

Scope of Child Education Sponsorship Programme in the Modern Society

Marykutty E.P¹ and Hemalatha. K²

Abstract

As for any adults, children too have their own right which is formulated by United Nation's Child Right Convention (UNCRC). India also obliged to protect the rights of the Children as its citizens. But the reported cases in the country say that the existing laws and legislations are not at all functioning in a proper way. So the institutionalisation is the only one alternative for such cases. At the same time institutionalisation have its own demerit which makes obstacles for the holistic development of the children. Though there are adverse effect, the needy people and the parents are forced to keep their children in the institutions.

So it is the need of the time to introduce and implement the child education sponsorship programme. It is a family oriented as well as a community based programme. Child education sponsorship programme is an important child welfare service which is intended to strengthen the family as a unit and preventing family disintegration which leads to institutionalisation of the child. So the sponsorship refers to arrange the financial assistance by a person better placed in life to a child from disadvantaged family for his all-round development and particularly for his or her education. The main components of the programme are family and child, sponsors and the social worker or the NGO. Healthy development of the children, economic safety

1. Marykutty E.P, Scholar, Christ (Deemed to be University), Bangalore.

2. Dr.Hemalatha. K, Associate Professor, Dept. of Social Work, Christ (Deemed to be University), Bangalore.

and the education are the prime concern of all child sponsorship organisations. As family is the basic unit of the society, it is the place where all the socialisation process starts in the life of the children. So it is the right of the children to be in the family. So child sponsorship programme is an alternative for the institutionalization.

Key words: Child rights, Modern society, Institutionalisation, Child education sponsorship programme

Introduction

1959 is a remarkable year in the history of human rights. United Nations declared the Convention on the rights of the child on 1959. The world leaders have recognized that the children should have human rights exclusively, though the declaration of the child rights was held in 1959 November 20th by the General Assembly. Chandan Roy explore that “the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights within child rights.” All these rights have been set in 54 articles by the convention. These 54 articles have been concluded into four basic rights such as 1. Right to survival, 2. Right to develop to the fullest, 3 Right to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation and 4. Right to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. Also United Nations convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC) has defined child as the every human being below the age of eighteen years old.

Child rights in India

Directive Principles of State Policy in Indian Constitution (Article 39) demands the states to be the safeguard of the child rights so that the tender age of the children are not abused, and childhood are protected against exploitation and moral abandonment. India adopted National Policy on children on 1974 and authorized state to provide adequate service to children through the period of their growth in order to ensure their physical, mental and social

development in a full manner. As the signatory of UNCRC, India too globally recognized the child rights in 1992. Consequently, Child Labour(Prohibition & Protection) Act, 1986, Juvenile and Justice (Care & Protection) Act 2000 and POCSO(Protection of Child Sexual Offence) Act, 2012 came into force.

Child Labour Act(1986) debars the children below the age of 14 years into any work of occupations. Juvenile Justice Act ensure that every person below the age of 18 years, who is in need of care and protection, is entitled to receive it from the state. POCSO Act provides protection for every child from all sorts of sexual offences. Also Constitution of India guarantees every child to enjoy certain rights such as

1. Right to free and compulsory elementary education for all children between the age group 6-14 years. (Article 21A)
2. Right to be protected from any hazardous employment till the age of 14 years (Article 24)
3. Right to be protected from being abused and forced by economic necessity to enter occupation unsuited to their age or strength [Article 39(e)]
4. Right to equal opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in condition of freedom and dignity and guaranteed protection of childhood and youth against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment [Article 39(f)] .

Based on these rights, there are different policies for children made by India Government such as mid-day meals, Integrated child development scheme(1972), Integrated child protection scheme, child protection policy(2017) and National policy on child labour(1987).

Challenges of children in India

Though there are various acts and policies based on child rights, as the signatory of United Nations Convention of Rights of child in 1992, children in India are facing a lot of challenges. Save The Children explores in its article(2017) the top 5 issues faced by children India are malnutrition, stunting, *Educere-BCM Journal of Social Work*

child labour, forced begging and diarrhoea. Also Humanium realizes the main problems faced by children in India are poverty, right to life, right to health, right to water, right to education, right to protection, right to the food, right to have freedom of expression, child labour, child marriage and right to identity. To overcome these main challenges, children are brought to the institutions or care homes for the children.

