



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## Dual Role Management of Anganwadi Teachers as Booth Level Agents: A Study of 2023 Vidhanasabha Election in Udupi Taluk, Udupi District

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Anganwadi teachers are government-appointed professionals to teach children below the age of five years. It is more or less like a playschool but for the less privileged children who cannot afford to go to private schools or pre-play centres. The Anganwadi centres play a pivotal role in developing health facilities and implementing government welfare schemes related to women and infants in rural areas of India. They have been constantly involved with the women folks of the rural area and pockets of the urban area, especially in government hospitals, to keep women updated on regular programs so that they can reap maximum benefits for themselves and their children. Anganwadi teachers generally teach at home, which also helps parents who wake up early and return late from work as their children are taken care of. The education imparted to children is quite basic as per their age and stage. Common things taught by the Anganwadi teachers are – the name of the alphabet, recognising the alphabet, and teaching the names of common vegetables, fruits, and animals. The teaching is mostly oral. Many teachers are trained, and few states also pay them on an honorarium basis.

Challenges: Public policy discussions have taken place over whether to make Anganwadis universally available to all eligible children and mothers who want their children there. This would require significant increases in budgetary allocation and a rise in the number of Anganwadis to over 16 lakh. The officers and their helpers who staff Anganwadi are typically women from poor families. The workers do not have permanent jobs with comprehensive retirement benefits like other government staff. Worker protests by the All India Anganwadi Workers Federation and public debates on this topic are ongoing. There are periodic reports of corruption and crimes against women in some Anganwadi centers. There are legal and societal issues when Anganwadi-service children fall sick or die.

This study is conducted in Udupi Taluk. Udupi taluk is a taluk in the Udupi District of the Indian state of Karnataka. The headquarters is the town of Udupi . According to the Indian Census of 2001, Udupi taluk has a population of 529,225 (251,021 males, 278,204 females) in 104,608 households, divided between an urban population of 152,646 and a rural population of 376,579.

The concept of dual role management in the context of Anganwadi teachers has its merits and challenges. While there are potential benefits in having Anganwadi teachers perform dual roles, such as increased

efficiency and improved service delivery, it is crucial to address certain considerations to ensure its successful implementation. The dual role management of Anganwadi teachers involves the simultaneous performance of administrative and instructional duties. On one hand, this approach can enhance coordination and streamline operations within the Anganwadi system. It allows teachers to actively engage in the planning and management of the center, leading to more effective utilization of resources and the ability to tailor programs to local needs. On the other hand, managing dual roles can pose challenges. The workload of Anganwadi teachers is already demanding, and adding administrative responsibilities may strain their time and energy. This could potentially impact the quality of instruction and care provided to children. Additionally, teachers may require additional training and support to effectively fulfil both roles, ensuring they have the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out administrative tasks alongside their teaching responsibilities. To overcome these challenges, it is essential to establish a supportive framework for dual role management. This includes providing adequate training and capacity building opportunities for Anganwadi teachers, enabling them to acquire the necessary administrative skills and knowledge. Additionally, ensuring manageable workloads and appropriate remuneration can help alleviate the burden on teachers, allowing them to fulfil their dual responsibilities effectively. Moreover, collaboration and partnerships between government agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders are vital for the success of dual role management. By fostering cooperation and sharing resources, the capacity of Anganwadi centers can be enhanced, leading to improved outcomes for children and communities. In conclusion, dual role management of Anganwadi teachers has the potential to optimize service delivery and operational efficiency. However, careful attention must be given to address the challenges associated with this approach. By providing adequate support, training, and collaboration, the dual role management model can be effectively implemented, contributing to the overall development and well-being of children in Anganwadi centers.

### **Concept of BLA:**

In order to enhance participation by the recognized political parties at grass root level during preparation and revision of electoral roll, the Election Commission introduced a system of appointment of Booth Level Agent in November, 2008 on the pattern of polling agent /counting agent during polling /counting of votes. The Booth Level Agents are appointed for specific polling station areas by the recognized political parties to complement the Booth Level Officers of the respective polling stations. **Appointment of Booth Level Agent:**

Every recognized political party through its President or Secretary or any other office bearer shall authorize one or more district representatives to appoint Booth Level Agents. The authorization shall be given in Form ID: BLA 1 (annexure 60 – Manual on Electoral Rolls – Document 10 – Edition 1 – October 2016) by the President/ Secretary/Authorized office bearer. The Form must be signed in ink only. Most of the time Anganwadi teachers are appointed as then Booth Level Officers because they are easily available and under the control of panchayat officials.

