

A Study on the Problems Faced by Anganwadi Workers in Implementing the ICDS Scheme in East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh State

ABSTRACT

Perceptions of Anganwadi workers about problems faced by them during work at the field level were explored. Hence, the objective of this study was to assess the perceptions of Anganwadi workers in tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh state. A descriptive survey study was conducted in a tribal block in Andhra Pradesh state. The study sample participants were the Anganwadi workers who were providing various services. A total of 200 Anganwadi workers were interviewed using a pre-designed semi-structured interview schedule after obtaining informed consent. The sample participants expressed that they were facing problems like mental strain, neglect of family's health problems and children's education, difficulties in attending family functions and disinterest in family affairs. Social problems like the inability to attend social functions reduced social contacts, and work-related problems, such as conveyance difficulties, inadequate amenities and equipment at the Anganwadi centres, work overload and frequent stressful situations.

The sample participants were facing various problems at different levels during their work, which may be considered and provided support by higher authority. At the same time aware of ICDS services, but their perception regarding Anganwadi services needs to be improved. The reasons for poor perception regarding ICDS services need to be assessed by focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with Anganwadi workers.

Keywords: Problems, Anganwadi workers and implementing of ICDS scheme.

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Introduction

Anganwadi is the focal point for the delivery of ICDS services to children and mothers. Each Anganwadi caters to a population of around 1.000 in rural and urban areas and around 700 in tribal areas. The Anganwadi workers and helpers are the basic functionaries of the ICDS. They are not government employees but are called social workers or voluntary workers the activities these workers are required to perform are very extensive the workers in such centres who receive the paltry "honorarium" are seen as „part-time workers" in the centres that are supposed to open for only four hours a day yet, they are among the most dedicated and committed of public servants Who have developed grass root contracts and can identify particular individuals and groups in any community easily.

The key functions of Anganwadi are to provide supplementary nutrition to children below six years of age and nursing and pregnant mothers from low-income families' immunization of all children less than six years of age and immunization against tetanus and health education to all women in the age group of 15-45 years. As well as basic health checkups which include antenatal care of expectant mothers, Postnatal care of nursing mothers, care of newborn babies and care of all children under six years of age. They are supposed to be able to refer serious cases of malnutrition or illness to hospitals, Community health services (CHS) or district hospitals. In addition, the same two workers on their own are to provide non-formal preschool education to children in the three to five age groups.

Need and rationale of the study

This study was undertaken to highlight the problems faced by ICDS functionaries (Anganwadi workers) in implementing the programme. Hence, the researcher proposed to investigate the Implementation of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme in Andhra Pradesh. Most of the research work has been carried out to evaluate the services provided by ICDS to children but, in the case of pregnant women and other women (15-45 years) considered as the important beneficiaries of ICDS, comparatively less research work was conducted in Andhra Pradesh, particularly in Tribal areas. Hence, comprehensive investigation is felt needed at the district level i.e. in tribal districts concerning Anganwadi workers. ICDS is a multifaceted integrated development programme helping to decrease the problem of mortality, morbidity and malnutrition not only among children but also among women by providing services in an integrated manner at the country level. The researcher felt the need to find out the perceptions of Anganwadi workers towards personal, social and work-related problems.

Objectives

- To study the profile of the Anganwadi workers in East Godavari District.
- To investigate various problems (personal, family, social and work-related) faced by Anganwadi workers at various levels in implementing the ICDS scheme in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh state.

Research questions

- What is the profile of the Anganwadi workers in East Godavari District?
- What are the problems (personal, family, social and work-related) faced by Anganwadi workers at various levels in implementing the ICDS scheme in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh state?

Research design

The study was descriptive and used qualitative research methodology to describe Anganwadi workers' perceptions of the Implementation of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme in Andhra Pradesh.

Study Area

East Godavari district has 64 blocks, of which 51 are rural, 2 are urban and the remaining 11 blocks are from the tribal area, which is also known as agency or scheduled area. For the present study, only 5 tribal blocks are considered, as it is a scheduled area and inhabited by the tribes. These 5 tribal blocks were namely Y. Ramavaram, Rampachodavaram, Addateegala, Rajavommangi and Gangavaram. These five blocks have been selected for the study by using a simple random sampling technique. The selected cluster is Paderu. In these blocks, Anganwadi Workers were selected for the study in the following way.

