

Attitude of Anganwadi workers towards their job

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■ **ABSTRACT** : The Anganwadi worker is the grass root level worker entrusted with the multifarious responsibilities of the over all development of children, women and adolescent girls of a locality. The tasks undertaken are herculean compared to the meagre remuneration they receive. Considering the fact that the attitude towards a job affects work output, so attitude scale comprising of 5 components of their work patterns was framed using statistically methods. When the total attitude scores were analysed it was observed that 8 per cent of the sample obtained high scores, 89 per cent medium scores and 3 per cent low scores. Educational level was seen to have a positive significant association with attitude.

■ **KEY WORDS** : Anganwadi workers, Occupational status, Media exposure

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The integrated child development scheme (ICDS) with its network of Anganwadis covering more than 3000 CD blocks in the country is perhaps the biggest women and child development programme which is being implemented in the world (Seema, 2001).

Chattopadhyay (2004) rightly states that the Anganwadi worker (AWW) is the community based voluntary front line worker of the ICDS programme selected from the community. She assumes the pivotal role due to her close and continuous contact with beneficiaries.

The Anganwadi worker is entrusted with the multifarious and huge responsibility of the overall development of children in the age group 0-6 years, by providing an integrated package of services consisting of supplementary nutrition, immunization, health checkups, referral services, nutrition and health education to mothers and non-formal pre- school education (DISHA, 1990).

The Anganwadi worker is paid just a honorarium of Rs.1500/ and PTI, (2006) on News online rightly points out that Anganwadi worker's remuneration is woefully inadequate compared with the service they render. People and democracy (2006) adds on that, Awws do not have any job security or social security after decades of service, they do not have anything to fall back upon in their old age. Besides, they do not have any promotional avenues. There has been a cry for

higher remunerations.

Studies on the work output of the AWWs and attitude towards their work are scanty. Hence, this study has been executed.

Objectives :

- Study the attitude of fresh Anganwadi workers towards their newly acquired job.
- Identify socio economic parameters affecting their attitude towards work.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

Area of study :

Thiruvananthapuram district was selected amongst the 14 districts of Kerala.

Selection of centres :

Of the 6 centres operational in Thiruvananthapuram, 2 were selected for this study: (i) Pre-service Training Centre at College of Agriculture, Vellayani (ii) ICDS Training Centre of Kerala State Child Welfare Council.

Selection of respondents :

One hundred respondents of 3 batches of pre-service training from both of these centres were selected for the study.

Tool :

A list of 74 statements on attitude towards their work were enlisted out from related literature and discussion with experts. Due care was taken to edit the statements. The list was circulated among 25 experts in the field including the supervisory officials at the Social Welfare Department for judging the relevancy of the statements. Twenty four statements rated as most relevant were short listed. These 24 statements were listed and circulated for rating among 30 non-sample members. The responses were then collected as, score '5' for strongly agree, score '4' for agree, score '3' for undecided, score '2' for disagree and score '1' for strongly disagree.

A pre-tested schedule was finalized to study the socio-economic parameters of the respondents with respect to their personal details like family background, exposure to media, involvement in decision making in family matters, details of job aspired and attempted, house hold chores undertaken and mode of commutation.

Analysis :

The collected data were coded, classified and put to further statistical analysis for drawing appropriate inferences. The tools employed were :

- Frequency tables
- Test of hypotheses -X² testing
- Correlation

For quick evaluation of the merit of the individual statements in assessing the attitude of an individual, the relative importance of the statements was adjudged by finding the index of relevance of these statements using the formula :

$$K_i n_i$$

where, is the rating given by the judges

$$NK$$

$I = 1, < i < 5$ n_i is the number of respondents who had given a score of i for a particular statement, N is the total number of sample respondents, k is the maximum score that is assigned to a statement (here $k=5$) Treatments with a relevance index of 0.8 and above have been taken as statements in the final attitude scale.

The statements short listed and arranged into different components are as detailed below :

Component I :**General profile of Anganwadi worker's job and related responsibilities :**

- Anganwadi worker's task is a noble one.
- Social status gets elevated by the services she does to the community.
- Anganwadi worker through her social contact, gains recognition in the community.
- All the services offered through the Anganwadi is a boon to the community.
- Helping parents with the admission to the Primary

School after the pre-school years in an immensely helpful deed done by the Anganwadi worker.

Component II :**Prevailing stigma in the community about Anganwadi centre:**

- When a better paid employment is offered AWW generally quits this job.
- AWW's job is a strenuous one.
- Referral services of ICDS is not of immediate use to the people.
- It feels awkward to talk to elderly mothers about family planning .
- File work and field work will not go hand in hand.

