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AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND ONLINE PAYMENT SYSTEM (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ASHA SOFT)

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Abstract

In 2005, the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) established Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) to provide better health awareness and better services in rural areas. The ASHA programme has today emerged as the largest community health worker programme in the world. ASHA is a community level worker who functions as a health care facilitator, a service provider and generates awareness on health issues. Over the years it has been observed that there were no standard procedures for performance and payment monitoring of ASHAs. This resulted in lack of job satisfaction and job security in them.

National Informatics Centre (NIC) Rajasthan developed ASHA Soft in 2014. It is a system for performance measurements and online payment of incentives to ASHAs across the state. It is an integrated online system which facilitates the department to gather beneficiary wise details of services given by ASHA to the community, to make online payment of ASHA into their bank accounts and generate various reports to monitor the progress of the programme.

This study highlights the perception of ASHA Sahyoginis regarding working of ASHA Soft. It also aims to analyse the challenges which affects the working of ASHA Soft. Primary data is collected through interview schedules. ASHA Sahyoginis of Jasol and Pachpadra village (Barmer) were interviewed. It is concluded that ASHA Soft is a positive change in the programs of NRHM.

Keywords: Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) Sahyogini, ASHA Soft, National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), etc.

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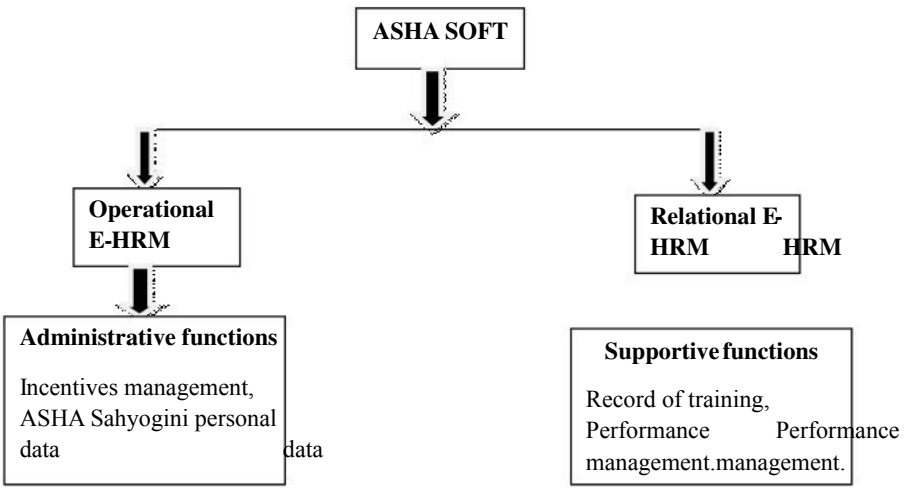
Introduction

ASHA Soft is performance monitoring and online payment software which was launched in December 2014 by joint efforts of NIC and NRHM. ASHA Soft is a kind of operational and relational E-HRM. It is concerned with administrative and supportive functions (refer figure 1). It records the performance of ASHA Sahyogini (i.e. rural women health workers of Rajasthan) and pays them incentives according to their performance. In this online system, performance is recorded when ASHA Sahyogini fills the claim form in order to receive the incentives for the activities undertaken by them. Those claims forms are verified by Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs). After verification data is entered in online database by supervisor or data entry operator of a particular region. Finally, fund is transferred in ASHA Sahyogini bank account. The main objectives behind the implementation of ASHA Soft was to bring transparency in the system, monitoring performance of each ASHA, empowerment, to introduce paperless work, to avoid human interference, to reduce the delay in payments of ASHA, etc. The organisations also aim to build amiable synergy between the NRHM and ASHA Sahyoginis of Rajasthan. It is a proper record system which not only maintains records of performance but also, helps the organisations in identifying the health status of any particular region.

