

## **White Paper on Adoptions-II**

### **Networking to enhance Indian Adoptions**

**A study on Adoption Agencies and Destitute Homes in Bihar, Jharkhand and Maharashtra (supported by feedback from Orissa and West Bengal)**

**Study conducted by:**

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Catalysts for Social Action

Pune, India

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### **ABOUT CATALYSTS FOR SOCIAL ACTION (CSA)**

Catalysts for Social Action (CSA) is a not-for-profit social organization founded by Kale Consultants Ltd., Pune, a reputed IT Consulting Company with global presence. CSA was registered as a Society on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2002, and as a Trust on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2003.

CSA's chosen field of work is 'Child Welfare' and includes the following:

- .. Adoption
- .. Foster Care
- .. Rehabilitation of the Destitute Child

CSA's current focus is on Child Adoption; our objectives are to:

- .. enhance the number of adoptions in/ from India;

- .. work towards better child-care both, while the child is institutionalized and post- adoption through facilitation and guidance.
- .. create an environment where all adoption stake holders work together in furthering the cause of the adopted child.

CSA's participation is at 2 levels:

1. Direct participation with stakeholders- Adoption Agencies, Government Departments,  
  
Aparents'/Adoptees' Associations, Professionals associated with Adoption and Researchers.
2. Participation through the Internet.

### **Direct participation**

#### **Software for Adoption Agencies**

CSA have developed software which facilitates the record-keeping requirements of an Adoption agency, and provides for the reports that an agency has to submit to the VCA or, CARA. The software also, tracks the history of a child from the date of his/ her arrival, until the child is placed in adoption. It provides for post-adoption follow-up on the child. It also, automatically generates letters for such follow-up.

CSA provides the software free to an agency, along with the donation of a (used) computer and the required training for the use of the software.

CSA's software has been evaluated by CARA; in view of the revised guidelines on In-country Adoption, CARA have asked for modifications to the S/W.

#### **Training Programs**

CSA offer training programs and workshops/ seminars for Childcare workers and Social workers from Adoption agencies, Prospective Adoptive Parents and Adoptive Parents.

We have also, developed sensitization programs for Police personnel and the Press. The training is offered free of participation cost.

#### **Awareness Programs**

CSA make extensive use of the annual Adoption Awareness Week in November, to organize awareness campaigns through media presence, workshops and road –shows. Wherever possible, CSA associate with existing stakeholders to hold events jointly.

### **Field Research Studies**

CSA periodically conduct Field Research studies on issues that impact the status of child adoptions in the country. We have conducted the following studies:

1. White Paper on Adoptions in India (2003)
2. The current study- Networking to enhance Indian Adoptions (2005).

### **Children's events**

Periodically, CSA organize fun-events for children from Adoption agencies and other destitute homes. Wherever, possible such programs are coordinated with the local VCA or, with Adoption Agencies.

### **Participation through the Internet**

#### **CSA Website**

CSA Website <http://www.csa.org.in> has been constructed with the specific objective of reaching out worldwide, to the community of Adoption stake holders. The website has 3 segments as follows:

1. An information repository based on published (public) information on adoptions in India. This section contains information on the Adoption process, legal provisions, eligibility, costs, lists of agencies, CARA and other Regulatory/ Coordinating agencies, foreign agencies recognized by CARA, list of Indian Diplomatic missions, etc.
2. A Bulletin Board where all stakeholders are invited to participate. The Bulletin Board provides a forum for stakeholders ( CARA/VCA's/ Scrutiny agencies, Adoption agencies, Associations of parents and children involved in adoptions, professionals) to provide information / updates, about themselves. A stakeholder can also, showcase its achievements. This section also, provides literature including research and, legal updates. A section for International Adoptions provides Childcare guidelines and other facilitation for the cultural transition of the Indian Adoptee into the Western culture.
3. Two separate Chat Groups for Adoptive Parents and Adoptees respectively.

[Adoption\\_experiences@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Adoption_experiences@yahoogroups.com) is a Chat group for Aparents who have adopted from India. It is a forum for exchange of ideas, sharing information, raising queries and issues of concern.

[Adoptees\\_voices@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Adoptees_voices@yahoogroups.com) is a Chat group for Adult Adoptees who were adopted from India.

