

Evaluation Study on Destitute Cottages

Women and Child Development

Executive Summary

The destitute children welfare programme is a district sector scheme administered by Zilla Panchayats (ZP) and Implemented by NGO's with financial support by the ZP's. Consolidated assistance in the form of recurring grants are given to implementing NGO's for all recurring items – food, clothing, soap, oil, electricity & water charges, posting, stationary, education, text books, vocational training, health, recreation, salary of house mother, supervisor, helper etc., Provision for rent is made till the institutions are in a position to construct accommodation. Where institutions have their own buildings the provisions for rent can be used for maintenance and repairs subject to the approval of estimates by the government. Non recurring grant is admissible for construction of cottage and furniture equipments and utensils. The existing NGO's active in the field of child welfare are promoted to involve in the implementation of this programme. The scheme envisages that 10% of the recurring as well as non-recurring expenses will have to be borne by the implementing NGO's. As the financial norms fixed is very old, the Government of Karnataka envisaged to assess the functional status and the needs for reforms towards better implementation.

Survey Methodology

To elicit information required for the evaluation, structured data collection formats were developed to collect information from the NGO's implementing the scheme and from a sample of children staying in the cottages. The information collected from these respondents included the functional status of the cottages, facilities available, income & expenditure, systems prevailing in

the cottages for the safety & security of the inmates, feedback & suggestions for effective implementation of the programme etc.,. As per the list provided by the implementing department as on April 2014, 184 NGO's are implementing the destitute cottage scheme located in 91 taluks of 29 districts across the Karnataka state. The total number of cottages allocated to these NGO's has been 301 with each cottage having up to a maximum of 25 children. The evaluation selected a sample of 66 NGO's from the 184 NGO's list which are spread across the 29 districts. Also about 400 children were selected at random (5 to 12 per cottage) to get the feedback about the cottages. The selection of children was done by the evaluation team member from the list of children enrolled in the cottage. The implementing agency personnel were not involved in the selection so as to make unbiased selection process. Also the children survey was done separately and independently so that the implementing agencies do not have any interventions during the interview.

Profile of Destitute Cottages

It is found during the survey that of the 66 sample NGO's selected from the 184 NGO's list, 15 NGO's have no cottages and are not functioning. Only 51 of the sample NGO's are implementing the scheme having children in 99 cottages which are **functioning**. The reasons for the non-functioning of the cottages implemented by 15 NGO's as per the department personnel are children admission was not as per the guidelines, falsification in the reporting of number of children and the lack of capacity of the NGO's to run the cottages. While the NGO's view attribute non-functioning to the low per child cost provided by the government which is not economically feasible to run the cottages.

The **year of establishment** of the cottages indicates that two thirds are established from 1980 onwards while about one fourth established during 1970-80 decade. The numbers of cottages functioning since pre independence and since 1960-70 are equal.

Types of Cottages Covered by NGO's indicates 43% NGO's are implementing boys cottages only while 18% are implementing girls only and 39% are implementing both boys and girls cottages. Each cottage comprises of children up to a maximum of 25 which is referred to as one **unit**. Among the 51 sample NGO's implementing the scheme it is seen that the number of units varies from 1 to 5. Two thirds of the NGO's have been sanctioned with more than one unit. Only Girls cottages comprised either one or two units as compared to more units in cottages where boys are also admitted. The **number of children** in the sample cottages by gender indicates 72% are boys and 28% girls.

The status of **ownership of the building** locating the cottages indicates that two thirds of the buildings are owned while one third is functioning in rented buildings. More owned buildings are observed among the Girls only cottages as compared to other two types of cottages. **24 X 7 Functioning** of the cottages is reported by all the functional NGO's implementing the cottages. Nearly two thirds of the NGO's functioning reported that they **admit** children coming from any part within the state. While less than one fifth each reported to be admitting children mostly living within the taluk and within the district. Few of the NGO's are reported admitting children domiciled from outside the state.

