

Orphans and Destitute: A Sociological Study Of Children Living In Government Homes And Ngos In Bhopal

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Abstract

Children are believed to be the buds that bloom in the future. They being amongst the most vulnerable group of people still acts as an asset to any society. Children who are properly nurtured can frame the future of any society but unfortunately there is a large group of children who are left unattended and vulnerable, who are then housed in an institutional setting set up by the government or some voluntary organizations. The present study throws light on the life of children residing inside the child care institutes, to study their sociology cultural environment and also the role played by the government and voluntary organizations in the life of children under the study. The education and training provided to the inmates in order to achieve a successful rehabilitation plan is highlighted in the study. Findings revealed that children yearn for a family life but also get attached to the facilities and services provided by the institution. The training provided for the rehabilitation purposes should be more focused as they are of utmost importance for the successful rehabilitation of orphans and destitute residing in the child care institutions.

Keywords: *Orphan, Destitute, Institute, Training, Rehabilitation*

Introduction

India from the primitive Times has been an advocate of the socialistic pattern of society. Though India is a democratic country equal opportunities could not be delivered to everyone. Hindu caste system always demonstrated organised structure of the society clearly demarking works of every strata of society, every strata of society was well equipped in a way to fulfill and cater the needs of all. The Hindu caste system, which was an organized structure of the Hindu society with religious foundations and sanctions, has been a target of rapid reform and change in urban and rural areas in a disorganized way. (Choudhury, 2016) With the advent of time, society has been a target of rapid

reforms and changes in urban and rural areas, disorganising its structure. Urbanisation and modernization of the society has resulted in the disorientation of joint families giving rise to nuclear families. Migration of people to earn their living in society have led to weakening of relative ties between families. Urban society has been a result of modernisation where there is little or no contact with relatives giving rise to a disrupted set of values. Such disrupted family values and weakening of ties have put strain on the conjugal relationships of husband and wife increasing the cases of strife and divorces among the couples. In the changing society parents tend to provide little time for rearing their children.

Family plays an important role in the development of society, regardless of the changing society the main function of a family is still believed to be the “production and rearing of children”. The family appears to be the major unit of society throughout the globe even though it can take various forms. **(Deepa, 1993)**

Since family is majorly responsible for the development and upbringing of the children, deprivation of family care directly affects the development of children on all fronts of life. The lack of affection and care from parents and family render children in a neglected state making them more prone to the adversities of society. The fast pace of modernisation in Indian society and its increasing population is making the children more vulnerable and in need of care and protection. The children are said to be the buds blossoming in the future and thus they are the ones who decide how the world is going to be after some years **(Waaqid, 2019)**.

Unfortunately many children are not privileged enough to be raised in a family and thus are rendered alone. They can be termed as orphans or destitute. The rate of orphans is increasing in the modern society. Death of parent(s), divorce, and separation, illegitimacy of a child or poverty are some of the prominent causes making a child an orphan. Destitute were used to be bought up in the past by the religious or charitable institutions as well as by the joint families. Actually joint families were a boon to destitute. But in modern era, joint family is disintegrating and orphans are being look after by the institutions established by the government and private agencies **(Dhumal, 1988)**

Definition Of Orphan:

There is no such definition present of orphan that can describe an explicit understanding of the term “orphan”. Many researchers, policy makers and common people understand the word “orphan” in different senses. According to oxford dictionary “orphan is a child whose parents are dead” while. According to UNICEF and worldwide partners, “An orphan is a child under 18 years of age who has lost one or both parents to any cause of death”, the term “orphan” describe children who have lost one or both the parents (**Michaels and Levine, 1992**). According to the on-line Encyclopaedia Britannica and the Merriam Webster Dictionary an orphan is (i) a child deprived by death of one or usually both parents; (ii) a young animal that has lost its mother and (iii) one deprived of some protection or advantage. An orphan is a child permanently bereaved of or abandoned by his parents.

