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**PROBLEMS AND FUNCTION OF ANGANWADI WORKERS (AWWs) IN
ASSAM- A CASE STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SELENGHAT
BLOCKS OF JORHAT DISTRICT**

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Abstract:

Anganwadi workers play a significant role for effective implementation of the ICDS service. The study will focus on the effectiveness of the performance of the Anganwadi workers. The study will assess the performance of the Anganwadi workers in discharging selected child care activities of the ICDS programme. The working environment has very much importance in the process of service delivery by the Employees. Proper physical condition of the Anganwadi centres along with the Quality work life is very much essential for better performance of the Anganwadi workers. Quality work life is the degree to which employees are able to satisfy their personal needs through experience in the organization. The study will highlight the infrastructural facilities' availability of shortage at the Anganwadi centres of the district and also on quality work life of the Anganwadi workers. An attempt has been made to highlights and assess the profile of the Anganwadi workers and to examine the efficiency of Anganwadi workers regarding selected child care activities and offer some suggestive measures for the upliftment of their efficiency and effectiveness etc.

Key words: Attendance of the Children, Age group of the Children, Gender of the Student, Teaching Aids used in the Anganwadi Centers and Awareness the teaching methods by the parents etc.

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

Pre-school children are our future citizen and form an important segment of the Indian population. Children's Development is an important as the development of material resources. A study team constituted by the planning commission in 1972 suggested comprehensive plan of action to meet the needs of children as result of the recommendation of the study team, along with a national policy of children in 1974 the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) project was introduces in 1975. ICDS Scheme is the most comprehensive scheme of the Government of India for early childhood care and development. It aims at enhancing survival and development of children aged 0 to 6 from the vulnerable sections of the society. Young children are the most vulnerable because the foundation for the lifelong learning and human development is laid in the early years, therefore the ICDS programme has been designed to promote and facilitate total development of the child, through different components viz. health, nutrition, pre-school, education etc.

1.2 NEED OF THE STUDY:

Anganwadi workers play a significant role for effective implementation of the ICDS service. The study will focus on the effectiveness of the performance of the Anganwadi workers. The study will assess the performance of the Anganwadi workers in discharging selected child care activities of the ICDS programme. The study will also focus on the working environment of the Anganwadi workers.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Anganwadi worker is the key person and is charged with multiple responsibilities for achieving the targeted goals. Anganwadi workers are the main link between the community and ICDS schemes. So the success of the schemes largely depends on the effectiveness of the Anganwadi workers. The Anganwadi worker in ICDS programme assumes a pivotal role in Anganwadi centre due to her close and continuous contact with the community. By virtue of her position in the community, the Anganwadi worker has more chances to interact and to educate the mothers. For that the Anganwadi worker should have the basic knowledge of the child care activities. Most of the Anganwadi workers are not highly qualified. Mostly they are matriculated of higher secondary passed. So it is important to train them properly and also it is require understanding whether the training facility helps them to assume their responsibility properly. .

The working environment has very much importance in the process of service delivery by the Employees. Proper physical condition of the Anganwadi centres along with the Quality work life

is very much essential for better performance of the Anganwadi workers. Quality work life is the degree to which employees are able to satisfy their personal needs through experience in the organization. The study will highlight the infrastructural facilities' availability of shortage at the Anganwadi centres of the district and also on quality work life of the Anganwadi workers.

The output of the ICDS programme is to a great extent dependent on the profile of the key functionaries i.e. Anganwadi worker, her qualification, experience, skill, attitude, training etc. So the investigator feels that it is important to assess the knowledge of the Anganwadi workers in depth and depending on the result refresher training for the Anganwadi workers can be designed from time to time.

The present study will play a vital role in helping the programme implementers to understand how efficiently the anganwadi workers are performing their jobs. The study will help to know various reasons which are responsible for low performance of AWW and also will have an insight into factors that are responsible for any poor or ineffective functioning. The study will also helps the policy makers of ICDS to take necessary measures to create congenial working environment and better Quality of Working Life (QWL) of the Anganwadi workers. The study will bring the drawbacks of the Anganwadi workers functioning and that will help to design proper training programme for the them and to make them efficient to discharge their duties and responsibilities.

