



Job Involvement among ICDS Scheme Functionaries in India: Assessing Extension Needs for Enhanced Performance

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Job involvement is psychological identification with one's work as well as degree to which the job situation is central to person and his identity. Human behavior plays a pivotal role in maximizing organizational effectiveness irrespective of the technological support and their involvement in their job is critical for successful achievement of its objectives. ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) is a comprehensive scheme of Govt. of India enriches human resource and tackles malnutrition and health problems in children below six years of age and their mothers. The services

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to the beneficiaries, who are pregnant women, Lactating Mothers, children under 5 years, adolescents and adult women, are provided at Centre called as Anganwadi. The grass-root level functionaries at the center are called Anganwadi workers (AWW) who executes ICDS scheme as per the Government guidelines to raise the level of health and nutrition, create proper mental, physical and social development of children below six years; to reduce mortality and malnutrition and dropouts. Since job involvement contributes to overall availability of human resource, the success of the ICDS programme extents to effective and successful working of AWWs. The study was conducted to know the job- involvement of AWWs and AWHs – the grass-root functionaries of ICDS scheme. The conducted in one of the blocks of Faizabad District situated in Eastern part of Uttar Pradesh state. One hundred AWWs were randomly selected from 182 AWWs in the block and administered interview schedule and standardized Job Involvement scale by Dr. A.P Singh. The data collected revealed that AWWs were highly involved (47%), moderately involved (37%) and rest (16%) had low involvement. Analysis further found that job involvement and income of the workers; educational qualification and work experience are significantly dependent.

Keywords: Programme functionaries; job involvement; services to women and children; factors associated; extension strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human behavior plays a significant role in maximizing organizational effectiveness despite the development of technology. Job involvement is engagement is engagement of a person both psychologically and in attitude. According to Elankumaran [1], any effort to maximize organizational effectiveness requires a high degree of job involvement among the members of an organization. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), is India's primary social welfare scheme sponsored by Government of India to tackle malnutrition and health problems of in children below six years and their mothers. Infant mortality rate of Indian children is 44 and that of under five mortality rate is 93 and 25 % of the new born children were underweight among other nutritional, immunization and educational deficiencies of children in India. The programme first launched in 1975 with 33 projects (18 urban slums, 4 rural and 11 tribal areas). The positive effects of the pilot project lead to ICDS being the most comprehensive project of India. The services provided to the scheme beneficiaries (pregnant, lactating, children under five years are Supplementary nutrition, Health check up, Immunization, Referral Services. Preschool children are also given non-formal education while nutrition and health education is given to women of the community. The scheme provides at least one third daily recommended nutrition at the centre called – Anganwadi (AWC). Anganwadi is a grass-root center established in each project area (urban slums, rural and urban areas) that covers a population of 1000 persons. Each AWC is managed by an honorary female functionary called the Anganwadi worker (AWW) who is the key community level functionary [2].

About 100 Anganwadis are supervised by a Supervisor called the Mukhyasevika. Every four Mukhyasevika is headed by CDPO (Child Development Project Officer). Thus, the ICDS scheme has three tier monitoring system to ensure deliveries through which the services are to its beneficiaries. Sachdev, Avsm and Dasgupta [3] reported that ICDS is the world largest community based programme. Over the 25 years it expanded progressively and at present there are 5614 (5103 central and 511 state) projects covering over 5300 community development blocks and 300 urban slums; over 60 million children below 6 years of age, over 10 million women between 16-44 years and 2 million lactating mothers.

The basic work of Anganwadi worker is extremely important and needs to be carried out in most efficient manner possible as they ensure care of new born, prenatal care for pregnant woman, post natal care to nursing mothers and get them immunized. The primary focus is on the malnourished group and therefore, it becomes necessary to provide supplementary nutrition. Consistently, Anganwadi workers (AWWs) ensure regular medical check up to all its beneficiaries and preschool education to 3-6 years old children registered in the scheme [4]. AWW is specially selected and trained women from the local community, educated upto high school. She undergoes three months training in child development, environmental sanitation, breastfeeding, ante-natal care, treatment of minor ailment and recognize children. She is given a small honorarium as an incentive fixed by the Govt. [3]. The AWW and AWHs are paid Rs. 4500/ per month and Rs. 2250/- per month respectively. An additional incentive of Rs. 250/-

per month is paid to Anganwadi Helper for facilitating proper functioning of Anganwadi centres. The State Government also pays them an additional amount from their resources. They are also provided an honorarium of Rs 400/- annually for their dress in cash or in kind [5].

