

Subject Matter Knowledge of Anganwadi Workers (ICDS) in Different Areas of Competencies

Shobha Rani* and Devendra Kumar**

*Sr. Scientist & Head, KVK, Jehanabad, BAU, Sabour

**Sr. Scientist & Head, KVK, Vaishali, RPCAU, Pusa, Samastipur

Received: 10.06.2018 | Revised: 16.07.2018 | Accepted: 24.07.2018

ABSTRACT

The AWW is the main functional unit in ICDS scheme and on her, rests the penultimate responsibility of making the scheme a grand success. Therefore, a study was conducted to assess the subject matter knowledge of Anganwadi workers in different areas of competencies and to know the relationships and relative contribution of selected characteristics of AWWs and subject matter knowledge. The study leads to conclude that the knowledge possessed by AWWs was less than 50 percent in majority of the areas. The overall knowledge of 90 percent AWWs varied between low-medium to high-medium. It was the level of formal education which was found to be highly correlated and as also significantly contributing in subject matter knowledge.

Key words: ICDS, Anganwadi workers, Subject matter Knowledge, Competency.

INTRODUCTION

ICDS scheme, devoted to the welfare of women and children was started in the country on 2nd October, 1975 with a view to provide a package of services to women and children at their door step. The grass level unit of ICDS is Anganwadi and a centre is run by Anganwadi Worker(AWW). The AWW is the main functional unit and on her, rests the penultimate responsibility of making the scheme a grand success. The accomplishment of the objectives set forth requires a number of jobs/activities to be carried out by AWW and for that she must possess subject matter

knowledge. A well knowledgeable AWW would definitely have a distinct personality and an asset to the scheme for its high level of performance. Therefore, it is imperative to assess their knowledge in different areas of competencies. More specifically an attempt was made with objectives:

1. To ascertain subject matter knowledge of AWWs in different areas of competencies and
2. To know the relationships and relative contribution of selected characteristics of AWWs and subject matter knowledge.

Cite this article: Rani, S. and Kumar, D., Subject Matter Knowledge of Anganwadi Workers (ICDS) in Different Areas of Competencies, *Int. J. Pure App. Biosci. SPI: 6(3): 688-691 (2018).*

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Kalyanpur Block in Samastipur district of Bihar served as the locale of research in which the ICDS was started in 1989. Out of 137 AWWs 90 selected randomly constituted the sample of the study.

Subject Matter Knowledge of the respondents was determined in six areas of competencies, embracing the cognitive domain normally required to perform role and functions as AWWs. These areas with specific number of question items were: Concept and objectives of ICDS scheme¹⁰, Nutrition and health education²⁵, Immunization¹⁵, Health check up and referral services⁹, Non-formal pre-school education⁷ and Monitoring and Reporting¹⁴.

Teacher-made type knowledge test was developed after due modification on the

basis of pretesting. In all, the test was composed of 80 specific question items which was administered to the subjects with clear and complete instructions by the researchers. The respondent was given a score of "1" for correct answer and a 'zero' for incorrect or no answer. Thus a respondent's knowledge score varied between 0 and number of items in each of the area of competencies. The score obtained by the respondents in the selected areas were calculated into percent separately and subsequently divided by 90 to get mean percentage score of that area. The overall knowledge of a AWW was the total percentage score over the six areas of competencies divided by six and classified as under:

Class	level of knowledge in percent
Low	0-25
Low medium	26-50
High medium	51-75
High	76 & above

Multiple correlation and regression analysis were computed to know the relationships and relative contribution of the variables selected under the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Knowledge possessed in different areas of competencies:

Mean percentage scores of subject matter knowledge is presented in Table 1 which clearly indicates that the AWWs possessed less than fifty percent knowledge in almost all the areas of competencies except 'Nutrition and health education' with 50.09 percent. It is glaring that the subject matter knowledge in 'Monitoring and reporting' was the lowest with mean percentage score of 34.08

It is obvious from the mean percentage scores of 45.33, 46.42 and 45.56 that knowledge status with regard to 'Concept and objectives of ICDS', 'Immunization', 'Health check-up and referral services' respectively

were almost similar. However, based on the magnitude of mean percentage scores, ranks of different areas of competencies could be assigned which also appear in Table 1.

It is to be highlighted that 'Nutrition and health education' ranked first which might be attributed to greater emphasis on this aspect during the orientation training programme of AWW. Lal, reported that one month time was devoted in training on nutrition and health. This is also to be pointed out that subject matter knowledge of AWWs in 'Monitoring and reporting' ranked sixth giving a poor picture as compared to other areas of competencies. In ICDS scheme, prescribed forms and registers are required to be filled-in by the AWWs. The researchers in their informal discussions with a number of AWWs of the study area could know that the registers and forms are mostly filled-in by their husbands. It was also told by them that the maintenance of registers and records was a

difficult job. These may serve as valid reasons for the lowest position of this area.

