

Role of Anganwari Workers in ICDS

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Abstract:

Children are the future of a nation. Recognizing the importance of children as a vital human resource, the Constitution of India, Directive Principles of State Policy and the National Policy for Children have addressed the need for ensuring holistic development of the child. Integrated Child Development Services Scheme is one of the major efforts for children development. It has been launched on 2nd October, 1975 to reduce child death rate and to provide proper nutrition to children and pregnant women. This scheme was run, under the supervision of the state government, from the economic aid provided by Central Health and Family Welfare Ministry under UNICEF. Under this scheme, one Anganwari was set up at the proportion of one thousand population whereas in the hilly areas this proportion was seven hundred. Anganwari was run by a woman called Anganwari Worker. The AWW provides both basic education and nutrition to all the children ranging from 0-6 years. She takes care of their health. In other words, she performs her responsibility not only as a teacher but also as a mother, sister and friend. Besides, she provides nutrition food to both pregnant women and feeding mothers. She also keeps them aware about their health by providing health advice. On the basis of present study, it is concluded that the AWW is playing a pivotal role in ICDS scheme as child death rate has gone down and there is improvement in the health of both women and children. However, there are still a few departmental and social weaknesses. Due to such shortcomings, this scheme is not able to work properly. To make this scheme successful and improve the role of the AWW, time to time training to them should be organized, the workers who have been working for more than 15 years should be promoted as Supervisors and there should be proper arrangement of electricity, water etc. in all the buildings.

Keywords: AWW, BDPO, CDPO, ICDS, PO

Introduction:

Children are the future of a nation. Recognizing the importance of children as a vital human resource, the Constitution of India, Directive Principles of State Policy and the National Policy for Children have addressed the need for ensuring holistic development of the child. As per 2001

census, Haryana has around 3.26 million children, constituting 15.46% of Haryana's population, who are below the age of 6 years. A large number of them live in economic and social environment which impede the child's physical and mental development. These conditions include poverty, poor environmental sanitation, disease, infection, inadequate access to primary health care, inappropriate child caring and feeding practices. Government of India proclaimed a National Policy on Children in August 1974 declaring children as, "supremely important asset". The policy provided the required framework for assigning priority to different needs of the child. The Indian government has been doing a lot in this direction since independence. It has amended Anti Child Marriage Act in 1978 to bring improvement in the status of Women. Integrated Child Development Services Scheme is one of the major efforts. It has been launched on 2nd October, 1975 to reduce child death rate and to provide proper nutrition to children and pregnant women.

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme:

ICDS scheme was launched on 2nd of October, 1975 to bring improvement in both nutrition and health of children ranging from 0 to 6 years, to reduce child death rate, and to provide free food to both pregnant women and feeding mothers (18-44). This scheme was run, under the supervision of the state government, from the economic aid provided by Central Health and Family Welfare Ministry under UNICEF. Under this scheme, one Anganwari was set up at the proportion of one thousand population whereas in the hilly areas this proportion was seven hundred. Anganwari was run by a 21-45 year old woman called Anganwari Worker (AWW), who is a voluntary non-paying female worker of that community. Further, the AWWs having the qualifications of 10th level and under 10th were given Rs. 175/- and Rs. 125/- per month as honorarium respectively under this scheme. In the present time they are given Rs. 7500/- per month as honorarium. A Supervisor having qualification of B.A. has been appointed to supervise the work of twenty five Anganwaris. At block level Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) has been appointed to keep control and supervise Anganwaris. At district level Project Officer (PO) has been appointed for supervision and control. All the Supervisor, CDPO and PO are women. At present there are 17440 Anganwaris in Haryana. There are 1270 Anganwaris in Hisar District, theselected district for this study. The monthly menu regarding food and nutrition supplied to Anganwaris is decided by the Director of Women and Child Development Department. At present in Anganwari, women and children are provided with, as nutrition, salty and sweet porridge of wheat, puri, peas, paranthas etc. Besides the food, immunization, health checkup, referral services and treatment of minor illnesses are also provided at Anganwaris.

