

Study of Children's Homes in Thamizh Nadu

organized by

Directorate of Social Welfare, Government of TN

in collaboration with

People Studies, Loyola College

with support from

UNICEF and UNODC

RESEARCH REPORT

submitted on

19 January 2011

submitted to

Directorate of Social Welfare, Government of TN

Contents

SECTION I: OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY	03
SECTION II: GENERAL PROFILE OF HOMES	09
SECTION III: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	14 - 72
<i>Chapter 1: Pattern of Registration</i>	15
<i>Chapter 2: Composition of Inmates</i>	18
<i>Chapter 3: The Staff Profile</i>	27
<i>Chapter 4: Physical Infrastructure</i>	34
<i>Chapter 5: Minimum Facilities</i>	38
<i>Chapter 6: Food and Nutrition</i>	41
<i>Chapter 7: Education</i>	45
<i>Chapter 8: Formation</i>	48
<i>Chapter 9: Discipline</i>	56
<i>Chapter 10: Health and Medical Care</i>	63
<i>Chapter 11: Maintenance</i>	66
<i>Chapter 12: Finance</i>	70
SECTION IV: SPECIAL TOPICS	73 - 90
<i>Chapter 1: Children from Other States</i>	74
<i>Chapter 2: Homes in Tourist Spots</i>	77
<i>Chapter 3: Case Study of Select Homes</i>	87
SECTION V: RECOMMENDATION AND FINDINGS	91 - 97
APPENDICES	
1: <i>Questionnaire for Comprehensive Data</i>	
2: <i>Questionnaire for Mapping Data</i>	
3: <i>Mapping of all the Children's Homes in Thamizh Nadu</i> <i>(Seperate Volume)</i>	

SECTION I:

OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY

COLLABORATORS

The Study of the Children's Homes in Thamizh Nadu has been **organized** by the Directorate of Social Welfare, Government of TN, in **collaboration** with People Studies, Loyola College, with **support** from UNICEF and UNODC.

INTENT

The **intent** of the Study [as per the communication from the Directorate of Social Welfare, dated 22.03.10] was "to conduct a rapid assessment on the delivery system of child care services in children's homes run by the NGOs," and as the 'terms of reference' in the same communication the following **objectives** of the Study were spelt out:

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To assess / inspect all the children's homes in Thamizh Nadu [listed in the consolidated list given by the Social Welfare Department].
- (2) To assess / inspect the quality in terms of delivery of service with special mention to minimum standards (as per OCH Act 1960).
- (3) A thorough report on the NGOs which maintain children of other States – problems faced by children due to language / migration / food habits / education.
- (4) A special assessment of homes situated in tourist spots and to identify the forms of violation, in order to ensure the safety of children.
- (5) To inspect and report over any child abuse / violence / exploitation / sexual assault on the children in the homes.

(6) To identify the gaps in order to promote holistic development of children and to come out with effective ways and means to promote quality child welfare programmes.

(7) Mapping of all the children's homes in Thamizh Nadu.

METHODOLOGY

The Study adopted a unique **social-psychological approach**, consisting of both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

As for the **quantitative** analysis, the unit of analysis was the home. The samples were selected from the sampling frame consisting of 2054 addresses, with 79 Government-run homes and 1975 private homes run by the NGOs [list provided by the Social Welfare Department], of which 42 entries were found to be repeated. In order to give due representation to each district proportionate to the total number of homes each district has, a simple random sampling technique was employed district-wise, and 10% homes were selected overall. To this list were **added**:

(1) at least **one Government-run home** per district [whichever district the Government does have a home] to meaningfully make a comparative study of the minimum standards, and

(2) the additional list of homes [provided by the Social Welfare Department] which needed **special attention** during the field study because of certain complaints received.

The final **sample size** consisted of 279 homes which were studied in detail. After the field study, the filled-in questionnaires were thoroughly scrutinised and cross-verified, and 226 forms which met scientific research standards in providing the necessary data were selected for the final analysis.

