

A DAY AT THE ANGANWADI WORKERS PROTEST

Mumbai,
15th january, 2024



An illustration of two women standing on a balcony with a wooden railing. The woman on the left has dark skin, black hair in a ponytail, and is wearing a pink sweater over a blue shirt. The woman on the right has dark skin, is wearing a blue hijab with yellow flowers and a red sweater. A speech bubble from the woman on the left contains the text. The background shows a blue sky and a tree on the left.

Today we had an interesting conversation about **intersectionality** and **education**. Ms. Chakravarty asked us to read **Teaching to Transgress** by bell hooks.

Cool ya **Sanika**, why isn't my faculty as cool as yours?


Hay Hay! Rajyasashan
Hay Hay!

A comic book illustration featuring four women in a park-like setting. In the background, two women are walking along a path. The woman on the left is wearing a pink jacket, a blue scarf, and purple pants. The woman on the right is wearing a red tunic, blue pants, and a blue headscarf with yellow floral patterns. In the foreground, two other women are shown from the back, looking towards the background. The woman in the middle ground is wearing a purple and pink striped shirt. The woman in the foreground is wearing a pink shirt. They are all standing on a paved path with a metal fence in the background.

Do you hear that **Mariam**?
It coming from over there
in **Azaad Maidan**

Oh I have been seeing
these women here for
the last few weeks
since **January**. Let's go
and talk to them.

Good Idea. I wonder
why they are here!



Hmmm....That's a lot of women!
Should we ask someone what
this protest is about?

Aho Tai!
Zara aikta ka?

स्त्री शिक्षणाचा पाया रचनाऱ्या
पहिल्या महिला शिक्षिका

क्रांती
ज्योती
सावित्रीबाई फुले



Ek minute
jara vicharu
Tai? why
are you all
women
protesting
here in
Mumbai?

We are **Anganwadi workers**. We have
come from all over Maharashtra. We
are protesting for **decent salaries,**
pension and **other rights.**





I see! So you work with preschool children, right?

We are college students. We have been passing by your protest for weeks and wanted to check in today.

Accha! So you are students. Hello, I am **Jyoti Gaikwad**. I am from **Naigaon**, a village in Chatrapati Sambhaji Nagar in Aurangabad. I have been an Anganwadi worker for **11 years** now.

Yes beta, you are almost right. We provide education for **children upto the age 6**, but that's not the only thing we do.

We are not only responsible for **looking after children** but also the nutrition needs of **pregnant and lactating persons**.

Role and responsibilities of AWWs

- i. To elicit community support and participation in running the programme.
- ii. To weigh each child every month, record the weight graphically on the growth card, use referral cards in cases of mothers/children to the sub-centres/PHCs for children below 6 years and provide first aid and para-medical personnel.

There are **21 mandated tasks** an Anganwadi worker is supposed to carry out according to the **MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

iii. To check the health of children and adults in the community and refer them to the PHCs for treatment.

iv. To maintain files and records of children and adults in the community and refer them to the PHCs for treatment.

- viii. To maintain files and records as prescribed.

- ix. To assist the PHC staff in the implementation of health component of the programme viz. immunisation, health check-up, ante natal and post natal check etc.

- xi. To assist ANM in the administration of IFA and Vitamin A by keeping stock of the two medicines in the Centre without maintaining stock register as it would add to her administrative work which would effect her main functions under the Scheme.

- xii. To share information collected under ICDS Scheme with the ANM. However, ANM will not solely rely upon the information obtained from the records of AWW.

- xiii. To bring to the notice of the Supervisors/ CDPO any development in the village which requires their attention and intervention, particularly in regard to the work of the coordinating arrangements with different departments.

- xiv. To maintain liaison with other institutions (Mahila Mandals) and involve lady school teachers and girls of the primary/middle schools in the village which have relevance to her functions..

- xv. To guide Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) engaged under National Rural Health Mission in the delivery of health care services and maintenance of records under the ICDS Scheme.

- xvi. To assist in implementation of Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY) and motivate and educate the adolescent girls and their parents and community in general by organizing social awareness programmes/ campaigns etc.

- xvii. AWW would also assist in implementation of Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls (NPAG), as per the guidelines of the Scheme and maintain such record as prescribed under the NPAG.

- xviii. Anganwadi Worker can function as depot holder for RCH Kit/ contraceptives and disposable delivery kits. However, actual distribution of delivery kits or administration of drugs, other than OTC (Over the Counter) drugs would actually be carried out by the ANM or ASHA as decided by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.


- xix. To identify the disability among children during her home visits and refer the case immediately to the nearest PHC or District Disability Rehabilitation Centre.

- xx. To support in organizing Pulse Polio Immunization (PPI) drives.

- xxi. To inform the ANM in case of emergency cases like diarrhoea, cholera etc.

Role and responsibilities of Anganwadi Helpers

- (i) To cook and serve the food to children and mothers
- (ii) To clean the Anganwadi premises and
- (iii) Cleanliness of



That's a huge responsibility, Tai! You are practically taking care of the whole country's childhood!

So what is your **salary**, Tai?

Anganwadi workers in Maharashtra get Rs. **10,500** and Helpers get Rs. **5,500**. [These are revised rates after increase in **2023** after **years of protest**]

Different states have different payment structures for Anganwadi workers ranging from Rs. 600 in Puducherry to Rs. 19,000 in Tamil Nadu

Rs. 130 x 1 month



Rs. 20



Rs. 150



Rs. 180



Rs. 99



Rs. 5000? That's not enough pocket money for me..