The concept of job involvement has gained importance in recent years because of its pivotal role providing link between productivity on one hand and employee's need and quality of working life on the other. Job involvement refers to a state of psychological identification with work—or the degree to which a job is central to a person's identity. From an organizational perspective, it has been regarded as the key to unlocking employee motivation and increasing productivity. From an individual perspective, job involvement constitutes a key to motivation, performance, personal growth, and satisfaction in the workplace. Job involvement contributes importantly to organizational effectiveness, productivity, and morale by engaging employees deeply in their work and making it a meaningful and fulfilling experience. People become involved in their jobs when they perceive in them the potential for satisfying salient psychological needs [6].

AWWs and AWHs are the grass-root functionaries in ICDS programme. Srivastava [7] stated that the performance of Anganwadi worker will also depend on the environment of her work. Job involvement studies have been done Sudaraswamy (1992) found that the age and experience were negatively and significantly associated with job involvement of Assistant Agriculture Officers whereas formal education level of AAOs showed significant and positive association with their level of job performance. Halakatti and Sundaraswamy (1996) found that job performance was significantly correlated with job, attitude, job perception, job stress and organizational stress. The present study assess the job involvement of AWWs and AWHs- the grass-root functionaries of ICDS scheme.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study explores about the job- involvement of AWWs and AWHs – the grass-root functionaries of ICDS scheme in the Bikapur block of Faizabad now known as Ayodhya in the Eastern part of the State of Uttar Pradesh (Latitude: 26 47' N Longitude 82 12 E Latitude). The total area of Bikapur is 486 km² covering both rural and urban areas. It has a population of 4,49,764 people with about 336 villages and 76710 houses in the sub

district. One hundred AWWs/AWHs were randomly selected from 182 working in the Bikapur block. The data was collected through Interview schedule to elicit information on the profile of the AWW that included age of the AWW respondent, education, work experience, income, family type and size. A standardized scale on Job Involvement Scale developed by Dr. A.P. Singh was used to examine to job involvement of job involvement among the grass-root worker of the Scheme. The scale has 54 items with respect to different areas of job involvement namely intrinsic motivation, Attachment to work, Fulfillment of organizational demand, Commitment for work, Internalization of organizational goals and organizational identification. The empirical data was obtained from the AWWs on their monthly meetings days. The data obtained was consolidated on MS Excel with appropriate coding and duly tabulated. The statistical tools were used frequency, percentage table and chi-square test. The chi-square test was used to test the hypothesis with standard formula.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Personal Profile of the Respondents

The age of the Anganwadi workers (AWWs) in the study was between 25 years to 54 years. Majority of the respondents (AWW) were between 25-34 years (50%) while 43 % of the AWWs were in the age range of 35-44 years and a few 7% were 45-54 years. The average age was 35.2 years implying that the AWW in the study were young adults approaching their middle age years. The standard deviation was 6.2. The educational qualification of the AWWs ranged from high school to Post graduation. The study revealed that AWWs were highly qualified as they were Post Graduate (42%), Graduate (37%), Intermediate (17%) and only four per cent were high school educated. The experience in work ranged from 2 years to 25 years. Most of the AWWs had an experience of 8-13 years (59%), 2-7 years (33%) and 14-19 years (5%). Only a few (3%) had work experience of 20-25 years. The average work experience was 9.18 years with standard deviation of 6.2, which implies that Anganwadi workers in the study were not new and had good experience in their job.

3.2 Social Profile of Respondents

The Family size of half of the Anganwadi Workers was between 5-8 members, while 29%

AWW had more than eight members in their family. Rest 21% families had less than 4 members. Social status of 43% Anganwadi workers was found to be belonging to Backward Category (OBC), 37% from General category and 20% Scheduled Caste (SC). AWWs belonged to nuclear family (64%) and joint family (36%). The monthly income of AWWs ranged from Rs. 1600/- to Rs. 4000/- per month. The average monthly income of AWWs was Rs. 2915.

3.3 Factors Associated with Job Involvement of Anganwadi Worker

The Job Involvement Scale revealed that 47% AWWs were highly involved in their job, 37% were moderately involved and low involvement with 16 % AWWs. Agewise, among AWW aged 25-34 years, high job involvement was found in 50% of the Anganwadi worker, 40% were moderately and only 10% were found to have low involvement.

Table 1 shows that the educational qualification of the Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) were above high school with 42% post graduates, graduates (37%), Intermediate (17%) and high school (4%). This is a good sign of better education level in rural areas. Interestingly, a majority of AWWs who were Post graduates (42%), among them half of them were found to be highly involved in job, 33.33% were moderately involved and only a few (16.66%) had low job involvement. Among

the Graduates (37%), majority were moderately involved in their job (48.64%), while 32.43% were highly involved and rest had low job involvement (18.91%). Job involvement of 17% AWW who were Intermediate/10+2 in educations showed high job involvement (70.58%), moderate (17.76%) and low involvement (11.76%). Among the high school educated AWWs, job involvement was either high or moderate. None of them were found to have low job involvement. The null hypothesis that job involvement and education qualification of AWWs are independent was rejected as the calculated chi-square value (13.02) was greater than the table value at 6 degree of freedom at 1% LS (10.64). This implied that job involvement and educational level of grass root workers are not independent and are significantly associated with each other.

