

SOCIAL WORK STRATEGIES ADOPTED IN BALAKIYARA BALA MANDIRA, MYSURU

Dr. H. P. Jyothi

Assistant Professor, Department of Studies in Social Work
University of Mysore, Mysuru

Abstract: *Juvenile Justice* has assumed greater importance since 2000 with the enactment of JJ Act 2000 amended in 2015. The aim of the act is to provide care and protection of girls who are in difficult circumstances. Such a service is offered by adopting various social work strategies by Balakiyara Bala Mandira, Mysuru which is a correctional institution. This paper explores how girls are provided care and protection and paving the way for their overall development. The paper also throws light on the constraints of the institution in protection of its inmates.

Keywords: Adoption, Foster Care, Rehabilitation, Repatriation, Reintegration, Perpetrators, Juvenile Justice.

Introduction: Our country has Juvenile Justice Act 2000 amended in 2015 for those children who are in need of care and protection. Such children include the run-away children, abandoned, surrendered, neglected children, the institutions under the act also provides temporary shelter to those children who are rescued from sexual offences, child marriages, child labour, Beggary, children with HIV and other deadly diseases, assaulted children by any unknown or known individuals. The act considers a child to be any person who not attained the age of 18. The people who are in custody of the persons under the age of 18 are responsible for their complete care and protection be they the parents, schools or any child care institutions. Such children are rescued by the public, child help line, Special Juvenile Police Unit, NGO etc. and are produced before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) in respective district. The CWC has quasi-judicial powers to pass the order for suitable care and protection of children till they attain the age of 18. There will be Child Care Institutions (CCI) to place such children for temporary shelter till they attain the age of 18. The overall development namely personal, emotional and educational development of child is the responsibility of the institution.

Similarly when the children themselves have committed offences like rape, murder, theft, assault etc., such children are considered to be the children who are in conflict with law and are produced in front of Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) for counseling. There will be temporary shelter for such children called as Observation Homes.

In this research paper one such Child Care Institutions (CCI) has been visited to collect data and to understand the social work strategies adopted by the institution in care and protection of children. The institution is Government Home for Girls called as *Balakiyara Bala Mandira*, in Mysuru.

Review of Literature: The review of JJ Act 2015, the reports of the government of India and UNICEF on children care and protection, Guidelines of NCPCR (National Commission for Protection of Child Rights), KSCPCR (Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights) have made the researcher to frame questions to collect the data from the personnel and the inmates. Books on social work strategies and skills have helped to update the knowledge on the latest techniques of social work strategies in handling the clients. The review of literature showed that seldom exploratory research works conducted on government run child care institutions. Hence researcher felt this research will help other researchers to go in depth on the subject and bring out policy influencing recommendations.

Methodology: There is one boy's home and one girl home run by government through the department of Women and Child Development. The Girls home was selected for the research. There were 80 girls

of which 20 were selected at random for interview. A structure interview schedule was prepared. The girls are categorized as into two. The first category include those children who have parents but are in conflict with law or in need of care and protection and need temporary shelter, the second category include the children whose parents are dead and the relatives are not ready to take these children, thus they are totally orphan, some of the children are missing from their original place and biological parents, and will wait and stay for a longer period in the institution. The first categories of children are called as reception center girls and the second category are called as committal girls. 10 girls from reception center and 10 girls from committal category were selected for interview. The superintendents, the counselor, the 2 Probationary officers, were also interviewed to understand the social work strategies they use to work with children.

A Brief Organization Profile: Balakiyara Bala Mandira, Mysuru district, Karnataka state is a child care institution run by the department of Women and child since last 35 years. The institution building is gifted by a palatial building by the Maharaja of Mysore. Hence the building is very big having big rooms upstairs and down stairs giving a palatial heritage look. The building has a very big compound, hence children can play. The compound has a big stage where children perform cultural functions. The organization intake the children above the age of 6 years. The girls children above the age of 15 are sent here from neighbouring districts like Mandya, Hassan, Madikeri (Coorg), Ramanagara and Chamarajanagara. The home is headed by Superintendent. Children are looked after by a Mother, there are teachers to teach and give tuitions to the children, and there is a counselor who counsels the children. The probationary officers do home visits and give reports to the Child Welfare Committee. There are visiting doctors, nurse and yoga teacher. The institution is monitored by the District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) and the Deputy Director (DD) of the Department of Women and Child.

Objectives of the Study: The objective of the research was to understand whether social work strategies are applied in dealing with girl children and to understand the constraints of the institution to apply the strategies.

Detail of Respondents:

Table: 1: Profile of the Respondents: Reception Centre

Category of Children	Total Inmates	Respondent Selected
Child labour	2	1
Child marriages	30	5
Child trafficking	5	1
Child abuse	5	2
Beggary	5	1
Total	47	10

Table: 2: Profile of the Respondents: Committal Center

Category of Children	Total Inmates	Respondent Selected
Child labour	1	1
Child marriages	30	1
Child trafficking	5	1
Child abuse	5	3
Beggary	5	1
Orphan	10	3
Total	47	10

Findings: The counselor has a background of M.S W and discuss in detail with individual girl as soon as they come as inmates. She discusses first with them to know about their family background and then second round include the counseling. The rounds of interview vary from 2 to 5 based on the child's response. This is how the case work is applied in the institution. The counselor makes the children to discuss in groups, play in groups and treat the children through game therapy. This group includes the

girls who are having similar problems, who have come from similar background. For example game therapy is used to enthruse the girls who are victims of child marriages to achieve education development. Thus group work method and strategies are adopted. The parents are called in a separate meeting where they are involved to discuss the problems, gain strength and confidence from each other and take bold decisions especially to face the society who otherwise had made the child to take punishment. For example a girl who ran away from or kidnapped by the person of the same village is never entertained in the house by the parent as it is a prestige issue in the society. But the parents are given confidence to take the child back to their home. The village elders are also met to receive the child by the parents. Thus the community at large is prepared to receive the child. Thus the child is reintegrated into the family.

