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Financial status of ASHA workers

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Abstract

ASHA workers the backbone of health services in India are paid quite low. Work based incentives and with lots of hard work. Study was conducted at Ghagwal in Samba district in Jammu and Kashmir. 21 ASHA workers were interviewed about their financial status. Most of the ASHA workers (66.7%) received work based incentives between Rs. 10,000-15,000/annum and none of the interviewed 21 ASHA workers had alternate self-income from some other source. Spouse income was found to be less than Rs 50,000/annum for most of the ASHA workers.

Keywords: ASHA workers, Income, Incentives

Introduction

Accredited social health activists (ASHAs) are community health workers instituted by the government of India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) as part of the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). The mission began in 2005; full implementation was targeted for 2012. Once fully implemented, there is to be "an ASHA in every village" in India. ASHAs are local women trained to act as health educators and promoters in their communities. Their tasks include motivating women to give birth in hospitals, bringing children to immunization clinics, encouraging family planning (e.g., surgical sterilization), treating basic illness and injury with first aid, keeping demographic records, and improving village sanitation. ASHAs are also meant to serve as an interface between the healthcare system and rural populations.

ASHA must primarily be a woman resident of the village married/ widowed/ divorced, preferably in the age group of 25 to 45 years. She should be a literate woman qualified up to 10 STD

Methodology

The study was conducted in Samba district of Jammu and Kashmir state. For the study Ghagwal block was selected. A sample of 21 respondents was selected for the study. Data were collected with the help of pretested structural interview schedule. Thereafter, data were analyzed and results were discussed.

Results and Analysis

Table reveals that very high percentage (66.66%) of ASHA workers fell in the bracket of Rs 10,000-15,000/annum indicating low income generation from government based incentives, followed by 24% (23.80%) of ASHA workers in the bracket of Rs 16,000-20,000/annum.

Per capita income of India grew to Rs. 74,920 in 2013-14 which shows that government incentives to ASHA workers is very low.

Table also reflects that none of the 21 ASHA workers interviewed had any other self-income from any other source. Hence government incentives are main source of income for them.

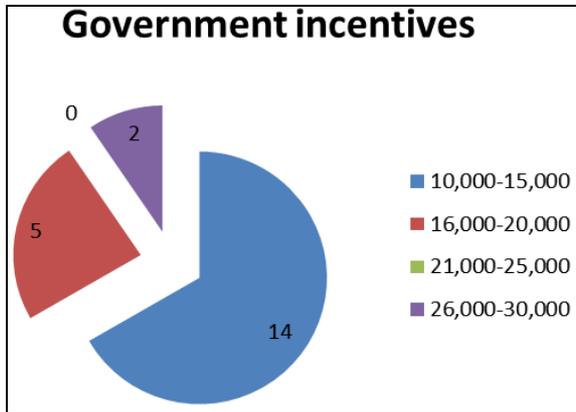
According to the table majority of spouse income (71.42%) of ASHA workers is up to Rs 50,000/-. Followed by spouse income (14.28%) of ASHA worker between Rs. 51,000-1,00,000/-.

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ASHA workers and their financial condition N=21

S. No	Income source	Per annum In Indian Rupees			
		10,000-15,000	16,000-20,000	21,000-25,000	26,000-30,000
1	Income from work based government incentives	14	5	0	2
	In percentage (%)	66.66	23.80	0	9.52
2	Self income from other sources	0	0	0	0
	In percentage	0	0	0	0
	In Indian Rupees	0-50,000	51,000-1,00000	1,10000-1,50000	1,60000 and above
3	Spouse income from all sources	15	3	2	1
	In percentage	71.42	14.28	9.52	4.76

Incomes in averages and may vary according to the work available in the area



Conclusion

ASHA workers form the backbone of health systems of India. However their financial status is poor even by Indian standards. To improve the financial status tailor made social benefit schemes have to be instituted in our policies so that these workers may be able to live a more dignified life with a sound financial security. Government scheme should be targeted at such social activists so that their financial status improves.

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