Figure 1: ASHA Soft



Source: Compiled

Review of literature

Jain, M.L., et al., (2016) aimed at identifying impact of ASHA Soft on the ASHA performance. The study was based on secondary data. Data was analysed by reviewing all relevant reports and data available on ASHA Soft related to two years (2014 & 2015). Researchers concluded that ASHA Soft had a positive impact on the performance of the ASHA Sahyogini as there was upward movement in the incentives paid to them for the activities undertaken by them in the year 2014 & 2015. Rai & Rathore. (2016) aimed at reviewing various literature related to need and challenges faced while implementation of E-HRM. Researchers proposed a research model in which they stated that some organisational practices such as inappropriate work culture, lack of training, absence of information, etc. affect the implementation of E-HRM. Researchers suggested that organisations should lay down effective strategies to overcome the barriers in order to implement effective E-HRM practices for organisational triumph. Jain, (2015) stated that ASHA soft helps in maintaining records and in analysing performance of ASHA. Songara et al., (2015) aimed at studying the benefits and drawbacks of ASHA Soft. The study was based on primary data. Data was collected from a sample of 97 pertaining to Rajsamand and Dausa district of Rajasthan. Researchers concluded that majority of ASHA Sahyogini found ASHA Soft software beneficial to them. Kumar, N., Narain, N., Dhawan, R., and Mehta, S.. (2011). analyzed ASHA Mobile Money Transfer (MMT) payments system. It was found that MMT payments reduces time and cost and increases the savings of ASHA, etc. MMT brought transparency in the whole system, reduced paper work and workload of PHC. Researchers also found some challenges faced by ASHA and PHC such as lack of training to ASHA's & PHC about MMT, lack of customer service point (CSP), etc.

The research papers reviewed show justified efforts made by various authors in evaluating the impact of ASHA Soft. However, research work to analyse perception of ASHA Sahyogini regarding ASHA Soft with special reference to Jasol and Pachpadra village of Barmer district, Rajasthan has not been undertaken.

Objectives of the study

1. To analyse perception of ASHA Sahyoginis regarding performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA Soft).

2. To identify challenges in the functioning of performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA Soft).

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (Ho): There is no significant difference in the perception of ASHA Sahyoginis having different work experience regarding working of performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft).

Alternate Hypothesis (Ha): There is a significant difference in the perception of ASHA Sahyoginis having different work experience regarding working of performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft).

Research Methodology

1. Primary data was collected through interview schedules. A random sample of 44 ASHA Sahyogini was taken from Jasol and Pachpadra village of Barmer, Rajasthan. About 40% of the ASHA Sahyogini from Jasol and Pachpadra village had been taken into consideration. To analyse the ASHA Sahyoginis perceptionregarding working of ASHA Soft, 5 point - Likert scale (strongly agree -5 & strongly disagree -1) questions were used. To identify the challenges faced by ASHA Sahyogini which affects the functioning of performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft), open ended questions were use

2. Secondary data was collected by reviewing various online articles and research papers related to impact of performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft).

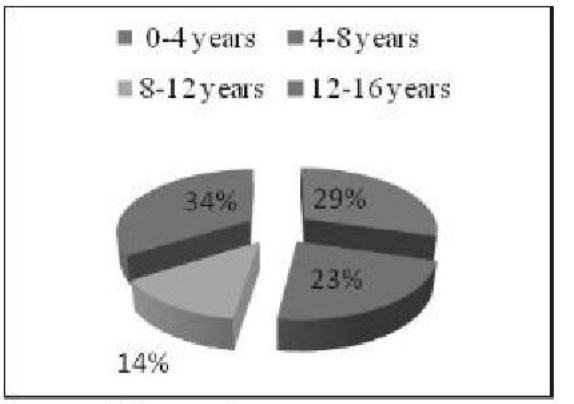
Analysis & Findings

Descriptive Analysis

This study is empirical in nature. It dealt with the working of performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft) in Jasol and Pachpadra village, Balotra block, Barmer, Rajasthan. SPSS and excel sheet was used to analyse perception of ASHA Sahyogini. About 66% ASHA Sahyoginis were in the age group of 25- 35 years. With

respect of education, it was also found that majority of respondents were senior secondary qualified. It was also found that about 34% of the respondents were having 12-16 years of experience and 29% of the respondents were having 0-4 years of work experience as ASHA Sahyogini (refer figure 2).

Figure 2: Work experience



Source: Primary data

Majority of respondents agreed that they were provided training for operating performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft). But, still 52% percent of the ASHA Sahyoginis are unable to login in the ASHA Soft database.

The main objective is to analyse the ASHA Sahyoginis perception regarding working of performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft). 5 point Likert scale technique was used for analysis. The table below depicts the perception of ASHA Sahyogini.

