



Exploring the Operational Framework of Child Welfare in Haryana - Issues and Challenges

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Abstract

The concept of Child Welfare deals with the services and the institutions catering physical, social and psychological cover to the child (in need of care and protection), one of the most vulnerable section of society, facing various sufferings due to numerous reasons such as lack of parental care and supervision, poor financial resources and inadequate provision for education although the scope of child welfare is growing wider in developed nations. India is the world's second most populous country and the share of the child population to that of the total is quite a big number. In India, every child has a right to lead a life with dignity. Moreover, the Constitution of India guarantees fundamental rights to every child implemented through directive principles of state policy. India has a comprehensive legal regime and policy framework to protect the rights and interests of the children, however, greater momentum is required for the effective implementation of these policies and programmes for the well-being of the children by improving their education and nutrition. Already a lot of work has been done by community partners, however, the results are not convincing. The present study is aimed to examine the functioning of the child welfare mechanism and its impact on beneficiaries especially focussed in the Haryana State. *Keywords:* child welfare, legislation, welfare machinery, beneficiaries.

INTRODUCTION

Child Welfare services aim to protect and support children and their families by addressing physical, social and psychological cover to the children (in need of care and protection), the most vulnerable section of the society, suffering due to numerous reasons e.g. lack of parental care and supervision, poor financial resources and inadequate provision for education. In underdeveloped economies child welfare services pertain to basic amenities leading to their survival such as food, shelter and cloth while in developed economies scope of child welfare is growing wider and adds more features like personality development, career guidance, best use of leisure time et.al. Our country is world's second most populous country and the share of child population to that of total is a big number. India's total child population (aged 0-18 years) is 444 million while adolescent population (aged 10-19 years) is 253 million. Population ages 0-14(% of total population) in India was reported at 25.69% in 2021 (World Bank, 2022). In this young nation every child has a right to lead a life with dignity. Moreover, the Constitution of India guarantees fundamental rights to all children implemented through directive principles of state policy. It guides the states to keep the children safe, protect them from abuse and afford them opportunities to develop physical, social and mental well-being. Child means a person male or female who is below 18 years of age (United Nations). National Policy for Children, 2013 recognises anyone under the age of 18 as a child and covers all the children within the territory and jurisdiction of the country. While casting glance over Indian situation, it is found that India has high rate of neo-natal deaths which is around 19 percent. Around 25 percent of infant mortality occurs in the country, while under the age of five it is 31 percent (UNICEF, 2021). Keeping in view above grim scenario, comprehensive laws have been framed and implemented for the welfare of the children because they



are neither the possessions of parents nor of the state, nor are they mere people-in-the-making; they have equal status as members of the human family.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Children are future backbone to the world. So education is must for the development of any nation. If a good education is provided to a child, it gives a good growth to the family. The particular family can improve the society with help of their education, although to provide child welfare is not a simple task (Banu, R.H.B. 2016). As per theory of motivation propounded by Abraham Maslow, basic need fulfilment leads a person to move towards the highest potential and achievement of self-actualization. An individual who successfully achieves the basic cyclic needs can move towards realizing the potentials human beings are gifted with, failing to do so leads a life of misery and deprivation from the potential human beings are capable of (Sagar, R. 2021). The present paper aims to highlight the important relationship between child development research and child welfare policies, and in doing so provides an analysis of the factors that tend to limit the application of research findings and technical information in child development to policy and professional practice. The study deals with a few major issues related to the improvement of child development research in our country (Verma, A.1979). The author in her research paper asserts that children are not accorded their due share in the developmental process of the country and least efforts are made to bring them to the mainstream. This has a long-standing impact on their physical, social, psychological, mental and moral development. The paper opens a discussion regarding the developmental needs of children and also the impediments presented for the reason of their being abused and neglected- orphan, abandoned, child beggars and trafficked (Mengi, N. 2019). In a paper presented at the National Seminar on the Pre-school Child in Madras in 1970, Dr. K. G. Krishnamurthy analysed the problems of child welfare programmes in our country thus "The changing sectoral approach to the needs of children, the shifting emphasis from one target group of children to another, the constant recasting of the form and content of the various schemes, the lack of proper coordination between government and voluntary organizations and amongst voluntary organizations themselves, point out the fact that by and large, the development of child welfare programmes rested on a trial and error method".

