

Exploratory Study of Integrated Child Protection Scheme in Haryana

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Abstract

Children, the citizens of tomorrow are vulnerable due to their age as well as adverse socio-economic conditions. A large number of children experience vulnerable circumstances and need protection. The Government of India launched the 'Integrated Child Protection Scheme' in 2009-2010 as a government-civil society partnership programme and provides finance for this scheme to the State Governments to set up child protection centres like 'Children Homes', 'Observation Homes', 'Special Homes', 'Shelter Homes', and '*Bal Bhawans*'. This paper studies the 'Integrated child protection scheme' (ICPS) in general and dwells on the child protection services in Haryana.

Key Words: Child Protection Scheme, ICPS, child protection

Introduction

Children being the most vulnerable sections of the society due to their age and compelling circumstances like poverty, large families, unemployment of their parents and illiteracy become victims or perpetrators of organised ghastly crime like rape and murder. As per United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child a child is a person below the age of 18 years. One third of the Indian population includes persons below the age of 18 years and of these around 40% have either experienced difficult circumstances or are vulnerable. (Integrated Child Protection Scheme - A Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Civil Society Partnership). Unfortunately adults also use these adverse socio-economic circumstances to intimidate and drag children into crime due to which a child ends up on the other side of law. The country is presently witnessing an unprecedented increase in 'crime committed against children' as well as 'crime committed by children'. 'Child protection' has become one of the most important components of child welfare today.

Initially, child protection services were mainly being undertaken by the voluntary sector under the overall supervision of the Departments of Social Welfare of the Central and State Governments. But due to lack of coordination there was a wide gap between the services required and provided. Besides, the voluntary sector was unable to cater to the needs of vulnerable children in difficult circumstances. Later on child protection came under the Ministry of Women and Child Development and in order to provide these services in an integrated manner Integrated Child Protection Scheme was launched.

Integrated Child Protection Scheme

In our country the children face a number of problems due to which they are vulnerable and need protection. 'Child protection' is related to protection of the child from risk and protecting him in harmful situations by reducing their vulnerability. The Constitution of India too provides for the protection of the child through Art. 15. It states that special attention should be given to the children through necessary laws and policies to safeguard their rights. Provision of these rights has also been addressed in a number of International Conventions, Standards and Declarations. The Government of India having ratified these international conventions have enacted legislations and formulated a range of policies to ensure child protection and improvement in their situation (Integrated Child Protection Scheme - A Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Civil Society Partnership).

In order to reach out to all children, especially those in difficult circumstances, Ministry of Women and Child Development launched Integrated Child Protection Scheme by combining its existing child protection schemes in 2009-2010. The objectives of the scheme are as follows (Integrated Child Protection Scheme - A Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Government-Civil Society Partnership):

1. To set up an effective organisational structure and provide infrastructural facilities at the national, regional, state and district level to provide services;
2. To define and standardize the child protection services by devising operational manuals for the functionaries;
3. To sensitize, train and build capacities of all the functionaries of the scheme; the allied services and bodies like the police services, local bodies, judiciary; and other central and state level departments associated with the implementation of the scheme;
4. To create a database and knowledge base for child protection services for the effective implementation, monitoring and research and documentation in the field;
5. To strengthen family and community level child protection by building capacities of the families and community level functionaries for the care and protection of the child;
6. To ensure networking and coordination amongst allied systems like central and state governments; NGOs; and other organisations; and
7. To educate and raise the awareness of the public about the vulnerabilities a child faces; rights of the child; and child protection services and schemes at all levels.

Target Groups

The ICPS focuses its activities on children in need of care and protection and children in conflict and contact with law. The target groups in the case of ICPS (Integrated Child Protection Scheme - A Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Civil Society Partnership) are:

1. Children who are:
 - homeless or abandoned;
 - mentally, physically or terminally ill;
 - abused or exploited; have no means of subsistence;
 - victims of armed or civil conflict;
 - staying with parents / guardians who are unfit –physically, mentally and economically - to look after them; and are in vulnerable circumstances.
2. Children in Conflict with Law are those who have allegedly committed an offence.

3. Children in contact with Law are those who have come in contact with law either as a victim or as a witness or due to any other circumstance.