## **Networking to enhance Indian Adoptions - A study of Adoption Agencies and Destitute Homes in Bihar, Jharkhand and Maharashtra.**

**(Supported by feedback from Orissa and West Bengal).**

### **GENESIS**

The growing number of destitute children and their rehabilitation has always been a matter of concern for CSA. Even as CSA was set up in September 2002, we knew that we would work on 'Child Welfare'. Also, that to begin with, our efforts would be focused on Adoption- it being the most complete form of re-habilitation of the destitute child. As a prelude to CSA's initiatives and in an effort to set directions for ourselves, we did a White Paper on Adoption in India. This was a field study covering 30 sets of respondents in three groups of stakeholders viz. adoption agencies, social workers attached to agencies and Aparents, respectively. The objective of that paper was to make a field assessment to validate some of the hypothesis that seemed to exist about child adoption. Primarily, there was the belief that it was necessary to focus extensively, on promoting adoptions and, on creating a mind-shift in the perception of the general Indian public, to the concept of child adoption.

Our White paper led to some interesting findings. Primarily we found that a paradigm mind -shift in the perception of the general public to adoption had already happened. Perhaps due to extensive promotion efforts by CARA through Adoption Agencies, VCAs and Scrutiny agencies as also, the very significant contribution of Aparents who had not only, successfully reared adopted children but also, had set up Associations of Adoptive parents in several locations in India, there was a tremendous response to adoption in the metropolitan cities. Also, this response belied the belief that people were generally inclined to adopt only male children; most often, the preference was for the girl child. More interestingly, the child born outside wedlock, was no longer taboo; many parents were not concerned about matters other than the health of the child. We found that most of the agencies in the metropolitan cities had long lists of waiting parents who had registered to adopt. Also, that this group was not restricted to infertile couples; parents with natural children of their own also wanted to adopt.

Another interesting finding was that each agency worked in isolation. There was almost no coordination with the result that each agency lived with its own share of problems and difficulties many of which could perhaps, have been better addressed through coordination and sharing.

These findings set the road- map for CSA's initiatives; we concluded that:

1. We would work towards the twin objectives of :
  - .. Enhancing the number of adoptions in the country, and
  - .. Working towards better child-care both, while the child is institutionalized and post- adoption through facilitation and guidance
2. We would work through the adoption community by first of all, bringing them together on a common platform.

As we progressed and via our extensive interaction with adoption agencies both, in metros and outside, we found that the situation in locations other than the metros, had not changed and was much the same as before viz.:

- .. The response to adoption was very low.
- .. The girl child still had no takers. Likewise, the 'special-needs' child had no takers.
- .. There was generally, a lack of awareness and people still continued with informal adoptions; promotional efforts were minimal.
- .. Many agencies had large numbers of children, mainly girls, who were adoptable.
- .. The existing regulations did not encourage the free movement of children across states and agencies.

The effort for us then, was to ascertain the reasons for the **very contradictory positions** in metropolitan agencies and those in the non-metros respectively, and to seek possible solutions. It appeared to us that **there was just no justification in adoptable children languishing in institutions when there were so many people wanting to adopt and waiting for long and anguishing periods to do so.** Also, we believed that most certainly, many more adoptable children would be available in Government, and privately -run institutions and orphanages.

We concluded that for Adoptions to work in the desired manner and to reach the desired levels of child rehabilitation, it was **necessary to create a virtual cycle where destitute, orphaned and adoptable children would move into adoption agencies and move out into adoption, at the smallest possible time.** There being so many destitute children in India, there would always be a space and place for a new child to come into adoption. The sources it seemed, were adoption agencies that had children but no waiting Aparents and, Destitute Homes where adoptable children were perhaps, available. **The solution it appeared, was in networking- working with Destitute Homes, Adoption Agencies, the Regulatory authorities and the media, such that the process could both be hastened and the numbers of adoptions, enhanced.**

That is the genesis of this study. We have attempted a field level assessment to look at some of the existing problems, identify the availability of adoptable children both, in adoption agencies and in other Destitute Homes/ Orphanages and, examine the feasibility of their movement across agencies and across states, within the framework of the existing rules. While doing so, we have also looked at some of the related issues that impact adoptions. **We have attempted to highlight all of these in the hope that further coordinated movement will be possible.**

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study,

1. assesses some of the existing issues if any, that negatively impact Indian adoptions.
2. examines the status of rehabilitation of destitute children (many of whom are orphans) in both, government-run and privately-run orphanages/ Destitute Homes, and the feasibility of their movement into the adoption stream.
3. examines the need and feasibility of moving children across agencies and across states.
4. makes recommendations for modifications in existing practices, recommends areas of further studies and some immediate initiatives.