Children in institutions

Many children spend most of their childhood in institutions, including, inter alia, residential homes and schools, hospitals, detention centres, remand homes and refugee centres, where opportunities for play, recreation and participation in cultural and artistic life may be limited or denied. The Committee stresses the need for States to work towards the de-institutionalization of children; but until that goal is reached, States should adopt measures to ensure that all such institutions guarantee both spaces and opportunities for children to associate with their peers in the community, to play and to participate in games, physical exercise, cultural and artistic life. Such measures should not be restricted to compulsory or organized activities; safe and stimulating environments are needed for children to engage in free play and recreation. Wherever possible, children should be afforded these opportunities within local communities. Children living in institutions for significant periods of time also require appropriate literature, periodicals and access to the Internet, as well as support to enable them to make use of such resources. Availability of time, appropriate space, adequate resources and equipment, trained and motivated staff and provision of dedicated budgets are needed to create the necessary environments to ensure that every child living in an institution which can realize his or her rights under article 31. (UNCRC , 2013) General comment No. 17 based on article 31.

(Abrol,1998) explores that though JJ Act formulated some strategies for the children “at risk”, the institutions run by voluntary Organisations are better to a certain extent than that of by the government institutions. The SOS

Village- small Group home model has got a lot of attention recently. Some of the non-institutional services are foster care, adoption, sponsorship programme, care and support to single mothers and strengthening the child's biological family. Some guidelines to develop and promote alternatives to institutional care are listed below.

1. TISS (1986) reports that in 1983 approximately 1.19 lakh destitute children are provided institutional care. And very few children are taken care by the institutions.

2. The very young ones require more health and nutritional care and individual attention, where s the older ones need educational, vocational and counselling services.

3. India have a strong family system and collective living(at least in rural areas) which is the biggest safeguard for minimizing the exploitation of the child.

4. There are many people who want help, but do not know about the services for children such as adoption, foster care and sponsorship programme.

5. "Watchdog" committees should be set up in the Government custodial care services.

6. The psycho social needs of the children at various developmental age should be kept in mind while planning session for the children.

7. There should not be any compromise on account of investing human resources and money for the children "at risk".

8. For reducing the destitution of children some macro strategies such as empowerment of the children, protection of the girl child, rehabilitation of the working children etc. has to be promoted.

9. Though the NGO efforts are much more effectiveness than that of the government's, they cannot match the outreach and resources of the Government. So Government based organizations should be retained, improved, sen-

sitized and made more effective.

10. Ensure the involvement of more and more children in day –today affairs of the institutions so that they learn to be protected by themselves.

Nayak (1998) define the children “at risk” would include children who have been orphaned or abandoned/neglected by their birth parents and belonging to dysfunctional families or live in an institution. Children who survive on the streets, working children and those addicted to drugs and other chemical addictives as well as victims of exploitation also referred as the children “at risk”. She found that the children in institutions are not adequately met their emotional, psychological and physical needs.

According to her institutionalisation means the practice of admitting the children considered “at risk” for long term care into residential facilities like orphanages, destitute cottages and statutory institutions as a solution to meeting their unmet physical and developmental needs.

Also she referred the non institutionalisation as the practice of encouraging family involvement and mobilising community services to strengthen and support the families own ability to nurture their children. The substitute family care services are adoption, foster family care, group foster homes and sponsorship programme where children are offered more personalised care and attention than what large scale institutional set up.

(Rupande 2015) argues that children are getting material goods, opportunities, services and psychological satisfaction by the people who work for them in the institutions. At the same time, these services are never distributed perfectly equitably.

Child education sponsorship programme

As part of de institutionalisation, child education sponsorship programme strengthen the family system by supporting the families to nurture their children at home. Child sponsorship programme grew as the individual responses to appeals from humanitarian voluntary organisations and then developed into formal organised services. The collective motivation of the individuals

provided the social energy to the intervention for a social transformation of the vulnerable and marginalised children, families, and communities(Fernandes, 2015)

Philosophy of giving

Fernandes(2015) argues that giving has an emotional component of empathy. The art of giving is an old as human relations established. The philosophy of giving is based on the altruistic principle of giving unto others what you would like to receive in similar circumstances.

The virtue of giving is emphasized by all religious scriptures like, Veda, the Budhist Scriptures, the Bible and the Koran. All religious faiths encourage the core elements of compassion, altruism and charity as our shared obligation to help others. Mostly it is promoted as a traditional practices to share one – tenth of the income with those in need, particularly with widows and orphans. Most of the religious scriptures inspire the religious as the spiritual motivation for giving without expecting anything in return.

Various religious institutions have established registered trusts and through these trusts financial support is given as educational, medical, relief in times of natural disasters, emergency displacement and other services for children, families and communities. Some of the well known trusts are catholic charities, caritas India, ParsiPanchayat, the Agha Khan Foundation, the Anjuman Islam Trust and the Mahalaxmi Temple trust etc.

Over a long period of time child sponsorship programme is evolved. Today there are number of sponsoring agencies at all levels such as international, national as well as local and there are thousand of children and families who receive support as sponsorship.