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The underlying objective of this research paper is to give a brief overview of the child welfare mechanism from state perspective and to explore the issues and challenges related thereto. The study will find out the gap between the work done and what more is needed for child welfare in the state of Haryana. Major child welfare schemes related to the improvement of child development sponsored by Government of Haryana are dealt with. The methodology used in the study is descriptive and based upon secondary information taken from published reports, research papers in journals and existing literature on the title. Findings of the study will contribute to identify the areas of child welfare remaining unaddressed.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Child Welfare System

The child welfare system is not a single entity. Many organizations in each community are working together to strengthen families and keep children safe. Public agencies, such as departments of social services or child and family services, often contract and collaborate with private child welfare agencies and community-based organizations to provide services to families, such as in-home family preservation services, foster care, residential treatment, mental health care, substance use treatment,

parenting skills classes, and financial assistance. National Policy for Children, 2013 recognizes that a multisectoral and multidimensional approach is necessary to secure the rights of children. The Policy has identified four key priority areas: survival; health and nutrition; education and development; protection and participation for focused attention.

Child welfare systems are complex and the responsibility for their implementation lies with the states. The Central Government supports the states through program funding and legislative initiatives. Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India is the nodal ministry for ensuring welfare of children. WCD has approved centrally sponsored scheme “Mission Vatsalya” erstwhile Child Protection Scheme since 2009-10 for the welfare and rehabilitation of children in difficult circumstances. The vision of Mission Vatsalyais to secure a happy and healthy childhood for each and every child in India, ensure opportunities to enable them to discover their full potential and assist them in flourishing in all respects. The guidelines lay emphasis on child rights, advocacy and awareness along with strengthening of the juvenile justice care and protection system with the motto to ‘**leave no child behind**’. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 form the basic framework for the implementation of the Mission. There are many children in this country who lack a stable home and family. They become vulnerable thereby to adverse situations like destitution, exploitation, abuse, torture, etc. In this connection, various stakeholders such as Governments, Child Care Institutions such as Children Home, Open Shelter, Observation Home, Special Home, Place of Safety, Specialized Adoption Agency etc. play a crucial role by providing a safe space for the children to grow and develop. It is, therefore, essential that these institutions are run as per the detailed norms and provisions laid down in the JJ Act, 2015 and Rules framed there under.

Child Welfare in Haryana

While referring to child welfare scenario in Haryana, the status of child development index in the state was consulted. This index was drawn on all states in India and it has taken the following parameters for calculating the index-health, nutrition, education, children and work, child marriage, children having children, children and violence. The study presents the results for the year 2015, comparing 640 districts across the country including 18 districts of Haryana on India Child Development Index (Mathur, R.et al.2022). The result reflects that most of the states across country have wide intra-state disparity and the same case is with Haryana. For instance, the district with highest ICDI achievement in Haryana is ranked 44 out of 640 districts in India, whereas the district ranked lowest in the State is ranked 629. Out of 18 districts about 38% have very high ICDI value, next 38% have high ICDI, 17% fall in medium category and one district is having low ICDI. Ambala and Panchkula are having very high ranking and Hisar district is reported to have 145 rank while seven districts have secured high ICDI ranging from 0.714 to 0.772. Table 1.3 contain three districts who have medium ICDI and unfortunately the millennium city, Gurgaon, has low ICDI i.e.0.702. The district Mewat was placed in the low ICDI bracket with 0.545 which weakened overall average state scenario.

Table 1 India Child Development Index Of Haryana (2015)

Table 1.1 Districts Having High ICDI			
S. N.	District Name	ICDI Value	Rank
1	Ambala	0.832	44
2	Panchkula	0.829	46
3	Kurukshetra	0.806	88

4	Mahendergrh	0.799	98
5	Yamunanagar	0.795	106
6	Jind	0.791	116
7	Hisar	0.778	145

Table 1.2 Districts having High ICDI			
S. N.	District Name	ICDI Value	Rank
1	Sirsa	0.772	161
2	Karnal	0.765	183
3	Bhiwani	0.754	216
4	Faridabad	0.745	234
5	Sonipat	0.738	250
6	Rewari	0.733	263
7	Rohtak	0.714	315

Table 1.3 Districts having Medium ICDI			
S. N.	District Name	ICDI Value	Rank
1	Gurgaon	0.702	349
2	Panipat	0.697	363
3.	Palwal	0.664	470

Table 1.4 Districts having Low ICDI			
S. N.	District Name	ICDI Value	Rank
1	Mewat	0.545	629

Source: <https://www.nipfp.org.in/publications/working-papers/1970/>

Framework of Child Welfare Machinery

Mission Vatsalya envisages defined institutional arrangements to nurture a robust implementation framework that are monitored at different level by the centre, state and district. The Centrally Sponsored Scheme works on fund sharing pattern as prescribed by Ministry of Finance in the ratio of 60:40 between Centre and State and Union Territories respectively. At state level, a Committee headed by the Chief Secretary is monitoring, reviewing and promoting convergence in the implementation of the scheme.

