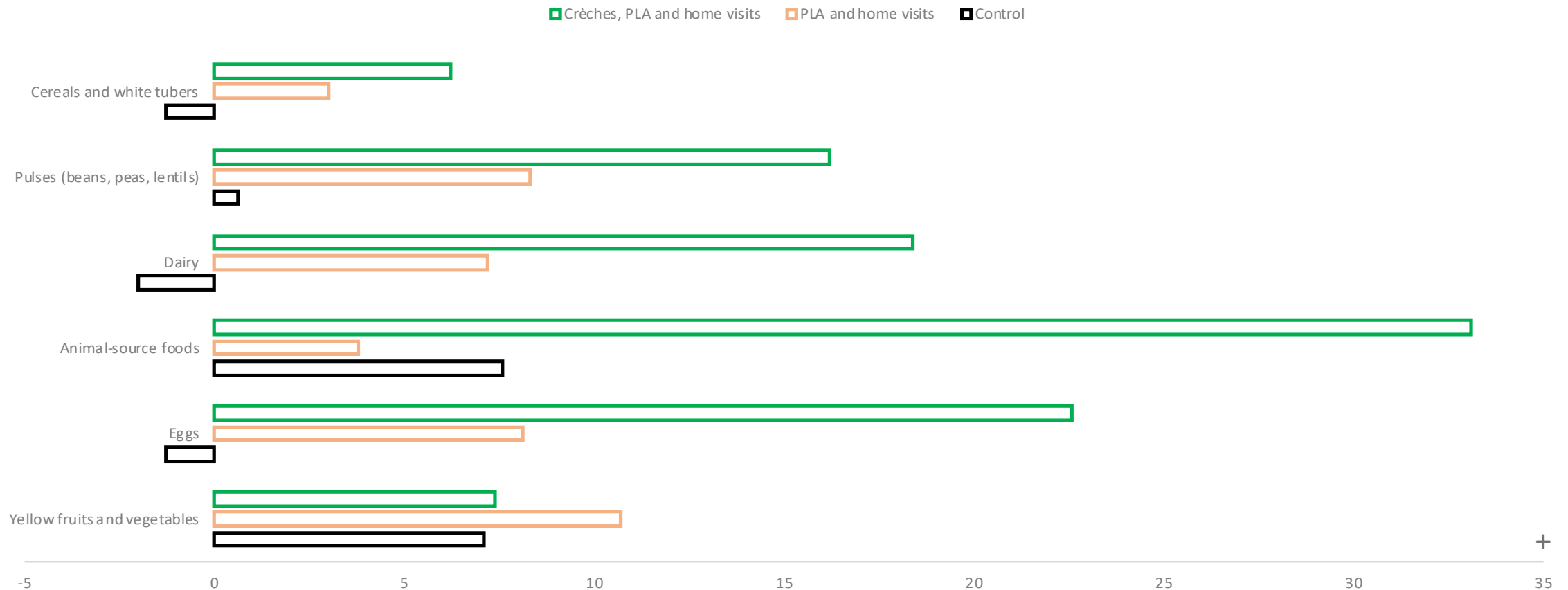
Gope et al. *BMC Public Health* 2019 19: 962

* Most marginalised: belonging to Scheduled Tribes and to the two poorest wealth quintiles



RESULTS

CHANGES IN % OF CHILDREN AGED 6-36 MONTHS CONSUMING DIFFERENT FOODS



Data ascertained through 24h recall

Gope et al. *BMC Public Health* 2019
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-7274-3>

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STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

STRENGTHS:

- One of three studies quantifying the potential contribution of crèches to undernutrition under 3 in India
- Control area benefitted the study

LIMITATIONS:

- Selection of areas was purposive
- Only 75% eligible respondents in the endline survey – possibility of missing vulnerable mothers who may have migrated or were unavailable due to workload
- Social desirability - behaviours may have been influenced by the intervention
- Study was not randomised, but to overcome selection bias and seasonal and secular changes, endline was done in the same season

CONCLUSIONS

- Crèches, Participatory Learning and Action meetings and counselling through home visits reduced undernutrition among children under three in rural eastern India
- These interventions can be scaled up through the Government's existing plan for home visits and community mobilization with Accredited Social Health Activists through efforts to support crèches.



RESULTS UPTAKE

- Ekjut involved in mainstreaming crèches through resources from Government using funds from District Mineral Foundation – 60 crèches in Keonjhar district, Odisha state, India from 2018
- Other agencies in 3 districts of Jharkhand state, India using PLA meeting + home visit + crèche to address undernutrition – Ekjut gives technical support
- District Administration officials of other districts showing interest in setting up crèches



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VIDEO



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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
AVAILABLE
ON THE R4NUT WEBSITE