It was interest to note that among AWWs getting an honorarium of Rs 2100-2500 per month, 60% were found to have low job involvement and rest were high and moderate distributed equally. In contrast, among the AWWs who had monthly income of Rs. 3600-4000 were highly involved (60%) and moderately involved (40%) in their job and none of them had low involvement. The chi-square analysis to test the null hypothesis that job involvement and monthly income are independent found that the calculated value of chi-square was 8.44 which was greater than the table value (7.34) at 8 df at 5% LS. This indicated that job involvement and monthly family income are dependent significantly.

Table 1. Distribution of AWWs with respect to educational qualification and their Job involvement

Educational qualification	Level of involvement			No. of AWWs	Calculated χ^2
	High	Moderate	Low		
Post Graduate	21 (50)	14 (33.33)	7 (16.66)	42 (100)	13.02**
Graduate	12 (32.43)	18 (48.64)	7 (18.91)	37(100)	
Intermediate	12 (70.58)	03 (17.76)	2 (11.76)	17(100)	
High School	02 (50)	02 (50)	0	04(100)	
Total	47	37	16	100	

Figure in parenthesis indicates percentage **Significant at 1% LS df=6

Table 2. Distribution of Job involvement of AWWs with respect to monthly income

Monthly family income	Level of involvement			No. of AWWs	χ^2
	High	Moderate	Low		
1600-2000	04 (44.44)	04 (44.44)	01 (11.12)	09 (100)	8.44*
2100-2500	01 (20.00)	01 (20.00)	03 (60.00)	05 (100)	
2600-3000	21 (46.67)	16(35.55)	08(17.78)	45 (100)	
3100-3500	18 (50.00)	14 (38.89)	04 (11.11)	36 (100)	
3600-4000	03 (60.00)	02 (40.00)	00	05 (100)	
Total	47	37	16	100	

Figure in parenthesis indicates percentage **Significant at 5% LS df=8

Table 3. Distribution of AWWs Functionaries based on family type and their Job involvement

Family Size	Level of involvement			No. of AWWs	χ^2
	High	Moderate	Low		
Joint	23	9	4	36	6.44**
Nuclear	24	28	12	64	
Total	47	37	16	100	

Figure in parenthesis indicates percentage **Significant at 5% LS df=8

Table 4. Distribution of AWWs with respect to Family Size and Job involvement

Family size	Level of involvement			No. of AWWs	χ^2
	High	Moderate	Low		
1-4	9 (42.85)	6 (28.57)	06 (28.57)	21 (100)	3.53*
5-8	23 (46.0)	20 (40.0)	07 (14.0)	50 (100)	
8-12	15 (51.72)	11 (37.93)	03 (10.34)	29(100)	
Total	47	37	16	100	

Figure in parenthesis indicates percentage **Significant at 5% LS df=4

Table 5. Distribution of AWWs based on Work Experience and Job involvement

Work experience (in Years)	Level of involvement			No. of AWWs	χ^2
	High	Moderate	Low		
2-7	18 (54.55)	13 (39.39)	02 (6.06)	33 (100)	8.63*
8-13	25 (42.37)	23 (38.98)	11 (18.65)	59 (100)	
14-19	03 (60.0)	01 (20.0)	01 (20.0)	05 (100)	
20-25	01 (33.33)	00 (00)	02 (66.67)	03 (100)	
Total	47	37	16	100	

Figure in parenthesis indicates percentage **Significant at 5% LS df=6

The type of family to which the AWWs belonged was nuclear (64%) and Joint (36%) in nature as revealed in Table 3. Most of the AWWs (28%) showed Moderate job involvement and were from nuclear family. The high job involvement was found with 24% nuclear families and 23% joint families. Among the low job involved AWWs, 12% were from nuclear family and a few (4%) from joint families. The null hypothesis that job involvement and family type are independent was rejected as the calculated chi-square value (6.44) was greater than the table value at 2 degree of freedom with 1% level of significance. It implied that job involvement is associated with the structure of the family. It seems that the job of the AWWs is not only important to them as a social responsibility but the family structure may also be the reason for their nature of job involvement which may further be investigated.

Table 4 reveals that half of the AWWs had a medium family size of 5-8 members, while 29% had large families with more than 8 family members and small family (21%) having (less than 4 members). Family size wise, table found that among the small family high involvement in job was among 42.85% AWWs, moderate and

low involvement (28.57% each). Among the medium size families, high job involvement was found among 46% AWWs followed by moderate involvement (40%) and a few (14.0%) were low in job involvement. The significant association was revealed at 5% LS as revealed from χ^2 calculation as the calculated value was greater than table value at four degree of freedom.

