

The Status of Security, Health and Education among Children Living in Child Care Institutions in Delhi



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Abstract: Child population in India is estimated to be 472 million which is 39% of the country's total population¹. According to United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (abbreviated as UNCRC) a child is a person who has not attained 18 years of age. A high quantity of children needs care and protection and who are conflict with law² are placed in institutional care both in long term and short term care depending on the identified need of the child. India's population of orphaned and destitute children is projected to be 20 million³. Children who are in institutional care needs proper rehabilitation and integration programme which addresses their needs and challenges they face. As per the standardized norms under Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act 2015; the institutions offers the basic requirement to children such as food, safe shelter, appropriate clothing, medical facility and other suitable aids. The present research study is an attempt to examine the status of health, security and education of children residing in child care institutions in Delhi.

Keywords: Child Care Institutions, Children in Need of Care and Protection, Education, Health, Homes, Security.

I. INTRODUCTION

India is home to total number of 472 million children which represents 39% of the country's total population⁴. According to United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (abbreviated as UNCRC) a child is a person who has not attained 18 years of age. Children have a vital role in the society as they are foundation of the social-institution called family and are important assets of the nation. It is needless to say that today's children will be the future of the country. It's been 71 years since India achieved independence and as an independent country the continuous efforts have been made to ensure the rights of its citizens including children but child protection have been largely unaddressed issue of the country. Article 7 of the UNCRC clearly defines that children have right to know who their parents are and as well as to be raised by them.

The UNCRC⁵ and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000⁶ constitutes that family unit holds primary responsibility to provide them basic care and protection and in absence of familial support this responsibility is of State is obliged to protect children who are deprived of family love and support. A large number of children who are in need of care and protection and are conflict with law⁷ are placed in institutional care both in long term and short term care depending on the identified need of the child. India's population of orphaned and destitute children is projected to be 20 million⁸. When a child faces any difficult circumstances in family or outside the family in such case the second responsibility is of the state or government to provide them opportunity to grow with their full potential. Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act 2015 (abbreviated as JJ Act) has made special provisions and emphasis of rehabilitation and assimilation of children in society.

Who are Children in Need of Care and Protection (abbreviated as CNCP)?

Before defining CNCP we need to identify who is a child? Article 1 of Convention on the Rights of the Child (abbreviated as CRC) in its definition states a child is under the age of 18 years but also specifies in different laws applicable to them or when attained majority whichever is earlier. As per the JJ Act a child who is found in any conditions working, abused, orphaned, abandoned, victims of sexual exploitation, at families at risk, differently abled, HIV AIDS affected, on streets, beggars, affected by disasters, physically and mentally abused, drug abusers or found in any difficult circumstances comes under the umbrella of CNCP cases. The Act further states that in order to deal with the cases of CNCP the competent authority is formed which is known as Child Welfare Committee

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⁵ Social Work and the Right of the Child. A professional training manual on the UN Convention. 2002

⁶ The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of children) Amendment Act 2000

⁷ The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of children) Amendment Act 2000

⁸ Report on 2nd biennial conference on Improving standard of care for alternative child and Youth care: Systems, Policies and Practises

¹ (Status of Children in Urban India, Baseline Study, 2016, 2016)

² The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of children) Amendment Act 2000

³ Report on 2nd biennial conference on Improving standard of care for alternative child and Youth care: Systems, Policies and Practises

⁴ (Status of Children in Urban India, Baseline Study, 2016, 2016)

The Status of Security, Health and Education among Children Living in Child Care Institutions in Delhi

(abbreviated as CWC). Child welfare committee (CWC) is a bench of members consists of a chairperson and four members who are expertise in the area of child rights are designate to exercise their rights in cases of CNCP. Each CNCP case has to produce before Child Welfare Committee. The committee shall takes decision in the best interest of the child. The committee has power to restore children to their biological parents or guardian or any extended family members. Child Welfare Committee also declares the child legally free for adoption if restoration and reunion is not possible in the biological family of the child. In the cases where no family alternatives are found the custody of the child shall be given to the fit person or institution or children home as per the action required to deal with cases.

