

The Dual-Role Dilemma: Work-Family Intersection of Anganwadi Workers in Gujarat

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the “Dual-Role Dilemma” of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) in Gujarat with reference to this intersection of their professional role vis-a-vis the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and their domestic role. Using a mixed method approach and stratified random method to select 370 functionaries from five (5) districts, the research examines the effect of family on job performance especially the prevalence of joint family structures (79.7%).

The major findings indicate a big “Process-Impact Gap” where high educational attainment (24.1% post-graduates) does not lead to high levels of practice due to dysfunction in the management systems and domestic role conflict. Statistical analysis indicates that although knowledge is related to practice ($r = 0.182$), it does not address professional challenges, which are still linked to bureaucratic barriers and household burdens. The conclusion of the study is that the efficacy of the AWW is inextricably tied to her domestic stability. It infers that moving “Beyond HR”, through flexible working models, psychosocial support and family sensitization is a must to make these frontline workers to change partners.

Keywords : Anganwadi Workers (AWWs), Work-Family Conflict, ICDS, Gujarat, Dual-Role Dilemma, Joint Family Dynamics, Frontline Social Workforce, Management Dysfunction, Strategic Change Partners

INTRODUCTION

Background and Importance

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme, launched by the Government of India in 1975, is one of the largest and most ambitious social welfare schemes for early childhood development and maternal care

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in the world. At the operational level of this monumental machinery stands an Anganwadi Worker (AWW), a community-based frontline functionary who is the main link between the health infrastructure of the government and the rural population. These women have a multi-faceted responsibility for a range of services including coordinate supplementary nutrition, immunization, health monitoring and pre-school education. However, though the ICDS framework refers to them as the “backbone” of the program, they are categorised structurally as “honorary workers” (rather than formal employees) which tends to obscure the immense amounts of professional and personal pressure they experience.

In the particular socio-cultural context of Gujarat, they are not merely service providers but Anganwadi Workers who are women are part of traditional family systems. A significant percentage of these workers, nearly 79.7% of them according to the present study, live in joint families. This family structure presents a unique “Dual-Role Dilemma”: The AWW is expected to be a strategic change agent in her village advocating for child health and social change, while at the same time fulfilling the demanding, and non-negotiable roles of a daughter-in-law, wife and mother at home. The intersection of these two worlds, the professional world and the world of the home, creates a complex nexus group which determines the efficiency of the worker as well as his or her mental health and job performance.

The importance of working on this work-family intersection cannot be overstated. Current research shows that the efficiency of the ICDS program in Gujarat has been on a downward spiral and is often plagued by “Management Dysfunction”, poor infrastructure as well as heavy workloads. When these systemic professional challenges combine with the “Dual Burden” of managing a large household (with 43.2% of workers living in families of 5-6 members) the end result is often role conflict and “Compassion Fatigue”. If the AWW is overburdened at home, her ability to sustain the high levels of knowledge and practice for the scheme is severely compromised.

Furthermore, the demographic shift in the state of Gujarat indicates that of the younger age group of highly educated workforce entering the system, 34.6% of them falling in the age group between 18 and 28 years and over 24% of them having post-graduate degrees. For these young, aspiring women, the conflict between modern professional ambitions and traditional expectations of domestic responsibility is especially acute. Understanding this “Dual-Role Dilemma” is vital to policymakers. Moving “Beyond HR” in the public sector means moving from the view of the AWW as a low-level “functionary” to seeing her as an individual whose domestic stability is the basis of her professional impact. This article argues that the key to the success of India’s maternal and child health outcomes lies at the core of the system in supporting the woman behind the worker.

Statement of Purpose

The main purpose of this article is a critical analysis of the “Dual-Role Dilemma” encountered by Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) of Gujarat by analysing the complex intersection between their professional role and domestic role. While the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme counts on these women as the “backbone” of community-based health and education, the system does not always account for the sociological fact that these workers are embedded in complex familial structures that require a great deal of time and emotional energy. This work is particularly interested in exploring how the change from traditional functionaries of the administration to strategic change agents is impinged by “Work-Family Conflict”.

Central to this investigation is an analysis of the influence of family dynamics, especially the dominance of joint families (which make up 79.7% of the workforce in this study), in terms of knowledge, practices, and challenges in the profession of AWWs. The article seeks to take a step forward from the purely administrative evaluation of the ICDS scheme to give a human-centric view of the workforce. It examines the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between the administrative inconveniences of the system of the ICDS and the personal problems faced by the workers, which are often the result of the double role.