ICPS also provides preventive, statutory care and rehabilitation services to other vulnerable children like: (Integrated Child Protection Scheme - A Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Civil Society Partnership):

- those of potentially vulnerable families and families at risk;
- those of socially excluded groups like migrant families, families living in extreme poverty, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes subjected to or affected by discrimination; who are infected and / or affected by HIV / AIDS;
- Orphans, drug abusers, beggars, trafficked or sexually exploited children, children of prisoners; and
- Street and working children.

Stake Holders of the Scheme

The scheme visualized as a Government-Civil Society Partnership Scheme under the direction and responsibility of Central and State Governments include the following stakeholders: (Integrated Child Protection Scheme - A Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Civil Society Partnership):

- the Central Government which develops and funds the scheme;
- the State Government which implements the scheme by devolving the funds;
- the voluntary sector, which acts as a watchdog as well as provides responsive child care facilities and expertise for the implementation of the scheme;
- community groups to act as a watchdog, monitor and help in the implementation of the scheme;
- the academia to conduct research and try to provide solutions to the problems of the target groups;
- the corporate to partner with the government or private institutions by supporting them financially as well as technically; and
- the media to create awareness about the rights of the child as well as the scheme.

Child Protection Services in Haryana

Child Welfare Programmes in Haryana are not only being run by the Government but by Non-Governmental Organisation like Haryana Council of Child Welfare, State Social Welfare Advisory Board besides other organisations. The State / District Councils runs the following child welfare programmes in Haryana (Programmes and Activities):

Shishu Greh

The State Council runs *Shishu Grehs* for abandoned and destitute children. They provide boarding and lodging besides providing child care, medical and nutrition facilities. The children are admitted here through the deputy commissioners of the districts. The State Council is a recognised Adoption agency for placing children for in-country and inter-country adoption. The primary emphasis of the agency is on placing the children within the country.

Shelter Homes

Shelter Homes for children in need of care and protection functioning as drop-in-centres cum night shelter for children in need of urgent support have been set up by the Haryana Government in Chhachhrauli and Rewari. Educational, recreational and other developmental needs of the children are looked after in these homes. Financial support is provided by the Central Government to the State Governments to set up such homes.

Children Homes

The State Governments either by itself or in association with the voluntary organisations set up Children's Homes in every district or groups of districts for receiving a child in need of care and protection during pendency of any inquiry and subsequently for their care, treatment, education, training, development and rehabilitation. These homes cater to the educational, recreational and other developmental needs of the children.

Observation Homes

Observation Homes are set up by the State Government or by the voluntary agencies, in every district or groups of districts for temporary reception of juveniles in conflict with law during the pendency of any inquiry regarding them under the JJ Act. Central Government provides finance to set up observation homes for children.

Bal Bhawans

In Haryana there are 21 *Bal Bhawans* at the District level and 27 Mini *Bal Bhawans* at the Block Level providing recreational as well as learning facilities like hobby classes, Dance, Painting, Radio and TV repair, entertainment Centre, Yoga Centre and Computer Centres etc.

Crèche

Haryana State Council runs 373 crèches under the Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for Working Mothers through Indian Council of Child Welfare, New Delhi. It also runs 7 such centres at Panchkula for children of working mothers and 1 centre at BEL factory. Up to 25 children can be kept in a crèche where day care facilities for children in 6 months to 6 years of age are also provided. 74 crèches are also being run by the District Councils for Child Welfare. Crèches managed by the State Social Welfare Advisory Board under the Rajiv Crèche scheme also provide services to the women and children.

Child Care Institutions in Haryana

ICPS is a government-civil society partnership scheme so both the State Government and the NGOs both are running Child Care Institutions in the State.

Government run Institutions

Table no. 1 provides information about the location, capacity and actual number of children in the Government run institutions in the State. The State Government runs four Observation Homes located at Ambala, Faridabad and Hissar for boys and one at Karnal for girls. In homes at Ambala and Faridabad the number of boys i.e. 71 and 40 respectively, are more than its capacity, whereas in the case of the home in Hissar the number of children are less than the capacity. The Observation home for girls in Karnal does not have a single girl in it. In Children's Home, Special Home and the *Bal Gram* varying number of children are there.