Independent residential facilities are available for children in all the cottages. The **total number of personnel working** in the 51 functional NGO's implementing 99 cottages is 231 ranging between 2 to 6 per NGO. There are 15 types of personnel working under temporary and permanent employment status. The two most important types of personnel are the cook and warden who constitute nearly 60% of the work force. The House Mother and Father are the next category of personnel comprising of 9% followed by Supervisors (8%) and Helpers (8%). The gender distribution of the working personnel shows that 47% are males and 53% are females. The majority of women are cooks and wardens,

while house mothers and helpers are also seen in some cottages. Also it is seen that majority of the teachers employed are women. It is reported that 42% of the personnel employed are under temporary employment while 58% are permanent. The work experience of the personnel working in the cottages indicates that the temporary personnel have an average of 5 years of experience in the cottages as compared to 8 years for permanent personnel.

It is reported in all the cottages **safety and security** of the children is not an issue. None of the cottages have reported any incident/complaint of **harassment** (sexual or otherwise) to any inmate at any point of time. The children's movement is **monitored** regularly by the warden and the other personnel staying in the cottage. Registration of cottages under **Juvenile Justice Act** has been reported by 27 of the 51 implementing NGO's.

The **total number of children** as per the enrollment list is 2335 comprising of 71% boys and 29% girls with the average size of the cottage being 24 children. The **average age** of the inmates is 12 years and varies between 3 years to 35 years. The **social group** of the children shows that the children mostly belong to the OBC groups (44%) followed by SC, ST and General whose share is over 10% each. Muslims constitute 9% while Christians 4% respectively. Other social group children are also staying in the cottages which are not in large number. The average number of **years of stay** in the cottages is 3 years and ranges from 1 to 30 years. One fourth of the children are new and staying since last one year while 21% since two years. It is seen that more number of girls are staying for over ten years. It is observed that 18 out of the 24 children staying beyond 10 years are girls. Seven of these children do not have parents while 9 have single parent. The **domicile status** indicates that the majority of the children are from within the state only. About 2% of the children have domiciled from outside the state. It is observed that of the 49 children domiciled from outside state 36 are staying in one cottage namely Bala Samrakshana Kendra in Mangalore. These children are migrated from

Meghalaya state and are staying in this cottage since 1 to 8 years. The **different types of children** staying in the cottages shows that over half of the children do not have father, while one fourth do not have mother. Less than 7% of the children staying do not have any care takers while 3% have relatives only. The gender disparity indicates that 5% each of girls and boys do not have any care taker. Both parents are alive for about 15% of the children.

Profile of Sample Children Surveyed

A **sample** of 380 children living in the sample cottages were selected at random to assess the effectiveness in the implementation of the scheme and also to get a feedback about the cottages. A sample of 5 to 12 children from each functional NGO's implementing the scheme were selected at random and interviewed personally using the structured tool. OBC's are the largest **social group** (47%) followed by SC (20%) and ST (11%). While the General and Muslims constitute 8% each. The average **age** of the sample children surveyed is 14 years and ranges between 6 to 25 years. Sample children are studying at various grades mostly in the primary and secondary levels which constitute 93%. The different **types of children** surveyed indicate that 61% of the children are single parent children – 43% have mother and 18% have father only. It is reported by 9% of the children do not have either of the parent or relatives. In 27% of the cases both father and mother are alive indicating that the cottages are admitting not necessarily single parent or destitute but also other types of children.

It is reported that the **prior knowledge** of the cottages are through many channels. Some of the NGO's have advertised through media, while in some cottages the siblings are admitted earlier. Also friends, relatives, anganwadi centers, teachers, religious heads, old students, wardens, community leaders and the government departments are the many sources of information about the cottages and its uses. It is reported by 97% of the sample children that they knew about the **inmates** before joining the cottages. Majority of the children

irrespective of the type of cottages have perceived that the **quality of facilities** available in the cottages is good.

Income and Expenditure of Destitute Cottages

The **average income** received by the organizations from all sources over the last five years for implementing the programme is Rs. 3.92 lakhs per year. Over the years it is seen that the income increased in the first three years and then declined. From the government the average income received per annum over the five years has been about Rs.1.86 lakhs while the internal resources constitute about Rs.2.06 lakhs. Over the years the government financial support is almost same while the own resources is increasing. The two main **sources of income** are the income received from the government and the own source contributed by the implementing agencies. The distribution of sources over the years shows government share has declined from 53% in 2009-10 to 48% during 2013-14 while the organizations share has increased from 47% to 52% between the periods. As per the norms of the programme each destitute cottage will be given a **per child** recurring cost of Rs.360 per month which is 90% of the governments share (the recurring costs per child per month is fixed at Rs.400) and Rs.45 per child as rental charges if the cottage is running in rented building. Based on these norms some cottages are getting Rs.360 per month per child and some Rs.405 per month per child. On an average each cottage is getting Rs.375 per child per month. Based on this norm the **per capita income** from all sources is increasing over the years and the five year average being Rs.688 and the government funding comprises of Rs.375 while the internal funding is Rs.313. The yearwise trend in the income shows internal funding has increased over the years. The programme guideline indicates that 10% of the per capita funding has to be borne by the implementing NGO. However as seen the implementing agencies are funding higher than this 10% norm.