Furthermore, the purposes of this article are to:

- **Assess the Knowledge-Practice Gap:** Assess the correlation between domestic responsibilities and family size (43.2% of workers are responsible for household of 5-6 members) and low levels of knowledge and practice.

A well-developed plan and supply management system must confront the unique challenges associated with managing stress in workers who have already been dealing with a double load.

It is recommended that: - Propose a “Beyond HR” Framework: Call for a change in human resource management in the public sector, including psychosocial support, flexible working hours and family sensitization in order to make the AWWs a professional strategic partner.

By synthesising the empirical data from a zonal wise study across Gujarat, this article provides a nuanced understanding of the impact of work family balance in delivery of public services. It is a call to action for policymakers to accept that the sustainability of the ICDS program is dependent on the well-being and professional empowerment of the women who implement it at the grassroots level.

Rationale for the Article

The logic behind this article is the fundamental need to address a deep disconnect between the expectations of public policy and the realities of life on the frontlines of the workforce. While Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) is being touted as one of the supports of the social welfare architecture in India, the efficiency of this program in Gujarat has been tainted by inefficiencies in its operations and management dysfunction. Most of the current research is on single outcomes such as the rate of malnutrition or the level of awareness in the community rather than the human factor-the Anganwadi Worker (AWW), who is the key driver of the outcomes. There is a large research gap on how the effects of systemic shortcomings and individual life variables collectively affect the efficiency of these workers.

A major justification for the present study is the peculiar demographic and sociological profile of the workforce in Gujarat. With 34.6% of workers in the age group of 18-28 and 24.1% with post-graduate qualifications, the working class is more aspirational and educated than ever before. However, these women are in a position of “Dual-Role Dilemma,” where the demands of the profession are often in conflict with housework. The fact that 79.7% of these workers are resident in joint families is particularly interesting. While the joint family can provide a far-reaching support system, it also creates a huge burden of caregiving and household work, particularly in families with 5-6 or more members. This study addresses this gap by taking an integrative approach to understanding the implications of this work-family intersection on knowledge, practices and challenges.

Furthermore, the statistical case for such a rethink is a compelling one, as can be seen from this research. The result of the study presents a staggering 39.5% of workers having low levels of knowledge, and 39.2% low levels of practice. Crucially the correlation analysis shows how knowledge can and does improve practice it does not make up for the high professional challenges (reported by 33.2% of workers) arising from infrastructure deficit and administrative overload. This suggests that the “Dual-Role Dilemma” is worsened by a management system that does not create a good environment for a modern and overqualified workforce.

By bringing out such region-specific insights for Gujarat, the article offers some actionable recommendations for policy reforms on decentralization, greater accountability and specialized capacity building. Ultimately, the rationale is about the pursuit of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2 and SDG 3) and achieving zero hunger and good health is impossible without first achieving the professional empowerment and personal well-being of the women at the grassroots level.

Methodology

For the research, a mixed methodology approach is followed that combines exploratory and descriptive approaches to understand the nuanced interaction between professional work and personal life of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) which is also a part of the research. The universe of the study comprises the total population of AWWs in Gujarat, a representative sample of which was selected from the population using a stratified random sampling method. 370 Anganwadi Centres were selected, and the sample size was 370. This sampling strategy included the five districts in four different zones, i.e., the districts of Vadodara (Anand), Ahmedabad (Ahmedabad and Banaskantha), Rajkot (Kutch) and Surat (Surat), as sample is allocated equally to five respondents per district so as to ensure the comparative analysis of different socio-demographic landscapes.

The focal point of the target cohorts centres on key sociological and family variables that define the “Dual-Role Dilemma.” This includes a great focus on family structure, with a dominating 79.7% (n=295) of the sample being a joint family and household size with 43.2% (n=160) handling big size domestic units of 5-6 members. Furthermore, the methodology follows the intersection of the maternal status (30.0% are currently childless) and the particular demographic of the young (34.6% between the ages of 18-28) and highly educated (24.1% post-graduate education) workers in order to analyse the clash between the modern aspirations on the career and the traditional expectations.

