**Need for Guidance and Counselling Services in Child Care Institutions in**

**India: A Systematic Review**

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**Abstract**

Children admitted to Child Care Institutions (CCIs) have certain deficiencies that Counsellors and Social Workers need to address in unique ways. Only through appropriate counselling can such children be expected to appreciate their peculiar skills and assess their strengths & limitations. It also gives them the confidence and courage to assimilate into Institutions from different social backgrounds. Further, children are the most vulnerable section in society; they are dependent and have less control over their lives. Some children are more marginalized and neglected than others because of their Psycho-social problems.The systematic review in this paper aims to assess the need for counselling services in CCIs in India, to find the existing social adjustments of children in CCIs, and to identify the gap in counselling services in CCIs. The Juvenile Justice Act of 2015 mandates that institutions should be the last resort for any child. Lack of parental supervision and support makes children susceptible. Therefore, children in need of care and protection and children in conflict with the law are kept in the Child Care Institutions and Observation Homes. It was found that children staying in CCIs exhibit poor social adjustments, poor emotional stability, and behavioural problems. Further, due to the lack of love, affection, and untrained staff of the CCIs, the children do not want to stay in CCIs resulting in trafficking nexus, addiction to drug and substance abuse, and antisocial behaviours. Due to a lack of a stimulating environment, intellectual and perceptual competencies were also low among children staying in the institutions.

**Keywords:** Counselling services, Child Care Institutions (CCIs), Social Adjustment.

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**Introduction**

India is the country with the largest child population in the world, with about 25.69 per cent of the Indian population falling into the 0–14 years category (2021, Ministry of Statistics). India signed one of the most widely ratified treaties in the world, i.e., UNCRC,1992, an international agreement that sets out every child's civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. The Rights of Children were realized in India because the treaty and convention had played an important role. Followed by this, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), 2007. The Juvenile Justice (J.J. Act, 2000 & amended 2020 establishes the Principles, Systems, processes, and related statutory bodies) to cater to children's basic needs through proper care, protection, development, and social integration. The statutory bodies include the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) for Children in Conflict with the Law and Child Welfare Committee (CWC) for children in Need of Care and Protection.

Ganguly, E.T., Ali, B., & Mathur, S. (2007) stated that India has progressed in overall indicators like a decline in Infant Mortality Rates, improvement in child survival, school dropout rates falling, and improved literacy rates, but is far from achieving Millennium Development Goals (2015), when children are considered. The negative fallout of the changing socio-economic status children are deprived of social benefits, leading to forced migration, an increased number of children on the streets, more being trafficked, and a rising number of children engaged in full or part-time labour. Therefore, the Ministry of Women and Child Development has envisaged the Child Protection Scheme, which brings many existing Child Protection Schemes- Mission Vatsalaya, which created a scope for the creation of new institutional facilities and maintenance of existing institutional facilities for both children in conflict with law and children in need of care and protection. These include Shelter Homes, Children's Homes, Observation Homes, Special Homes, and Places of Safety.

Every Children's Home must be registered as a Child Care Institution under sub-section (3) of section 34 of the Act and rule 71 of the J.J. Act. These institutions are run by state Government or can run through the help of civil society. The CCIs provide long-term care, treatment, education, training, development, and rehabilitation for children needing care and protection. Children admitted to Child Care Institutions (CCIs) have specific deficits that Counsellors and Social Workers need to address in unique ways. It is only through appropriate counselling that such children can be expected to appreciate their peculiar skills, assess their strengths and limitations, gain self-confidence, and develop the capacity to face the challenges of life better. It also provides confidence and courage to the child as the children come from Institutions from different social backgrounds. It helps in the child's overall development by choosing the right career and participating in extra-curricular activities provided to the children of the Institutions.

Further, children are the most vulnerable section in society; they are dependent and have less control over their lives. Some are more marginalized and neglected than others because of their Psycho-social problems like attention deficit disorder (ADD)/ ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) in children, including exhibiting inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsiveness, about children's Anxiety Disorders, Substance Abuse Disorder, Depression, Sense (fear) of being rejected or neglected, etc. These children constantly and consistently need Counselling and Psycho-social treatment to reconnect to their environment and community and reintegrate into society. Counsellors can help these children to develop positive feelings toward themselves.