The distribution of AWWs on the basis of overall knowledge possessed by them is presented in Table 2.

It is revealed that a maximum of 57.78 percent of AWWs had low-medium level of knowledge followed by 32.22 percent in high-medium category. Surprisingly enough, none of the AWW had high level of knowledge. It could be inferred that retention and recall of knowledge among AWWs were not upto the mark. It means the knowledge that was gained during orientation training could not be refreshed/maintained by way of individual reading and practice.

Relationship of subject matter knowledge and respondent's characteristics:

It is obvious from Table 3 that only formal education of AWWs showed highly significant correlation with knowledge in different areas

of competencies while rest of the variables had weak correlation. This may be due to the fact that level of formal education has a definite influence on the overall cognitive domain of AWWs. Rani & Verma reported that educational qualification of AWWs varied from non-matric to graduation level and in some cases they were qualified in Home Science discipline.

Contribution of independent variables on subject matter knowledge of AWWs:

It is clear from Table 4 that only one variable that is level of formal education of AWWs significantly contributed to the overall knowledge in different areas of competencies.

Nevertheless the set of variables under study accounts for 46 percent of variability ($R^2 = 0.461$) which is found to be significant with F value of 8.65

Table 1: Mean percentage score of subject matter knowledge in different areas of competencies of AWWs

Areas of competencies	Mean percentage score (n=90)	Rank
Concept and objectives of ICDS scheme	45.33	IV
Nutrition and Health education	50.09	I
Immunization	46.42	II
Health check-up and referral services	45.56	III
Non-formal pre-school education	41.57	V
Monitoring and reporting	34.08	VI

Table 2: Level of overall knowledge possessed by AWWs

Knowledge level	Frequency	Percent
Low	9	10.00
Low Medium	52	57.78
High medium	29	32.22
High	Nil	Nil
Total	90	100.00

Table 3: Relationship of subject matter knowledge and respondent's characteristics

Sl. No.	Characteristics	'r' Value
1	Age	0.094 ^{NS}
2	Level of formal education	0.640 ^{**}
3	Annual income	0.143 ^{NS}
4	Tenure of service	0.006 ^{NS}
5	Relation with Mukhya Sevika	-0.165 ^{NS}
6	Situational variable	-0.141 ^{NS}
7	Opinion of AWWs towards the project	0.036 ^{NS}
8	Job involvement	-0.117 ^{NS}

Table 4: Contribution of independent variables on subject matter knowledge of respondents

Sl. No.	Independent variables	Regression coefficient	't' Value
1	Age	0.35261	1.309
2	Level of formal education	9.318	7.497 ^{**}
3	Income	-0.0001	-0.322
4	Tenure of service	-0.79209	-0.473
5	Relation with Mukhya Sevika	-4.4298	-1.330
6	Situational variable	-0.16009	-0.185
7	Opinion of AWWs towards the project	-0.03987	-0.241
8	Job involvement	-0.20895	-1.143
$R^2 = 0.461$		$F=8.65^*$	

CONCLUSION

The study leads to conclude that the knowledge possessed by AWWs was less than 50 percent in majority of the areas. The overall knowledge of 90 percent AWWs varied between low-medium to high-medium. It was the level of formal education which was found to be highly correlated and as also significantly contributing in subject matter knowledge. Therefore, it is implied that on the job training of AWWs in one form or the other should be a regular feature 'Mukhya Sevika' should provide effective technical guidance and while selecting AWWs their formal education should be given due weightage.

REFERENCES

1. Krishnamurthy, K.G. and Nadkarni, M.V., Integrated Child Development Services : An Assessment : New Delhi, UNICEF (1983).
2. Kumar, R. Prakash, V. and Lal, S., A study of community's reaction to the scheme of ICDS and its package of services, Research on ICDS: An overview, **1**: 262-263 (1985).
3. Mahajan, Neelam (1991). Physical, Social and Environmental characteristics of ICDS project organisation. *Indian Journal of Extension, Education*, **27**: 24-33.
4. Rani, S. and Verma, N.C., Performance of Anganwari Worker in Integrated Child Development Services Scheme : An Appraisal, *Maharashtra Journal of Extension, Education*, **14**: 175-178 (1995).
5. Rani, S. and Verma, N.C., Job perception of Anganwari Worker in Integrated Child Development Services. *Maharashtra Journal of Extension, Education*, **16**: 13-17 (1997).