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Present condition of After Care Programme in Kamrup Metro District, Guwahati, Assam

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Abstract

According to Mission Vatsalya Implementation Guidelines After Care is the provision of care for all children, including children with special needs, after they have reached the age of 18 years and discharged from Children's Home. The children who are orphan, abandoned after the age of 18 years there is a question mark where will they go after 18 years? In this regard for the best interest of the Children, there is a programme introduced namely After Care Programme which will help the inmates to be self sufficient in future life in different areas like education, skill development course etc. It is the help prepare the young adults to sustain themselves during the transition from institutional to independent life.

It is an important final stage in the continuum of care, so it ensures smooth rehabilitation and reintegration of a child in need of care and protection (CNCP) as she/he steps into adulthood. The children who are in Child Care Institute (CCI) they are different categories like child labour, child marriage, child trafficking, POCSO (Protection of children from sexual offences) etc, so that to achieve the objectives of the programme there are some challenges facing in field level. The programme will introduce themselves to identify their strength and weakness in practical life and also motivate on self awareness. Thus this study is conducted to know the present condition of the After Care Programme in the district of Kamrup Metro, Guwahati, Assam and try to highlight some valuable findings for strengthening the programme. This paper tries to examine different issues facing by staff and inmates of child care institutes. And with a quantitative and qualitative study on staff this paper tries to enlighten the present need and status of the programme. With the help of purposive sampling method, the CCI, District Child Protection Unit are selected for study. Data are analysed and collected with mix method by using a semi structured interview, recorded audio, direct observation by researcher and a self made questionnaire. The paper concludes with a study of valuable suggestion to overcome the issues and to focus on the positive outcome of the programme.

Keywords: Child Care Institute, District Child Protection Unit, Inmates, Rehabilitation.

Introduction:

As per the guidelines of Misison Vatsalya (July 5th 2022), the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection Children) (JJ) act, 2015, provides for After Care Program of Children living under the Institutional care wide section 2(5) and section 46 which mandates that "Any child living a Child Care Institution on completion of 18 years of age may be provided with financial support in order to facilitate child's re-integration into the mainstream of the society in the manner as may be prescribed.

After Care is meant for all young children, who are during their childhood have grown up in any form of Alternative Care such as Children's Home, Observation Home etc or fit facilities and had to leave them up on attaining 18 years of age. This transition for a young person leaving the childcare setting and moving to independent living throws up various challenges as well as offers opportunities as they go through these situation and emotional changes.

The State Government shall prepare a program for the needy children for the best interest of the child who have to leave the Child Care Institutions (CCI) on attaining the age of 18 years by providing for their need based skill development course, education and others. The plan may be preferably made when the child is in the CCI attains 16 years. The plan is prepared as per JJ Act form 07 namely Individual Care Plan (ICP). The ICP is to be placed before the hon'ble concern Child Welfare Committee (CWC) for the final decision. After the final approval of the application by the District Child Protection Unit and State Child protection Society, the children who are attaining 18 years. The duration of the program is three years upto 18-21 years and may be extended upto 23 years in exceptional cases.

Criteria for receiving After Care Fund:

Each young children who have turned the age of 18 years and who are the children of category orphan, abandoned, destitute. The After Care service is provided to the children of child in need of care and protection and the child in conflict with law.

The program is supported the young children with Rs. 4000 per month for three years. The amount is deposited only the child's individual account. The amount is included for all the basic needs along with the need based course of the child to be selfsufficient. It is a provision where the children are able to understand their weakness and strength and to develop themselves in future life and also create a platform where they will earn their self- identity in a society with dignity.

Without economic empowerment any human being is not able to survive their life in real life situation. For the deprived victim of children it is an Umbrella of

empowerment where children will introduce themselves from their own skills through the various skill development course, education, life skill training, entrepreneurship course etc.

Significance of the study:

The problem has identified to study the present condition of After Care Program in Kamrup Metro District, Guwahati, Assam for better understanding the service of the program. Children are deprived from their rights and they are the victim of different categories like child labour, child marriage, child trafficking, POCSO (Protection of children from sexual offences), orphan, abandoned etc. For the best interest of the children the program is recently introduce in the Mission Vatsalya for a healthy future of the needy children to overcome from their traumatic life.

