Review of Research on ICDS

The ICDS scheme, initiated in 1975 as a pilot scheme, has gradually grown to become one of the largest schemes in India. Since then, several reviews have been undertaken to study the impact of this important programme. The focus in these reviews has been largely on the functioning and the impact of individual service components of the programme. The reviews have provided evidence of usefulness of the programme particularly its impact on children and mothers as compared to those in the non-ICDS areas.

The weakest links in the Programme as revealed by the reviews, were health and nutrition education (HNE), community participation and availability of stimulating learning environment for children. These components were important for building capacity and self-reliance in the vulnerable people, which in fact is the main objective of the programme. The anganwadi workers, the main field functionaries for ICDS, needed initiative, motivation and specific skills for implementing these essential aspects of the programme. Reviews of training courses revealed that training has not been that effective in meeting these needs and in equipping the AWWs for discharging their role effectively. Another important fact, emerging from the reviews, was that, there were very few studies, if at all, on the role of the AWW and
her motivation and behaviour. The present research was undertaken to help fill some of these gaps and in understanding the functioning of the programme in perspective of the AWWs' role and participation.

The Presearch Research

The present research involved an inter-related study of self-concepts, aspiration, perceptions and performance of the anganwadi workers. Such a study of their psychological profile including their motivation and field behaviour, was likely to have an important bearing on functioning of the programme. The study was geared specifically to understand the aspirations and motivation of the anganwadi workers, inter-relationship of such variables with their perceptions and self-assessment of the programme and to understand some of the important personal and organisational factors in their motivation and performance in the programme.

The study was conducted on 200 anganwadies spreading over four project areas of Delhi, drawing a sample of 50 AWCs from each of these areas. Twenty six AWCs were individually observed for their day to day functioning and 50 beneficiary-mothers were also randomly selected for individual interviews in this respect.

A self-concept inventory, a background questionnaire, a job perception questionnaire and a ladder type scale of aspirations were used to obtain data from the sampled AWWs. A detailed check list was used to help observe AWWs'
activities and behaviour at the centres. The beneficiaries were also interviewed with the help of a structured interview schedule. The respective supervisors rated the sampled AWWs' performance with the help of structured schedule including some specific criteria of performance.

Thus, the obtained and processed data yielded information on the background of the AWWs including information on their age, level of education, marital status, locality of residence, seniority, training, income and supplementary employment. Study of self-concepts yielded information on self-concepts of health and personality, self-abilities, self-confidence, self-worthiness, sense of success in present and future, sense of responsibility as indicated by beliefs and convictions, sense of shame and guilt and sense of emotional maturity. In addition to these self-concepts, data revealed the AWWs' level of expectation, satisfaction and aspiration about their past, present and future quality of life. Their perceptions revealed their self-assessment of the functioning of some important aspects of the programme, such as services like supplementary nutrition, immunisation, health check-up facilities, pre-school education, as well as some managerial aspects of the programme implementation, degree of public cooperation available in the programme and their approach towards their service and working conditions.

In addition to such motivational and behavioural data, assessment of their performance yielded information on AWWs'
interaction and rapport with the beneficiaries, activities conducted by them at their respective AWCs and the overall environment obtaining there. The beneficiaries recalled benefits derived by them from the programme and their assessment of the functioning of respective AWCs and AWWs. The AWWs' performance was also specifically rated by their supervisors.

The AWWs: The Profile

AWWs were mostly young and unmarried women. The younger AWWs were also more educated. On an average, they had put in about 5-7 years of service with the programme. On an average they were earning Rs. 300/- per month from their work. Some of them earned small additional income from other employment.

The AWWs' Self-Concepts and Motivation

The AWWs checked a self-concept scale, as mentioned above, which yielded information on several self-concept. The AWWs tended to be positive in their self-concepts of self-abilities, self-confidence, and their sense of success in present and future. They appeared to be somewhat negative in their self-concepts of emotional maturity and sense of shame and guilt. They were about average on self-concepts of health and personality, self-acceptance, sense of self-worthiness and sense of responsibility. Most of these self-concepts were inter-related.
Review of Research on Self-Concepts and Motivation

Psychological studies of self-concepts have focused on self-awareness, self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-image and other self related phenomena. Such studies are interested more in consequences of self-concept in relation to behaviour. Focus here has been on internal cause of behaviour, where motivation is one of the main issues. Several studies have shown the importance of consequences of occupational conditions and the related experience for individual self-evaluation and self-concepts. Studies have identified three major self related human motives, namely, self-efficacy motive, self-esteem motive and authenticity motive. Such motives, particularly self efficacy motive, tend to work as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Studies also show the importance of social learning in the formation and strengthening/weakening of self-concepts and motivation.