Definition Of Destitute:

A “destitute” is a person without money, food, a home or possessions. A destitute child is a child who is rendered alone or is not able to access basics of life such as food, clothing, and education and most importantly love. Any child not given all basics of life including nurturing and love can be termed as a destitute child.

The scope of this study is limited to only those children who are orphaned, abandoned, and helpless and are institutionalized because of their needy state. An institution can be said as a place or a structure employed to provide a family environment to the children in need. An institution is expected to provide education, recreation, care and opportunities for proper rehabilitation to its inmates. India being the most populated country of the world also houses the most number of vulnerable children that are denied the basic rights a child should be guaranteed. Such vulnerable children suffer due to the deprivation of parental and family care which somehow leads to development of an imbalanced personality.

The present study is aimed at only such children who have been residing in child care institutes. The study aims at determining the conditions of living in the institutes and learning how far an institute can achieve the place of a family in the life of its inmates.

The study is based on the hypothesis that nothing comes at par with the family life; the affection and facilities provided by any family to its children can never be compared to the institutional services. It is believed that the best interest of the child lies with the family.

As the purpose of this study, attention is paid to the services that are provided for the development of the children in the institutes. The study also intends to provide an insight on the rehabilitation programmes framed and followed by the institutes for the reintegration of the child in the society.

The present study aims at providing cues and clues to the concerned officials for the betterment of the services provided to the children by the child care institutes. Institution can be said as a place where a lot of children are reared together who are in need of care and protection. These institutes try to fill in the void created by the absence of families in the lives of such deprived kids. Institutional care is intended to offer to children a close approximation of normal family living and to allow opportunities for satisfactory intellectual, social-emotional and physical development(**Deepa, 1993**).

The family life is considered to be the best for a wholesome development of a child and when a child is deprived of a family he may incur a thwart in his emotional and social development. The child care institutes are employed to provide a substitute for family life which may not become possible in every scenario.

The present study is intended to study and analyse the living conditions and social well-being of the orphans. The study is also directed to study the various rehabilitation schemes available for orphaned and destitute children by the government.

Review Of Literature:

Spitz (1945-46):R.A.Spitz gave his significant contribution in studying the problems of institutionalised children. He studies the problems that arise by placing the children separated from their birth mothers in institutional care houses. He mentioned the irreparable emotional social mental intellectual imbalances that occur due to the absence of parental figures to children. **Goldfarb (1944), Spitz (1945) and Bowlby (1951):** The studies of these researchers can be considered as the benchmark to study the adverse effects of institutions employed to be as the care units on children living in them. They

believed that institutionalisation can be deteriorating child development. **Bailey (1951) and Rheingold (1956)**: They studied the orphanages of Europe and found normal development of children similar to family settings in these institutions also. They criticised the work of Goldfarb and Spitz and believed in institutional care for normal growth and well-being of orphans and destitute

MeeraKosambi (1988): She attempted to study the overall general situation of the institutionalised destitute residing in Maharashtra. She focussed her work on the factors that lead to the institutionalisation of destitute and study the emerging picture of society from these instances. **Reddy (1989)**: He conducted a study on behavioural problems of orphans that said one third of the institutionalised children had one or the other behavioural disorder. The features of depression, anxiety, and aggressiveness were found among a few.

Indian council for child welfare, Chennai, Tamil Nadu (1996): A study conducted by the Indian council for child welfare, Chennai, Tamil Nadu in the year 1996 gathered information from about 81 institutions sampling 400 children and 275 family members. They assessed the factors that lead to institutionalisation of children, the relationship of children and their guardian. The institutions studied were considerate for educational progress of the children residing but were not very sensitive for emotional and behavioural issues of the children. Poverty was listed as the main cause for institutionalisation of children. The recommendations after the study were that more vocational training and counselling services should be introduced in the children's homes also the NGO's may help certain families to overcome their distress and be able to take their children and rear them again.**Sangwan, Ram Narain (1996)**: In the thesis entitled, "orphanages in Haryana; a sociological study" he explored the complete scientific profile of the orphanages from different angles. He studied the social structure as well as the role of orphanages in the society. The main feature of the study is it started a new notion of treating the orphanages at par with the family system. He explored all dimensions of the orphanage and gave a complete scientific outlook of such institutions. He also studied the rehabilitation process of the children residing in these institutions.**KunalChaudhary (2016)**; an anthropology study of orphans living in Guwahati: in his thesis he discussed the status of orphan children. He mentioned that around 41% of the population of India is under 18 years and