Table 1: Perception of ASHA Sahyogini

Statements		**No. of Respondents (%) (n=44)**					
S.No.		**Strongly Agree (5)**	**Agree (4)**	**Neutral (3)**	**Disagree (2)**	**Strongly Disagree (1)**	**Total**
1.	ASHA Soft reduces delay in payment.	66%	25%	9%	0%	0%	100%
2.	ASHA Soft is a proper performance measuring tool.	55%	11%	16%	4%	14%	100%

3.	ASHA Soft makes full payment according to my performance.	34%	16%	21%	11%	18%	100%
4.	ASHA Soft does not give the feeling of job security.	14%	2%	25%	18%	41%	100%
5.	ASHA Soft has impro ved quality of work life.	64%	25%	5%	4%	2%	100%
6.	ASHA Soft reduces the exploitation done at various levels.	25%	0%	25%	25%	25%	100%
7.	ASHA Soft increases the motivational level of workers.	36%	55%	7%	2%	0%	100%
8.	ASHA Soft has not helped in solving grievances regarding payment system.	43%	0%	5%	16%	36%	100%
9.	ASHA Soft is not a positive change in the programs of NRHM.	7%	0%	39%	29%	25%	100%

Source : Primary data

Above table led to certain findings which are as follows-

- 66% of the ASHA Sahyoginis strongly agree that performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft) reduces delay in payment.
- 55% of the respondents strongly agree and 11% agree that performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft) is a proper performance measuring tool.
- Regarding the statement "performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft) makes full payment according to their performance", there were divergent views. 34% strongly agreed, 21% were neutral about the statement whereas 18% were strongly disagreed with it. 11% were disagreed with this.
- 41% of the respondents strongly disagree and 18% disagree on the statement that performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft) does not give the feeling of job security.
- 64% of the ASHA Sahyoginis strongly agree that performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft) has improved quality of work life.
- Regarding the statement, "performance monitoring and online payment system

(ASHA soft) reduces the exploitation done at various levels" there were divergent views. 25% strongly agreed, 25% were neutral about the statement whereas 25% were strongly disagreed with it. 25% were disagreed with this.

- 55% of the respondents agree that performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft) increases the motivational level of workers.

- Regarding the statement, "performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft) has not helped in solving grievances regarding payment system" there were again divergent views. 43% strongly agreed, 5% were neutral about the statement whereas 16% were strongly disagreed with it. 36% were disagreed with this.

- 39% of the respondents were neutral, 29% disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed that performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft) is not a positive change in the programs of NRHM.

Challenges in the functioning of performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft)

To identify the challenges which interrupt the functioning of performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft), open ended questions were asked and majority of the ASHA Sahyoginis replied that there are some problems which are as follows-

- Some ASHA Sahyoginis reported that their full performance is not recorded by the ANMs and data entry operator. They demanded money to entry data in the system due to which ASHA Soft is unable to calculate proper incentives of ASHAs.

- According to some ASHAs there were errors in entry of claim forms.

- They reported that mismanagement in the work culture and absence of negligence by top management affected working of performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft).

- Unfriendly relations between ASHA Sahyogini, ANMs and other health staff members also affected the functioning of performance monitoring and online

payment system (ASHA soft).

- Lack of internet facility in the areas sometimes affects the working of performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft).
- Some of the ASHA Sahyoginis are unable to operate ASHA Soft login id even after training.
- Unfriendly relations between ASHA Sahyogini, ANMs and other health staff members also affected the functioning of performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft).
- Lack of internet facility in the areas sometimes affects the working of performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft).
- Some of the ASHA Sahyoginis are unable to operate ASHA Soft login id even after training.

Statistical Analysis

Null Hypothesis (Ho): There is no significant difference in the perception of ASHA Sahyoginis having different work experience regarding working of performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft).

To compare and evaluate difference in the perception of ASHA Sahyoginis having different work experience regarding working of performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft) non parametric Kruskal Wallis test was applied. ASHA Sahyoginis perception (ordinal scale) was considered as dependent variable while, work experience (categorical) was considered as independent variable. The results are summarised below:

Table 2: Kruskal Wallis Test

Ranks					**Test Statistics** [a, b]			
S. No.	Statements	Time spent per day	N spent per day	Mean Rank	Chi-square	df	Asymp.sig.	Reject or Accept Null Hypothesis