The **average expenditure** over the last five years has been continuously increasing from nearly Rs.4 lakhs to over Rs.5.5 lakhs with the five year average of Rs. 4.7 lakhs. **Food and Salary** constitute the major share of the expenditure (78%) with Food expenses being 63%. The non food items constitute about 16% while repayment of loan to management is 3%. Among the non food items, Firewood & Fuel (4%), Bedding & Clothing (3%) and Education (3%) expenses are the major items. These are followed by expenditure on Rent, Medical and Communication & stationary. The **monthly per capita expenditure** has increased from Rs.700 in 2009-10 to Rs.900 in 2013-14 showing an increase of 31% over 5 years an annual increase of 6% which may be attributed to the inflationary pressure.

The analyses of **income vs. expenditure** indicate expenditure has been on the higher side over the years. The excess of expenditure over income is met through internal borrowings from the parent organizations which is implementing the programme. It is seen that over the last five years the average expenditure is higher than income from all sources by 20%, which has been increasing over the last five years excepting a decline during 2011-12. If we exclude the internal source of income which is repeated in the expenditure as repayment to the organization and compare the income received from government with the total expenditure incurred for implementing the programme, the deficit is increasing from 113% to 188% during 2009-10 and 2013-14 with the five year average deficit of over 150%.

The study collected information on the daily food expenses incurred on food items on the first day of every month for a period of 9 months from July 2013 to March 2014. This data is obtained from the food stock inventory register maintained by the cottages. Based on this data the **per capita daily expenditure on food items** is estimated between Rs.37 to Rs.39 and the monthly per capita expenditure of about Rs.1142.

Other Programmes for Children

Children Homes for boys and girls are functioning under many programmes of the state and implemented through various departments –Social Welfare, Backward Classes and Minority, Education and Women and Child Development departments under various schemes and varying funding pattern. In the case of the Destitute Cottage scheme implemented by the Women and Child Welfare department the financial support is Rs.400 which includes food, clothing, soap, oil, electricity & water charges, posting, stationary, education, text books, vocational training, health, recreation, salary of house mother, supervisor, helper etc,. There is a wide disparity between the programmes and hence strategies to be developed for convergence of the destitute cottage programme with others.

Recommendations

Based on the analyses of the data presented in the previous chapters, the following recommendations would enhance the effectiveness in the functioning of the Destitute Cottages:

1. There are many programmes supporting children welfare with varying financial norms and implemented by different departments as given below.

Backward Classes and Minority Department	Government Pre Metric	Rs.900	per
	Government Ashram	Rs.700	per
	Private Aided Pre Metric Hostel	Rs.500	per month
	Private Aided Destitute	Rs.500	per
	Morarji Desai Residential	Rs.1000	per
Social Welfare	Pre Metric Hostel	Rs.800	per
Education Department	KGBV Schools	Rs.750	per
Women & Child	FIT Institutions	Rs.750	per
	Pre Metric Hostel for	Rs. 800	per

Development	Post Metric Hostel for	Rs. 850 per
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The Destitute Cottage scheme is also a child welfare programme and is implemented by the Women & Child Development Department through NGOs. The financial support provided under this scheme has been Rs.400 per child per month (as recurring expenditure) out of which the NGOs have to contribute 10%. The current recurring expenditure estimated, based on the data collected from the NGOs indicate that per child monthly recurring expenditure is Rs.1142. Thus, the current norm of Rs.400 per child per month financial support fixed is insufficient and needs revision. It is recommended that the State may (a) normalize the financial support provided such that the difference between schemes is not wide, and, (b) enhance the financial support by convergence or otherwise to be close to the actual of Rs 1142 per child per month.