1.4.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

With the following objectives the study has been undertaken:-

- To assess the profile of the Anganwadi workers in the study area.
- To examine the efficiency of Anganwadi workers regarding selected child care activities
- To assess the work culture of Anganwadi workers regarding selected child care activities.
- To offer some suggestive measures for the upliftment of their efficiency and effectiveness etc.

1.5 HYPOTHESIS:

The Anganwadi workers knowledge is sufficient to deliver selected child care services
The quality of work life of the Anganwadi workers is favourable to maintain their positive level of job satisfaction
The parents of whose children are enrolled are aware about the ICDS services and also utilizing the same.

1.6 REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Lalit kant et al (1984) as cited in Rani and Devi (2004) conducted a study on “profile of Anganwadi Workers and their knowledge about ICDS”. The profile of 96AWWs of Inderpuri project in Delhi and their knowledge about ICDS was accessed through a questionnaire. Majority of them neither told full form of ICDS nor enumerated all services being provided and listed out of their job responsibilities and hence it was recommended for continuous training and evaluation.

Dongre *et al.* (2007) conducted a study on “Perceived Responsibility of Anganwadi Workers and Malnutrition in Rural Wardha” to find out the nutritional status of under six children attending ICDS scheme and to study Anganwadi Workers’ perceived work load and operational problems. A cross-sectional survey was undertaken among six ICDS beneficiaries of all 20 Anganwadi of primary Health Center, Anji. Out of 2442 children, 1543 (63.1%) were examined and weighted by a team of trained personnel. Nutritional status of children was assessed by survey. Participatory methods like Venn diagram and seasonal calendars were used to collect qualitative data regarding AAWs perceived work load and food security with malnourished children. In the study overall, prevalence of underweight and severe underweight among children under six was found to be 53% and 15% respectively and among below three years it was 47% and 15% respectively. Among the three significantly perceived responsibilities, record keeping got the highest priority followed by preschool education and supplementary food distribution. Other activities like growth monitoring, immunization and examination of malnourished children got relatively poor emphasis.

Kumari, P.s (1991) as cited in Bhavya (2007) conducted a study on a sample of 115 Anganwadi workers belonging to both urban and rural centres, 8 supervisors and 345 beneficiaries. The tools used were a job involvement scale. A work involvement scale, a job stress scale and rating scales to assess job performance. Urban and rural differences were highlighted in the study, the urban anganwadi workers showing better job and work involvement and experiencing less job stress.

Kariyil and Sunny (2009) stated in the study entitled “A study on Redesigning the Anganwadis in Kerala” 90% of the workers had an educational background of matriculation and above. 92% of the workers had undergone refresher training. AWWs mentioned that inadequate public cooperation hinders the smooth functioning of the centers. Exhaustive tasks and lack of time stagnated their creativity for discharging their duties in a better way. Majority of the key

personnel (community leaders) appreciated the activities carried out by AWWs, they were happy with the prevailing conditions and claimed that the AWC prepared the children for Standard I. They also expressed the need to discontinue certain tasks like providing health services, conducting surveys, organizing a number of meetings, maintaining a number of registers, undertaking house visits and panchayat related tasks.

Sharma and Pandey (2009) conducted a study on “Impact of ICDS training on Service Delivery by Anganwadi Workers: A Study” in two districts on Uttar Pradesh, namely Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur. 100 AWWs were selected for the purpose of the study. It was found that AWWs who had attended the JTC (Job Training Course) had significantly better composite skills for communicating with children than those who had not. The AWWs who received Job Training did not exhibit significant gain on the composite skill of delivery of supplementary nutrition and its constituent set of two skills of maintaining hygiene and distribution of supplementary nutrition according to norms as per schematic pattern of the scheme than their counterparts who did not attend JTC.

1.7 RESEARCH GAP:

From the foregoing review of literature, it can be understood that though many studies have been conducted on different aspects of impact on AWWs and its role for improvement of the community a study specifically on the impact of AWWs and its role for improvement of the rural society in Assam is missing in literature. Moreover, till date, no research has been conducted on any aspects of AWWs sampled for this study. Hence, the study will make an attempt to examine present scenario of AWWs by highlighting the existing lacuna and drawbacks.