about 4% of this population is orphaned which is very worrying. According to the research findings an institution in the long run is not an effective or a humane mode for assistance to orphan infants and families. It was found that children living in orphanages have rather different behavioural problems than home cared children. He also studied the trauma levels faced by different children in orphanages of Assam.

Objectives:

1. To know about the different rehabilitation schemes for orphans and destitute children living in NGO's and government homes in Bhopal district.

Methodology:

A research is usually distinguished by the purpose and approach used for the study. There are various methods used to describe the rationale for the application of specific procedures and techniques used to identify, select and analyse information applied to understanding the research problem, thereby, allowing the reader to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability

Different government and non-governmental organisations that are working to provide shelter and education to such vulnerable children in need. The work of such institutes can be considered as very noble as they work for building a future for a child who can otherwise be not able to fulfil even his basic needs. Since studying a single institute could not provide a justified analysis of these types of institutes and its inmates, thus a brief overview of Bhopal city was done and it was discovered that Bhopal houses around 13 child care institutes. For collection of normalised data all child care institutes housing children from the age of 10 to 18 years were studied for this endeavour.

Sampling unit for the proposed study will be the orphan and destitute children residing in the child care institutions working in Bhopal district. Bhopal district has 9 child care institutes, 2 open shelter homes and 2 special adoption agencies

The children (orphans and destitute) residing in the 7 child care institutions out of the 9 will be the respondents of the proposed study. The children living in two of the institutes are special need children who were not able to answer the research questions appropriately

and thus were excluded from the study. These 9 child care institutions in total reside around 700 children out of which the sampling size for this study will be 300 respondents.

As it is known that data collection of such studies cannot be done in the laboratory thus field study becomes inevitable in such research works. For the study, the researcher visited all the child care institutes situated in Bhopal city in order to obtain reliable primary data to know about the situation and conditions of orphan and destitute residing in such institutes. The investigator during the study realised the lack of studies on such orphan and destitute children in central India and thus the collection of secondary data was very difficult. Collection of secondary data was done through studying the literature published by the institutes themselves and the knowledge of elderly people and staff that is connected with such institutes from a long time,

Analysis:

The ultimate aim of any child care institute is the rehabilitation of its inmates. Every child care institute tries to rehabilitate all the children residing in the institute through various different mechanisms. Rehabilitation of institutionalized children can be said as the efforts by the child institute to re-integrate the children back into the society.

Rehabilitation means provision of skills and competence to the inmates, within the institutional setting to equip them to face the outer world when they leave. **(Punalekar, 1985)**

Rehabilitation in general means making a child independent in the sense he is able to actively participate in every day chores, education, recreation and other important roles such as taking care of family, having social relationships etc.

The present study, it was found that the child care institutes of Bhopal district use around 8 mechanisms or schemes for the proper rehabilitation of the orphans and destitute inmates of the institute. The schemes are explained as follows:

1. Restoration

Family restoration is the most common form of rehabilitation technique used by child care institutions for the rehabilitation of the destitute children residing in the institute.

The restoration and protection of a child shall be the prime objective of any children's home, specialized adoption agency or open shelter

The children's home, special adoption agency or an open shelter, as the case may be, shall take such steps as or considered necessary for the restoration and protection of a child deprived of his family environment temporarily or permanently where the child is under their care and protection. Restoration and protection of a child means restoration to parents, adoptive parents, foster parents, guardian or fit person. **(Section 40, Juvenile justice act, 2015).**

Family restoration is believed to be one of the most difficult techniques of rehabilitation as the family that has once rendered the child alone does not seem to be fit for the upbringing of the child again. For this process an appropriate individual care plan is to be prepared by the caseworker of the institute.