Generally, After Care Program is applicable for the children who are the children belonged to CCI. It is a program to introduce the young children with dignity with the help of offering some financial support to lead an independent life in future life. It is a bridge to cross their depressed life and reached a way self – dependent. The program provides an opportunity to establish an independent life through different way with a positive energy among the young children. It is also an example for the other victim to encourage them with some of the success story. The children are also able to develop their personality and learn the life skills independently which enable them to more strong in life.

After Care Program is for a period of 3 years. It is an ongoing support to the needy children after attain age of 18 years. For the holistic development of the children After Care Program is now demanding. To provide the service smoothly there is some challenges facing while implementing the program in some level. For the better service of the program the research is conducted to know the present condition of the After Care Program in Kamrup Metro District, Guwahati, Assam with reference to CCI, District Child Protection Unit.

Statement of the problem:

Keeping in mind the need and significance of the study, the paper is introduced as:

Present condition of After Care Programme in Kamrup Metro District, Guwahati, Assam

Objectives of the study:

1. To know the present condition of After Care Program in Kamrup Metro District, Guwahati, Assam with reference to CCI, District Child Protection Unit.
2. To analyse the process of intervention among the concern staff and children.

3. To suggest some measures for the better implementation of the program on the collected data.

Operational Definition of the study:

Child Care Institution:

According to Mission Vatsalya Implementation Guidelines, the CCI as envisaged under the Juvenile Justice (Care and protection of children) Act, 2015, empowers the State Government either by itself or in collaboration with voluntary organizations to set up homes in every district. The CCIs serve as a home away from home and provide comprehensive child care facilities to children for their all- round development till the children's social re-integration through non-institutional care. There are different types of CCI like:

1. Child Care Institutions for children in Need of care and Protection (CNCP),
2. Special Unit for children with Special Needs,
3. Open Shelters,
4. Specialized Adoption Agencies(SAA)

District Child Protection Unit:

According to Mission Vatsalya Implementation Guidelines, The District Child protection Unit will function under the overall supervision of District Magistrate in ensuring service delivery and care and protection of children in the district.

Roles of DCPU:

1. The DCPU shall perform the functions as given under the JJ Act, 2015,
2. DCPU shall coordinate and implement all child rights and protection activities at district level.
3. Provide administrative support.

Design of the study:

Method of the study:

The present study is an empirical survey research conducted on Child Care Institutes, District Child protection Unit situated in the Kamrup Metro District of Guwahati, Assam. In this study researcher tries to understand the After Care Service and try to make a complete picture out from the study.

Sample:

Population for the study is staff of CCI And DCPU. In this study researcher selected 24 sample of CCI and DCPU centre which is situated in the Guwahati with the help of purposive sampling method. The data are collected from the concern staff and 5 children belonged to After Care Program. The CCI are selected on a purpose. Kamrup Metro District is selected for the study as the all over Assam the highest CCI is available in the Guwahati in Govt run and NGO run CCI. In Guwahati other resources are more available in comparison to other district like training centre, sports, skills development course, education etc. Number of beneficiaries are more in Kamrup Metro than the other district based on the available data of DCPU Kamrup Metro.

Tools of data collection:

Researcher collected the information on various ground in the CCI, DCPU with the help of semi structured interview, direct observation of the CCI which help the researcher to get valuable information about the program. For better understanding of the service researcher also tries to focus the present situation of the program through staff and children.

Qualitative and Quantitative method is used for interpretation. Collected responses were analysed by creating themes, systematic analysis of the collective data on audio mode of the respondent. And with a small tabulation, graph tried to give a brief picture of the findings.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Qualitative and Quantitative data were collected to know the status of the After Care Program and these were analysed in a systematic manner:

Staff attitude on After Care Program:

It was found in the study that the concern staff has showed a positive attitude about the implementation of the program. The staff of the district are belonged to NGO run Government run Institute like CCI, DCPU in Guwahati, Assam. They had behaved friendly with good manner and encouraged the program and basic knowledge about the program.