Definition of Child Sponsorship Programme

Child sponsorship programme is one of the most important child welfare services to strengthen the family as a unit and preventing family disintegration which leads to subsequent institutionalisation. It refers to financial as-

sistance from a person better placed in life to a child in a disadvantaged family for his development including the educational needs. It has evolved from charity approach to a systematic and combined effort of welfare agencies to reach out to needy children. As per the definition, the three major components of child sponsorship programme are the service user, the sponsor and the social worker.

The service user refers to family and child who wants financial assistance to meet the educational needs of the child, where as the sponsor refers to the one who is willing to give contribution to help the child. The social worker is generally an NGO personnel who does wholistic assessment of the strengths and problems of the family and determine the services in the best interest of the child. The social worker do the regular monitoring and evaluation of the progress of the programme as well as the development of the child and assist the child to communicate with the sponsor.

Rationale for child sponsorship programme

Family is the basic unit and primary social institution. Unfortunately many children are not blessed enough to be born and brought up in families. Children from lower socio- economic background are not met their needs in the family, so that their rights are violated right from the beginning. Parents are illiterate or not educated enough, so they are unable to help or guide their children in studies. To fulfil the financial needs of the family, they end up working as daily wages earners or domestic help and not able to concentrate on the needs of the children. They work for long hours and many a time the role of the parents ends with the enrolment in school or pre school. Most of the time the children are lacking proper diet, lack of space to sit and study and facing lot of family problems, regular fights and financial constraints. Once the children are unable to cope up with the pressure of higher studies or have financial constraints or financial problems they tempt to withdraw from their studies and engage in their family responsibilities or try to solve their financial problems. This is a vicious circle. Child sponsorship programme is

designed to meet the needs of the children in their own homes. Child sponsorship programme is a timely help rendered to a needy child in a family setting for a temporary period to enable the child to grow as an independent, self-sufficient citizen.

The child sponsorship Organisations adopted various changes in its approach over a period of time.

1. Charity approach:-It refers to the reaching out and assisting others in need of social and financial support
2. Remedial approach:- According to this approach, whenever there is dysfunctional family background and assistance needed from external or formal organization, families and individuals were being aided.
3. Crisis intervention approach:- This approach has been adopted as a response to emergency, as art of relief and rehabilitation in times of crisis such as natural calamities or war.
4. Developmental approach:- This approach ensure the total development of the children by understanding the children, families and communities and their socio economic, cultural and political context. This approach is more sustainable in nature.

Steps in the implementation process.

1. Providing Access to Child Sponsorship Services
2. Selection of Children for Sponsorship which includes profile of the children and the profile of the family along with the school details of the child.
3. Problem assessment
4. Partnering with the client in setting goals and finding solutions.

This step involves various elements such as:

- a. Informing service users about the process intervention
- b. Home visit
- c. Primary services/case management

- d. Counselling and service provision
- e. Balancing between Counselling /service provision, between inner and outer resources.
- f. Facilitating Linkages and mobilising Resources
- g. Facilitating Systemic changes
5. Terminating Sponsorship services

Ethical Values in Child Sponsorship programme

The values and ethics to be followed by a social worker in child sponsorship programme are as follows.

1. Acceptance of the child who needs the service and the socio economic condition
2. Respecting the dignity of each individual
3. Accepting the differences and individuality of others and working to build a rapport with them.
4. Respecting the autonomy of the clients
5. Having faith in the capacity and potential of the child
6. Transparency and honesty in communication
7. Confidentiality of the records and the information of the child being sponsored.

Conclusion

Child education sponsorship programme is a service to the needy child in time so that the child is able to be in the family with the birth parents. It helps the child to enjoy the child rights, prohibit the child right violation and to have the development in a proper way especially in the modern world where the children are facing lot of challenges. So that the child learn to furnish his/her role in the family and in the community. As a result she grows as a socially responsible person. It helps not only the child but also the entire family and the community as a whole. This is a model service to the vulnerable child or the marginalised child. The regular monitoring and supervision help the child and the family to be strengthen and empowered. Since there are many

stakeholders in this programme, involvement of many are ensured. The sponsorship programme help the child to overcome the vulnerability and come to the main stream of the society.

References

Abrol, D. U. (1998). Strengthening non institutional strategies. banglore: BOSCO.

Fernandes, G. (2015). Child Sponsorship - A tool for development. Mumbai: Tata Institute of Social Science.

Nayak, N. P. (1998). Guidelines for developing non- institutional strategies to prevent the abandonment and destitution of children "at risk". Bangalore: Bosco.

Roy, C. (n.d.). Child Rights and Child Development in India;A regional Analysis.

Rupande, G. (2105). Institutionalised Discriminationn in the Education System and Beyond:Themes and Perspectives. International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education, 248-255.

TISS. (1986). Children in difficult situations in India. Bombay: TISS.