Table No. 1: Homes run by the Haryana Government					
Name of Home	District	Capacity		Actual No. of Children March 31, 2014	
		Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Observation Home	Ambala	No	44	No	71
Observation Home	Faridabad	No	25	No	40
Observation Home	Hissar	No	44	No	40
Observation Home for Girls	Karnal	No	25	Nil	Nil
Children Home	Madhuban, Karnal	No	120	Nil	76
Special Home	Ambala	No	25	No	29
Bal Gram, Rai	Sonapat	No	144	34	77

Source: Minutes of the Project Approval Board meeting under ICPS held on September 2, 2014.

NGO run Institutions

District Council of Child Welfare and a number of other NGOs are running child care institutions like Children Home, Shelter Home and Homes for Special Children, in the different districts of the State. Children Homes in Yamuna Nagar and Karnal are catering to more children than their capacity, whereas in the other homes children are less than the capacity. Table No. 2 provides information about the Homes run by NGOs in Haryana.

Table No. 2: Homes run by NGOs in Haryana					
Name of Home	District	Name of the NGO	Capacity	Actual No. of Children in March 31, 2014	
				Girls	Boys
Shelter Home	Rewari	District Council of Child Welfare (DCCW)	25	14	5
Shelter Home	Yamuna Nagar	DCCW	50	32	17
Children Home	Rewari	DCCW	50	Nil	26
Children Home	Yamuna Nagar	DCCW	100	68	45
Children Home	Karnal	Mission to the Desperate and Destitute of India	100	51	56
Children Home	Karnal	Sharadha Nand Anathayala Trust	100	68	45
Children Home	Kurukshetra	Vishvash Bal Ashram	50	Nil	19
Children Home	Rohtak	Chaudhry Lahi Ram Anathalaya	50	Nil	37
Children Home	Panchkula	Bal Sadan Association	100	48	2
Children Home	Panchkula	Association of Social Health in India	100	33	18
Children Home	Panchkula	SOS Children Village Association	50	21	26
Children Home	Jhajjar	Bal Greh, Bal Bhavan	25	16	9
Children with Special Needs	Sirsa	Mahavir Jain Vikas Sadan	25	Nil	41

Source: Minutes of the Project Approval Board meeting under ICPS held on September 2, 2014.

Exploratory Survey of Some Child Care Institutions in Haryana

The researcher visited some institutions run by the Government and NGOs for the care and protection of the children. Some of the centres visited and the services provided by them are as follows:

Children's Home 'Ashiana' in Panchkula

The researcher visited Ashiana – Children's Home (run by Association for Social Health in India – Haryana State Branch) and interacted with the functionaries there. The home houses about sixty orphan and destitute children, who go to different schools in Panchkula. Boarding, lodging, clothing, education, medical care services are provided to the children. Volunteers at the home also help the children in their homework and other study related activities.

A number of other activities are also conducted for the benefit of women and children. Following is a description of the same: (Grace October 2011-March 2012)

- **Computer Training Centre:** Imparts training to children belonging to economically weaker sections of the society. The children are provided training free of cost.
- **Ananda Project:** This project supports the under-privileged children in their educational and other needs to inculcate a feeling of dignity among the children who beg outside the temple and make an endeavour to save them from becoming beggars, criminals and drug addicts. The children are provided snacks and shown a film every Tuesday.
- **Navchetna Centre for Women Empowerment:** This Centre provides skill training in handicrafts to underprivileged women of the nearby slums.
- **Awareness Generation Programme:** Ashiana undertakes awareness drive to generate awareness among the youth against social evils and make them aware of the need for healthy and ethical living.
- **Honouring of meritorious students:** The home conducts cultural programme and honour children who do well at school besides giving certificates to women who successfully complete their skill training programme.

The day the researcher visited the home many students were sitting and filling up application forms for the oncoming competitive examinations, certain others were playing in the ground etc.