Table 2. ORGANISATION CHART

2.1 State Machinery	
Mission Vatsalya/Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS)	
Statutory Arrangement	Service Delivery Structure
State Child Protection Society (SCPS)	State Level Monitoring Committee
State Adoption Resource Agency (SARA)	State Child Welfare and Protection Committee

2.2 District Machinery

Statutory Arrangement	Service Delivery Structure
District Child Protection Unit (DCPU)	District Child Welfare and Protection Committee
Child Welfare Committee (CWC)	PRIs/Urban Local Bodies Committees on Social Justice Women & Children
Juvenile Justice Board (JJ Board)	
Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU)	

Source: ICPS Report (Haryana), 2017

- Organisation Chart gives a view of state machinery and district machinery working simultaneously for the welfare of children and implementing the ICPS. “Mission Vatsalya” erstwhile Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) is an umbrella scheme under which various schemes for children in need of care and protection, and children in conflict with law are covered. Under statutory arrangement, two agencies named SCPS and SARA are established and the programme is being implementing through Haryana State Child Protection Society (HSCPS). The State Child Protection Society (SCPS) established under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 ensures the implementation including mapping, planning of Mission Vatsalya Scheme.
- SCPS assists the State Child Welfare and Protection Committee (SCWPC) for coordinating and ensures effective implementation of legislations, policies and schemes for child welfare and protection in the state. The Committee takes needful steps for advocacy, awareness generation, capacity building of all the stakeholders on child rights and child welfare, and address road-blocks, issues, complaints received regarding care and protection of children in the state.
- District Machinery follows the same pattern and comprises four statutory bodies namely DCPU, CWC, JJ Board, SJPU and, the District Child Welfare and Protection Committee & PRIs/Urban Local Bodies Committees on Social Justice Women & Children are the monitoring committees.
- For providing Non Institutional Care, State Adoption Resource Agency (SARA) has been set up at state level. The main function of the SARA is to coordinate, monitor, develop the work related to adoption in the state.
- “Special Juvenile Police Unit” means a unit of the police force of a district or city or, as the case may be, any other police unit like railway police, designated as such to exclusively deal with children either as victims or perpetrators in co-ordination with the voluntary and non-governmental organisations.

Child Welfare Committees

As per the provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000 (amended in 2006), state governments are required to establish a Child Welfare Committee or two in every district. Each CWC should consist of a chairperson and four members. The CWC has the same powers as those of Metropolitan Magistrate or a Judicial Magistrate of First Class. A child can be brought before the committee by a police officer, any public servant, child line personnel, any social worker or public spirited citizen, or by the child himself/herself. The CWC usually sends the child to a Children’s Home while an inquiry into the case is conducted for the protection of the child. The purpose of the CWC is to determine the best interest of the child and find him a safe home environment either with his/her biological parents or adoptive parents, foster care or in an institution (Child Help Foundation). The District Sessions Judge inspects Observation Homes and Child Care Institutions once in a month to

review the working and facilities being provided to the Juveniles while Juvenile Justice Monitoring Committee reviews the findings given by the District Sessions Judge.

Child Care Institution(CCI) means Children’s Home, Open Shelter, Observation Home, Special Home, Place of Safety, Specialised Adoption Agency and a Fit Facility recognized under the Act for providing care and protection to children, who need such services. Children in conflict with the law are provided residential care and protection in Observation Homes, Special Homes, and Places of Safety (The Juvenile Justice Act, 2015). Childline is the country's first toll-free tele-helpline for children in need of care and protection and the number is 1098. The following services are provided for the overall welfare of the child in the Children Home.

1. Clothing and bedding
2. Sanitation and hygiene
3. Nutritional Diet
4. Medical Care
5. Mental Health Services
6. Education
7. Vocational Training
8. Recreational Facilities

2.3 Types of Child Care Institutions (CCIs)			
	Observation Home	Special Home	Place of Safety
Purpose	For temporary reception, care & rehabilitation of any child alleged to be in conflict with law, during the pendency of any enquiry under The Juvenile Justice Act, 2015. For every child alleged to be in conflict with law who is not placed under the charge of parent or guardian.	For rehabilitation of those children in conflict with law who are found to have committed an offence and who are placed there by an order of the Juvenile Justice Board made under section 18.	To place a person above the age of eighteen years or child in conflict with law, who is between the age of sixteen to eighteen years and is accused of or convicted for committing a heinous offence.