For the purposes of **mapping** and cross-verification as many as 2172 homes [the consolidated list given by the SW Department after removing the repeated ones, and **new homes** identified] were contacted, employing a **multi-pronged communication approach**, which ranged from using conventional postal system to modern e-mail,

from talking over the phone to direct personal visit. Of the total homes thus approached, 135 new homes were identified during the extensive field study, and 623 homes responded enthusiastically providing the information sought. Despite the concerted attempts, however, the study team could not reach 372 homes because of insufficient address or change of address not recorded in the SW list or the closure of home itself. Since the time of the field study coincided with the desperate attempts at registration of homes under the JJ Act [as per the Government requirement], as many as 1042 homes were not in a mood to supply the information when contacted. For the very same reason, it is possible that the homes we had identified as 'new' at the time of our field study would have by now applied for registration. [All these classified data are provided under 'mapping' as a separate volume in this Report.]

For data collection, two sets of **structured questionnaires** were administered. One was an elaborately structured main questionnaire to collect comprehensive data for quantitative analysis, and the other was a shorter version to gather only vital data for the purposes of mapping and cross-verification. The main questionnaire consisted of **four major** sections, each section designed to elicit the responses of a specific stakeholder: Section one concerned the views of those **who run the home** expressed by a person holding a responsible position in the home; Section two concerned the impressions - objective and unbiased views as much as possible - of the **neighbourhood** about the home; Section three was the comprehensive **factual study** of the home on various aspects including the minimum standards; Section four concerned the opinions of **the children** residing in the home. Ample room was given to express the views freely and record the views accurately by making many of the questions **open-ended**.

The quantitative data collected through the questionnaires were processed using the statistical software **SPSS**. While doing the analysis and interpretation, the quantitative data were appropriately and innovatively supplemented by the **qualitative data**. The qualitative study employed a **wide range of tools** including *candid and critical observation* of both internal and external environments, *simulated admission-seeking* to assess the procedure for admission and the quality of service, *informal interaction* with the inmates, employees, parents and visitors, observations on neighbourhood / *public perception, empathic hearing* to employees and children, and study of *artefacts, body language* and non-verbal communication.

The field study had to face a lot of **challenges** from the beginning till the end. Firstly, identifying the homes in several cases was difficult because of insufficient address or change of address. Secondly, while some homes were very happy to welcome us, some others were not willing even to let us in, considering the visit as a nuisance. Thirdly, in the case of some homes, the persons responsible were not there, or so it was said, and hence we had to visit more than once. Fourthly, in many big homes, the access was very restricted, and in some cases it was more like a 'guided tour' in the homes. Fifthly, concerning the sensitive areas, such as finance, the response by and large was not forthcoming.

The **strength** of this study, however, lies in its innovative **social-psychological approach**. The research instrument was carefully designed based on a pilot field study. The data collection by the qualified and trained field investigators was rigorously monitored and guided, and the data were cross-verified using another set of questionnaire **directly** filled in by the warden or any other office-bearer. The findings are reliable because of the creative and systematic **triangulation** of the comprehensive quantitative data and the extensive qualitative data.

PROJECT EXECUTION - A BRIEF HISTORY

The Study commenced with the inauguration of the workshop in field investigation techniques by Hon'ble Minister for Social Welfare, Tmt. P. Geetha Jeevan, on 29 July 2010.

Field investigation in all the districts was done for three months from 01 August to 31 October 2010.

The core team headed by the Director, People Studies, made a special study of homes about which complaints had been received by the Social Welfare Department, in September 2010.

The Phase-2 workshop for the field investigators was held on 08 October 2010.

Special meetings to assess the progress of the study were held with the Director, Social Welfare, and the UNICEF representative on 25.09.10 and 19.10.10.

An interim Progress Report was submitted to the Social Welfare Department on 01 November 2010, and an executive summary was submitted to the Principal Secretary, Social Welfare Department, on 29 November 2010.

The draft final report was ready by 10 December 2010, and the final report is presented on 19 January 2011.

FINAL REPORT

The final Report of the research study consists of an introductory section [Section I] on objectives and methodology, followed by presentation and analysis of the data in the next three Sections: Section II presents a brief overall view of children's homes in the State, Section III makes a general assessment of homes with reference to minimum standards and holistic development of the children [Objectives 1 and 2], and Section IV deals with three important special topics, i.e., assessment of homes maintaining children from other States, assessment of homes in tourist spots, case studies of homes about which complaints have been received [Objectives 3, 4 and 5]. Section V deals with effective ways and means to promote quality child welfare programmes [Objective 6]. The overall mapping of all the children's homes in Thamizh Nadu [Objective 7] is presented as a separate volume.