Restoration of the children to the family is essential as one of the main principles of the juvenile Justice act, 2015 is that family life is the best for the upbringing of any individual and the institutionalization of any child should be the last resort. The main goal of any institute is to provide proper rehabilitation of its inmates by any means.

Since destitute children residing in institutions already have a family and because of some adverse some circumstances they are forced to leave their children in such institutes, so the most appropriate form of rehabilitation process for the destitute children could be restoring them back to the family by making suitable conditions in the family for the proper upbringing of the child.

2. Sponsorship

Sponsorship is an important rehabilitation tool as also mentioned in the juvenile Justice act, it can be said as a program run by the government to ensure rehabilitation and restoration of vulnerable children back into the mainstream of the society.

According to the Juvenile justice Act, 2015; Sponsorship means provision of supplementary support, financial or otherwise, to the families to meet the medicinal, educational and developmental needs of the child.

Sponsorship is believed to be an efficient technique of rehabilitation as it solves the biggest problem of the destitute children and their families which is lack of money and provision of other basic facilities. Sponsorship scheme is designed in a way focusing on the fundamental right of the child to reside in a family. The main objective of sponsorship scheme are:

1. To prevent children from separating from their biological families.
2. To seek support from financially competent families in order to help the children of socially and financially deprived families.
3. To restore the children living in child care institutions to their biological family and to ensure their overall development.

Since there are a lot of vulnerable and needy children available, an order of priority has been given under the sponsorship scheme to identify the children who are in need of immediate support and help them first. The priority order for the selection of children is as follows:

1. Orphan children who have lost both parents and even the family taking care of such children lie under the poverty line.
2. Priority should be given to families under poverty line among all other categories
3. Parents suffering from chronic illness as HIV, AIDS, cancer etc.
4. Children suffering from HIV/AIDS

Sponsorship in states provision of Rs.2000 per month for one child as a minimum remuneration of sponsorship, in addition to this any child or institute can be provided with private sponsorship where people can provide support in terms of money, school fees, coaching assistance, medical assistance, provision of stationery, books or any other thing that is of use to the children.

In the study conducted in Bhopal district it was found that 40 children are given government aided sponsorship. All children given sponsorship is a preventive type sponsorship and none of the children of child care institutes are provided rehabilitative sponsorship as yet in Bhopal district.

3. Foster Care

Another notable method for rehabilitation of inmates in the child care Institute is foster care.

As defined in the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 foster care means placement of a child, by the committee for the purpose of alternate care in the domestic environment of a family, other than the child's biological family, that has been selected, qualified, approved and supervised for providing such care.

People often confuse sponsorship and foster care schemes but the basic difference lies in the type of family they reside in. Sponsorship services are provided to biological families or non-guardians whereas in foster care the child is placed with families that are not related to the child.

Foster care as observed is a foreign concept and it still requires a lot in order to make people aware and vigilant of the concept.

The objective of foster care is to provide care and protection to children who are rendered destitute and there is little possibility of getting back in the family care.

Children institutionalize children or often or destitute who don't have a family or relatives to care for them in that condition for the rehabilitation of the child he can be placed with willing people of the same caste or community, neighbours, family friends, acquaintances or any other not related person. Such arrangement is termed as foster care.

According to Foster care guidelines, the foster parents are entitled for a minimum amount of Rs.2, 000 per month for the upbringing of the child.

Foster care is defined as an arrangement when a child is provided with family care and environment by unrelated families in order to provide him alternative care and protection as needed by the child. The Foster care scheme by the Madhya Pradesh government is adopted on the notion that the Madhya Pradesh government is highly motivated on the fact that the best interest of the child lies with the family. Family environment is the most beneficial for any child's development, thus it should be aimed to rehabilitate a child as such that he is raised in a family.

Under this study it was found that two children are given under foster care to families in Bhopal district.

4. Adoption

Adoption is recognised as an efficient method of rehabilitation and social integration of orphans and destitute children. According to the definition from juvenile Justice Act, 2015 adoption means the process to which the adopted child is permanently separated from his biological parents and becomes the lawful child of his adoptive parents with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities that are attached to a biological child.