Role of the Anganwari Worker:

Initially, Anganwari was run by a female AWW, who worked voluntarily and without pay. After sometime the AWWs having the qualifications of 10th and under matric were given Rs. 175/- and Rs. 125/- per month as honorarium respectively. At present only a female having matric is kept, a widow is given preference and Rs. 7500/- per month is given as salary. The AWW is selected by a block level selection committee consisting of BDPO, CDPO and PO. Every month the AWW has to attend a meeting at the Block Office. In this meeting the AWW presents her monthly progress report. T.A. and D.A. are also provided to the AWW for attending this meeting. If the AWW is on leave, her work is performed by the Anganwari helper, who gets Rs. 3500/- per month as salary. This helper helps the AWW in her Anganwari works. The AWW provides both basic education and nutrition to all the children ranging from 0-6 years. She takes care of their health. In other words, she performs her responsibility not only as a teacher but also as a mother, sister and friend. Besides, she provides nutrition food to both pregnant women and feeding mothers. She also keeps them aware about their health by providing health advice. The AWWs have to undergo through a three month training organized by the department in order to execute their duties. In this training they are taught about child and female development.

Present Study:

To clear the role of the AWW in ICDS scheme, Agroha Block has been selected out of the nine blocks of Hisar district in Haryana by the Sampling Method. Out of twenty three villages in the selected block five villages-Jagan, Fransi, Chikanwas, Kalirawan and Agroha have been selected. Twenty five AWWs of these villages were interviewed through specially designed schedule to know contribution in ICDS scheme being made by the AWW. Besides, for the study rural women, officers and employees of the block were consulted. Conclusions were drawn after analyzing the collected data and on the basis of these conclusions, suggestions to improve the role of the AWW were given. The year of the present study is 2014.

Analysis of the Data:

As the people working in an organization must have complete information about it, the AWWs were raised questions relating to both establishment and purposes of Anganwari. It was found that all the workers had knowledge about it. When the selected workers were raised the next question relating to the works of the AWWs, all the workers provided correct information of it. When a question relating to their training was asked, they replied that three months training has been given to them by the department. When they were asked the span of their work, 80% of the workers replied that they had been working on this post for the last 15-20 years. When a question regarding the number of the registered children and females in the Anganwari was asked, it was concluded that approximate 70 children and 25 pregnant women were registered. Raising a question relating to the nutrition food being given to children and pregnant women, it got cleared that 250 gram nutritious food to pregnant women and 150 gram to children is given. Besides, a question relating to other facilities, it was known that pregnant women and children are provided with pills of cough, fever, stool and influenza in Anganwari. The pregnant women are also given advice relating to food. When they were asked regarding the building of the Anganwari, it was found that 70% Anganwaris are working in the buildings erected by the department. On being asked regarding their relationship to ANM, they admitted that they have good relations with ANM and help each other. On being asked whether they inform females relating to family planning, almost all the workers replied that they not only inform women about family planning but also take at least 10 women to the civil hospital for castration. Raising a question about their salary, they replied that they are not satisfied with their present salary.

On the basis of present study, it is concluded that the AWW is playing a pivotal role in ICDS scheme as child death rate has gone down and there is improvement in the health of both women and children. However, there are still a few departmental and social weaknesses. Due to such shortcomings, this scheme is not able to work properly.

Suggestions:

To make this scheme successful and improve the role of the AWW, the following suggestions are given:

1. Time to time training for the AWWs should be organized.
2. The salary of the AWWs should be increased.
3. The workers who have been working for more than 15 years should be promoted as Supervisors.
4. New buildings for all the Anganwaris should be erected by the department.

5. There should be proper arrangement of electricity, water etc. in all the buildings.
6. On retirement, the workers should be provided economic help by the government.
7. The Anganwaris should be built at an arm's length from the road.
8. In some Anganwaris there is no provision of "Gas Chulla". Therefore, such provisions should be made available in them.

References:

1. <http://wcd.nic.in/icds/icds.aspx>
2. http://www.wcdhry.gov.in/child_development_f.htm