

Chapter I

Introduction

The problems of orphans cannot be overemphasised. Here, 'orphan' has a wider connotation and means children living without family. As large as one-fifth i.e. 20% of 150 million children deprived of families live in India.(UNICEF Report 2012). This is a conservative estimate and even then this number in actual terms is a staggering 30 million children. Though plenty of work has been done in this area of institutional care for these children, whether government or NGO led, this topic is dear to me and I have attempted to throw some light with the intention of improving their condition and prospects.

I have briefly highlighted the enormity of the problem on hand and the socio economic & physiological condition of such a large portion of potentially productive population in these care centres, both government and non-government. To understand this critical subject in a much broader perspective, I have also touched upon the history of orphans across the world and ways in which other countries, mainly the developed ones, try to deal/manage these neglected angels with a human touch.

Culture plays a vital role and apart from general problems faced by both the sexes of orphans, there are additional ones specific to the girl child. I have tried to peek into history to explain this cultural trait of females being a liability leading to infanticides. Here socio-economic factors too played a role in shaping the cultural belief of girls being inferior.

Finally I have delved deep in understanding institutional arrangements for orphans existing in Delhi with the purpose of recommending measures, approach and ways of improving their lot after analysing two distinct institutions- one run by the government and the other by an NGO.

Objectives

To identify the institutional arrangements existing for orphans in Delhi

To analyse the effectiveness of children's homes through a comparative study between government and non-government run shelters in Delhi.

To highlight the inherent problems within each system and acknowledge the positive practices within each system

To compare the systems with established guidelines and suggest areas of improvements, if any.

Research Questions

How do Government run children homes compare to the non Government Homes?

How can the Children's homes in Delhi be improved.?

To what extent do the select cases adhere to the guidelines laid down by the Government?

How do the Homes analysed compare with homes in other select countries?

Methodology

Research is exploratory in nature and includes specific actions as follow:

Non participative observation through visiting the centres, asking questions et al

Requisite data has been collected from the Ministry of Women and Child Development and other sources.

Detailed study is confined to two homes of Delhi.

Certain tangible indicators have been selected for examining performance such as:

1. Resources
2. Facilities
3. Ratio of staff to child

4. Skill imparted
5. Post education settlement.

Study is documented in following chapters:

Chapter II - Historical Overview of Orphanages

We explore the history of orphanages and the situation across various countries such as UK and USA

Chapter III – The Indian Scenario

We discuss the reasons of orphanhood and the government initiatives and guidelines on the same

Chapter IV – Case Study of Childrens' Homes in Delhi

We compare a government run home with an NGO-run childrens' home

Chapter V – Key Issues

We highlight the inherent problems within the system as well as recognise the positives

Chapter VI – Suggested Action Plan

A Bibliography is given in the end.