Adoption is a way in which a parentless child is provided with a family which it can call its own. Adoption is considered as one of the best methods for rehabilitation of any child. Through Adoption a child is re-integrated into the society again.

“Adoption” means the process through which the adopted child is permanently separated from his biological parents and becomes the legitimate child of his adoptive parents with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities that are attached to the relationship(**CARA guidelines, 2011**)

Adoption establishes a permanent relationship between the child and adopted parents.

The adopted child becomes the lawful child of the prospective parents.

The adoptive parents are required to give the same rights, privileges and responsibilities to the adopted child as that of the biological child.

Under the study it was found that the past year there were around 10 children from the child care institutes above the age of 6 years were given for adoption. It is to be noted that the success rate of adoption for older children (above the age of 6 years) is very low. It was found that maximum children are returned back to the institute after some time. It was observed that both the children and prospective parents lack adjustment qualities and it becomes difficult for both of them to live together thus causing disruption of adoption. The causes of disruption were varied but most of them were not found to be satisfactory reasons. The adoptive parents had high expectations from the adopted children while the children living previously in child care institutes have no experience of living with the family tend to develop habits not favourable for families and thus this difference between the child and parents cause misunderstandings resulting in disruption of adoption.

5. Further Education

Another way of rehabilitation for the children who turn 18 years of age in the child care institute is arrangement of facilities for further or higher education.

The Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 limits the child care institutions to house children till 18 years of age and beyond that some other arrangements should be made for the child for the proper rehabilitation and social integration. The juvenile Justice act also directs financial assistance to such children leaving the institute for higher education till 21 years of age, which can be further extended for two more years based on the requirement of the child.

The child care Institute enrolled children in schools and colleges but since they cannot house the children after 18 years of age, they make arrangements of hostels, PGs (paying guest) or other rented places for such children so that leaving the institution does not hamper the growth and the process of rehabilitation.

The women and Child development department of Madhya Pradesh have made an arrangement of assistance of Rs.2000 per month for all such care leavers leaving the institute for further education, so that it may financially assist the child till they are not capable enough of earning for themselves. The provision of assistance by the women and child development department is termed as Aftercare scheme and is given to all the care-leavers leaving the institute for further education till 21 years of age. Usually the non-government child institute bears all major expenses of the care leavers as payment of School college fees, accommodation cost, food etc.

According to the study conducted, it was found that 16 children who turned 18 years of age last year were found to be living in hostels and PG's. The institutes reported regular follow ups of these children.

6.Job Oriented Trainings and Job Placements

Another criteria for providing rehabilitation facilities and opportunities to the children living in child care institutions is found to be job oriented training and job placements.

For successful rehabilitation of the inmates of the child care institutions the institute prefers job oriented training for its inmates to achieve the ultimate rehabilitation of the children. Job oriented training is training of courses for a short duration of time and set up in a way to provide a job or working opportunities in the Relative field as they complete the training.

Job oriented training enables the children to learn skills that can directly create and provide employment opportunities. Maximum children residing in institutions and even the

staff of the institution prefer providing job oriented training over gaining higher education as options as such training provide the children with immediate or early employment opportunities which is beneficial to them and time saving arrangement for achievement of the final step of rehabilitation.

The institute provide such employment generating trainings to children after the term 18 years of age in some residential settings or since the process of rehabilitation is intended to start as soon as the child turns 16 many institutes provide short-term job oriented trainings for the children still residing in the institute so that they can be placed in a job as they turn 18 years and leave the institute.

Under this study, it was found that different institutes provide different types of job oriented training and there is no uniform training present in all institutions. It was observed that maximum number of girls are provided with stitching and tailoring trainings, also Thai and die in garment making training was found popular for girl inmates but it was observed that these trainings are not much job oriented and only a few, who are very good at tailoring bags a job at some boutique or tailors but it cannot said to be as a complete waste as it provides with a skill which is beneficial for all. Other types of training provided include mobile repairing, mechanics, tally courses, GST training etc. It was noted that the GST training garners the most employment opportunities.