Source – Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, Hyderabad 2020

Name	Observation Home	Special Home	Place of Safety	Children Home	Shelter Home	Swadhar Home	Ujjawala Home	SA A	Combination Homes	Any Other	Total
Haryana	05	03	00	67	03	00	00	01	0	0	79
India	278	52	08	6368	373	185	110	336	10	1869	9589

Source- Report of Ministry of Women and Child Development Sep 2018

Table 3.1 The data highlights that column “children home” is having highest strength while other types of CCIs are having either very low figure or it is zero in number. Because all the children (CNCP) under the age group 6-18 are kept in children home, and sex wise separate arrangement (M/F/T) is done there. While CNCP under the age 0-6 yrs are kept in Specialised Adoption Agency irrespective of gender. Shelter home is a temporary arrangement for the children rescued under any special operation like prostitution, child labour etc. Various categories of CCIs functioning in the state are run by Govt., Semi Govt., Private organisations located at many places. Table 2.5 details the capacity of each CCI in the state and the separately shows the number of boys and girls residing there. It is evident from the statistics that in govt run CCIs children in conflict with law were residing and, here, the strength of the girls was nil. In other words, no girl was found in the category of child in conflict with law.

Table 3.2 Child Care Institutes (CCIs) in Haryana as on 28-8-2017

Table 3.2.1 Govt Run CCIs CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH LAW				
S.N.	Name of the Home	Capacity	Girls	Boys
1.	Observation Home (Ambala) Boys	50	-	109
2.	Observation Home (Faridabad) Boys	25	-	77
3.	Observation Home (Karnal) Girls	44	-	-
4.	Observation Home (Hisar) Boys	50	-	85
5.	Observation Home (Sonapat) Special Home	50	-	70
	Total	219		341

Table 3.2.2 Semi Govt Run CCIs (CHILDREN/SHELTER HOMES)				
S.N.	Name of the Home	Capacity	Girls	Boys
1.	Shelter Home Rewari	25	-	13
2.	Children Home rewari	50	-	23
3.	Bal Kunj Chhachhruli	46	16	19
4.	Children Home Chhachhruli	100	46	26
5.	Shelter Home Chhachhruli	50	19	22
6.	Bal Greh Jhajjar Children Home	25	18	04
	Total	296	99	107

Table 3.2.3 Private Run CCIs (Children Homes for Children with special needs)				
S.N.	Particulars	Capacity	Girls	Boys
1.	64 CCIs	3998	1271	1464

Source - Women and Child Department, State Govt.

Non-Institutional Approaches To Rehabilitate And Reintegrate Children The ICPS project promotes family based on non-institutionalised care of children in difficult circumstances based on the principle of institutionalization of children as a measure of last resort. Non institutionalised measures are adoption, foster care, sponsorship.

- 1. Adoption Scheme** Specialised Adoption Agency means an institution established by the State Government or by a voluntary or non-governmental organisation and recognized under section 65, for housing orphans, abandoned and surrendered children, placed there by order of the Committee, for the purpose of adoption (The Juvenile Justice Act, 2015). For providing non institutional care State Adoption Resource Agency (SARA) has been set up at state level. State Adoption Resource Agency works for de-institutionalization of children and facilitates the process of in-country and inter-country adoption through Specialized Adoption Agencies. Table 4.1 highlights many features of various adoption agencies working in Haryana being run as govt., semi govt., and private capacity. It also depicts the capacity of the centres, sex wise strength and total strength.

S.N.	Name of Agency	Type of Agency	Capacity	Boys	Girls	Total
1	ShishuGreh, Bal Gram Rai, Sonapat	Govt	10	05	09	14
2	ShishuGreh, Panchkula	Semi Govt	50	11	13	24
3	Bal Bhawan, Rewari	Semi Govt	10	00	00	00
4	Miracle Charitable Trust, Faridabad	NGO	30	02	05	07
5	Bal Bhawan Jhajjar	NGO	10	00	01	01
6	Distt. Branch bal Bhawan, Hisar	NGO	10	00	01	01
7.	Seshav Kunj, Hisar	NGO	10	02	04	06
8	Bal Upwan Ashram, Kaithal	NGO	10	04	10	14

Source- Women and Child Department, State Govt.