Sample participant's selection and size

The researcher has selected 200 Anganwadi workers (40 from each block) were selected from five tribal blocks of the East Godavari district. Thus, for the present study, the sample participants were consisting of 200 Anganwadi workers.

Interview schedule for Anganwadi workers

The data have been collected from the Anganwadi workers, an interview schedule is prepared covering the following areas; Personal Information, Family Information, Work Place Information, Anganwadi work, Personal, Family, Social and Work-Related Problems and Service Delivery.

Data collection procedure

The present study was based on primary data collected from 200 Anganwadi workers by adopting a random sampling technique. A well-structured questionnaire was prepared and was pre-tested. The researcher collected data from 30 Anganwadi workers for pre-test purposes and updated the data where necessary. The researcher also collected expert opinion by giving questionnaires to the experts' viz., Professors, Field Supervisors and Scholars in this regard; the suggestions given by the experts were also taken care of and modified where necessary. After incorporating the necessary changes in the pre-tested questionnaire, it was administered to the selected samples and required information was collected. The data collection was done by the researcher herself.

Statistical computations:

The researcher has used statistical measures that frequency and percentage have been calculated and presented.

Results and discussion

The researcher has collected data from sample participants (Anganwadi Workers) by using an interview schedule and the same has been explained through research questions as follows:

Research question-1: What is the profile of the Anganwadi workers concerning various variables in East Godavari District?

East Godavari District which is the largest and the most populous district in the state of Andhra Pradesh, was successively ruled by Mauryas, Sathavahanas, Vishnu Kundins, Eastern Chalukyas, Cholas, Kaktiyas, Musunuri Chieftians, Kondaveeti Reddy Kings, Gajapathis, Kutubshahis and then by the British. It was under the Raj that, on April 15, 1925, East Godavari District was formed as per G.O.No.502. East Godavari is the richest district of the state, in terms of GDP, is both the cultural and tourist hub of the state. As the name of the district conveys, East Godavari District is closely associated with the river Godavari, occupying a major portion of the delta area. The Headquarters of the District is located at Kakinada. East Godavari District lays north – East Coast of Andhra Pradesh and is bounded on the North by Visakhapatnam District and the State of Orissa, on the East and the South by the Bay of Bengal and on the West by Khammam District of Telangana State and West Godavari Districts. The area of the District is 12,805 Sq.Kms including the newly added Yetapaka Division. The district is located between Northern latitudes of 16° 30' and 18° 20' and between the Eastern longitudes of 81° 30' and 82° 30'. It has a population of 52.86 lakhs as per the 2011 Census. The district consists of 7 Revenue

Divisions viz., Kakinada, Rajamahendravaram, Peddapuram, Rampachodavaram, Amalapuram, Ramachandrapuram and Yetapaka.

Sample Distribution of Anganwadi Workers by their Demographic Variables:

Table-1: Distribution of Anganwadi Workers by their Variables

Variable	Category	Number	Total
Age group	18-25	1	200
	26-35	48	
	36-45	86	
	46 & above	65	
Marital status	single	12	200
	married	141	
	separated	9	
	divorced	8	
	widow	30	
Educational qualifications	Secondary	92	200
	intermediate	75	
	degree & above	33	
Religion	Hindu	186	200
	Muslim	1	
	Christian	13	
Caste	SC	16	200
	ST	174	
	BC	4	
	OC	6	
Experience (as an Anganwadi worker)	up to 5 yrs.	20	200
	6 - 10 yrs.	39	
	11 – 15 yrs.	35	
	16 yrs. & above	106	
Size of family	up to 3	86	200
	4 – 6	107	
	7 & above	7	
Number of family members earning	none	6	200
	one	83	
	two	102	
	three & above	9	
No. of school-going children	none	97	200
	one	30	

	two	53	
	three & above	20	
Father/husband occupation	unemployed	5	200
	self-employed	23	
	employed	30	
	daily labour	142	
family income (monthly)	below Rs.5000/-	8	200
	Rs.5001 – 10000/-	10	
	above Rs.10000/-	182	
Treatment received in the family	respectful	178	200
	indifferent	12	
	hateful	4	
	curial	6	
Alcoholic in home	yes	47	200
	no	153	

Research question-2: What are the problems (personal, family, social and work-related) faced by Anganwadi workers at various levels in implementing the ICDS scheme in the East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh state?