Job placements are believed to be the best option for rehabilitation of the children. For appropriate social integration or rehabilitation of the children of the child care Institute, providing them with a job is a very satisfying option.

When a child from a CCI bags a job opportunity, it is believed to attain the final stage of rehabilitation to working opportunities. A child is wholly integrated in a society without any difference from other children.

The child care institutes normally support provision of job oriented training instead of higher education as they guarantee job placements which seems to be a better option for social integration of children leaving the institute.

The study revealed that about 27 children above the age of 18 years are given job oriented training while 14 children gained employment in the past year.

7. Aftercare Institute:

Another tool for rehabilitation used by child care institutes in Bhopal district is transfer of children turning 18 years of age to an aftercare home. Bhopal district has a government aftercare home which houses girls above the age of 18 years. There is no government alternative for boys leaving the child institute on completing 18 years of age. A non-government institute runs an aftercare home for both boys and girls but it is exclusively for the children residing in their own child institute and does not offer stay to children of other child institutes.

These aftercare institutes function similarly as child care institutions. They provide all basic necessities to children as available in the child institute. The aftercare Institute pays more emphasis on rehabilitation and social reintegration of these children as there are no further options for their conservation after leaving the aftercare home.

The child institutions consider an aftercare home as a rehabilitation tool but it cannot be considered as a rehabilitation tool but only an alternative means to achieve the end that is proper rehabilitation.

After Care home gives more time to such children in need of care and protection to settle back in the society. An aftercare Institute is not a rehabilitation option but just a way or a path to reach the rehabilitation goals.

It was found that around 12 children were sent to after care homes by the child care institutes for supporting them further for their desired rehabilitation.

8. Marriage:

Rehabilitation through marriage is also a very common method opted by the child to institutions. Marriage as a rehabilitation technique is used majorly for the girl inmates. Since ancient times the best method for social integration of girls has been considered to be marriage. Although this trend is declining as now both the girls and boys are more inclined towards achieving employment and becoming self-sufficient rather than getting married at an early age.

The marriage of the girls and boys are done both in love and arranged settings. There are girls who are married as a child and many times prefer to get married to the same boy again. A few girls also choose love marriages and inform the institute of the same, the institute after investigating the boy if found acceptable may arrange marriage for them.

For arranged marriages proposals are invited to the institute and after thorough investigations, preparing of social investigation reports, home study reports, police verification of the groom or selected for marriage.

Usually the institutes prefer group marriages and the marriage of more than two girls in a single ceremony. The marriages are arranged with the help of government schemes such as Mukhyamantri Kanya Vivah or Nikah Yojna. Many institutes play for organizing the weddings on their own resources.

It was also found that marriages of Muslim girls receive a lot of Zakat from the fellow community members. All types of dowry and gifts or arranged through the amount received in zakat.

Conclusion:

To summarise the paper it can be said that rehabilitation of the institutionalised orphans and destitute is a process or technique implied in order to re-integrate the child back into the society from the child care institutes. It was observed that the process of social re integration of institutionalised children is a process that requires a lot of efforts from the government and child care institutes in order to attain positive rehabilitation of its inmates. The schemes and techniques employed by government and child care institutes for rehabilitation are quite ideal but it was found that these schemes are not used to their full potential. The schemes of adoption, sponsorship and foster care still need a lot of publicity and promotions through different media in order to gain maximum assistance for the support of institutionalised children. It was also observed that due to lack of funds and resources with the institutes, children are often not provided with their choice of education and trainings. The education and trainings are given according to the resources available with the institutes. The paper concludes that all the schemes and techniques if employed properly in an efficient way can achieve proper rehabilitation and social reintegration of the orphans and destitute residing in the child care institutes. It is suggested that further detailed study should be done on the prospects and problems of rehabilitation of inmates of child care institutes, to gain more knowledge and find ways for better implementation of these techniques. Also publicity for these schemes are important to achieve their maximum support.

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