2. FOSTER CARE & SPONSORSHIP SCHEME

Foster Care is an arrangement whereby a child is placed for the purpose of alternate care in the domestic environment of a family, usually on a short term or extended period of time with unrelated family members with the purpose of care and protection. In India it is the framework for child protection

which attained a strong rights-based approach for children, by differentiating provision of measures for the minor who come in conflict with the legal system and, children who loose a protective system in their life due to parental abandonment, inability of parent to take care of them and due to sudden disasters and calamities. This act lays down provision for placement of a child in a foster family and also lays down that the selection of the foster family on the basis of the suitability of the family, analyzed by the District Child Protection Unit, nodal authority, for the implementation of a foster care program at district level(Juvenile Justice Act, 2015). In Japan becoming foster parent is a matter of honor while in our country foster care, and even adoption is a stigma (Sagar R., 2021).

Table 4.2 Sponsorship and Foster – Care Scheme in Haryana

Sr. No.	Financial Year	Name of Scheme		Total Cases	Amount Disbursed
		Sponsorship	Foster Care		
1.	2014-15	54	41	95	42,00,000
2.	2015-16	682	53	735	45,00,000
3.	2016-17	236	143	379	2,94,12,000
	Total	972	237	1209	3,81,12,000

Source-Women and Child Development, State Govt.

Sponsorship is the provision of supplementary support to families to meet medical, nutritional, educational and other needs of their children with a view to improving their quality of life. Table 4.2 explains the total number of cases under sponsorship and foster care scheme, and the total amount the disbursed. In financial year 2016-17 total amount disbursed was about Rs 2.94 crores and the number of beneficiaries was 379. In a period of three years 1209 children were benefited by this welfare scheme i.e. sponsorship and foster care.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) had conducted the nationwide audit of the CCIs. In Haryana, the audit has raised questions over the functioning of the CCIs. In Haryana, out of 88 CCIs, 63 come under NGOs or trusts, while 25 are run by government. As per Juvenile Justice Model Rules, 2016, every CCI should have a management committee and it should meet at least once every month. 11 CCIs don't have management committees, and out of the remaining 77 at 61 places the committees don't meet every month. The audit also pointed out that close to 65% of the CCIs in the state don't have child welfare officers, over 76% don't have paramedical staff, over 69 % don't have housekeeping staff, 17% don't have cooks, close to 40% don't have storekeeper-cum-accountants and over 37% don't have house mother or house father. On infrastructure front, only 58% of the CCIs have recreation rooms, and just 42% have counselling rooms. Over 76 % have bathrooms and 68.2 % have toilets. Close to 32 % don't have child friendly exclusive toilets and about 24% don't have child friendly exclusive bathrooms, mentioned in the audit report. According to Rules, the children have to be grouped on the basis of age, nature of offence or kind of care required. But 25% of the CCIs don't follow the segregation process as per age-group for stay and other activities. As many as 85% of the CCIs don't have a copy of child protection policy and in 18% there are no adequate measures to prevent any form of physical or emotional abuse of children. As per rules, every CCI has to maintain case history and

counsellor's report of each child but it is not followed in 24% institutions. The audit says that state inspection committees have to randomly carry out checking, but it has not happened in case of more than 51 % homes. Close to 16% don't have availability and provision of individual beds for children, over 18% don't plan meals in consultation with children (The Tribune, 2023).

Social audit of Children Care Institutes in Haryana presents a sorry state of affairs. Despite strict legal system and sufficient funds, why these institutes are not able to implement centrally sponsored child welfare schemes as per norms and why these institutions and their management should not be accountable? The unanswered question needs to be addressed with serious note keeping in mind the child welfare. The observations given under social audit should be paid immediate and strict attention. Otherwise the motto of Mission Vatsalaya “no child leave behind” will not be fully realized. The issue of trained and experienced staff should also be dealt with. Because child welfare agency staff will work more effectively when they are well educated and well trained.

Conclusion

Every child enters this world with a special dream. He should be provided with basic amenities irrespective of his social status. Children are the biggest asset for any nation. Care given to the children in hours of suffering will help in preparing them as good citizens to make the society a better place. The working child welfare mechanism will be smooth if all the stakeholders like social workers, educators, join hands with high commitment and integrity. Though the child welfare mechanism in Haryana has been plagued with the challenges in the above report, still it plays a central role in child welfare and family delivery system.

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