Component III :**Practical difficulties faced by the AWW to fulfill her job :**

- Supervisors are very considerate in understanding the AWW's problems
- AWW will face a lot of criticism in the choice of beneficiaries to various schemes
- It is an easy task to conduct the feeding programmes.
- People of the locality will always prefer PHCs for immunisation programmes.
- It is easy to organise an exhibition/ mela in a rural setup.
- The helper and AWW will have an understanding of their job responsibilities.

Component IV :**Cultural clashes against the job responsibilities of AWW :**

- Home visits and field visits are not traits accepted in our culture.
- AWW'S family responsibilities are affected adversely to a great extent by her nature of work .
- The community will accept a women's leadership in organising social activities.

Component V :**Pre-school component of the AWC :**

- Children will be very fond of the AWW.
- AWW will not have the mental relaxation to deal with children.
- AWW cannot be content with the quality of the teaching aids as they are not made from standard raw materials.
- It is easy to convince parents in the rural areas to send their children regularly to Anganwadi.
- Attempts to monitor growth of children using charts is very useful.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study well as relevant discussions have been presented under following heads:

Personal profile of the AWWs :

Majority of the respondents (58%) were young women of 30 years and less and 11 per cent of them were above 40 years of age. Marital status of the respondents revealed that, married women were found to form 55 per cent of the population. Seventy per cent of the sample comprised of backward communities. Fifty eight per cent of the respondents had college level education, of which 17 per cent were degree holders. Forty two per cent of the respondents were observed to have studied upto Xth standard.

Monthly family income and expenditure pattern :

Among the families surveyed, 32 per cent were found to have a monthly income below Rs.1500 per month. Earning members were observed to be in the habit of giving their total income for household expenditure in 45 families while the remaining were found to contribute 75.99 per cent in 41 families, 50-75 per cent in 8 families and 25-49 per cent in 6 families (Table 1).

Income range (Rs.)	Expenditure range			
	100%	75-99%	50-74%	25-49%
1. 0-1500	20	5	4	3
2. 1501-2500	15	14	3	1
3. 2501-3500	6	-	1	1
4. 3501 and above	4	22	-	1
Total	45	41	8	6

Occupational status of the families :

In 46 families there was only one casual worker to take on the sole burden of the family; in 29 families there were more than one member with a casual job. There was a regular employed member to support the family with a casual worker in 8 per cent of the families and in 17 per cent of the families, there were one casual worker and a private entrepreneur. However, only in 25 per cent of the families with a Government employee, the monthly income was above Rs.3500, while income was higher in families with member having casual jobs; 66 per cent of the families having a monthly income of above Rs.3500/- were observed to be members with casual jobs (Table 2).

Preference for employment :

Among the respondents, 81 per cent of the respondents were on the look out for any placement in Government or private establishments; 12 per cent had applied for more than 10 posts, 25 per cent between 6-10 posts and 35 per cent upto 5 posts. This observation directs attention to the circumstances in which many AWWs have accepted the present job and the enthusiasm they may show to take up the

Table 2 : Income and occupational status of the families

Type of work	Income range (Rs.)				Total
	0-1500	1501-2500	2501-3500	3501 above	
1. One member with casual job.	20	16	4	6	46
2. More than 1 member with casual job.	9	7	1	12	29
3. Members with casual job and regular Government job.	1	3	2	2	8
4. Member with casual job and business.	2	7	1	7	17
Total	32	33	8	27	100

X² = 1.24 *

various job responsibilities.

Actual job preference of the AWWs :

A measurement of the order of preference of AWWs to different categories of jobs indicated that only 30 per cent of the respondents disclosed their actual preference (Table 3).

Table 3 : Actual job preference of the AWWs

Job type	Priorities (frequency)		
	1	2	3
1. Typists	10	1	1
2. AWWs	9	2	2
3. Art teacher	-	1	1
4. Nurse	11	3	2
5. Police	-	-	-
6. Computer operator	-	2	-
7. Advocate	-	2	1
8. Tailor	-	-	3
Total	30	11	10

Anganwadi worker's job was preferred most by 9 per cent of the group, it was given second priority by 2 per cent. The job given most priority by these women were typing (10%) and nursing (11%). As second choice, positions like nursing (3%), computer operators (2%) and advocate (2%) were found rated. The preference for employment in the police force reveals the lack of inhibitions on the part of these respondents to take up male oriented jobs and positions in the society (Table 3).

