Problems faced by ICDS (Anganwadi) workers in Thrissur District in Kerala

Dr. Sefiya K.M. Assistant Professor
Post Graduate Department of Commerce
MES Asmabi College, P.Vemballur, Kodungallur, Thrissur Dist., Kerala- 680671, India.
M. Com, BE.d, Ph.D
Office: 0484- 2850596

Mob : 9495667609
Email : sefiyaakbar@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Background

In pursuance to the national policy for children, the Government of India launched the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme, which was introduced on experimental basis on 2nd October 1975. ICDS today represents one of the world's largest programmes for early childhood development. 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 from the vulnerable sections of the society.

Materials and Methods

The proposed research work attempts to study the problems faced by ICDS (Anganwadi) workers in Thrissur District in Kerala. The respondents of the study include Anganwadi workers in Thrissur District. The data were suitably classified and analyzed based on the objective of the study. Analysis was done via statistical software 16.0. Statistical tools like percentages, Friedman test, Krushkal wallis test analysis have been applied for analysing the data.

Results

There were a number of problems faced by anganwadi workers in Thrissur district in Kerala. Inadequate salary was the most important problem faced by AWWs in Thrissur district. The majority of anganwadi workers have strongly agreed that they have faced a high level of problems in Thrissur district. The study concluded that there is no significance difference among the years of experience and the problems faced by AWWs in Thrissur district.

Our Heritage

Conclusion

The Anganwadi worker is the most important functionary of the ICDS scheme. The Anganwadi worker is a community based front line voluntary worker of the ICDS programme.

Key words: Anganwadi worker, ICDS, Problems of anganwadi workers.

Manuscript

Introduction

The Anganwadi worker (AWW) is the community based voluntary frontline worker of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme. Selected from the community, she assumed a pivotal role due to her close and continuous contact with the beneficiaries. Anganwadi Worker (AWW), is a part-time honorary worker. She is a woman of same locality, chosen by the people, having educational qualifications of middle school or Metric or even primary. The study analyzed various problems faced by the AWW while implementing and working the ICDS programme. The various problems faced by them were inadequate salary, excessive record maintenance, work overload, inability to take brief vacation, logistic supply, infrastructure, lack of help from community, in accessibility of superiors, physical fatigue, mental strain, neglect of family responsibilities and neglect of health problems.

Review of Literature

Thakare Meenal M, Kurll BM (2011) in their study "A Study on Knowledge of Anganwadi Workers and their Problems in an Urban ICDS Block" reported that the most of AWWs were faced by a problem of inadequate honorarium, lack of help from community, problem related with infrastructure, work overload and record maintenance.

Prasanti Jena (2013),conducted "A Study of Urban Blocks in Sundargarh District of Odisha", suggested that most of the Anganwadi workers were trained; but it was found that

performance as well as awareness among Anganwadi workers regarding the importance of growth charts and growth monitoring was not satisfactory. The quality of knowledge was one of the neglected features among job profile of Anganwadi workers. The study concluded that for improving the quality of knowledge and awareness among Anganwadi workers various training programmes were conducted through ICDS Services.

Significance of the Study

ICDS is the only major national programme that addresses the health and nutrition needs of children under the age of six. It seeks to provide young children with an integrated package of services, including supplementary nutrition, health care and pre-school education. Since the needs of a young child cannot be addressed in isolation from those of his or her mother, the programme also extends to adolescent girls, pregnant women and nursing mothers. ICDS services are provided through a vast network of ICDS centers, better known as "Anganwadis". ICDS is the foremost symbol of Indias commitment to her children — Indias response to the challenge of providing pre-school education on one hand and breaking the vicious cycle of malnutrition, morbidity, reduced learning capacity and mortality on the other. The present study would help to know various problems faced by the AWW while implementing and working in the ICDS programme. In this context, the present study titled "Problems faced by Anganwadi workers in Thrissur District in Kerala" assumes a greater significance.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is limited to the problems faced by Anganwadi workers in Thrissur District in Kerala. The respondents of the study include Anganwadi workers in Thrissur District. The geographical area of the study is limited to Thrissur district.

Objective of Study

To study about the various problems faced by Anganwadi workers in Thrissur District.

To know about the level of problems faced by Anganwadi workers in Thrissur District.

Hypothesis of the study

H_{01} There is no significant difference among various problems faced by Anganwadi workers in Thrissur District.