Bal Bhavan, Kalka

The researcher visited the *Bal Bhawan* situated at Kalka, being run by the Haryana State Council of Child Welfare and interacted with the officials informally. The *Bhavan* situated in its own building offers the following facilities to the beneficiaries:

- **Crèche:** There is a crèche in a spacious room with lot of toys; slides blocks etc. for the children to play besides colourful cots for them to rest and sleep. The care-taker informed the researcher that the children are also provided nutritious meal that is made in their spacious kitchen;
- **Computer Centre:** A computer centre located in the *bal bhavan* provides computer training to the beginners as well as professionals;
- **Pre-Nursery:** A pre-nursery class is also being run from the centre for the pre-school children;
- **Craft Centre:** A training centre to impart training in craft is also functioning;
- **Library:** There is a well maintained library in the centre to provide books for children;

The *bal bhavan* is a complete welfare centre providing a range of services to the beneficiaries. The *bhavan* presented a clean and hygienic look with a colourful and inviting interior. It had all the basic facilities – electricity, water, toilet etc. for the welfare of children.

Bal Kalyan Kendra

The Haryana State Council of Child Welfare under the Indian Council of Child Welfare is providing a number of services to the children and other beneficiaries at the *bal kalyan kendra* in Panchkula. The facilities provided include:

- **Crèche:** Crèche facility is provided for the children of working mothers from 8.30 am to 6.00pm on week days. The crèche has a capacity for about 25 children to whom they provide a nutritious snack, cots to sleep, toys to play besides other basic facilities;

- **Short / Long Term Courses:** The *Kendra* provides short and long term courses in ‘Stitching & Embroidery’, ‘Commercial Art’, ‘Fashion designing’, ‘Beauty Care’, ‘English Speaking’ to enable children, young adults and women to earn their livelihood;
- **Hobby Classes:** Hobby classes in Music and Dance are also run for the children to develop them holistically;
- **Woman & Child Help Line:** 1800-180-2056, the Woman and Child Help Line is also being provided to take care of women and children in need of care;
- **Counselling for Drug Addiction:** Drug addicts are provided counselling at the centre to enable them to lead a drug free life;
- **Library:** library facilities are provided;

The *Bal Kalyan Kendra*, Panchkula provides facilities to the beneficiaries in a holistic manner. The researcher spoke to some young people undergoing training in the computer centre and came to know that they were satisfied with the training provided to them.

Crèche for BEL Employees

BEL factory, a Public Sector Undertaking provides crèche facilities for the children of BEL employees. The researcher informally interacted with the beneficiaries of this crèche and was informed by them that the crèche has a good and hygienic environment and is very convenient for the women employees of the undertaking. A hot meal is provided to the children during their stay in the crèche. This crèche is being run by the State Council for Child Welfare.

Observation and Special Home for Children, Ambala

The Observation and Special Home children having accommodation for 50 students, housed in a newly built and spacious building is located behind the District Courts in Ambala city. The researcher visited the home and informally interacted with the officials of Department of Women and Child development, Haryana and the Haryana Police officials posted there. The officials informed that these homes have been set up under the Juvenile Justice Act for the juvenile delinquents. In the Observation Home children who had committed crimes under various sections of the IPC and SLL and their trials were going on in the Juvenile Justice Boards are housed. The children who are sentenced for a crime they have committed are shifted to the Special Home located in the same premises.

The officials informed the researcher that children under the age of 18 years who had committed crimes ranging from theft, burglary, group robbery, rape, murder etc. are housed in these homes. The children are given computer training to enable them to earn their livelihood in a respectable manner after their release from the home. Yoga training is also imparted to the inmates by a teacher. During the visit of the researcher a sports instructor was playing volley ball with the inmates as part of their daily routine.

The officials informed the researcher that children who commit crimes in different parts of the State are housed in these homes. They further informed that sometimes if there was a fight between two groups of children and both of them land up at the observation home then they fight with each other inside the home also. The officials stated that the children are handed over to the parents or responsible people of the area of their residence after they are released from the home. On being asked if a child went back to his older ways once he was released from the home, the officials were of the opinion that since they go back to the same surroundings and have same peer pressures there was a remote chance of their being reformed. When the researcher wanted to know about the number of children being involved in crime after they are adults, the officials that they did not know as by then as the child becomes an adult, he goes to the jails and is tried in regular courts.

Conclusions

Integrated Child Protection Scheme started in 2009-2010 as a Government –Civil Society partnership scheme is still in infancy. Though the State Government and the NGOs are setting up institutions in the State yet more such institutions are required for the holistic development of the Children.

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