Dual work responsibilities :

It is an established fact that outside employment has

not reduced the house hold chores and related responsibilities of these women, affecting their health and vitality. Among the respondents surveyed, 57 per cent were found to play the role of wage earner and home maker.

Domestic chores undertaken at home :

These women were observed to be responsible for the key domestic chores like cooking (69%), washing clothes (53%) and cleaning the house (45%), shopping (46%) without assistance.

Financial decision making pattern at home :

Joint decisions in financial matters were taken up in many of the families (74%). This indicated that equal status was bestowed on women in these families. In 10 families, financial matters were solely the male's domain, however 16 respondents had the sole responsibility in the domestic financial matters which was undoubtedly the greatest strain in family living.

Impact of media exposure :

Different media to which the AWWs were exposed were newspaper, magazine, radio and T.V, as detailed in Table 4. They were utilised by many (66%) mainly for entertainment and to spend leisure hours. Among the different media, TV was found to be the most popular media followed by radio and newspaper. The commercialisation of media has enhanced its value as a source of entertainment.

Table 4 : Media exposure pattern of the respondents

Type	Purpose			Total
	Entertainment	Information	Born	
1. News paper	4	6	12	22
2. Magazine	12	-	2	4
3. Radio	19	4	6	29
4. TV	31	2	1	34
Total	56	12	21	89

A very anxious figure observed from the Table 4 is that there were 11 per cent of AWWs not exposed to media which

is unbelievable in the literate state of Kerala.

News papers were observed to be read for the sake of information (6%) as well as to be engaged during free hours by 4 per cent of the group. Magazines were read only by 4 per cent of the respondents. Leisure hours were found to be spent by watching TV by many respondents (31%) However, radio was accessed by 29 per cent respondents.

Attitude of AWWs towards their job responsibilities :

The total scores obtained for each respondent were statistically treated and the data generated showed that 8 per cent of the sample obtained high scores, 89 per cent medium scores and 3 per cent low scores (Table 5).

Table 5 : Attitude of AWWs towards their job responsibilities

Attitude scores	Distribution of respondents
Low score (Mean -50)	3
Medium score	89
High score (Mean + 50)	8
Mean – 82.42	SD-12

Statements pertaining to the different aspects of responsibilities of AWWs were grouped into 5 categories. Mean score and maximum scores for each category was worked out and the details are presented in Table 6.

Five statements under general profile of the AWWs job were grouped together (Table 6). The means score for this category was observed to be positive (4.26) indicating positive attitude of the AWW towards their job responsibilities. Five negative statements on the prevailing stigma in the community about AWCs were grouped as the second category. The mean score of the group was found to be 2.76. This reveals that a stigma affected the attitude to work. Six statements on 'Practical difficulties faced by AWWs to fulfill her job' were grouped together in the next component. It had 3 positive and 3 negative statements. The mean score of this group was found to be 2.16 indicating that, difficulties perceived negatively affected attitude. Three statements formed the component of cultural clashes against the job responsibility of AWWs. There were 2 negative and one

Table 6 : Scores obtained for different categories of statement

Sr. No.	Categories of statement	No. of statements	Mean score	Minimum score	Maximum score
1.	General profile of AWWs job responsibilities.	5	4.26	4.10	4.90
2.	Prevailing stigma in the comments about Anganwadi centre	5	2.76	2.12	4.80
3.	Practical difficulties faced by the AWWs to carry out their job responsibilities.	6	2.16	2.98	4.32
4.	Cultural clashes against the job responsibilities of AWWs.	3	2.98	2.73	3.92
5.	Pre -school components of Anganwadi centre.	5	3.76	3.13	4.72

positive statement in this group and the mean score was found to be 2.98 indicating that AWW has not perceived her job responsible well.

The last component namely, the 'Pre-school component of the AWC' comprised of 5 statements, 2 negative and 3 positive. The mean score of this component was 3.76, indicating that the concept perceived by the AWW about the pre-school component was more or less uniform.

Influence of socio economic variables on the attitude of AWWs:

Statistical treatment of data on age and attitude scores revealed that there was no significant association ($X^2 = 1.13$).

Educational level of the respondents was seen to have a positive significant association with attitude scores ($X^2=5.74$) However, economic status of the respondents and attitude scores revealed no significant association amongst them. Media exposure showed positive association with attitude, but it was not statistically significant.

Conclusion :

Though the nobility of the profession exists, the remuneration attached to this hectic work is too meagre. This explains why the respondents are indifferent in responding

to their job preferences. If this profession is to achieve the social motive of rural development, more efforts at Government and local body levels is needed to increase the AWWs salary package.

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