H_{02} There is no significant difference among the years of experience with regard to the problems faced by Anganwadi workers in Thrissur District.

Research Methodology

Selection of Sample

The respondents of the study included 29 Anganwadi workers from Anganwadi centres belonging to Thrissure district was selected by adopting convenience sampling method.

Data Collection

For analyzing the problem under study, both primary and secondary data were used. The primary data were collected by using well-structured questionnaires. The secondary data were collected from books, journal, and various websites.

Period of Study

The study was conducted during the period September 2019 to December 2019.

Tools of Analysis

The collected data were analysed through SPSS 21 version by using various statistical tools like Percentages, Friedman test and Krushkal wallis test analysis.

Problems Faced by Anganwadi Workers -Analysis

Table 1 Profile of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent

Age (in Yrs.)	**Less than 20**	**-**	**-**
	20-30	**1**	**3.4**
	30-40	**13**	**44.8**
	40-50	**10**	**34.5**
	Above 50	**5**	**17.2**
	Total	**29**	**100**
Religion	**Hindu**	**22**	**75.9**
	Muslim	**4**	**13.8**
	Christian	**3**	**10.3**
	Total	**29**	**100**
Marital status	**Married**	**26**	**89.7**
	Widow/Divorcee	**3**	**10.3**
	Total	**29**	**100.0**
	Less than 5 Years	**3**	**10.3**
	5-10 years	**2**	**6.9**

WORK EXPERIENCE OF AWW	10-15 years	18	62.1
	above 15 years	6	20.7
	Total	29	100.0
Education	Upto 8th Class	1	3.4
	Matriculation	11	37.9
	Predegree/Higher Secondary	16	55.2
	Graduation	1	3.4
	Total	29	100.0
Distance from AWW residence to AWCentre	0-2 kms	18	62.1
	2-5 kms	6	20.7
	5-10 kms	4	13.8
	above 10 kms	1	3.4
	Total	29	100.0

Source: Primary data

It is clear from the table that, out of 29 Anganwadi workers, 3.4 per cent of Anganwadi workers were in the age group of 20 to 30, 44.8 per cent were in the age group of 30 to 40 years, 34 per cent of Anganwadi workers were in the age group of 40 to 50 years and 17.2 per cent of workers were in the age group of 50 years and above. The study revealed that most of the Anganwadi workers were in the age group of 30 to 40 and only a few Anganwadi workers were in the age group of 20 to 30, even if there is no age restriction under the scheme. 75.9 per cent of Anganwadi workers were Hindus, 13.8 per cent of Anganwadi workers were Muslims and 10.3 per cent of Anganwadi workers were Christians. Even though there is no caste and creed disparity in ICDS programme, most of the Anganwadi workers were Hindus. The study also revealed that the Christian women rarely prefer this kind of job, since the percentage was very low, i.e. 10.3 per cent. It is observed from the table that 89.7 per cent of Anganwadi workers were married, and 10.3 per cent of Anganwadi workers were either widows or divorced. It is understood that 10.3 per cent of Anganwadi workers have an experience of less than 5 years, 6.9 per cent of Anganwadi workers have 5 to 10 years of experience, 62.1 per cent of Anganwadi workers have 10 to 15 years of experience and 20.7 per cent of Anganwadi workers have above 15 years of experience. Most of the Anganwadi workers have well experienced in between 10 to 15 years work experience. An analysis of the educational qualification of the Anganwadi workers reveals that 3.4 per cent have only upto 8th class 37.9 per cent have an educational level of matriculation, 55.2 per cent have the predegree/higher secondary level education and 3.4 per cent have degree level education. Most of the AWWs have the predegree/higher secondary level education and a very few Anganwadi workers were either Plus two/ Pre-degree or upto8[th] class level of education. 62.1 per cent of AWWs have 2 k.m distance from their residence to AW centre, 20.1 per cent of AWWs have two to five k.m distance from their residence to AW centre, 13.8 per cent of AWWs have five to ten k.m distance from their residence to AW centre and 3.4 per cent of

AWWs have above ten k.m distance from their residence to AW centre, even if each ward in the panchayath have functioned at least one Anganwadis under ICDS programme in Kerala.