Guidance & counselling is a continuous and ongoing process. While providing legal aid to children, it increasingly becomes apparent that counselling and psychological therapy are needed for their healing and into society. As per provision of Rule, 46 (6) under “The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Rules, 2007”, every institution should have the services of trained counsellors or collaboration with external agencies such as child guidance centers, psychology, and psychiatric departments, for specialized and regular individual therapy for every juvenile or child in the institution. In view of the above, this systematic review article attempted to assess the need for Guidance and Counselling Services and social adjustments of children in Child Care Institutions in India.

**Material and Method**

The systematic review of the Need for Counselling Services in Child Care Institutions in India was conducted according to guidance from the PRISMA 2009 checklist (Moher et al., 2009), flow diagram and informed by the Assessment of Multiple Systematic Reviews to guide methodological quality (Shea et al., 2009). The papers yielded by the search strategies are reported using the PRISMA flow chart in the figures for each section.

At first, for the systematic review, keywords like Child Protection in the Indian context were searched in Google Scholar, Research Gate, SSRN, and other search websites. Subsequently, the studies from 1973 to 2019 relating to Child Care Institutions in India were searched. While searching, specific studies on the need for counselling services in CCIs in the Indian context were downloaded. Ultimately, the research studies were narrowed down based on the specific topics: Social adjustment, Psycho-social aspects, Trafficking, Social, Emotional behaviour, Drugs, Substance Abuse, Destitution, Intellectual Skills, and Perception competencies.

**TOTAL STUDIES REVIEWED -52 on**

Child protection Issues

**SIMILAR STUDIES -7**

Excluded

**UNIQUE STUDIES- 45**

On Child care Institutions

**EXCLUDED -28**

* Family & community-based care
* Academic adjustment in residential Schools
* Characteristics of Children, age, sex, duration of stay, education, health
* Socio-economic background, Opinion of children in residential homes
* Mandatory Standards in CCIs
* Stakeholders responsibilities
* Lack of Grievance Redressal Mechanism in CCIs
* Child protection policy
* Child protection issues related to migrant families

**RELATED TO TOPIC-17**

Need for Counselling Services

**NOT ACCESSIBLE -2**

**FINAL LIST-15**

* Social adjustment
* Psycho-social aspects
* Trafficking
* Social and emotional behaviour
* Drugs, Substance Abuse
* Destitution
* Intellectual Skills, Perception competencies

**Figure 1: Shows the flow chart of the methodology adopted for systematic review**

**Data extraction**

The data extraction was carried out for the systematic literature review by formulating sub-topics, and the data abstraction was prepared in Excel. The Excel columns included the study's name, authors, place, year, sample size, type of problem dealt with, tools used, findings, and recommendations. Data from each study was extracted to a standard table with a set of crucial headings to ensure systematic and compatible insight.