Exactly! Most of the money would be spent in my canteen. **How can you manage to run a house with that money?**

See, this is my friend Sangeeta Pawar. **She has taken a loan to come to this protest.** Sangeeta Tai! Ithe Ya. Tell them how you got here.







Ho Tai, I had to borrow **Rs. 2000** for traveling to Mumbai for the protest, and I'll have to pay **5% interest**.



Most women here survive on **loans, for rent, food and other expenses**. How are they supposed to pay off their debts with these wages?



This is ridiculous! Government has money to stick posters everywhere **but not to pay their salaries?**



What are you girls studying right now?


I am in second year BA Social Studies in Smt. PN Doshi Women's College



I am doing B Ed in SNDT college.

EDUCATION IS AN IMPORTANT TOOL FOR EMANCIPATION. MY GIRLS! THAT'S WHAT SAVITRIMAI TAUGHT US.

I also have three degrees, one in Marathi literature, social work, and Phule Ambedkar Thought.



Arey wah! How come you decided to be an **Anganwadi worker**?



आंगनवाड़ी केन्द्र

I STEPPED INTO IT WITH THE
AIM TO NURTURE YOUNG MINDS
AND THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM.

UNLIKE MY FELLOW
ANGANWADI SISTERS WHO
HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO
CHOOSE THIS PROFESSION
FOR THEIR INCOME

BUT DESPITE MY PASSION AND
QUALIFICATIONS AS AN EDUCATOR I
HAD TO FACE LOTS OF CHALLENGES

INADEQUATE
ALLOWANCES

DELAYED
EQUIPMENT FOR
TEACHING

DISTANT
MEETINGS

FUNDS FOR TWO
MEALS FOR OUR
CHILDREN

THE WAGE DOESN'T MATCH
WITH OUR RESPONSIBILITIES



How much money do you get to feed a child at your Anganwadi center?



We are supposed to serve hot cooked meals for **65 LAKH** children across Anganwadis, aged **3 months** to **6 years**.

Yet we are only given **Rs.8 per day cost for two meals a day** for a child since 2014. So we are demanding a per day cost of **Rs.24** for severely **malnourished children** and **Rs.16** for the rest.




Oh my! That's not enough at all, what do you even get for Rs.8 these days?



It doesn't stop there

Us Anganwadi workers are also charged with an array of assignments ranging from **election duty** to **pandemic relief** work.





Tai, they must atleast give you reimbursement for all the traveling and rent for Anganwadi center na since that's extra cost?

OUR COLLEGE ALWAYS REIMBURSES US FOR FESTS AND PROJECTS.

NO, WE DON'T. THE TRAVEL ALLOWANCE OF RS 120 HARDLY COVERS THE EXPENSES, AND THE ANNUAL ALLOWANCE OF RS 2000 FOR ESSENTIALS LIKE CLEANING MATERIAL, STATIONARY, AND TOYS IS INSUFFICIENT. WE HAVE TO PAY FROM OUR OWN POCKETS.



But Tai, surely you must get a pension for your lifelong service?

No annual increments, no bonus, no provident fund – just a one-time payment on retirement.

IS THIS WHAT
SERVICE IS

OUR LIFELONG
WORTH?






The government offers a one-time payment of **Rs 1 Lakh for retirement?**
WHAT ABOUT A LIFETIME OF SERVICE?

And **Rs 75,000** for helpers? It's barely enough. Even Sandhya, who retired long ago, **hasn't been paid for the last 6-7 years.**

Our salaries never keep up with inflation. Government announced **3%** increment in our salaries after **10 years** of work, **4%** after **20 years**, and **5%** after **30 years**. And Inflation rate is around 6%.

**THE PEOPLE IN POWER
SHOULD TRY TO BE AN
ANGANWADI WORKER AND
SEE IF THEY CAN EVEN
SURVIVE ONE DAY!**



Why does the Government **not consider us as workers** and call us **Sevika**? This is a job which needs skills, caliber and energy.

Agadi khara ahe! **We are workers** and we want salaries and other social security benefits.

सेविका

THIS POLITICS OF LANGUAGE IS UNFAIR AND EXPLOITATIVE.

This is unfair! More people should be made aware of the important role Anganwadi workers play in **India's healthcare and education system**.

The people in power must be held accountable and this fight should be amplified.

An illustration featuring three women in the foreground, standing against a background of a large crowd of people. The woman on the left is wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt, a blue scarf, and purple pants, with a blue bag slung over her shoulder. The woman in the middle is wearing a red tunic and a blue headscarf with yellow floral patterns. The woman on the right is wearing a pink sari and has her arm around the woman in the middle. All three women have dark skin and are looking towards the right. The background shows a large crowd of people, many of whom are raising their fists in a gesture of protest or solidarity. The overall color palette is dominated by pinks, purples, and blues.

Jyoti Tai! Rohini Tai! We understand the importance of your work and the need for fair treatment.

We want to join your protest and support your fight for justice.

**LET'S CONTINUE TO FIGHT FOR
OUR RIGHTS AND THE RIGHTS OF
ALL WORKERS.**

WE STAND WITH YOU!

BEHANBOX

This comic is a tribute to **India's 12 lakh** of India's **Anganwadi workers** and the care economy they contribute significantly to. At Behanbox, we are committed to their rights and struggle for dignity of work. The idea of this comic came about with the years of reporting on this issue but we met all the women mentioned in the comic at a recent protest in Mumbai.

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