## **SCOPE**

The study was conducted in the Adoption agencies and orphanages / Destitute Homes, in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand and Maharashtra. As a part of another initiative, we visited some Adoption agencies in Orissa and West Bengal too. Since the findings in those agencies were of relevance to the current study, we have used that information to reinforce some of our findings. A total number of 57 agencies were covered in the five states. Separate State-wise reports covering 13 agencies in Bihar, Jharkhand and, 27 in Maharashtra as filed by our Researcher, are at Annexures 1 and 2.

### **Bihar and Jharkhand**

Adoption agencies and Destitute Homes/ Orphanages, located in Patna, Danapur, Muzaffarpur, Bettiah and Bhagalpur in Bihar and Ranchi and Sahibganj in Jharkhand were covered. This included 11 agencies, the BVCA and Department of Social Welfare, Government of Bihar.

- |                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. BVCA                             | Patna       |
| 2. Department of Social welfare     | Patna       |
| 3. East & West Educational Society  | Patna       |
| 4. Kishore Dal Bal Niketan          | Patna       |
| 5. Missionaries of Charity          | Patna City  |
| 6. Rama Nandi Devi Hindu Anathalaya | Bhagalpur   |
| 7. Dipti Mission                    | Sahibganj   |
| 8. Madyanand Ananthalaya            | Danapur     |
| 9. Aanchal                          | Patna       |
| 10. Jeevan Jyoti Kala Kendra        | Muzaffarpur |

- |                                      |         |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| 11. Vishweshwarnath Hindu Anathalaya | Bettiah |
| 12. Woodland Welfare Society         | Patna   |
| <b>13.</b> Karuna Nivedita Ashram    | Ranchi  |

### **Maharashtra**

The study in Maharashtra covered 7 Adoption Agencies and 25 Destitute Homes in the Districts of Ahmednagar, Aurangabad, Jalna, Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur, Ratnagiri, Solapur, Pune, Nashik and Latur. A list of agencies along with permission to visit the agencies and collect information, was provided by the Department of Social Welfare, Government of Maharashtra. The following agencies were a part of the study.

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 1. District Probation and Aftercare Association, Observation Home Ahmednagar |            |
| 2. Karandikar Guruji Balsadan  | Ahmednagar |
| 3. Lion's Balsadan   | Aurangabad |
| 4. Preet Mandir  | Aurangabad |
| 5. Sakar,  | Aurangabad |
| 6. Gajanan Balsadan  | Aurangabad |
| 7. Govt Juvenile Home  | Aurangabad |
| 8. District Observation Home   | Jalna      |
| 9. Meena Nagojirao satkar Shala  | Jalna      |
| 10. Godawari Samaj Prabodhan Sanstha's sunita Balsadan                       | Jalna      |
| 11. Renuka Kanishtha Balsadan  | Jalna      |
| 12. Bhagwan Baba Mulanche Balsadan   | Jalna      |
| 13. Bhimraj Mulanche Balgruha  | Jalna      |
| 14. District Probation Home  | Satara     |
| 15. State Home for Boys  | Kolhapur   |
| 16. State Home for Girls   | Kolhapur   |

17. Kailasvasi Gurudas Balgruha	Kolhapur
18. Thakkabappa Vasatigruha	Satara
19. Remand Home and Balgruha	Kolhapur
20. District Probation Home	Kolhapur
21. District Probation Home	Ratnagiri
22. District Probation and Aftercare Home	Baramati
23. District Probation Home	Nashik
24. District Probation Home	Sholapur
25. District Probation Home	Sangli
26. Shaskiya Mulinche Pramanit Shala	Shirur
27. Shahskiya Mulanche Pramanit Shala	Solapur
28. Shri Ganesh Nivas Balgruha	Solapur
29. Bal Vikas Mahila Mandal's Balgruha	Latur
30. Shishu Sadan, MIDC	Latur
31. Manta Shishu Gruha	Udgir
32. Anand Mahila Balkalyan Mandal's Balgruha	Shirur

## **Orissa**

The visits to the agencies in Orissa were made, in connection with another CSA initiative. The information gathered was relevant to this study and has thus, been used here. The visits were confined to Adoption agencies and did not include Destitute Homes / Orphanages. The agencies listed below, located in different parts of the State were covered. We also met the VCA , Orissa and The Director, Department of Social Welfare, Orissa.