**Results of Systematic Review Studies**

Numerous studies are available in the domain of institutionalized children, and a few of them are discussed below, which have briefly addressed the self-esteem, social adjustment, emotional stability, inferiority feeling, and adjustment problems among institutionalized children. It is also mentioned that the following **seven studies** were studied before implementing the child protection scheme and the implementation of UNCRC. More studies were not considered for review because no minimum mandatory non-negotiable standards were prescribed for the Child Care Institutions before implementing the child protection scheme.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr No.** | **First Author & Year** | **Name of the Study** | **Source of Publication** | **Place of the Study** | **Type of Problem Addressed and Specific Issues dealt** | **Recommendations of the Study with Systematic Review** |
| 1. | Khurana, S., 2004 | Mental health status of runaway adolescents | Indian Journal of Paediatrics | Child Observation Home for Boys in Delhi | Psychological problems amongst the runaway adolescent boys - depression and attempted suicide. Prevalence of Physical abuse and substance abuse | The recommendations included the runaway adolescents suffering from various mental health problems, indicating a need for a broad-based psycho-social intervention programme. These children require counselling by a trained counsellor in Children's Homes and CCIs. |
| 2 | Deb, S., 2005 | Processes of child trafficking in West Bengal: A qualitative study | Social Change | Rehabilitation Homes for Trafficked Victims of Narendrapur, West Bengal | Trafficking Process of Trafficking – lured for marriage, jobs, and promise of a better life by known persons in the community | The study recommended a comprehensive rehabilitation of these trafficked victims; mental health services like counselling and legal support must be provided to these girls. |
| 3. | Aangan, 2006 | Study the effectiveness of Observation Homes and Children's Homes in Maharashtra through the children's and staff's perspectives. | A Non-Government Organisation (NGO) | CCIs in Maharashtra | Social, Emotional and Behavioural Problems faced by the Institutionalized children | Recommendations were made that NGOs can be brought in to provide counselling through creative and therapeutic activities; institutions can ask local psychologists and psychiatrists to assist in exceptional cases. Besides, they can establish a referral system with nearby local government and private hospitals |
| 4 | Saraswati C., 2007 | A Study on Adjustment of Institutionalized Children | Karnataka Journal of Agriculture. Science | Four Juvenile Institutions of Belgaum Division in Karnataka 9 Two Boys two Girls) | Social, Emotional, and Educational Adjustment of CCI Children | The study recommended that the Department of social welfare should pay attention to children's social, emotional, and educational problems either by providing special training to in-service teachers or through guidance and counselling services in the institution by the counsellor. |
| 5. | Tiwari, P., 2007 | A Study on the Juveniles in conflict with law | IRA International Journal of Management & Social Sciences | Observation Homes Delhi. | Antisocial and criminal activities such as drug dealing, thefts, assaults, etc. | Recommended timely intervention in the form of a safe environment and also providing counselling to channel their energy into a positive direction is the essential rehabilitative step |
| 6. | Malhotra, C., 2007 | Drug use among juveniles in conflict with the law | [The Indian Journal of Paediatrics](https://www.researchgate.net/journal/0973-7693_The_Indian_Journal_of_Pediatrics) | Prayas Observation Home for Boys, New Delhi | Pattern of drug use, reasons for initiation, and the perception of the effects of using drugs Peer group and Media influence | Since peer influence was found to be an essential factor influencing the initiation of drug use, peer groups must be targeted in anti-drug use campaigns. Moreover, steps should be taken to provide facilities for counselling the youth at all levels of the health care system. |
| 7. | Stanley, S., 2008 | Psycho-social correlates in adolescent children of alcoholics- implications for intervention | International Journal of Psycho-social Rehabilitation | Private Psychiatric Hospital in Tiruchirappalli | Adjustment in adolescent children of alcoholics (CoAs) – Self Esteem | It was recommended that there was an imperative need for therapeutic intervention with this population and to develop programmes for CoAs with a strong focus on strengthening resilience in them and inculcating desirable personality traits, and enhancing their psycho-social functioning through appropriate psychotherapeutic procedures |
| 8. | Jose, 2008 | A Study on the psycho-social aspects of institutionalized adolescence | Social Work in Mental Health: Book | CCIs of Kerala | Psycho-social aspects – Social, Emotional, and disciplinary adjustments | The study showed that institutionalized had higher insecurity lower self-esteem and emotional adjustment mental problems. |
| 9. | Pasi , A, R., 2011 | A study on socio-demographic profiles of children under institutional care in Mumbai | Journal Family Community Medicine | Mumbai | Prevention of destitution of children in the community | Recommendations were made by the researchers, including the implementation of family assistance and family sponsorship schemes to support the socio-economically deprived families in the 22 upbringing of their children and the provision of counselling services for families. |
| 10. | Devarsetty, P., 2012 | A study to estimate the distribution of whitener use among adolescents in Observation Homes for children in conflict with law | - | Two Observation Homes for boys and girls in Hyderabad | Whitener use among adolescents | Recommendations of the study include the need to develop a comprehensive intervention strategy to tackle the problem of inhalant use among street children and the development of social support systems to guide, counsel, and help such children in the best possible way through decent job opportunities, living facilities, and schooling. |
| 11 | Padmaja, G., 2014 | Psycho-social Problems and well being in Institutionalized and Non-institutionalized children. | IOSR Journal of Humanities And Social Science | Hyderabad & Secunderabad, Telangana; NGO that provides institutional care to children in a community-based sample, local government-run schools; | Internalizing & Externalizing Problems | Psycho-social interventions, particularly resilience-based, are highly essential. An assessment of children’s counseling needs and an examination of the corresponding services provided by the institution have to be undertaken. |
| 12 | Sivvala, R., 2014 | Impact of Behavioural Intervention on the Adjustment of Inmates of Children Homes | IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science | Children Homes in Andhra Pradesh state | Behavioral intervention is the adjustment of inmates in children's homes. | The Department of social welfare should pay attention to children's social, emotional, and educational problems either by providing special training to in-service teachers or through guidance and counselling services in the institution by the counsellor. |
| 13 | Talukdar, H.K., 2015 | Cognitive Competence Among Institutionalised and Noninstitutionalised Children In Greater Guwahati Area | A Doctoral Thesis, Gauhati University | Different Child Care institutions in Greater Guwahati, Kamrup district of Assam. | Intellectual skills and perceptual competency | Efficient and highly motivated trained caretakers and experts like counsellors should be employed in the institutionalized residences so that the institutionalized children can get proper guidance and counselling for improving their overall performance/cognitive competence. |
| 14 | Sandhyarani,. M C ., 2016 | Perception of adjustment among institutionalized adolescent girls in selected districts of Karnataka | International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research | Hubali & Mysuru Govt Institution for Girls, Karnataka | Perception of adjustment among institutionalized girls | It is essential that the concerned personnel /counsellor /house mothers  responsibility to identify such adjustment problems before they persist further and to come out with measures to mitigate the problems of institutionalized adolescent girls with suitable intervention strategies to  overcome problems. |
| 15 | Talukdar,R.R.,, 2019 | Social Adjustment of Institutionalized Children Under Need Care and Protection in Assam | IRA International Journal of Management & Social Sciences | Child Care Institutions run by the Govt of Assam and NGO of Assam. | Social adjustment of CCI children in need of Care and Protection | Female children are more socially adjusted than male children, as it is a big difference in the Mean Value. |

