

A comparative study on Personal and Service profile of Anganwadi Workers in Punjab and Rajasthan states of India.

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Abstract

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) has been operating in the parts of Punjab for decades. Present study was conducted to examine the personal and service profile of Anganwadi Workers in Punjab and Rajasthan states of India. For this study eight districts selected from Punjab and districts selected from Rajasthan. Further, 05 Anganwadi Centers selected from each selected district for the study from both states. Here one Anganwadi center selected from one village. Therefore, 40 Anganwadi workers selected from Punjab state and again 40 Anganwadi workers selected from Rajasthan state of India. A total of 80 Anganwadi Workers were selected for the study those were running Anganwadi Centers involved for the study. The study showed that a majority 75% AWWs in Punjab and 65% of the AWWs in Rajasthan were aged between 26-45 years, which is very suitable age for effective functioning of the AWWs at the AWCs. Only 40% of AWWs in Punjab and 20% of the AWWs in Rajasthan had done graduation or post-graduation and a high majority (95%) AWWs in Punjab and all AWWs in Rajasthan were married. A majority 67.50% AWWs in Punjab and 80% of the AWWs in Rajasthan have service of more than ten years. Only 7.50% of the AWWs in Punjab and 5% of the AWWs in Rajasthan had high job satisfaction.

Key Words: Integrated Child Development Services (ICSD), Anganwadi Worker (AWW), Anganwadi Centres (AWC), Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM).

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I. INTRODUCTION

Realizing the great importance of bringing improvement in children and women's health and nutritional status, Integrated Child Development Services (ICSD) Scheme was launched on 2nd October 1975, on the auspicious occasion of the 106th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation.¹ Government of India initiated an integrated approach for the delivery of health care as well as nutrition and education services at the village level through Anganwadi Centres (AWCs). ICDS is one of the flagship programmes of the Government of India and represents one of the world's largest and unique programmes for early childhood care as well as women etc. In the initial stages ICDS was implemented in 33 selected community development blocks all over India. ICDS has expanded considerably in subsequent years and Up to 31st March 2013; there are 7076 sanctioned projects, 7025 operational projects in India. In Punjab ICDS program has expanded very rapidly. At present, there are 155 sanctioned and 154 operational projects.² Vijay Rattan³ is his book (1997) gave details about genesis, growth, components of ICDS and described a package of seven services comprising supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check-ups, and referral services' treatment of illness, Nutrition and health education and non-formal pre-school education which are provided under ICDS.

The focal point for the delivery of ICDS services in an *Anganwad*-a child care center located within the village or slum area itself. An Anganwadi Centre (AWC) usually covers a population of 400 to 800 in rural and urban areas and 300 to 800 in tribal and hilly areas. Each *Anganwadi* Centre is run by an *Anganwadi* worker (AWW), who is a part-time honorary worker. She is a woman of same locality, chosen by the people and having educational qualification of matric or graduation in some areas. She is assisted by a helper who is also a local woman and is paid a honorarium. Thakare et al, (2011)⁴, revealed that Anganwadi Worker (AWW) is the community based voluntary frontline workers of the ICDS programme. Selected from the community, she assumes a pivotal role due to her close and continuous contact with the beneficiaries. The output of the ICDS scheme is to a great extent dependant on the profile of the key functionary i.e. the AWW, her qualification, experience, skill, knowledge, awareness etc. Being the functional unit of ICDS programme which involves

different groups of beneficiaries, the AWW has to conduct various job responsibilities. Not only she has to reach to variety of beneficiary groups, she has to provide them with different services which include nutrition and health education, Pre-school education, supplementary nutrition etc. She also coordinates in arranging immunization camps, health check up camps. Her function also include community survey and enlisting beneficiaries, referral services to severely malnourished, sick and at risk children, enlisting community support for Anganwadi functions, organizing women`s group and maintenance of record and register. While performing various different types of functions, it is obvious that she might have to face variety of problems. Anuradha (1985)⁵ reported that 60% of the AWWs were in the age group of 15-24 years. 80% of AWWs were found to be undergraduates. 92% AWWs were trained and 48% of the AWWs felt that their workload was heavy. Kant *et al.* (1984)⁶ found that majority 92.71 percent AWWs could not tell full form of ICDS. Most of them (90.62%) could not enumerate all the services being provided and none could list out their job responsibilities. Rekha *et al.* (1983)⁷ had reported that in spite of delivery of package by AWWs, the mother`s knowledge was poor in most of the component and it might be due to failure of AWWs in communication and imparting knowledge to the community. A problem mentioned by Nayaret *al.* (1999)⁸ in their study is mainly related to inadequate honorarium and infrastructure. Keeping in view the relevance and effectiveness of the world`s largest and most unique ICDS programme, the present study was conduct to examine the personal and service profile of Anganwadi Workers in Punjab and Rajasthan states of India.

II. OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of present study was conduct to examine the personal and service profile of Anganwadi Workers in Punjab and Rajasthan states of India. Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Ludhiana, Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar, Jalandhar, Faridkot, Firozpur and Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar districts selected from the Punjab state and Jhunjhunnu, Sikar, Jaipur, Hanumangarh, Churu, Dausa, Nagaur and Bikaner districts selected from Rajasthan state for research program. Further, 05 Anganwadi Centers selected from each selected district for the study from both states. Here one Anganwadi center selected from one village. Therefore, 40 Anganwadi workers selected from Punjab state and again 40 Anganwadi workers selected from Rajasthan state of India. A total of 80 Anganwadi Workers were selected for the study those were running Anganwadi Centers involved for the study. The data collected was analyzed manually and tabulated.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Personal interview with Anganwadi Workers and observation of Anganwadi Centres by the researcher brought important results and major are presented in the tabular form below. All tables are related to the responses of Anganwadi workers.

**Table 1: Age of Anganwadi Workers
(Anganwadi Workers)**

Attributes	Responses of Total AWWs in Rajasthan in Punjab	Responses of Total AWWs in Rajasthan
20-25 years	02(05.00)	-----
26-35 years	10(25.00)	09(22.50)
36-45 years	20(50.00)	17(42.50)
46+ years	08(20.00)	14(35.00)
Total	40(100)	40(100)

Source: Culled from Primary data. Figures in brackets are percentages.

On the basis of age, the sample of AWWs was divided into four groups, viz., those falling between 20-25 years, 26-35 years, 36-45 years and 46 or more than 46 years. It is generally considered that age of AWW is important for effective functioning of the AWCs; hence, age was included as one of the parameters in the present study. The Table 1, shows the result in Punjab that 50% of AWWs were aged between 36-45 years, followed by one fourth 25% AWWs aged between 26-35 years, one fifth 20% AWWs of the selected sample were aged 46 years or more than 46 years and merely two AWW belonged to the age group of 20-25 years. It was found in Rajasthan that 42.50% of AWWs were aged between 36-45 years, while 22.50% AWWs aged between 26-35 years and 35% AWWs of the selected sample were aged 46 years or more than 46 years.

The findings also indicated that a majority 75% AWWs in Punjab and 65% of the AWWs in Rajasthan were aged between 26-45 years, which is very suitable age for effective functioning of the AWWs at the AWCs.

**Table 2: Educational qualifications of the AWWs
(Anganwadi Workers)**

Attributes	Responses of Total AWWs in Punjab	Responses of Total AWWs in Rajasthan
Matriculation	09(22.50)	23(57.50)
Higher secondary(12 th)	15(37.50)	09(22.50)
Graduation	10(25.00)	03(07.50)
Post-Graduation	06(15.00)	05(12.50)
Total	40(100)	40(100)

Source: Culled from Primary data. Figures in brackets are percentages.

Formal educational qualifications of the AWWs also influenced the implementation process of ICDS programme. The formal education received by the sample was recorded. The educational status of the AWWs ranged from Matriculation to post-graduation level. The data presented in Table 2 indicates in Punjab that 37.50% of the AWWs were educated upto higher secondary education. Around 25% of AWWs were educated upto Graduation level. About 22.50% of the AWWs had matriculation and only 15% of AWWs were educated upto Post-graduation level. Under the present investigation, in Rajasthan about majority 57.50% of the AWWs had matriculation, while 22.50% of the AWWs were educated upto higher secondary education, merely three (07.50%) of AWWs of selected sample were educated upto Graduation level and remaining 12.50% of AWWs were educated upto Post-graduation level.

It can be concluded that only 40% of AWWs in Punjab and 20% of the AWWs in Rajasthan had education at graduation or post- graduation level.

**Table 3: Marital status of the Anganwadi workers
(Anganwadi Workers)**

Attributes	Responses of Total AWWs in Punjab	Responses of Total AWWs in Rajasthan
Unmarried	02(05.00)	-----
Married	36(90.00)	37(92.50)
Widow	02(05.00)	03(07.50)
Divorcee/Separated	-----	-----
Total	40(100)	40(100)

Source: Culled from Primary data. Figures in brackets are percentages.

The marital status of the AWWs may have an influence on effectiveness of the ICDS programme in rural society. The Anganwadi Worker is supposed to look after the health of children and nutrition of the children. The experiences of married women, especially those having children may positively affect awareness about the needs of children. Hence, marital status of the AWWs was included as a variable in the study. The AWWs were divided into four groups viz., unmarried, married, widow and divorcee or separated. The Table 3 shows about Punjab that a majority (90%) of AWWs were married. Some 05% of AWWs were widows. Merely two (05%) AWW was unmarried. The data clearly indicate in Rajasthan that a majority 92.50% of AWWs of the selected sample were married and remaining three (07.50%) of AWWs were widows.

Informally, it was learnt that 95% in Punjab and 100% of the AWWs in Rajasthan were married and they had one or more than one child also.