The researcher has collected data from 200 sample participants (Anganwadi workers) concerning personal, family, social and work-related problems by using an interview schedule mentioned as follows:

Research question-2.1: What are the personal and family problems that you face because of your Anganwadi work?

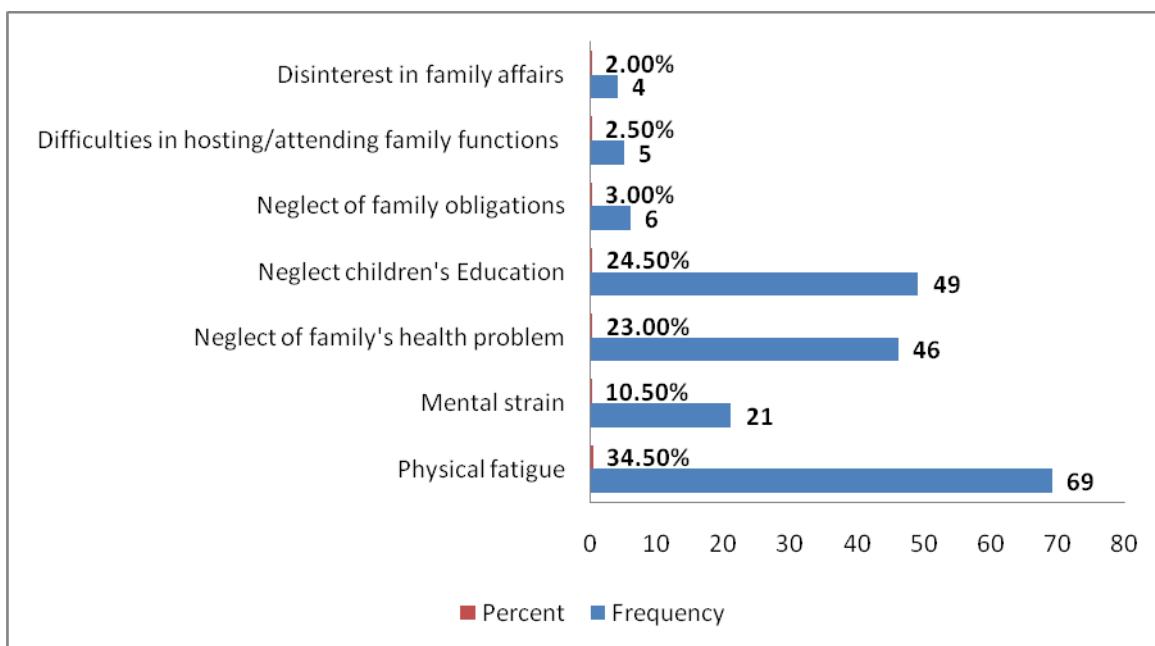
Table-2: Data on personal and family problems faced by Anganwadi Workers

Personal and Family Problems	Frequency	Per cent
Physical fatigue	69	34.50%
Mental strain	21	10.50%
Neglect of family's health problem	46	23.00%
Neglect children's Education	49	24.50%
Neglect of family obligations	6	3.00%
Difficulties in hosting/attending family functions	5	2.50%
Disinterest in family affairs	4	2.00%
Total	200	100.00%

Source: Primary Data

The table-2 shows that the majority 34.50% (69) of the Anganwadi workers expressed that they were facing physical fatigue because of their Anganwadi work, whereas 24.50% (49) were faced with neglect in children's education, approximately 23.00% (46) were faced with neglect of family's health problem, about 10.50% (21) were faced with mental strain, around 3.00% (6) were faced with neglect of family obligations. Furthermore, 2.50% (5) were faced with difficulties in hosting/attending family functions and also 2.00% (4) were faced with disinterest in family affairs.

Graph-2: Data on personal and family problems faced by Anganwadi Workers



Researcher question-2.2: What are the social problems that you face due to your Anganwadi work?