Data collection was conducted using structured interview schedules, which were specifically selected for eliciting deep personal and professional insights, and which also minimize the “surveillance bias” that is often associated with government visiting. These main insights were contextualized by access to secondary information from national policy documents, for instance, those from NITI Aayog. For statistical processing, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for performing the cross-tabulation and Pearson Correlation for testing the specific associations between management dysfunction and the personal obstacles of the workers. Finally, the methodology includes ethical safeguards, a focus on trust-building and anonymous data coding to mitigate some limitations such as respondent hesitation and logistical challenges of reaching remote village-based centres.

Discussion: Critical Review of Literature

The “Dual-Role Dilemma” faced by Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) Gujarat is a multi-faceted phenomenon, which is placed at the crossroad of public policy, sociology and human resource management. To gain insight

into the work-family nexus for these frontline functionaries, it is important to examine what is currently written on the topic, while highlighting the important gaps which this research endeavour seeks to address.

Conventional Ideas of the Efficiency of ICDS and Work Force

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme has been known for a long time as a pillar of the social welfare structure of India when it comes to tackling the problem of malnutrition and mother health. However, the scholarly literature is often indicative of a constant inefficiency in Gujarat context with socio-economic imbalances and dysfunctional management being the most common reasons cited. Historically, researchers like Gupta (2018), and Shah and Patel (2019) have given emphasis to how the reach of the scheme has broadened but is ill-effectuated by resource allocation challenges and administrative inefficiencies.

In these traditional models, the Anganwadi Worker is often seen as only an administrative unit; a “functionary” with limited powers who performs simple functions. This line of thinking disregards the human component of the worker, in particular her status as a woman in a complex domestic landscape. Yadav 2021 notes that the AWWs are often underpaid and they lack continuous training which has a negative effect on their morale. However, the literature tends to stop at “workplace morale” without exploring the role that the domestic sphere plays in contributing to this professional fatigue.

Gaps in Knowledge: The “Invisible” Domestic Sphere

The most prominent gap in current knowledge is that professional challenges of the AWWs and their personal lives are not integrated. While existing studies are “isolated in nature” and focus mainly on malnutrition rates or community awareness, very few address ways that management inefficiencies prevent AWWs from being effective by failing to account for their double-role burden.

Seventy-four of the 138 entries were selected for the syllabus. 13 entries selected in the month-long review 40 entries recommended for further reading 4 entries cited in the syllabus. 13 entries new to syllabus. 24 entries no citation. 1 entry submitted for review. 72 entries - citations available. 24 entries - citations - full text. 74 entries - citations - full text. 74 entries - full text. 74 entries - full text. 74 entries - full text. 74 entries - With 34.6% of workers in Gujarat in the age group of 18-28 years and more than 24% with a post-graduate qualification, the underlying conflict between modern professional pairings and old-fashioned domestic roles is a burgeoning conflict that is under-researched.

Ups and downs of the joint family in Gujarat: - “The Joint Family Paradox: The joint family is a dominant social structure in Gujarat, which

constitutes 79.7% of the sample in this study, but the literature is polarized about the impact of the joint family,” Some frameworks have viewed the joint family as a support system, but this study suggests that it may also be a source of significant domestic pressure, particularly in large households who have 5-6 or more family members.

- Knowledge vs. Practice vs. Challenges: There is a critical gap in regards to the understanding on why the relationship between increased knowledge and decreased challenges is not straightforward. This research does point out that there is a weak correlation between these variables ($r = 0.032$) and this would suggest that professional hurdles are systemic rather than individual. Traditional literature tends to mistakenly assume that “more training” is an all-purpose key to “better performance”.

Emerging Areas Addressed: Beyond the Administrative Lens

This article addresses some of the emerging areas by changing the focus from “Management” to the “Person.”

1. Work-Family Conflict Theory in Public Service: Applying the Work-Family Conflict Theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) to AWWs, this study examines demands in the work and family roles that create stress and result in the decreased job performance of AWWs. It moves the discourse “Beyond HR” because it acknowledges that household size and caregiving roles of a worker are central variables in models of public service delivery.
2. The Overburdened “Honorary” Worker: This research deals with specific issues of workers who are expected to do high-impact social work as they are structurally constrained by a “functionary” status. It focuses on the “Compassion Fatigue” caused by the double burden of monitoring nutrition and carrying out heavy domestic work.
3. Digital and Cultural Resilience: As the ICDS progresses towards digital tracking (e.g. Poshan Tracker), a new sphere of concern is the intersection of technology and a worker’s day-to-day existence. This study investigates whether technology is an enabler, or a new tool for ‘digital surveillance’ that contributes to the stress of the worker.
4. Gendered Roles in Public Service: This study is an extension of the Role Congruity Theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002), and explores the incongruity between women’s societal role as domestic help and that of women as professional community leaders.