Generic information about the After Care Program

Dimension	Responses (In key words)	Positive Result%	Negative /others%
Target group	The benefited children from the program	45% children with special needs age of 18	55% response others
Objective	Objective of the program	Found 50% aware	Found 50% response others
Age group	Age group of the program	Found 87.5% aware	12.5% others
Criteria	Identification and selection of the program	50% response correctly	50% others
Financial	Govt provide additional support to	91.7% response correctly	Found 8.3% response

	augment the amount		negatively
Time period	The basis of time period to provide the support of financial support	46% response correctly	54% found negative
Sufficient Fund	Financial support is sufficient for the program	16.7% accepted	83.3% rejected
Issue	Problems in practical level	33% accepted lack of confidence to start with a limited fund	67% response others
After Care Home	Need for After Care Home for fulfilling the objectives	87.5% agreed	12.5% rejected
Documents	Challenges related to legal documents	91.7% agreed	8.3% response negatively
Gap	Gap in practical level	91.7% agreed	8.3% response negatively
Infrastructure	Problem regarding infrastructure of the Program	83.3% agreed	16.7 response negatively

Table :1 General information and issue related to After Care Program

The effective general intervention includes different type of findings which gives a picture of the present condition of the program. It was analysed that 45% response positively in regard children with special needs age of 18 are benefited and 55% negatively, 50% response are aware about the objectives and 50% are not, 87.5% aware about the age group, 50% aware about the selection of the children, 91.7% respond about financial additional support, 46% aware about the time period, 83.3% supported financial support is not sufficient, 33% respond lack of confidence to start the program 67% supported others, 87.5% supported for After Care Home 12.5% response negatively, 91.7% supported legal documents issue and 8.3% found negative, 91.7% supported gap in practical level and 8.3% found negative, 83.3% agreed infrastructure issue and 16.7% found negative.

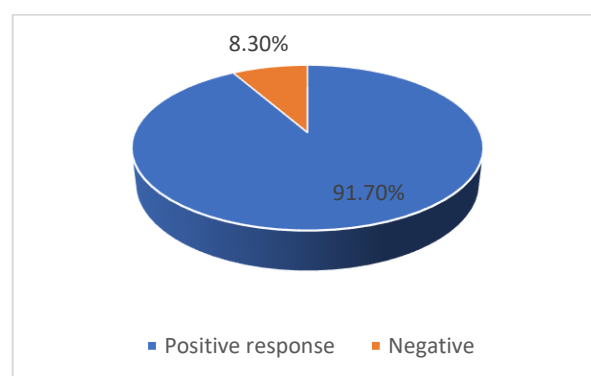
Analyse of Children related to After Care Program:

The children are free to live independently in a society after complete the period of the program at the age of 21 years. From this study it was found that due to lack of follow up, lack of adjustment, awareness among the children can create a problem to stop the program without complete the time period. By discussion with the children it was found it was difficult for them to adjust with the new environment with a limited fund. They require a mental support, self-esteem to overcome the challenges.

On the other hand, some children are overcome with their strong mentality and lead an independent life with a dignity. Other hand there is a lack of course availability based on their interest with the minimum qualification. Found that the government is now looking after the gap to fulfil the objectives, it is a positive side of the program.

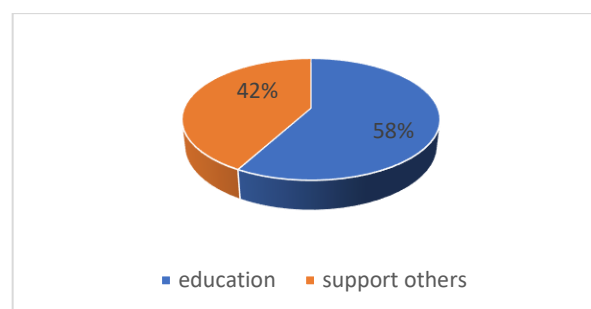
Key words	Positive	Negative %
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	response %	
Any Problem of children	91.7%	8.3%



In this analysed found 91.7% respond positively related to the problem faced by the children and 8.3% response negatively.