2. The study reveals that 23% of the NGO's implementing cottages reported as functioning i.e having children residing in them; in fact do not have any children. Also in some of the cottages there are variations between the number of children actually residing and the number of children reported by the NGO indicating falsification of figures. It is therefore recommended that Destitute Cottages need to be inspected at least once a year without prior information for verification of the actual number of children and an assessment of facilities. There are some instances where the department has reviewed the cottages and found some irregularities in the enrolment list. These types of NGO's giving falsification in enrolment must be discontinued and the children admitted to these cottages may be put in to other cottages or similar institutions running the welfare programme for children.

3. A central registry of children admitted to the Destitute Cottages is essential at the State level. As of now there is no updated information about the children in these cottages. In this regard, each child admitted to the destitute cottage may be provided with a unique identification number, preferably "**Aadhar Number**",

which will not only help in preventing falsification of records of children but could be used to track children after they leave the Cottage.

4. For the long term security the scheme should focus on providing best education to the children by identifying the children talent and capabilities. The guidelines seem to lay a lot of emphasis on providing vocational training. The guidelines may be modified to stress that each child be first tried to be provided the best education, particularly technical and professional courses, those who are unable to bear the load of these only may be given vocational training.

5. The vocational education has to be given to children who are not in a position to pursue further education. The implementing NGO's can coordinate with National Skill Development Corporation for imparting skill development activities to the children for bringing them to the mainstream. Also NGO's could coordinate with organizations such as Church's Council for Child and Youth Care (CCCYC), Don Bosco, Sriketra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project, RUDSET etc who are doing skill development training in vocational occupations.

6. There should be a District level Committee to monitor and review of the performance of Destitute Cottages. However. It is emphasized that no new committee need to be formed for this purpose, the existing committee reviewing any other similar or equivalent child development programme may be entrusted with this responsibility

7. The taluka level officers of the Women and Child Development Department have to be involved in the activities of scheme. Currently the scheme is being monitored at the district level only and taluk level functionaries have been assigned no role nor given any authority in the matter.

8. There is indeed no complaint of harassment of children reported in the study. But a stray case of bullying by elder children of the Cottage was reported. However, no complaint receiving/ grievance redressal mechanism was in place in any of the Cottages. It is recommended that a system in this direction be put

in place and more so, a child harassment/abuse protection system for the children in Destitute Cottages be codified and implemented in every Cottage.

9. Children in any Cottage belonging to other States of the Country, especially if they are from a district other than the neighbouring district to the Cottage in which they have come to, need special attention and monitoring. This has been recommended because of the presence of a large number of teenaged girls, belonging to the Northeastern States, being with a single Destitute Cottage for a period of about five years. The intention is to be sure that the reason for the distance travelled to the Cottage by the child is genuine and justified.

10. No sanctions for new or additional cottages is made unless it is found that the cottage has sufficient facilities for accomadating children and also the NGO's have capacity to run the cottages.

11. The existing cottages have to improve in the infrastructure facilities so that the children feel homely atmosphere. As seen most of the cottages do not have sufficient space for sleeping as per the norms specified by the government.

12. The quality and quantity of food served to the children has to be improved as seen the children are served food below the specied norms. This is because the NGO's are admitting children beyond the capacity of the cottages and are unable to raise additional resources. This is more so among the small NGO's who have no capacity to run these types of schemes. Such type of NGO's should not be encouraged under the programme.

Conclusion

This section concludes based on the analyses made in the previous sections and also focussing on the evaluation questions as specified in the TOR.

i. How many destitute cottages are functioning effectively in the state?

There are 184 NGO's implementing the nearly 300 destitute cottages as per the list of the Women and Child Welfare Department. Based on this list 66 NGO's were selected for the study. During the study it is found that 51 cottages are functioning and 15 are not functioning.

ii. What is average number of children taking shelter in them annually?

The average number of children per cottage based on the sample study is about 24 per cottage and an average NGO is implementing two cottages. If we project this to about 150 functioning NGO's implementing the cottages then the number of children taking shelter annually will be about 7500. This number is arrived based on the current enrolment data as per the register maintained by the cottages. However if we take 25% of enrolment as overstated numbers then the number of children taking shelter in these cottages would be about 6000. But some of the religious mutts such as JSS Mutt and Sri Murugaranjendra Mutt are feeding over 250 children annually who are not getting benefits under the programme.

iii. Is there any duplication or falsification in the enrolment of destitute children?