The finding of the study have been highlighted and discussed based on the data collected from the teachers for analysis and interpretation. Here again each of objectives been treated separately and only relevant significant finding have been highlighted. The data reveals that majority of (42%) respondents belong to 31-40 years of age. The researcher found that majority of (76%) respondents opinion was the work is manageable. The study shows that 38% of respondents experienced 10 -15 years as an anganwadi teacher. The study shows that majority of (40%) of respondents experienced 10 -15 years as Booth Level Officers. It is observed from the analysis that majority of 98% respondents agreed that the workload assigned to anganwadi teacher is manageable. The study shows that majority of (64%) of respondents agreed that the aspect that creates stress while working as Anganwai teacher on other ways. The data reveals that majority of (40%) respondents have never engaged in self-care activities outside the work.

It is observed from the analysis that majority (70%) of respondents feel supported always by the supervisor and colleague in managing work related stress. The data reveals that majority of (88%) of respondents' opined

that they remain in current position as Anganwadi teachers even in the right future. The study shows that majority of (84%) of respondents agreed that dual role management of works as anganwadi teacher and as booth level officer the workload is high. It is observed from the analysis that majority (60%) of respondents agreed that they don't feel the work affects their personal life and relationship. The data reveals that majority (68%) of respondents agreed that they have not ever taken any time off work due to stress related issues. The researcher found that majority (58%) of respondents agreed that their organisation did not do anything for the better manage stress at work. It is observed from the analysis that 36% of respondents agreed that they normally manage about 20-25 children every year. The study shows that majority 76% of respondents agreed that anganwadi teachers have emotional impact on their feelings. It is observed from the analysis that 40% of respondents agreed that they spend on per week 5-7 hours as booth level officer. The data reveals that majority 52% of respondents agreed that they don't feel dual role as anganwadi teacher and booth level officer had a impact on physical health.

The study shows that majority 84% of respondents have sought professional help or support for managing the health concern. □ The researcher found that majority 90% of respondent have provided any additional benefit or incentives apart from your salary for additional work. □ The data reveals that majority 98 % of respondents agreed that not provide any additional source of income apart from your job as an anganwadi work. □ It is observed from the analysis that 80% of respondents are not receiving any financial support from the government or any other organization to the anganwadi. □ The study shows that majority 88% of respondents agreed that they were supported by panchayat V.A. and other officials at the time of election. □ The researcher found that majority 84 % of respondents agreed that they are not happy with the 10 days holidays in very year as summer holidays.

On the basis of analysis interpretation and major findings of the study the investigator would like to make following suggestions to address the problem under the study. □ Increase in salary: The government should increase salary of the anganwadi teacher as though, through the study of dual role management of anganwadi teacher the majority findings the respondents are not satisfied with the salary provided to them. □ Not to involve in other departmental works: From the research the researcher suggests that not to involve the anganwadi teacher in other departmental work though they can't control or manage the students of anganwadi and they are not satisfied with the involvement. □ Increase in numbers of summer holidays: The government should provide more numbers of holidays to the anganwadi teacher though they are not satisfied. □ Coordinate with authorities: Communicate with the election commission or relevant authority to understand the specific requirement and timelines for the dual roles. Ensure that the dual anganwadi supervisor and the election commission are aware of dual responsibilities □ Delegate tasks: Seek support from colleagues or assistants in your anganwadi centre to help manage tasks during the absence. Collaborate with other BLOs to share responsibilities and ensure that election duties are effectively handle. □ Self-care: Dual Role Management of Anganwadi Teachers as Booth Level Officers: Take care of your physical and mental well being during this demanding period maintain a healthy work life balance by setting aside time for relaxation, exercise and spending quality time with family.

Thus, the Anganwadi or (ICDS) system is passing through many ups and downs. It does not mean that it is a worthless program; but on the other hand, it helped many rural children by providing them with an early education. Therefore, for making this program successful, it is our collective duty to cooperate with each other in this pious social work.

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