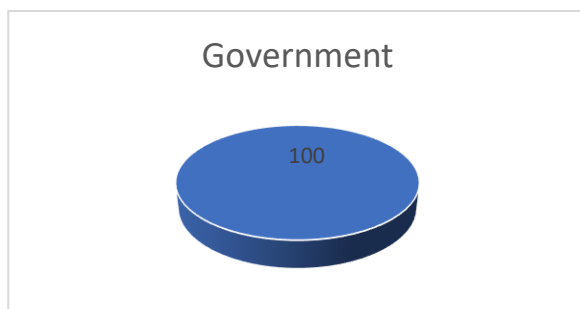
Key Words	Education %	Others%
Problem of children	58%	42%



In this analysed found 58.3% response related to the problem of minimum education of the children and 8.3% accepted others problem of the children

After care Program funding system

- **Government : Private**



In this study the all the financial support is provided by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

Expectations by the staff member:

With the help of an interview with staff and children, it was found that they are satisfied with the program implementation. But they expect some support to other line department for the better development of the children. They are eagerly working to aware about the necessity of the program but in somehow they are unable to fulfil the objectives due to lack of After Care CCI, Lack of financial support etc. They required proper awareness, proper environment with all facilities.

The finding of the study is discussed below:

1. The study was found that in the Kamrup Metro District there is no provision for Separate After Care Special Home for the better service.
2. They encouraged the program but financial support is not sufficient to survive in the present situation, expect to be increased in further step.
3. After cross the age of 16 years expect carrier counselling for the best interest of the children by the expertise so that they will able to choice the right one course. Mental health awareness is very essential for all the children and youth for a healthy life.
4. It was found that after release from the CCI follow up and monitoring is more important for the proper implementation of the program. It was found due to lack of manpower in this part some challenges faced.
5. The children are belonged to different category so it is difficult to enrol the children in any course as most of the children are drop out. Found Lack of minimum educational qualification so to expect to introduce some provision of special quota for the children of CCI.
6. It was also found that lack of team effort which creates an unsystematic environment for the ongoing program.
7. It was found that employment opportunities needs to be intensified.

Suggestions and discussion:

After Care Program is a service for the young children to develop their skills in a professional manner and give them a platform of self - independent. There is a big question earlier after 18 where will they go ? From the study, it is analysed that after the program implementation it a blessing for the deprived children for their holistic development. To implement the program properly there is some support needed as there are some challenges found like unavailability of minimum qualification, lack of financial support, lack of awareness, lack of team work. For the better service of the program without fulfilling the issues the program is not implement properly.

There are some suggestions to overcome the challenges are mentioned below:

1. The most important thing in every program is the awareness among the grass root level so that it will accept positively and other volunteer service, NGO can involve to introduce the necessity of the program with some innovative ideas like street play, documentary flim on success story etc.
2. Proper financial support is needed with the help of some other CSR facility, Sponsorship fund to provide the expected needs.
3. A toll free number can be designed specially for the program so that anyone can raise their voice anytime anywhere from the state.
4. Young professional expertise should be employed specially for the program to monitor and better development of the program.
5. Every human being wants encouragement. It will be grateful if the concern staff can be encouraged in yearly basis with best performer reward so that others staff will motivate easily for smooth functioning of the program.
6. After Care Program can make a common After Care Program with the help of other concern department in all over Assam so that all are under in a roof through which the children are able to utilize and develop their skills more.

Conclusion:

The most critical and risk time of the children is in the age of 18 years basically who are belonged to the CCI. Though the program of After Care is new in Assam but day by day the demand is increasing for the best interest of the children. As per JJ Act 2015, Institutional care is the last resort of a children. After this study found due to the challenges the program is failed in providing a quality service with quality professionalism in terms of follow up, monitoring, though the success story lead an impact on the other children with a positive way.

Unicef defines (19 th August 2021) after COVID -19 young representatives of Care-leavers in India launched the National Care Leavers Network

(NCLN), a youth collective focusing on After Care for Care –Leavers. Launching the NCLN, Dr. Yasmin Ali Haque, Unicef representative in India, said “Young people who leave CCI after 18 years of age are faced with the realities such as having to find a job and afford a home. They may face challenges in community integration and self-worth. These challenges have been worsened by the pandemic. Formation of the NCLN will not only help address some of these challenges, but also give care-leavers some tools for planning their future to live a productive and dignified life. “In Assam the After Care Program is also formed Assam Care Leavers Association for the improvement of the children and celebrated 2nd foundation day on 21 September 2021.

Lastly Michael Jordan quoted that “ *Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships*”

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1. **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015.**
2. **Implementation Guidelines of Mission Batchilya (5th July, 2022)**

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2. Assam Care Leavers celebrates 2nd foundation day: <https://assamtribune.com>

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