1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN:

Nature of the study: The study will be of descriptive and attempts have been made throughout the survey to give description of the state of affairs of the AWWs as it exists in the area under consideration. This kind of research will be appropriate to investigate the factors influencing the functioning of the AWWs.

Source of Data: The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data has been collected by preparing a well designed interview schedule and questionnaire containing both close ended and open ended questions. The secondary data has been collected from annual report of the ICDS, referred journals, internet, and periodical etc.

Technique of collection: The interview schedule in vernacular language was administered to the worker respondents of the AWCs by the researchers personally visiting the study area. The interview method permits greater depth of questioning and probing for data and the response rate tends to be quite high in face to face interviews. Since most of the workers and parents are low educated and do not understand English well, a copy of the interview schedule has been translated into vernacular language. So that AWWs able to understand the questions and give answers. Any difficulty face by the respondents has been cleared by the researcher. Face to face Questionnaire has also been prepared with close and open ended questions for the collection of data from the supervisors.

Sample design and size:

A sample of 40 Anganwadi Centres out of 197 centres, 40 Anganwadi Workers out of 394 workers, and 80 parents whose children were enrolled in Angawadi Centres were selected and using stratified random sampling technique. In order to collect the required information, two interview schedules were prepared:

- (i). for Anganwadi Workers to assess information about teaching method and teaching aids used for imparting education,
- (ii) For parents regarding educational facilities provided to children, their purpose to visit to the Anganwadi Centres etc.

This size is considered as reasonable and representative to minimize the bias and maximize the reliability because small sample will result in sampling error and large sample enhances the systematic bias.

Statistical tools: The data and information so collected has been edited, tabulated and analyzed with the help of simple statically tools such as ratio, percentage, comparative statement, coefficient of correlation etc. and also by application of specific software and inferences will be made.

1.9 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

The study only consider the child care activities of the anganwadi workers Since the study will be conducted in the 3 ICDS projects of Jorhat district as such generalization will be restricted to the area under investigation in particular and other areas where similar condition prevail in general

RESULT AND DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY:

Table: 1.1: Attendance of the Children

Sl. No	Factors	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Regularity	32	80
2	Not regularity	08	20
Total		40	100

Source: Field Study.

It is observed from the table that 80 percent of the children are attending regularly in the Anganwadi Centres of the sample survey while 20 percent of them are not attending in the Anganwadi Centres as their parents are unaware and illiterate so that they did not know whether their children are attending in the centres or not.

Table: 1.2: Age group of the Children

Sl.No	Factors (Years)	No of respondents	Percentage
1	1—3 years	24	60
2	3---6 Years	16	40
Total		40	100

Source: Field Study.

It is observed that from the sample of 40 Anganwadi Centres 60 percent of the children are belonging in the age group from 1-3 years while 40 percent of them are in the age group from 3-6 years. Hence, it is analyzed that majority of the children are belonging in the age group of 1-3 years.60 percent children were enrolled in anganwadi Centres at the age 1-3 years, as parents viewed that early years of life are important for child's development.

Table: 1.3: Gender of the Student

Sl.No	Factors	No of Anganwadi Centres	Percentage
1	Males	24	60
2	Females	16	40
Total		40	100

Source: Field Study

It is revealed from the table that 60 percent of the surveyed area children are enrolled

male students while 40 percent of them are females. It is observed that parents prefer to send their male children to anganwadi, as they believed that males are the future bread earners so they should be given more nutrition and education.

Table: 1.4: Educational Qualification of the Anganwadi workers

Sl.No	Qualification	Noof Respondents	Percentage
1	Up to V Std	08	20
2	V—X Std	24	60
3	H.S (Higher Secondary)	06	15
4	Graduate	02	05
5	P.G	Nil	00
	Total	40	100

Source: Field Study.

It reveals from the table that 60 percent of the anganwadi workers have educational qualification up to Xth standard while 20 percent of them are in class V std and a few of them are H.S (15%), and rest 5 percent are graduate. Hence, it is analyzed that majority of the anganwadi workers have their educational qualification up to Xth standard.