Voluntary Coordinating Agency	Bhubaneswar
Department of Social Welfare	Bhubaneswar
Basundhara Abhinaba Bidanasi	Cuttuck

Lutheran Mahila Samiti	Kendrapad
Nilachal Seba Pratistan	Puri
Subhadara Mahatab Seba Sadan	Alginia, Khurda
Nirmala Shishu Bhawan	Bhubaneswar

### **West Bengal**

The visits to the agencies in Kolkata were made in connection with another CSA initiative. The information gathered was relevant to this study and has thus, been used here. The study in West Bengal was confined to Adoption agencies and did not include Destitute Homes / Orphanages. The agencies listed below, located in different parts of Kolkata were covered. We also met the VCA, West Bengal.

1. Voluntary Coordinating Agency	Kolkata
2. Missionaries of Charity	Kolkata
3. Indian Society for sponsorship and Adoption	Kolkata
4. Indian Society for Rehabilitation of Children	Kolkata
5. Society for Indian Children's Welfare	Kolkata

### **PERIOD OF STUDY**

The field visits were carried between September 2004 and January 2005.

Bihar 6<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> September 2004

Maharashtra 15<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> October 2004

18<sup>th</sup> November to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2004

Orissa 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> January 2005

## **METHODOLOGY**

1. A questionnaire (Annexure -3) was used in the States of Bihar and Maharashtra. The questionnaire was finalized in consultation with the officials of Voluntary Coordinating Agency, Bihar. In Orissa and West Bengal, simple interviews were used to obtain data and feedback.
2. Meetings and personal interviews were held with the representatives of Agencies and Destitute Homes / Orphanages; in many cases the information was filled by the CSA Researcher, in the presence of the officials from the respective agencies.
3. In some cases where formal information was not forthcoming, Informal interaction with the children and Staff of the agencies (Orphanages and Destitute Homes) helped in acquiring the information.

## **LIMITATIONS**

1. Bihar does not have any formal system of Centre / State sponsored adoption. Thus, though this report comments on the status of Adoptions in Bihar, the findings do not feature in the assessment of status of adoptions in the country. The findings vis-à-vis adoption agencies, relate to Maharashtra, Orissa and West Bengal.
2. This report is an assessment on the basis of a field study as distinct from Research based on empirical data. The objective was to make a zero-level assessment and, lay down a base for in-depth assessment of specific sections- if, and where, necessary.
3. Some agencies were reluctant to provide formal information though many were willing to speak off-the -record. In Maharashtra, we had the permission of the Commissioner, Department of Social Welfare, Maharashtra State Government, which helped.

4. The quantitative data available are those indicated by the agencies /orphanages. There was no opportunity to validate the data.
  
5. Some of the negatives highlighted are based on the oral feedback of individuals; there was no opportunity to validate the information; however, the similarity of the feedback from multiple quarters leads us to believe that the issues do indeed, exist.

## **OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS**

### **Adoption Agencies**

#### **Bihar and Jharkhand**

1. A State-level licensing policy for Adoption does not exist. Some of the existing orphanages do adoption placements. Orphanages are registered under the Societies Act 1860. They have laid down their respective aims and objectives and work accordingly. A few agencies have applied to CARA for a license to facilitate domestic and international adoptions. Unfortunately, none of the agencies has obtained a license so far.
  
2. Bihar is perhaps the only state which did not receive Central Government funding for Adoption, in the year 2003-04.
  
3. There is little or, no control over the agencies in Bihar and Jharkhand. All the agencies work independently without any accountability and control by either the Central or State Government bodies.
  
4. The State Government has no knowledge of the adoption agencies and orphanages in the state. No records are available with the Adoption Cell, Department of Social Welfare, Bihar.