Service Gaps and Dysfunction in Management

The literature review confirms the fact that the service delivery is directly affected by the malfunction in the ICDS management system. Delayed supplies, poor infrastructure (no safe water and sanitation), and political

interference are not mere administrative problems; they are stressors that add to the personal struggle of the worker. When “Management Dysfunction” is faced by an AWW at work and high domestic demands at home, “Dual-Role Dilemma” becomes an obstacle to meeting the national goals of reducing child mortality and malnutrition.

By synthesizing these gaps this article suggests that the future of the ICDS workforce in Gujarat lies in a “Human-Centric” approach by recognizing the AWW as a strategic change partner whose professional efficacy is inextricably linked to her domestic stability.

Intervention Methods: Solving the Dual-Role Dilemma

The complexity of the “Dual-Role Dilemma” faced by Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) calls for a shift of the traditional, top-down administrative fixes towards multi-dimensional methods of intervention. Current literature suggests that for a workforce that is so embedded in joint family structures and has massive domestic demands, interventions will have to address the professional and personal spheres.

1. Capacity Building and Targeted Training Models Traditional intervention has been based on periodical training programmes but these have been criticised on the grounds of frequently as much as sharply content and low frequency. Bansal (2020) brings out the fact that training deficiencies that exist are leading to workers who are not ready for ever-changing challenges.

- Customized Training: Interventions need to move towards customized and need-based training modules that deal with specific knowledge gaps in areas such as child nutrition and health.

In the paper, we say, “Soft Skills and Resilience: Capacity-building initiatives must incorporate stress management, time management, and emotional resilience to help workers deal with the “Compassion Fatigue” caused by their dual responsibilities.”

Mentorship Programs As the young workers from the significant age group of 18-28 (34.6%) might not have these years of practice, mentorship programs, where experienced workers guide the less experienced ones, is able to fill the gap in terms of the level of practice.

2. Technological Augmentation and Digital Integration The emergence of digital tools is one of the key interventions in simplifying the ICDS process.

Reducing Administrative Load: Digital monitoring of growth and mobile applications for data collection can go a long way in reducing the manual record keeping burden, a major source of professional stress.

Relevant to the context of urban African cities, the following interventions are a step in the right direction: - **Community-Based Adaptation**: Interventions must ensure technology is accessible and user-friendly and in step with the capabilities of frontline workers to avoid “technological stress” adding to their domestic burden. - **User-Centric Design**: Interventions must ensure technology is accessible and user-friendly and in step with the capabilities of frontline workers.

3. **Social Work and Community Based Interventions** Social work interventions are recognised as an important technique for bridging the gap between the ICDS scheme and the community.

- **Family Sensitization**: A new intervention method is based on programs to sensitize the family members of AWWs especially in the context of joint families (79.7% of the sample) about the importance of their work. This helps to create a more conducive home environment and helps in reducing the “Work-Family Conflict”.

Social Work vs. Social: Key Differences between the Two Fields Social work focuses on social issues, whereas social work is more comprehensive and all-encompassing. Social work is more specific in scope compared to social work, which is broader and more comprehensive. Social work is more specific in focus compared to social work, which is broader and more comprehensive.

4. **Policy Reforms and Structural Professionalization Interventions** at the level of policy have to be made in order to address the “Management Dysfunction” identified in the study.

- **Remuneration and Incentives**: A thorough review of the remuneration structure and the inclusion of performance-based incentives are the keys to keep up motivation and mitigate the financial stress.

Flexible Working Models: To meet the domestic responsibilities of the women of Gujarat, flexible or staggered working hours could be enforced so that the functionaries could balance their professional responsibilities with their personal commitments.

5. **Infrastructural Development** Infrastructure gaps, such as lack of safe drinking water and sanitation at Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) pose a physical barrier to service delivery.

For the following: - **Modernizing the AWCs**: Allocation of funds towards betterment of physical facilities of the AWCs helps them to be safe, child friendly and operationally efficient, which in turn reduces the physical strain on the worker.