Relevance of Child Care Institutions (CCIs):

Institutional care and children homes are considered as the best means to provide care and protection to children who are in need difficult situations especially those who require long period care. According to the JJ Act "child care institution" means children home including governmental or non-governmental or any particular home or place of safety or specialized adoption agency and a fit facility meant for children for providing care and protection. Children homes look after all the developmental needs of the children and provide them physical, emotional, mental and educational support for their holistic development. For children in conflict with law child care institutions means observation homes, place of safety or fit facility and special homes whereas for CNCP it includes children homes, adoption agencies and open shelters. All types of child care institutions are adhere to mandatory registration under the act and to follow the standardized norms as mentioned in the act. If child care institutions fails to meet the standard norms it leads to cancelation of the registration and punishment.

Children who are in institutional care needs proper rehabilitation and integration programme which addresses their needs and challenges they face. Child care institutions are setup based on the objectives to fulfill needs of children in institutional care, these objectives are :

- To provide safe environment
- To ensure proper rehabilitation of children
- To protect as well as promote health of children
- To nurture overall growth and development of all children including physical, emotional, psychological, social and intellectual

Functions of Child Care Institutions:

Child care institutions follow designated roles and functions to play which may be defined under the following categories:

i. Basic care:

- Basic care means that child care institutions are endorsed to provide basic care and requirements to all the children. The basic care includes safe accommodation, appropriate clothes, healthy food, adult supervision and attention.

ii. Physical care:

- To provide physical care includes that Child care institutions are mandate to take care of physical health of the children and to give them proper medical care, immunization as per their age, to maintain

register indicating physical growth, routine check ups and to monitor their health status.

iii. Education:

- Child care institutions must provide formal education to all the children. Every child must be admitted to school as per his/ her age. Also bridge and tuition classes must be provided.

iv. Individual care plans and counseling of the children:

- Individual care plans are designed to assess every child's needs as every child has different needs depending on case to case. Child care institutions must prepare individual care plans as per the needs and requirement of each child. They are directed to make links with other stakeholders which includes school teachers, extended family members, psychologists, counselors, social workers and caregivers to ensure that each child's care plans are been followed. Child care institutions must arrange activities as per the age and needs of the children. Regular counseling session should be arranged for children by a trained professional to cater to the need of psychological and mental well being which shall aim to meet the developmental needs of every child in institutional care.

v. Recreational activities:

- Every child must get right to participate in activities which helps in enhancing social and emotional skills hence institutions are directed to facilitate age appropriate recreational activities which includes dance, yoga, music, which helps in cultivating the child's interest and aptitudes.

I. PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of present study are-

- To understand the functioning of child care institutions in Delhi.
- To examine the current status of security, health and education of children in need of care and protection CNCP living in child care institutions in Delhi.

II. METHODOLOGY

The undertaken research study is an effort to analyze the status of health, security and education of children who are in need of care & protection and those who are residing in child care institutions in Delhi. The study adopted descriptive research design. Qualitative research approach is been adopted in the present study to develop deeper perceptive of present status of children brought up in children homes. Researcher gathered data by means of self made semi structured interview schedule.

The Status of Security, Health and Education among Children Living in Child Care Institutions in Delhi

b) Association between student's current stay and their school type

When the study was taken out it was assumed that the children in NGO home are mostly sent to private schools whereas the children from government home are sent to govt. school.

Row Labels	Govt.		Others		Private		Grand Total	
	Count	%age	Count	%age	Count	%age	Count	%age
Govt. Home	7	70.0%	3	30.0%	0	0.00%	10	50.0%
NGO Home	1	10.0%	1	10.0%	8	80.0%	10	50.0%

Grand Total	8	40.00%	4	20.00%	8	40.00%	20	100.00%
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Test used - Pearson's Chi-squared test

Chi-squared = 3.2683 df = 2

p-value = 0.1951

Since Chi-Square value 3.2683 which is much higher than 0.1026 (critical value of Chi-Square test at 2 degrees of freedom) hence we can't reject the null hypothesis and can say that there is no association between student's current stay and their school type.

c) Health and Type of Children Home

Children who were included in the research were from two types of home government run and NGO run. Two sampled t test was used in order to find out if the type of home has any relation with regard to the health of the children.