The AWWs' Motives and the Programme

As per the contents of these self-concepts and the obtained inter-correlations, sense of self-ability, self-confidence, sense of success and sense of responsibility (belief and conviction) tended to cluster and form the self-efficacy motive. Self-concepts of health and personality, self-acceptance and self-worthiness formed the self-esteem motive. The remaining two self-concepts namely, emotional maturity and sense of guilt and shame formed the authenticity motive.
The AWWs' background showed some interesting inter-relationship with their self-concepts. For example, length of service with anganwadies seemed to weaken their self-concepts of health, personality and attractiveness, self-abilities, and sense of success in present and future. This factor was found to negate all the self-concepts suggesting that the longer their service with the anganwadies, less they gained from such experience in terms of their psychological well-being.

This finding suggested serious implications for the nature of the programme and its functioning on the ground. For example, the work involved in running an anganwadi seemed to be repetitive, had no variety and was uninteresting. It did not challenge the abilities of the field functionaries in order to motivate them for active involvement in the programme. Did such repetitive experience tend to weaken their self-image particularly self-efficacy and self-esteem. These issues assumed greater importance in view of the fact that the ICDS programme was meant to promote human resource development of children and mothers. Was the programme weakening the human resource of the field functionaries involved in implementing the programme?

The AWWs' Aspirations for Quality of Life

The ICDS field functionaries tended to expect better quality of life for themselves. Some of them felt a sense of nostalgia for their past life implying the resentment with the present conditions of life. The younger AWWs, yearned
more for better life in future. However, the AWWs with high self-esteem tended to view their present life positively. They did not decry their present life. This was particularly true for those who showed high sense of personal efficacy. Greater such efficacy, greater was their sense of positive feeling with present conditions of life. In this sense, quality of life, and feelings with present conditions, emerged as very significant factors in their motivation.

The AWWs' Perceptions of the Programme

The AWWs tended to positively perceive the functioning of supplementary nutrition, immunisation, record keeping, and management of the programme. They were about average in their perception of the functioning of health service, preschool education, public cooperation and their working conditions. Some of these perceptions were highly interrelated. This was particularly true of their perception of pre-school education and public cooperation. Those viewing these components as positive, were also equally positive about functioning of other service and the programme as a whole.

The findings, on the whole, suggested that, although the AWWs thought, record keeping was being maintained well, they did not think it to be an essential activity. They did not seem to be happy with supplementary food and nutrition service although they thought, they were implementing it well.
Another interesting finding here was their unclear response to their service and working conditions. It was neither negative nor positive. It did not show any relationship with the functioning of important services like food and nutrition, immunisation, health check up and with programme management.

**AWWs' Background and Perceptions**

Additional training, i.e., training in some specific components of ICDS programme and such other training in adult education etc. in addition to regular anganwadi work emerged as a positive factor in their perceptions of the programme. Income was also positively correlated with their assessment of the programme. The expectation for better quality of life in future was uniformly negatively associated with their self-assessment of the programme. The younger AWWs were less satisfied with the programme. On the other hand, those who felt adjusted and satisfied with their working conditions as well as their conditions of life were more positive about the programme.

**Self-Concepts and Perceptions**

The efficacious AWWs were consistently less positive about the functioning of the programme including the supplementary food and nutrition service. They were also not particularly satisfied with their service and working conditions. They seemed to be in search of more challenging and interesting content in the programme.
The AWWs' Performance
Various Criteria

The Observed Behaviour and Benefits Recalled

Several indices of the AWWs' performance were obtained and used in the analyses. A small group of anganwadies were directly observed for a day. The overall environment including space, lighting, seating facilities etc. was found to be of poor quality. The AWWs mostly implemented two activities namely distribution of food and distribution of toys among the children. Some of them were observed to be friendly with children and mothers as they visited the centres. They complained about lack of space and other facilities at the centres which prevented them from undertaking meaningful activities.