Table 5 revealed that majority of AWWs (59%) had work experience of 8-13 years and 33% were relatively new with an experience of 2-7 years, rest (8%) had work experience between 14-25 years. Work experience wise, it was found that among AWWs who had work experience of 2-7 years, 54.55% had high job involvement, followed by moderate job involvement (39.39%) and low involvement (6.06%). AWWs with 8-13 years work experience showed high job involvement (25%), moderate job involvement (23%) and low involvement (11%). Among AWWs who had more than 14 years of work experience majority had high job involvement and a few were found to have moderate to low job involvement. The hypothesis that job involvement and work experience are independent, tested through χ^2 found that the

calculated value was greater than table value at 5%LS and 6 degrees of freedom. Thus, the hypothesis was rejected. It implied that job involvement and work experience are significantly dependent. In a study the findings indicate that the involvement serves as a complex moderator role in the pattern of relationships of work experience and job characteristics with career expectations and career outcomes. It has both linear and non-linear relationships with several of the study variables. While in some cases high levels of job involvement tend to enhance the beneficial effects of work experiences on the quality of work life, in other such involvement tends to heighten the negative effects of role stressors [8,9].

3.4 Major Findings

The majority of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) were young adults, primarily aged 25-34 years (50%), with an average age of 35.2 years. A high level of education was observed, with 42% holding postgraduate degrees, 37% being graduates, and only 4% having completed high school. Most AWWs had substantial work experience, primarily in the range of 8-13 years (59%), with an average work experience of 9.18 years. Half of the AWWs reported family sizes between 5-8 members, with a notable presence of nuclear families (64%). A significant portion of AWWs belonged to the Other Backward Classes (OBC) (43%) and General Category (37%). The average monthly income was reported at Rs. 2915, with most AWWs earning between Rs. 1600 and Rs. 4000. The Job Involvement Scale indicated that 47% of AWWs were highly involved in their jobs, 37% moderately involved, and 16% showed low involvement. Educational qualification was significantly correlated with job involvement, with higher education associated with increased involvement levels. There was a significant relationship between monthly income and job involvement. AWWs with higher incomes (Rs. 3600-4000) showed higher involvement, whereas those earning Rs. 2100-2500 exhibited lower involvement. The family structure influenced job involvement, with AWWs from nuclear families showing a tendency towards moderate involvement, while those from joint families had varied involvement levels. A significant association was found between family size and job involvement, with AWWs from medium-sized families (5-8 members) showing the highest job involvement. A significant correlation existed between work experience and job involvement. AWWs with 2-7 years of experience exhibited the highest job involvement

(54.55%). AWWs with more than 14 years of experience also showed high involvement levels, suggesting that both relatively new and seasoned AWWs felt a strong commitment to their roles.

4. CONCLUSION

Job involvement of employee is critical and significant for the successful achievement of the organizational or a programme's goals and objectives. From the results and discussions, it was found that there was positive development with respect to literacy in Indian rural conditions especially in Uttar Pradesh. The joint families are still prevalent especially in light of tendency of the community to shift to nuclear family. The factors associated with job involvement of the functionaries were income of the family, level of education, family size, family structure, and work experience of AWWs. High involvement of these grass root worker (AWWs) is probably the reason of success behind the comprehensive programme of ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services). It is recommended to every intervention and development programmes should regularly conduct studies on quality performances of the associated human resource such as job involvement as high job involvement is significant for the success of any organization, programme and scheme. The subject needs further in-depth study to understand attributes that are fetching high involvement in the programme. At the same time, investigations on the low job involvement among the functionaries and policy actions will make long term effect on the impact of the programme and achievement of its objectives which is critical for food and nutrition security and fight against malnutrition and cost benefit ratio of the investment in human resources. Now that remuneration of AWWs is upgraded from 4000/- month to 6000/- month with additional perks and benefits in terms of dearness allowances, house rent allowances, maternal leaves, and medical facilities, it is high time to conduct similar study which is need of the hour. Furthermore, there is need for assessing the changes in job involvement, job competence of AWWs and achievement of objectives of the scheme.

5. FURTHER IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Continuous evaluation of job involvement factors is essential for enhancing the effectiveness of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS).

Further research is recommended to explore low job involvement among AWWs and understand its implications on program success, especially following recent changes in remuneration and benefits. The results of this study highlight how crucial work participation is to the ICDS program's and its grassroots functionaries' success. By utilising this information, stakeholders can help AWWs work in a more encouraging and stimulating atmosphere, which will improve their performance and the lives of local moms and kids. In order to maintain and increase the efficacy of this crucial endeavour in India's fight against malnutrition and health inequities, ongoing research and flexible policy frameworks will be necessary.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of this manuscript.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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