The researcher has collected data from 200 sample respondents (Anganwadi Workers) about social problems that they were facing during fieldwork, as mentioned table-3:

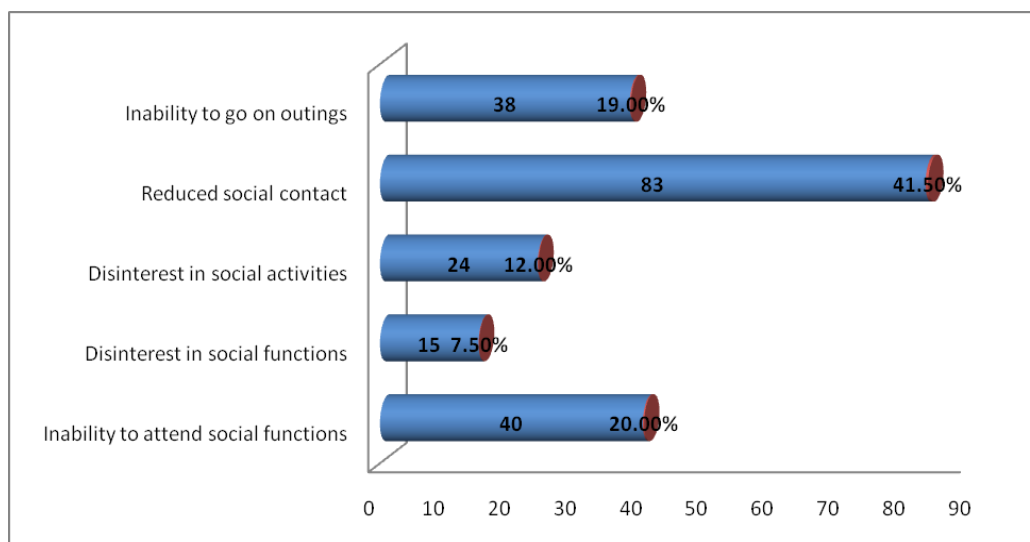
Table-3: Data on Social problems faced by Anganwadi Workers during work

Social problems	Frequency	Percentage
Inability to attend social functions	40	20.00%
Disinterest in social functions	15	7.50%
Disinterest in social activities	24	12.00%
Reduced social contact	83	41.50%
Inability to go on outings	38	19.00%
Total	200	100.00%

Source: Primary Data

The **table-3** shows that the majority 41.50% (83) of the Anganwadi workers expressed that they had reduced social contact due to their Anganwadi work, whereas 20.00% (40) were Inability to attend social functions, about 19.00% (38) were Inability to go on outings, around 12.00% (24) were Disinterest in social activities and approximately 7.50% (15) were Disinterest in social functions.

Graph-3: Data on Social problems faced by Anganwadi Workers during work



Research question-2.3: What are your work-related problems?

The researcher has collected data from 200 sample participants (Anganwadi Workers) regarding work-related problems faced by them and mentioned in the following table-4.