The most common benefit recalled by the beneficiaries was food and nutrition and sometimes pre-school education. They thought, their children at least got something to eat and that, they also learnt something there. They were however not happy with the quality of food and suggested the need for variety. They laid emphasis on AWWs' behaviour towards their children and themselves, and recalled some of them with warmth. Some of them were blunt in saying that the AWWs showed no respect for them and their children.

The Supervisors' Assessment

Supervisors were directly involved in assessing the AWWs performance from time to time. It was a part of their
function. They rated the sampled AWWs for the present study, using their usual criteria in this respect. They rated the AWWs on the basis of punctuality, regularity, their involvement in the programme and the observed impact of their various activities. On the whole, they tended to rate their AWWs' as average performers tilting towards positive side.

The Performance

The findings suggested the importance of availability and the manner of delivery of various services particularly food and nutrition. Along with quality and delivery of such services, AWWs' ability to establish communication and rapport with the beneficiaries also emerged as very important. The community seemed to assess the usefulness and the impact of the programme on such criteria. The supervisors, on the other hand, tended to give greater importance to punctuality and regularity in implementing the desired activities.

Some of the background variables showed interesting relationship with the performance of the AWWs. For instance, older the AWWs, lower was their interaction with beneficiaries. The same was true for 'senior' AWWs, i.e., those who had put in longer period of service with anganwadies. They seemed to show low interest in the programme.

The AWWs with greater training exposure were more positively assessed by the supervisors. In terms of simple
correlations, AWWs' level of education, income, additional employment showed no relationship with their performance either as observed or as assessed by the beneficiaries and the supervisors. The supervisors' assessment also showed no relationship with the AWWs' observed behaviour as well as with the beneficiaries' assessment of the programme.

The beneficiaries' assessment of perceived benefits, functioning of anganwadi centres and the behaviour of AWWs were highly inter-related. Some of these, such as the behaviour of anganwadi worker as perceived by the beneficiaries, was highly correlated with their observed communication and rapport with the beneficiaries. The AWWs' positive attitude towards the beneficiaries, as indicated by their communication and rapport seemed to have made no difference in the supervisors' assessment of their performance.

AWWs' sense of satisfaction/dissatisfaction either with the present quality of life or their past life and the expected quality of life in future showed no definite correlations with any of the assessments as indicated by sample correlations. However, those AWWs who thought that their future life would be better than the present life, were observed to show better communication with the beneficiaries. They were also uniformly assessed positively by the beneficiaries. In this sense, AWWs' expectation of better quality of life seemed to boost communication and
respect for the beneficiaries. The supervisors also tended
to give somewhat better rating to them as shown by simple
correlation. This was, however, reversed in multiple
regression analysis.

Sense of Personal Efficacy and Involvement in the Programme

On the whole, sense of personal efficacy, as indicated
by sense of self-abilities, sense of self-confidence, sense
of success in present and future and sense of responsibility
showed varying relationships with different modes of
performance appraisal. For instance, they seemed to be
negatively assessed by their beneficiaries in terms of
benefits derived by them from the programme. It did not show
any particular relationship with supervisors' assessment
except in case of sense of responsibility where there was a
small positive correlation between the two. On the whole,
the efficacious AWWs tended to be less involved in the
programme.

Sense of Self-Esteem and Involvement

Sense of self-esteem seemed to show positive
correlations with supervisors' assessment. This was
particularly true of the self-concepts of health and
personality and self-acceptance. However, such AWWs were not
observed to show sufficient interaction with beneficiaries
and rapport with them. The beneficiaries also tended to rate
them rather negatively. On the whole, therefore, they were
observed to be also less involved in the programme although
supervisors seemed to show positive assessment of their work.
The picture about various aspects of the AWWs' performance was not clear from simple correlation as these variables were themselves inter-related in various ways. It became more definitive in multiple regression analyses.