**Table 4: Have you received the training? If yes, nature of training received?
(Anganwadi Workers)**

Attributes	Responses of Total AWWs in Punjab	Responses of Total AWWs in Rajasthan
In service training	06(15.00)	07(17.50)
Job and Refresher training	34(85.00)	33(82.50)
Special training	-----	-----

Did not receive any training.	-----	-----
Total	40(100)	40(100)

Source: Culled from Primary data. Figures in brackets are percentages.

Training for the job as AWW generally includes equipping the trainees with necessary skill to perform their work effectively. The performance of trained AWWs may vary from those who are not trained. Hence, training was included as one of the parameters in the present study. The sample was divided into four groups viz., in-service training, both job and refresher training, special training and did not receive any training. From the Table 4, it is clearly indicated in Punjab that a high majority (85%) AWWs received both job and refresher training and some six (15%) AWWs received in service training. It was explored in Rajasthan that a high majority 82.50% of the AWWs of the chosen sample received both job and refresher training and the next of the seven (17.50%) AWWs received only in-service training.

**Table 5: Job experience of the Anganwadi Workers in ICDS?
(Anganwadi Workers)**

Attributes	Responses of Total AWWs in Punjab	Responses of Total AWWs in Rajasthan
Less than seven years	02(05.00)	03(07.50)
eight to ten years	11(27.50)	05(12.50)
Eleven to fifteen years	12(30.00)	08(20.00)
Above fifteen years	15(37.50)	24(60.00)
Total	40(100)	40(100)

Source: Culled from Primary data. Figures in brackets are percentages.

The number of years of experience as AWWs is considered as job experience here. Job experience can contribute to work efficiency and improvement of skills. Based on the length of service, the AWWs were divided into four groups viz., less than 7 years, 8-10 years, 11-15 years and above 15 years. A view of the Table 5 indicates in Punjab that about 27.50% of AWWs had service from eight to ten years, 37.50% of AWWs had service above fifteen years, about 30% had service between eleven to fifteen years and merely two (5%) of the AWWs had service below seven years. It was revealed in Rajasthan that a majority 60% of the AWWs had service above fifteen years, while one fifth 20% had service between eleven to fifteen years, only five (12.50%) of the AWWs had service from eight to ten years and the remaining three (07.50%) of AWWs had service less than seven years.

**Table 6: Job Satisfaction of Anganwadi Workers
(Anganwadi Workers)**

Attributes	Responses of Total AWWs in Punjab	Responses of Total AWWs in Rajasthan
High job satisfaction	03(07.50)	02(05.00)
Medium job satisfaction	21(52.50)	23(57.50)
Low job satisfaction	16(40.00)	15(37.50)
Have no job satisfaction	-----	-----
Total	40(100)	40(100)

Source: Culled from Primary data. Figures in brackets are percentages.

The AWWs perception about her job satisfaction at AWCs is included as a variable, as the job satisfaction influences performance. Table 6 shows about Punjab that only 07.50% of the AWWs had high job satisfaction, while 40% of the AWWs had low job satisfaction and remaining of the 52.50% AWWs had medium job satisfaction. It was revealed from data in Rajasthan that merely two (05.00%) of the AWWs had high job satisfaction, whereas 37.50% of the AWWs had low job satisfaction and the next of the 57.50% AWWs had medium job satisfaction.

Thus, the data of the study indicates that only 7.50% of the AWWs in Punjab and 5% of the AWWs in Rajasthan were found to be having high satisfaction from their job which leaves much to be desired.

IV. CONCLUSION

The personal and service profile of AWWs under the study showed that a majority 75% AWWs in Punjab and 65% of the AWWs in Rajasthan were aged between 26-45 years, which is very suitable age for effective functioning of the AWWs at the AWCs. Only 40% of AWWs in Punjab and 20% of the AWWs in Rajasthan had done graduation or post- graduation and a high majority (95%) AWWs in Punjab and all AWWs in Rajasthan were married. A majority 67.50% AWWs in Punjab and 80% of the AWWs in Rajasthan have service of more than ten years. Only 7.50% of the AWWs in Punjab and 5% of the AWWs in Rajasthan had high job satisfaction. **Some states of India** are shown the level of education qualification of AWWs is same comparatively to Rajasthan state under the present study. For example, in Aurangabad (Maharashtra), Patil et al. (2013)⁹ found that 65.3% of them were matriculation. Based on the present experiences, the following are some steps that need to be taken for improve the knowledge and awareness of AWWs.

- All the AWWs should be given adequate training and re-training at proper intervals of time about all components of ICDS scheme in order to enable them to develop suitable skills for imparting different services more effectively at AWCs.
- Some more avenues of promotion to a higher post should be created for AWWs. Some quota could be fixed in the ANM training courses for the AWWs who were matriculates and had worked satisfactorily for at least 5 years. This would work as an incentive and help the AWWs to get a regular government job with a much better salary.

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