Teaching Aids used in the Anganwadi Centres (AWCs):

Pictorial charts, puppets and posters are the only teaching aids using in the Anganwadi Centres for imparting education to the children. Anganwadi workers use indigenous materials for making teaching aids like posters, puppets etc.

Table 1.5: Teaching Aids used in the Anganwadi Centers

Sl.No	Factors	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Indigenous materials	12	30
2	Charts etc	28	70
	Total	40	100

Source: Field Study.

It reveals from the table that 70 percent of the Anganwadi Workers are using charts as teaching aids while 30 percent of them are using indigenous materials as a teaching aid. Hence, it is analyzed that majority of the anganwadi workers are using charts as a teaching aids. 70 percent Anganwadi Workers teach children using charts that provided to them by the government. It is also revealed from the responses of anganwadi workers that no funds are provided for making teaching aids. But the government is providing charts of animals, birds, alphabet, number etc in the Anganwadi Centres.

Table: 1.6: Awareness the teaching methods by the parents

Sl.No	Factors	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Aware	16	20
2	Do not Aware	64	80
		80	100

Source: Field Study.

It is seen from the table that 80 percent of the respondents are aware of the teaching methods being used by the Anganwadi workers while 20 percent of them are not aware as they are illiterate and ignorant. Hence, it is analyzed that majority of the respondents are aware about the teaching methods.

Table: 1.7: Door to Door Visit by the Anganwadi Workers (AWWs)

Sl.No	Factors	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Do not visit	24	60
2	Fortnightly visit	08	20
3	Once a months	08	20
Total		40	100

Source: Field Study.

It is found that 60 percent of the Anganwadi Workers pay no home visits, while 20 percent of them visit fortnightly whereas 20 percent visit once in a month.

Table:1.8: Purpose of the parents to visit Anganwadi centres

Sl.No	Factors	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Accompany to the children	16	20
2	Get information	08	10
3	Required information	08	10
4	Do not visit	48	60
	Total	80	100

Source: Field Study.

It is found from the table that 20 percent of the parents pay visit to the centre just to accompany the child and no bring them back to home, 10 percent visit to the centre to get information regarding their child's performance. It is also observed in the present study that 60 percent parents who do not visit to anganwadi centre are found mostly illiterate and are unaware of the services provided at the anganwadi. All the parents responded that their child shows interest in studies after his/her enrollment in the Anganwadi centres. When asked about their views about Anganwadi, it was found that all the parents believe that Anganwadi centre is the best place for their children to get good nutrition, health and education, free of cost. They consider Anganwadi as the best place for children as their children get better nutrition and education for their overall development.

1.10.MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

- 80 percent of the children are attending regularly in the Anganwadi centres while 20 percent of them are not attending in the Anganwadi Centres.
- 60 percent children are enrolled in anganwadi Centres at the age 1-3 years, as parents viewed that early years of life are important for child's development.
- 60 percent of the children are enrolled male students while 40 percent of them are females.
- 60 percent of the anganwadi workers have educational qualification up to xth std. while

20 percent of them are in class V std.

- 70 percent Anganwadi Workers teach children using charts that provided to them by the government.
- 80 percent of the respondents are aware of the teaching methods being used by the Anganwadi workers while 20 percent of them are not aware as they are illiterate are ignorant.
- 60 percent of the Anganwadi Workers pay no home visits, while 20 percent of them visit fortnightly whereas 20 percent visit once in a month

It is also observed in the present study that 60 percent parents who made no visits to anganwadi centre are found mostly illiterate and are unaware of the services provided at the Anganwadi Centres.

1.11.MAJOR SUGGESTION:

Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and Helpers should make more efforts to achieve the targets of enrollments of children, expectant women and nursing mothers.

Facilities like drinking waters, electricity and sanitation should be provided in every Anganwadi Centres (AWWs).Every child under six should be eligible for enrollment at the local anganwadi. There should be no eligibility criteria other than age, and no ceiling on the number of children to be enrolled in a particular anganwadi.Anganwadi Workers should build good rapport with the people; she should visit people's houses regularly.Honorarium of both Anganwadi Workers and Helpers should be increased because the entire functions envisaged under the scheme are being done by them.

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