Resource Mobilization, it is important that the vertical and horizontal linkages are strengthened so that supplies and funds are available at the

grassroots level without the delays by bureaucracy which is the current cause of administrative inconvenience.

By incorporating these intervention methods, the ICDS can go “Beyond HR” and create a system where the “Dual-Role Dilemma” is not left to the individual resilience of the worker but instead is dealt with through systemic support.

CONCLUSION

The investigation into the “Dual-Role Dilemma” of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) in Gujarat shows a complex story of resilience, systemic frustration and untapped potential. This study has transcended the administrative audit of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme to study the human reality of the women who keep the scheme going. By concentrating on the intersection of professional responsibilities and family living, a series of important conclusions can be drawn which redefine our understandings of the work force employed in the grass-roots public sector.

The Sociological Truth of the Front-Line Worker

One of the most important results of this research is the great influence that the family structure exercises have on the professional efficacy. In case of Gujarat, the AWW is not an isolated person, she is a pivot in a big domestic network. With 79.7% of the respondents living in joint family and 43.2% of them taking care of household of 5-6 members, the domestic world is as much demanding as professional one. While the joint family is a unique social safety net, there is a “Dual Burden” of care giving and house management. This study concludes that the AWW’s performance is not simply a result of her training, but a result of the balance which she strikes between her role as a community health leader and her role as a primary domestic caregiver.

The qualification and Knowledge paradox

The research highlights a troubling “Knowledge-Practice-Qualification Gap.” Despite the fact that it has a remarkably high level of formal education (with 24.1% being post-graduates and 28.1% having diplomas), a whopping 39.5% of workforce has low job knowledge. This paradox means that formal academic degrees are not successfully being converted into job-specific expertise. The generational shift is also clear, with the 18–28-year age group (34.6%) being an aspirational, tech-ready age group that is yet to be well supported by the current administrative framework. This conclusion implies a breakdown in the “Management System” in professionalizing and using the high calibre of human capital that is presently available at the grass-root levels.

Management Dysfunction as Systemic Barrier

One of the basic conclusions to be drawn from this research is that the problem that AWWs encounter is not so much an individual one as it is a systemic one. The statistical analysis gave a critical breakthrough even if there is a positive correlation between knowledge and better practices ($r = 0.182$), there is a non-significant correlation between knowledge and professional challenges. This goes to show that no matter how much the individual workers becomes knowledgeable and skilled she cannot overcome the “Management Dysfunction” inherent in this system. Bureaucratic barriers, political interference, administrative inconvenience and infrastructure deficits (such as the lack of safe water and sanitation) are “hard constraints” that negate individual excellence.

The “Process-Impact” Dissonance

The study concludes that the current style of management of ICDS is too much “Processes” (record-keeping and compliance) as opposed to “Impact” (nutritional outcomes and community health). This focus forces AWWs into a “Functional” role, which is to be defined as a person with limited authority, rather than a “Strategic Change Partner.” This dissonance is especially obvious for the younger, more educated workers who aspire to professional development and are trapped in manual registers and non-ICDS work. The “Dual-Role Dilemma” is therefore compounded by an employer (the State) that regards the worker as low-level volunteer but expects the results of a high-level professional.

The Importance of the “Beyond HR” Perspective

Ultimately, the research confirms that for reviving the scheme of ICDS in Gujarat the government needs to move “Beyond HR.” This means realizing that the worker’s home life and her professional output are inextricably linked. The “Grassroots Revolution” needed to achieve the national health goals is not possible if the frontline workforce is struggling with “Compassion Fatigue” and “Role Conflict.” The intersection of work and family needs to be recognised not as an individual obstacle for the woman to overcome, but as a structural variable to be managed by the policy-maker.

In conclusion, the Anganwadi Worker in Gujarat is a highly qualified, deeply embedded, and deeply overburdened person. She stands at a crossroads between tradition and modernity and is burdened with the responsibility of a joint family on one side and the health of a nation’s children on the other. The “Dual-Role Dilemma” is the defining characteristic of her professional life. Dealing with this dilemma is not only a question of social justice in relationship to the woman but it is a strategic imperative for the public sector. Only by rethinking the AWW as a Strategic Change Partner, and giving this position the systemic support to meet its title, will the ICDS

scheme be able to overcome its current slump, and fulfil its vision of holistic child development.

