

## Both financial & non-financial factors matter for ASHAs: study

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**New Delhi: A major challenge faced by the Indian health system is to keep Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) motivated and retain them in service. A new study has found that ASHAs get motivated most by prospects of promotions than other factors.**

Researchers from The George Institute for Global Health and Sydney University undertook a survey of 318 health workers to find out their priorities. The workers had to choose one of two jobs that were based on salary, workload, travel allowance, supervision and other job benefits. The study was done in Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh.

Results indicated that prospects of promotion were the main motivator for 85% of the health workers. This was because promotion meant higher salary, more authority and recognition. The other factors that led to job satisfaction included a fixed salary as well as non-financial factors like free family health-checks and lesser workload.

The study also highlighted the fact that priorities of ASHAs were linked to their

socioeconomic conditions. Community health workers who had other paid jobs prioritized free family health-checks. This could be because they may have had larger families needing more health visits and were more concerned that training might take them away from their families or cost them more days off their second jobs. Those who did not have second jobs and were less likely to be the main income earners for their families were more motivated by training and salaries.

Higher educated ASHAs prioritized career progression with a better pay and recognition. Less educated ASHAs were more interested in immediate high pay with no intention for further training to be promoted. The lesser educated also preferred jobs with lesser workload. This could be because they had larger families to look after and needed more time for that.

“There is a need to understand the preferences of health workers and certain aspects of career development valued by ASHAs. Non-financial and financial incentives should be combined to improve health workers satisfaction and their performance, which ultimately leads to better health outcomes,” said Dr Rohina Joshi, a member of the research team. Dr Marwa Abdel-All, lead author of the research study, recommends policies considering the preferences of health workers and prioritising them. This way, shortfall of health workers could be overcome.

The study results have been [published](#) in journal *BMJ Global Health*. The research team included Dr. Blake Angell, Prof. Stephen Jan, Dr. Martin Howell, Prof. Kirsten Howard, Dr. Seye Abimbola and Dr. Rohina Joshi.

(India Science Wire)