The missing children are repatriated into their family after a thorough search of the parents by the child help line and the police. The Missing Children Bureau helps the child care institution to upload the photo and other information of the child on missing children portal (**KHOYA- PAYA**). This portal helps the child helpline all over India to rescue the child. The institution is thus equipped with digital support to find the missing child.

Constraints of the Institution in Protection of its Inmates:

1. There is a need to take one professional social worker for 25 children to attend and make the children to be more attentive in day to day routine, achieve personality development, improve their communication skills, cope up with their stress and anger and personality issues. However there is not a single professional social worker in this institution either as counselor or as friend philosopher and guide to the children.
2. The care takers have different education background like M Sc nutrition, who only look after the health development of a child. For a professional counseling, the children are referred to the Department of Psychiatry, Government Hospital namely K R Hospital
3. The complete reception girl and committal girls are combined together for all logistics like dining, sleeping, day to day stay etc. This arrangement is creating problem for the children who are committal and are going regularly to the school. The life stories of reception girl's i.e. new inmates will make the committal girls to listen to them and distract their attention on study. This arrangement is a serious draw back of the institution. Hence the education development of the children is not happening.
4. The teachers of the institution are used for other duties and responsibilities like taking the children to the hospital or home visits or emergency issues. And children are sent to normal school to bring them into mainstream. But many of the time this arrangement is creating a problem. Because, there are daily new inmates coming in, and children have to adjust for new girl every day, some children feel discomfort and there are cases where children ran away directly from the school and not returned to home. The teachers are also frustrated with this policy of sending the children outside the campus. Because the teachers have lost their ability to teach and are engaged in the work this is not their original job chart. Thus the frustrated manpower can only pass the frustration to the children.
5. The children who have come from other states have to be sent back to their original home state. This is taking a long time as they have to be sent along with the police personnel. The police does not have enough manpower and take long time to escort a child. The child is thus frustrated to stay in the home for this reason.
6. The social work strategies such as case work, group work and community work are used by the personnel of the CCI and the professional counselor. However, there will definitely be a difference if a professional social worker is appointed here.
7. The mentally ill children also are given shelter here; such children may have to be treated well by the CCI. Arrangement to look after them is not easy. No special arrangements are made. They live among the other inmates. This also has created problems for the children when there were aggressive mentally ill children.
8. The department of women and child has seldom done research works on such institutions it is running. There is no improvement to approach seen. Most of the time punitive measures are

adopted to control the children. Though they know the law related to children, still they lack the patience to deal the children case by case.

9. The funds are not easily reaching the institutions. The salaries of the personnel are not given months together which demotivate them to adopt any strategies to motivate the children. There is enough funds in ICPS (Integrated Child Protection Services) but there is no flow on time.
10. There is no vehicle provided for the children. The children go by walk to the school. Though there are efforts to mobilize CSR funds by the authorities, such funds are spent on beds, safe drinking water etc. but not on to have a vehicle/school bus.

Recommendations:

1. Appointment of a professional social worker is a must in this girl's home. So that he/she will adopt effectively the methods and strategies of social work.
2. The appointment of professional work can happen either on full time basis or on outsource basis.
3. The girls who are under temporary shelter need to be given education within the home campus. As there are run away cases when they go to school.
4. The girl needs to be counseled more often. There is only one Professional counselor who cannot attend to the emotional counseling services of 80 inmates. There should be minimum four such counselors to be appointed.
5. The committal girls feel sick more often due to institutional arrangements. They need family care. But there is no proper foster care guideline Karnataka State, which makes the Child Welfare Committee weak to take decisions to send the children to foster care of families.
6. The communities at large and parents in particular have to be counseled and make them to be more sensitive to the children issue. There is quite a large gap between the parents and present age children who gain information fast through various media. Community work strategies have to be adopted effectively by the CCI
7. The stakeholder's participation such as the Hospital including Psychiatry settings have to be included to offer their services. The culture & sports development authority have to be involved by the CCI. The Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU), Child Help line to be involved in strengthening the parents and the communities.
8. As part of the personality development, children have to be involved in personality development classes, confidence building, and leadership development classes.
9. Girls have to be taught skills like *Karate* for self-defense. But no such efforts are seen by the care taking institution.
10. There is no systematic way of welcoming the inmates, their stay at home and exit from the institution. Most of the time they are handled unprofessionally. This is the result of non-training of the staff by the department of women and child.
11. Adoption rules have become online and speedy, hence institutionalization of children has become last resort and giving the orphan children for adoption have become more meaningful for the future life of the children.
12. The girl children who are sexually abused need more emotional support. This emotional support is often provided by Social work students who come here for field work practicum. Hence a full time professional social worker should be appointed by the government.

Conclusion: Thus, it is concluded by saying that children who are in need of care and protection are dealt without a professional social worker who can adopt various social work strategies. It is strongly emphasized here that the appointment of a professional social worker in Boys home has made a great difference, which is known from an informal information gathering. The present research undoubtedly concludes the need for social work strategies to be adopted in correctional setting like Government Girls Home in Karnataka.

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