Recommendations: A Strategic Roadmap for the Future Workforce

To counter this “Dual-Role Dilemma” and move from the position of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) as overburdened functionaries to that of empowered Strategic Change Partners, a multi-dimensional reform strategy is needed. These recommendations go “Beyond HR” and tackle the systemic management dysfunction with respect to the sociological reality of the Indian family structure.

1. Structural and Policy Reforms

The current classification of AWWs as “honorary workers” is the origin of a lot of the role ambiguity and lack of professional motivation.

- **Professionalization of the Role:** The state needs to shift towards formalisation of the status of employment of AWWs. This includes a clear job description which prioritises core ICDS tasks (nutrition, health monitoring, and pre-school education) over ‘Policy Burden’ tasks from other departments.
- **Staggered Working Hours:** In view of the high percentage of working population in joint families (79.7%), it shall be felt to introduce a flexible working model or staggered working hours on a pilot basis. This helps the workers to handle peak demands at home without sacrificing the operational hours of the Anganwadi Centre (AWC).
- **Performance-Linked Incentives:** Changing the incentive structure from a flat honorarium to one tied to results can help breathe new life into the workforce. Incentives must be linked to measurable results such as reduction in local stunting rates or 100% immunization coverage in their sector.

2. Management and Systemic Improvements

The study cites “Management Dysfunction” as a mainstay that individual excellence cannot overcome.

Decentralized Resource Management: In order to overcome the “administrative inconvenience” of delayed supplies and funds, decision making power on local AWC maintenance and emergency food supplies must be decentralized to the village level (Panchayat integration).

- **Infrastructure Modernization:** There is a need for urgent capital investment in order to ensure that all AWC in Gujarat have basic “hard infrastructure” including safe drinking water, separate sanitation facilities for women, and reliable electricity. This takes away the physical and mental stress of the worker and she can focus on service delivery.

As noted above, the Poshan Tracker is a step forward but the system needs to ensure that it replaces manual registers and not adds to them. Data entry should be automated where possible, and younger workers (the age group of 18–28-year-olds) used as “Digital Mentors” for older veterans.

3. Human-Centred and Societal Assistance

Since there is an inextricable connection between the worker’s home life and professional output, the system needs to extend its support into the personal sphere.

- **Family Sensitization Programs:** A novel intervention is the introduction of “Family Recognition Days” in which the families of AWWs (especially of joint family set ups) are invited to the AWC to get a feeling of the impact of the worker’s service. This is a way to build pride and reduce domestic friction by highlighting the social importance of her professional role.
- **Psychosocial Counselling:** To overcome “Compassion Fatigue” and high stress (reported by 33.2%) regular mental health workshops and peer support groups to be institutionalized at block level.

Childcare Support for Workers Since many younger AWWs are themselves mothers of young children, it would be very helpful to provide “creche-on-site” or nearby childcare support in order to reduce the work-family conflict.

4. Specialized Capacity Building

The above-mentioned “Knowledge-Practice Gap” (where 39.5% have low knowledge) can only be bridged by modern pedagogical approaches.

Need-Based Training: Quit the One Size Fits All Training Use the data from the Poshan Tracker to identify specific knowledge gaps (e.g. weaning practices or vaccine storage) and provide micro-learning modules via mobile phones.

The recommendations include: - **Academic-Practitioner Linkages:** Use the 24.1% of post-graduate workers by creating a “Senior Lead AWW” cadre. These highly educated workers can act as internal trainers and community activists, so they have a clear career advancement path.

5. Community and Stakeholder Synergy

The “Grass-roots Revolution” needs an ecosystem in order to work together.

Strengthening Linkages: Tease up the vertical and horizontal communication between the AWW, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM) and Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA). A unified “Frontline Task Force” meeting once a month can solve problems of coordination.

The government needs to work on bringing the social status of the AWW in the community. Promoting them as “Village Health Leaders” in the local media can result in increased compliance among the community and reduce the resistance workers often receive while visiting the field.

Final Synthesis

In conclusion the “Dual-Role Dilemma” is not an issue which the Anganwadi Worker on their own can solve. It is a structural problem for the State to stop managing processes and to support people. By making these recommendations a reality, the ICDS scheme in Gujarat can make its workforce a virtual army of Strategic Change Partners, ensuring in the long run, a healthier and more nourished future for the children of India.

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