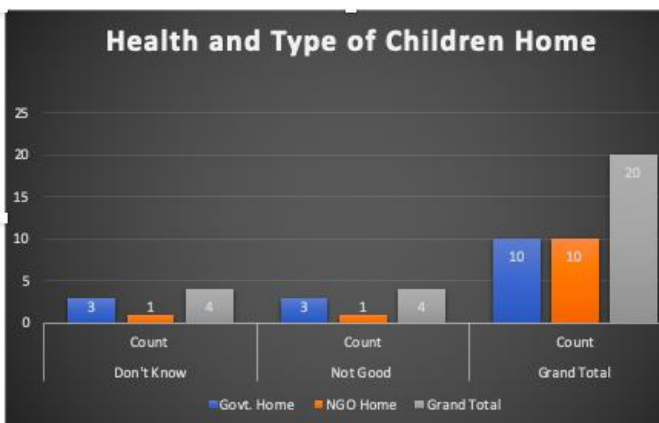
Row Labels	Don't Know		Good		Not Good		Grand Total	
	Count	%age	Count	%age	Count	%age	Count	%age
Govt. Home	3	30.00%	4	40.00%	3	30.00%	10	50.00%
NGO Home	1	8.33%	8	83.33%	1	8.33%	10	50.00%
Grand Total	4	18.18%	12	63.64%	4	18.18%	20	100.00%

Test used - Two Sample t-test

t = 0.22086 df = 4

p-value = 0.418

95 percent confidence interval: (-5.768231, Inf)



From the analysis it was found that there is no link between the health status and the type of home the children reside. The children in government home are equally healthy as in children living in NGO run homes.

IV. CONCLUSION

Child Care Institutions are considered as the best means to protect children from hazardous and harmful situations. It is a mean to give children necessary and required care

especially to children who require long tenure support and care. Child care institution and a fit facility are for children who are in need for aiming to nurture them. Child care institutions are directed to provide physical health care, safe and secured accommodation and educational facilities. The study was undertaken to understand the services and basic needs available to children in institutional care which includes their safety, health and educational facilities. Children homes follow the instructions as prescribed under JJ Act to provide facilities to all children living in institutional care. The results of the study indicates that in most of the cases children who are living in NGO homes are found to be admitted in private schools whereas children living in the government are going to government schools. It was found that children are facing difficulty in achieving desired academics goals because some of them have never been in any kind of informal or formal educational setting prior to their admissions in children homes. Children are aware of the fact that they are in safe custody if they are staying in children homes. Most of the children feels secured and are comfortable with the staff members. However children also have run away thoughts and feelings because they are in definite premises under security checks. It was found that children in both the homes are always accompany with the caregivers whenever they go to hospital or picnic or park or any other place, they are not allowed to go out without adult supervision. Children living in child care institutions have traumatic past experiences due to which they are found with illness like fits, skin diseases, lower immunity, low weight, malnourishment and others at the time of the admission in children homes but when they are admitted in children homes their health needs are taken care by the medical staffs and all the basic and necessary facilities is been given to them. There are regular and part time doctors and staff nurses who monitor regular check-up of the children. When they fall sick they are taken to the hospitals by the elders of the children.

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Hrishika is a PhD Scholar at Amity Institute of Social Sciences, Amity University, Noida. Her area of research is the issue of child abandonment in Delhi. She has completed her Masters in Social Work (MSW) from Delhi School of Social Work, Delhi University. She has over 3 years of experience working with child care institutions and national & international NGOs in Delhi. Her areas of interests are Child rights, Human Rights, Research, Adoption, Refugee rights etc.



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