Table-4: Data collected from Anganwadi Workers about work-related problems

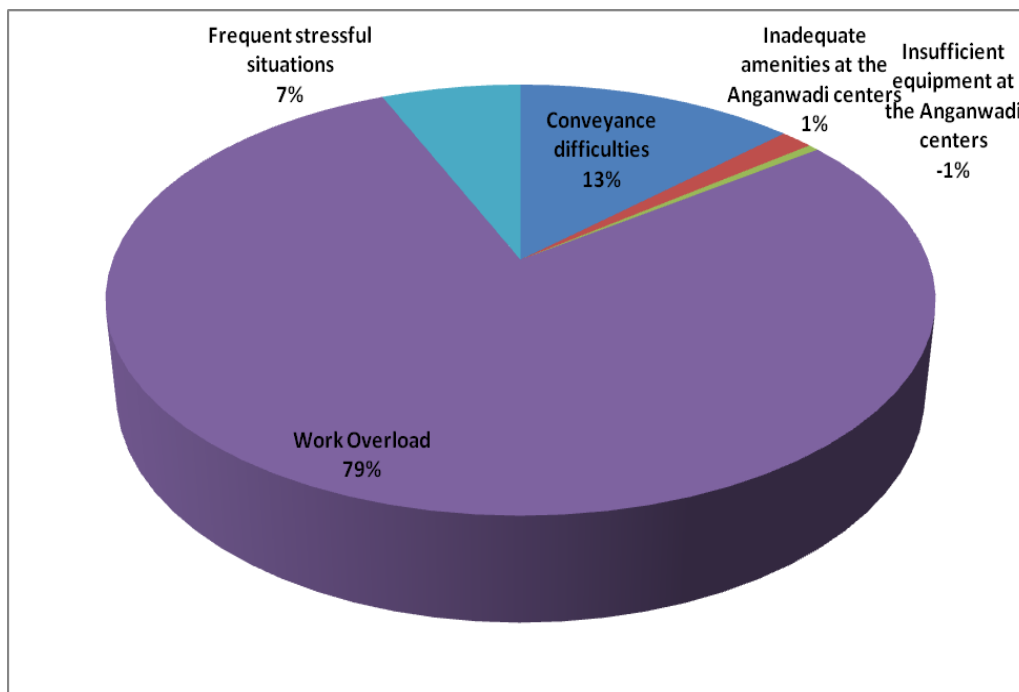
Work-related problems	Frequency	Percentage
Conveyance difficulties	26	13.00%
Inadequate amenities at the Anganwadi centres	3	1.50%
Insufficient equipment at the Anganwadi centres	1	0.50%
Work Overload	157	78.50%
Frequent stressful situations	13	6.50%
Total	200	100.00%

Source: Primary Data

The **table-4** shows that the majority 78.50% (157) of the Anganwadi workers expressed that they were facing overwork load problems in their Anganwadi work, whereas 13.00% (26) were facing problems due to Conveyance difficulties, about 6.50% (13) were facing problems

due to Frequent stressful situations, around 1.50% (3) were facing problems due to Inadequate amenities at the Anganwadi centres and 0.50% (1) were facing problems due to Insufficient equipment at the Anganwadi centres.

Graph-4: Data collected from Anganwadi Workers about work-related problems



Major findings

- It was noticed that the majority 34.50% (69) of the Anganwadi workers expressed that they were facing physical fatigue because of their Anganwadi work, whereas 24.50% (49) were faced with neglect of children's education, approximately 23.00% (46) were faced with neglect of family's health problem, about 10.50% (21) were faced with mental strain, around 3.00% (6) were faced with neglect of family obligations. Furthermore, 2.50% (5) were faced with difficulties in hosting/attending family functions and also 2.00% (4) were faced with disinterest in family affairs.
- It was noticed that the majority 41.50% (83) of the Anganwadi workers expressed that they were reduced social contact due to their Anganwadi work, whereas 20.00% (40) were Inability to attend social functions, about 19.00% (38) were Inability to go on outings, around 12.00% (24) were Disinterest in social activities and approximately 7.50% (15) were Disinterest in social functions.
- It was noticed that the majority 78.50% (157) of the Anganwadi workers expressed that they were facing overwork load problems in their Anganwadi work, whereas 13.00% (26) were facing problems due to Conveyance difficulties, about 6.50% (13) were facing problems due to Frequent stressful situations, around 1.50% (3) were facing problems

due to Inadequate amenities at the Anganwadi centers and 0.50% (1) were facing problems due to Insufficient equipment at the Anganwadi centers.

Limitations of the Study:

The following are the limitations of the present study.

- The present study has been conducted on Anganwadi Workers in Tribal Mandals of the East Godavari district. Therefore, the findings of the study are limited to the tribal area.
- The data has been collected from the Anganwadi Workers only and information from their family members is not ascertained and hence, the study is limited to the perceptions of the Anganwadi Workers only and not the members of their respective families.

Conclusion

There is an urgent need to evaluate ICDS training provided to Anganwadi workers as well as constant retraining to reinforce critical messages. Furthermore, the study has highlighted a need to develop soft skills and knowledge, such as counselling skills and conceptual understanding of malnutrition among Anganwadi workers. Such inputs to the ICDS programme are crucial as almost half of the population is undernourished and its developmental milestone depends upon such interventions.

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