Each NGO implementing the cottage maintains list of children who are admitted to the cottage based on which the government provides funding for running the cottage. As per the list each cottage has enrolled children based on the concept of units, each unit consisting of 25 children. During the visit to the cottages it has been found through validation with the children staying in the cottages, that in 13 NGO's implementing the cottages out of the 51 functional NGO's implementing the cottages has

less children as compared to the register. The percentage of children present at the time of visit as compared to the enrolled varied from 20% to 96% which is the actual situation as confirmed by the children. Hence the number of children actually staying in the cottages can be in the range of 50% to 75% of the enrolled. This may not be true in cottages run by religious mutts such as JSS Mutt, Sri Murugaranjendra Mutt, Swarnamba Gurukula, Pirangiswamy Mutt etc, which are catering to the needs of the poor and needy children over many years.

iv. What is the average living cost per child per month?

Is it being met adequately? The average living cost as per the income and expenditure statements provided by the sample organizations reveals that the monthly per capita expenditure over the last five years has increased from Rs.700 to over Rs.900, while the per capita income remained around Rs.600 per month over the years. This income comprises of Rs.400 from government and the remaining is subsidized by the implementing organization. The actual food expenditure based on the per day expenses is estimated at Rs. 1142 per child per month.

v. Are the scheme guidelines being adhered to by the NGOs running the Cottages? The implementing organizations are adhering to the scheme guideline in implementing the programme. However they are strongly suggesting that the financial support given per child is very inadequate given the raising prices and cost of living.

vi. What is the quality of life the destitute children are able to enjoy?

The sample children surveyed are of the opinion that life is not an issue in the cottages as they have got all facilities which they were deprived.

vii. What proportion of destitute children are rehabilitated and how effectively?

Data on rehabilitation is not maintained in the cottages. Once the child leaves the cottage there is no track of the child. During the survey only 8

children could be tracked. This is one of the weak areas of the implementing organization in documentation of left out children. The problem of tracking is that the children who leave the cottages in the middle are the single parent children or children having some relatives who take the children without providing any information on the migration.

Viii. Whether any destitute children are not admitted because of the capacity constraints?

No such instances have been noticed in the sample cottages. As seen from the analyses of the sample children knowledge of the cottages have been good among the children. This is mainly due to either the neighborhood or their siblings are staying. If the number of children is more than 25 then the organization will make alternate arrangements – either they apply for the second unit or they will send to nearby cottage.

ix. What is the reason for fluctuations in the annual performance of the scheme?

One of the reasons expressed by the field staff is that some of the implementing agencies have no capacity to run a cottage because of lack of staff. Also the variation in the children admission and identification of the children as per the guidelines makes the variations in the performance of the scheme. According to the implementing agencies the low financial support is hindering the continuation of the scheme by small organizations. Religious institutions have financial resources which could sustain the children strength and be in the scheme.

x. Is there any overlap or duplication of with any other-program of any other Department?

No overlapping or duplication of programmes is seen. The other programmes focusing children welfare is very clear about the norms

and procedures and hence there is no scope for overlapping or duplication. Also the number of children staying in the cottages was validated with the children staying in the cottages. Excepting in 13 NGO's implementing the cottages where the number enrolled is overstated, in other cottages no such instances have been reported by the children. It is to be noted that the other residential programmes such as the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya for girls run by SSA, Hostels run by other departments are not accessible in the neighbourhood of the Cottages. This will ensure that no overlapping of children staying in the cottages with other programmes is possible.

xi. How could the program be implemented better in the future?

As seen from the analyses of the data in the previous sections the programme is being implemented in its earnest and dedicated direction. It is the unilateral suggestions of all the implementing organization to increase the cost of support per child from the current Rs.400, which is meager under the given cost of living and raising prices. The children are of the opinion that the programme has to further focus on providing facilities such as availability of Cots to all children, education to all, bathroom and toilets should be painted regularly, play ground facility, improvement in sanitation facilities, developing reading habits, computer training, water availability. Also monitoring at the taluk levels by the department personnel and the Executive Officer of the Taluk panchayat would reduce the overstating of the enrolment by the NGO's. The Executive Officer of the Taluk panchayat has to give clearance certificate for release of funds to the NGO's.

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