Significant Correlates of Performance

Supervisors' Assessment

Supervisors' assessment of their AWWs' work was organisationally an important source of information about functioning of the programme and the performance of respectiveanganwadies. Thirty variables consisting of background variables, aspirations, self-concepts and AWWs' self-assessment and perceptions were used to predict variance in supervisors' assessment. These independent variables explained 60% variance in AWWs' performance as assessed by their supervisors. This was not significant statistically. Multiple regression analyses, however, identified 15 individual variables as significant factors/predictors of AWWs' performance. These are arranged below in order of importance as indicated by the amount of variance explained by them in performance.

Sense of Self-Abilities

This emerged as the most important correlate of AWWs' performance. Higher the sense of self-abilities and their readiness to undertake tasks, greater was their performance.
Satisfaction with Current Living Conditions

AWWs' sense of satisfaction with their current quality of life emerged as the next important correlate of their performance. More adjusted and more contented the AWWs were with their conditions of life, the greater was their involvement and performance in the programme. In this sense, perceived quality of life emerged as a very important factor in effective implementation of the programme.

Sense of Emotional Maturity

This self-concept emerged as the third most important correlate - negative - of their performance. Greater the tendency shown by anganwadi workers for trying out new ideas and methods and greater their readiness to view criticism as help, the lower was their performance. There appeared to be some mismatch between the nature of the programme and the AWWs' tendency to be creative in their approach.

AWWs' Perception of Supplementary Food and Nutrition

Perception of the functioning of this important service emerged as a negative correlate in this respect. More positive their assessment of this component, more complacent they appeared in implementing the programme. In view of the supervisors, such a complacently positive attitude of the AWWs tended to lower their overall performance in the programme. In this sense, critical and balanced attitude toward the ongoing programme emerged as a positive resource and a significant correlate of AWWs' performance.
Sense of Self-Worthiness

AWWs' sense of self-worthiness also emerged as a negative correlate of AWWs' performance. Greater the sense of their own competence and worth, the lower was their involvement and performance as assessed by the supervisors. This finding was similar to the finding regarding sense of emotional maturity.

Sense of Self-Acceptance

This self-concept emerged as an important positive correlate of their performance. Such AWWs, who did not harass anyone, gave no excuse and who did not indulge in self-praise, were assessed highly by their supervisors. Such qualities probably enabled them to establish positive interpersonal relations with others including their supervisors which helped them to perform better in the programme.

Honorarium/Income

The AWWs' income/honorarium emerged as the next most important correlate of their performance. It emerged as an important positive correlate in this respect. Greater the honorarium/income, the higher was their involvement in the programme, resulting in better performance.

Additional Employment

AWWs' additional employment for generating supplementary income emerged as an important negative correlate of their performance. Their supervisors did not view them positively probably because they were not able to
devote full attention to the programme.

Seniority: Length of Service

The AWWs' seniority in the programme, as indicated by their length of service with anganwadies, also emerged as a negative correlate of their performance. The supervisors did not view such 'senior' AWWs positively. They were probably less involved in the programme. This also suggested a possibility of some role and inter-personal conflict between supervisors and senior AWWs.

Sense of Self-Confidence

The AWWs' sense of self-confidence also emerged as a negative correlate of their performance. Greater their confidence for overcoming hurdles, the lower was their performance in the programme. Again, this finding was similar to the findings regarding sense of emotional maturity and sense of self-worthiness.

Satisfaction with Service and Working Conditions

The AWWs' positive adjustment with their service and working conditions at anganwadi emerged as a positive correlate of their performance. The AWWs, who did not bother much about their working conditions and were probably complacent in this regard, seemed to have better adjusted with the programme.

Age

Older the AWWs, the greater was their performance. Supervisors seemed to like comparatively older field workers.
Expected Quality of Life in Future

AWWs' aspiration for better quality of life in future emerged as a negative correlate of their performance. More aspiring the AWWs, the lower was their involvement and performance in the programme.

Education

The AWWs' level of education emerged as an important positive correlate of their performance. College education seemed to have helped them in this respect.

Sense of Responsibility

AWWs' sense of responsibility emerged as a negative correlate of their performance. The finding here was similar to the findings regarding sense of emotional maturity, sense of worthiness, sense of self-confidence, and sense of better future - all of which emerged as negative correlates of performance.