

Name of Research Scholar: Asfia Daneshyar

Name of Supervisor: Prof. Aejaaz Masih

Department: Deptt. of Teacher Training & Non Formal Education (IASE)

Title of thesis: *Ecology of Orphanages in Relation to Providing Socio-Emotional and Academic Support to Inmate Students - A Case Study.*

Abstract

The kind of environment a child is raised has an influence on his potentialities. There are children who spend years or entire childhood in orphanages. This study was meant to explore the various dimensions to the ecology of orphanages and to investigate the problems unique to institutional care, if any, faced by the children. To find out how supportive the environment of these institutions is in terms of providing socio-emotional and academic support to the inmate school going children; because a reasonably secure and supportive environment is imperative to the evolution of a human being from a child to an independent productive citizen.

The case study approach was followed. Participant observation, in-depth interviews, open ended questionnaires - tools typical of a qualitative study were used. There was a descriptive analysis of data, categorizing it under seven heads.

Findings and Conclusions:

- Parents send their children to orphanages when they are not in a position to provide for their children. These institutions take care of their needs – food, safe and comfortable shelter. The need for security in the form of parental love is vital but as we see, basic physiological needs, that is, food and shelter, come first on the Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. Security is primary, love and belongingness are secondary to them. The basic needs have to be met first. Therefore the parents in large numbers are make a decision to part with their children and are willing to compromise on security, love and belongingness need of their children.
- People living in far flung, remote and desolate places, where there is no school at all or not a comfortable distance, or may be where the quality of education may not be comparable to what the Capital could offer, send their children to orphanages in Delhi. Education being one of the prime motives of these institutions.
- Social mobility is another factor. The orphanages provide their inmates with educational opportunities, congenial environment and support. Hoping for a brighter future, better education prospects and job avenues, families trapped in the vicious circle of poverty, willingly depart with their children. Given their disadvantaged position in the society, people go for institutional care, in anticipation of their next generation's ascend in the social ladder.

- Gender is also one of the reasons. Though few in number, in some cases the girls are placed in institutional care while the boys, especially when he is the only male child he is retained while his female siblings considered to be a liability to the family are sent away.
- The background of the children may vary from orphanage to orphanage. Sanskar Ashram has a homogenous lot of inmates while a difference in background may be seen in the children of Happy Home. It is a very heterogeneous group of student inmates.
- One of the orphanages is government funded and other privately but both offer a sound infrastructure, with Happy Home scores more in terms of internal design of the building.
- Social environment of both the orphanages is not oppressive. Neither is their routine very regimental. The inmates have a reasonable amount of liberty to do things. The restrictions on them are out of security concerns. The cause of resentment that the inmates of Sanskar Ashram have is due to the bad and foul language that the lady sweepers use.
- Staff could be said to be inadequate, though for different reasons in both the orphanages. In Happy Home may because they procure funds privately they cannot afford to employ many caretakers, while in Sanskar Ashram they have sanctioned posts but there are huge delays in recruitment, simply because of bureaucracy and red tapism .
- The caretakers of Happy Home stay with them full time so it is good for the children as the one person they are familiar with is always around. While the caretakers of Sanskar Ashram have rotation of shifts but to the inmates' advantage they are educated, so they it may be expected that they give them better guidance and support. Though this may be always true.
- Inmates of Sanskar Ashram look more carefree. They do not bother about studies. Neither do they get any kind of support from the Ashram. The students living in Happy Home know that there are expectations from them to perform fairly on academics and help is also provided to them therefore they take their studies seriously.
- Also since they (inmates of Happy Home) go to an English Medium school they may face initial problems in switching over from their mother tongue, but ultimately that could give them an edge in the job market. Govt. run orphanages send the children to local government schools.