Table 1 Shows the systematic reviews of studies based on Author and year, Name of the Study, Source of Publication, Place of the Study, Type of Problem Addressed and Specific Issues dealt with, and Recommendations of the study about the systematic review

**Discussion:**

The Juvenile Justice Act of 2015 mandates that institutions should be the last resort for any child. However, in our country, many children are vulnerable and at high risk for abuse and neglect. Lack of parental supervision and support makes children susceptible. Therefore, children in need of care and protection and children in conflict with the law are kept in the Child Care Institutions and Observation Homes. The above systematic review found that children staying in CCIs exhibit poor social adjustments, poor emotional stability, and behavioural problems. Further, due to the lack of love, affection, and untrained staff of the CCIs, the children do not want to stay in CCIs resulting in trafficking nexus, addiction to drug and substance abuse, and antisocial behaviours. Due to a lack of a stimulating environment, intellectual and perceptual competencies were also low among children staying in the institutions.

Most studies have mentioned a need for counselling services to address the above problems. However, no study has assessed the efficacy of counselling services on social adjustment in the CCIs nor the status/ quality of counselling services provided to children in Child Care Institutions. The above research studies have not discussed the social adjustment during aftercare (Beyond 18 years) of children living in CCIs and the importance of counselling and life skill education for future repatriation and rehabilitation in society.

**Limitations and drawbacks**

1. The chief limitation is that the Mission Vatsalaya former Child Protection Scheme in India has been implemented for about the last 12 years. Therefore, the selection of studies/ references is taken only about those CCIs/ Homes that are registered under the J.J. Act.
2. Another drawback is that most of the studies addressed children's social adjustment in CCIs and recommended the need for counselling. No studies found that assessed quality counselling services provided to the inmates in the Child Care Institutions.

**Future directions**

1. Very few comprehensive studies have been done on the efficacy and quality of counselling services in Child Care Institutions in India till now. There is also a need to implement measures to ensure regular screening for psychological problems in these children. Furthermore, to prevent the damaging effect of these psychological problems on the development of children, there is a need for extensive training and handholding support for the staff of the CCIs. In the interest of the overall development of children, it becomes vital to study the counselling services provided to the children in these institutions.
2. The systematic review also provides a direction to Study the efficacy of the counselling services or to assess the status of counselling services in CCIs across the country. Again, aftercare is the final stage in a continuum of care for institutionalized children, facilitating their rehabilitation and social reintegration after they age out from CCIs. Studies can also be taken up to find the efficacy of counselling services for aftercare practices of institutional children in Need of Care and Protection.

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