1.	ASHA Soft reduces delay in payment	0-4	13	15.38	23.703	3	.000	Reject Null Hypothesis
		4-8	10	30.00				
		8-12	6	10.00				
		12-16	15	28.67				
		Total	44					
2.	ASHA Soft is a prope r performance measuring tool.	0-4	13	18.12	8.872	3	.031	Reject Null Hypothesis
		4-8	10	23.80				
		8-12	6	14.50				
		12-16	15	28.63				
		Total	44					
3.	ASHA Soft makes full payment according to my performance.	0-4	13	16.96	11.035	3	.012	Reject Null Hypothesis
		4-8	10	21.75				
		8-12	6	15.33				
		12-16	15	30.67				
		Total	44					
4.	ASHA Soft does not give the feeling of job security.	0-4	13	33.19	17.186	3	.001	Reject Null Hypothesis
		4-8	10	12.70				
		8-12	6	18.17				
		12-16	15	21.50				
		Total	44					

5.	ASHA Soft has improved quality of work life.	0-4	13	19.85	5.108	3	.164	Accept Null Hypothesis
		4-8	10	24.75				
		8-12	6	30.50				
		12-16	15	20.10				
		Total	44					
6.	ASHA Soft reduces t he exploitation done at various levels.	0-4	13	24.62	8.285	3	.**0**40	Reject Null Hypothesis
		4-8	10	12.60				
		8-12	6	26.17				
		12-16	15	25.80				
		Total	44					
7.	ASHA Soft increases the motivational level of workers.	0-4	13	14.42	17.526	3	**.**001	Reject Null Hypothesis
		4-8	10	27.15				
		8-12	6	36.50				
		12-16	15	20.80				
		Total	44					
8	ASHA Soft has not helped in solving grievances regarding payment system.	0-4	13	17.88	3.797	3	.284	Accept Null Hypothesis
		4-8	10	26.00				
		8-12	6	20.00				
		12-16	15	25.17				
		Total	44					

9	ASHA Soft is not a positive change in the programs of NRHM.	0-4	13	21.08	28.198	3	.000	Reject Null Hypothesis
		4-8	10	33.00				
		8-12	6	36.33				
		12-16	15	11.20				
		Total	44					

Source: Primary data

As can be seen from the above table that in 7 out of the 9 parameters, value of significance was <.05 (refer table above), which leads to rejection of null hypothesis. Hence, it can be interpreted that there is a significant difference in the perception of ASHA Sahyoginis having different work experience regarding working of performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft).

The parameters on which there is no significant difference in the perception of ASHA Sahyoginis having different work experience regarding working of performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft) have been identified as follows-

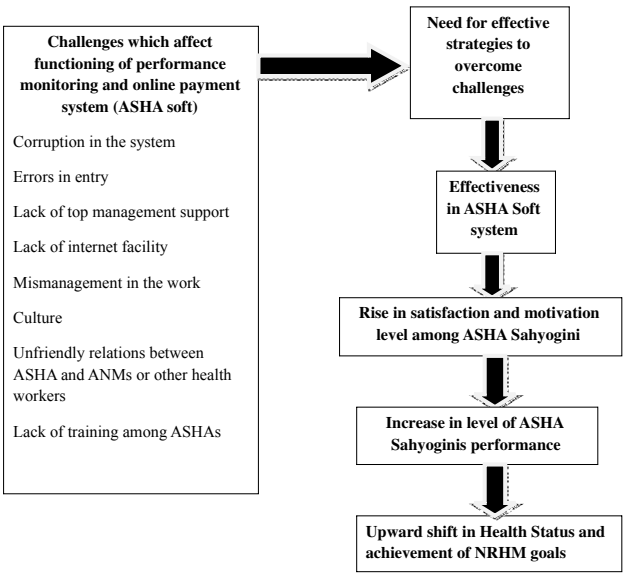
- ASHA Soft has improved quality of work life.
- ASHA Soft has not helped in solving grievances regarding payment system.

Conclusion

On the basis of this study, it can be concluded that ASHA Soft is a well developed Performance monitoring and online payment system that was launched to curb down the problems faced by ASHA Sahyoginis related to payment. ASHA Sahyoginis of Jasol and Pachpadra region stated that this performance monitoring and online payment system has improved their quality of work life and motivational level. But still, there are some challenges perceived by them- such as errors in entry by ANM's or by data entry operators, corruption in the system, lack of top management support and many more that affected the working of ASHA soft. In the end, a flowchart (figure 3) is being formulated which suggests that if such challenges are overcome by suitable strategies then it will

bring more transparency in the system. It will also help in smooth functioning of ASHA Soft. As a result, ASHA Sahyoginis grievance related to payments will be solved. Also, their satisfaction level, motivation level and performance standards will be more improved. This will further help NRHM in achieving its endeavours.

Figure 3: Flow Chart to improve functioning of performance monitoring and online payment system (ASHA soft)



Source: Primary data

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