Table 2 Problems Faced by the Anganwadi Women Workers (Friedman Test)

Problems	Mean Rank	Rank	Chi square	p.value
Related to Salary	9.98	**I**		
Related to Infrastructure	5.14	**VIII**		
Related to Logistic supply	4.84	**IX**		
Work overload	9.02	**III**		
Related to Record Maintenance	9.60	**II**		
Related to help from community	2.69	**XI**		
Related to Accessibility of superiors	2.31	**XII**	**205.100**	**<0.001**
Physical fatigue	8.14	**V**		
Mental strain	6.60	**VI**		
Neglect of family responsibilities	4.78	**X**		
Neglect of health problems	6.07	**VII**		
Inability to take brief vacation	8.83	**IV**		

Source: Primary data

Since P value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at the 1% level with regard to the problems faced by anganwadi workers in Thrissur district. Hence there is a significance difference among the various problems faced by anganwadi workers in Thrissur district. There were a number of problems faced by anganwadi workers in Thrissur district in Kerala. It is understood that all the factors considered for the study significantly affected by the anganwadi workers in Thrissur district, since the mean rank was much above the average

score of three, except the problems related to help from community (Mean Rank =2.69) and accessibility of superiors (Mean Rank =2.31). However, inadequate salary (Mean Rank= 9. 98) was the most important problem faced by AWWs, followed by excessive record maintenance (9.60), work overload (9.02), Inability to take brief vacation (8.83). Physical fatigue (Mean Rank =8.14), Mental strain (Mean Rank =6.60), Neglect of health problems (Mean Rank =6.07), Related to Infrastructure (Mean Rank =5.14), Related to Logistic supply (Mean Rank =4.84) and Neglect of family responsibilities (Mean Rank =4.78).

Percentile

Percentile score was used for analysing the level of problems faced by the anganwadi workers. The score below the first quartile (Q1), it is considered as low level. If the score lies in between the first quartile (Q1) and the third quartile (Q3), it is considered as moderate level. If the score is above the third quartile (Q3), it is considered as high level.

Table 3 Level of Problems

Level of Problems	Value
Percentile 25 (Q1)	37.5
Percentile 50 (Q2)	41
Percentile 75 (Q3)	45

Source: Primary data

The value calculated for the level of problem was 37.5 for the first quartile, 41 for the second quartile and 45 for the third quartile. Based on the scores of level of problems, the value below the first quartile (37.5) is considered as low level. The value in between the first quartile (37.5) and the third quartile (45) is considered as moderate level. If the value is above the third quartile (45), it is considered as high level. Based on the scores so converted as stated above into low level, moderate level and high level, the level of problems faced by the

anganwadi workers is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Level of Problems Faced by the Anganwadi Workers

Level of problems	Frequency	Percentage
Low	7	24.1
Moderate	15	51.7
High	7	24.1
Total	29	100

Source: Primary data

The level of problems faced by the anganwadi workers is given in Table 4. Based on the above percentile score, it is revealed that 24.1 per cent of anganwadi workers have a low level of problems, 51.7 per cent of anganwadi workers have moderate level of problems and 24.1 per cent of anganwadi workers have a high level of problems in Thrissur district. The majority of anganwadi workers have strongly agreed that they have faced a high level of problems in Thrissur district.

Table 5 Years of Experience and Problems Faced by the Anganwadi Workers

Experience in Years	Mean Rank	Chisquare value	P value
Less than one	10.25		
1-6	16.83	1.043	0.791
6-12	16.00		
Above 12	14.50		

Source: Primary data

Since P value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at the 5% level of

significance with regard to the years of experience and problems faced by AWWs in Thrissur district. Hence it is concluded that there is no significance difference among the years of experience and the problems faced by AWWs in Thrissur district.

References
1. Jena P, (2013), "Knowledge of Anganwadi Workers about Integrated Child Development Services(leds) : A Study of Urban Blocks in Sundargarh District of Odisha, Rourkela, Odisha.
2. Thakare Meenal M,(2011), "Knowledge of Anganwadi Workers and their Problems in an Urban Block", Journal of Medical College, Chandigarh, pp 15-19.
3. Vijayavardhini,et.al, (2016), " Job Satisfaction of Anganwadi teachers- A study", Internatonal journal of Indian Psychology,3(3), pp 137-148.
4. Sandhyarani,C,(2013), "Role and Responsibilities of Anganwadi workers," International Journal of Science, Environment and Techonology, Vol.2, pp 1277-1296.