5. In the absence of, a specific legal process, adoptions are facilitated through a simple legal procedure where, after an approval from the Governing Committee of the orphanage, the officials and the adoptive parents go to the local court and sign the legal documents before the magistrate and that makes the parents eligible to take possession of the baby.
6. There is no 'Shishu Greh" in Bihar. Shri Rama Nandi Devi Hindu Anathalaya had applied for 'Shishu-Greh' status, a few years ago but due to the apathy of the state government official, their proposal could not move forward until recently. Now the proposal is lying with the Department of Social Welfare, Government of India for further decision.
7. It is understood that about 65-70 adoptions in a year, take place in Bihar; most of them are routed through The Missionaries of Charity (which has five centers across the two states) and, a few other agencies.
8. In very few cases, CARA or BVCA are informed.
9. The existence of the Bihar Voluntary Coordinating Agency, BVCA too has not been able to bring about a change in the system.
10. The Adoption Cell of the Bihar State government wants eventually, to develop a system and be a part of a well functional network. However, there is a helplessness of sorts; they do not know where and how to begin
11. There is a general lack of awareness about Adoption. Most people are unaware of the existence of adoption agencies and the legal aspects involved in it. Also, misapprehensions and misconceptions about adoptions in Bihar's caste-ridden society, continue. It is believed that there are indeed, a number of parents also who want to adopt, but they are not aware of the process. Even officials who run the orphanages and destitute homes are unaware of any formal process.
12. In most cases, an adoption happens only when adoptive parents walk in, inquiring about the availability of a child that they can take home. Generally, the agency seeks an application from the adoptive parents. As a matter of formality, an investigation is made (in most cases by the untrained officials of the orphanages) to find out the background of the adoptive parents. Then an approval is sought from the Governing Committee of the orphanage. After getting the approval, the officials and the adoptive parents go to the local court and sign the legal documents before the magistrate and that makes the parents eligible to take possession of the baby.

13. A similar procedure is followed by the Missionaries of Charity too. They carry out their legal process from The Ranchi Court. Even in case of such orphans who live in their centres in Patna and Bhagalpur which are in Bihar and which fall in the jurisdiction of a different court.
  
14. It is believed that the incidence of illegal adoptions is not uncommon. The illegal adoptions directly take place from maternity homes or private hospitals where in most cases, unwed mothers give birth to the babies and then give them up. In some cases, birth parents themselves give away their babies because either they have one or more girls or are very poor and cannot bring up the baby. They are also, sometimes paid for doing this.

It is an acknowledged fact, that a number of prominent doctors who run their own maternity or nursing homes are involved in the facilitation of such adoptions. This preference to adopt a known child is often attributed to the fact that the adoptive parents, by and large, know the genetics of the adopted baby.

## **Maharashtra**

1. The study of Adoption Agencies and Destitute Homes in Maharashtra was undertaken with the permission of the Social Welfare Department, Maharashtra State Government. 32 agencies and Destitute Homes were identified which included 7 Adoption agencies, which formed a part of the study.
  
2. Approximately 123 adoptable children are currently available for adoption. The bulk of these children comes from one agency which routinely, transfers children to its branch in a metropolitan city. It is likely therefore, that most of these children will be placed in adoption.
  
3. Many of the agencies from Western Maharashtra and Konkan region are known to transfer the babies legally free for adoptions to agencies in Pune and Mumbai.
  
4. Regular promotional efforts are resorted to; each agency undertakes promotion in its own way- through posters, advertisements and radio.

5. **There is close State-level coordination and monitoring.** The agencies are generally, well maintained and have trained staff.
6. Some agencies have more children than the stipulated 10 but are afraid of suggesting movement for fear of being branded as ineffective for handling adoptions and government grants being effected.
7. It is informally learnt that some of the agencies in the metropolitan cities discourage transfers of children to their agencies because the children are 'not up to the mark' and finding homes for them is difficult.

### **Orissa**

1. The visits to the agencies in Orissa was made, in connection with another CSA initiative. The informal feedback received from some of the agencies, re-inforces some of the findings in our study of Bihar and Maharashtra and have therefore, been used here.
2. Approximately 150 children, mostly girls and some 'special- needs' children are available for adoption.
3. The agencies are well - run. The agencies are generally conscious of the health and hygiene factors and the children seem well - looked after.
4. Children are sent to local schools by many of the agencies.
5. Local awareness and support are lacking; adoptions do not happen frequently. Donations and public support is not visible.
6. Procedural delays do exist particularly where the judiciary is involved.

7. **The VCA and the State Welfare Department have been taking an active interest.**
8. The State Government is very keen that adoptions should happen locally i.e. in Orissa
9. An Association of Aparents does not exist; in fact adoptive parents prefer not to openly acknowledge the 'adopted' status of their child.

### **West Bengal**

1. The visits to the agencies in Kolkata were made, in connection with another CSA initiative. The informal feedback received from some of the agencies, reinforces some of the findings in our study of Bihar and Maharashtra and have therefore, been used here. CSA did not visit the premises where the children are housed.
2. As in all metros, there are more waiting Aparents than adoptable children.
3. The agencies are hard -pressed with the burden of administrative formalities.
4. The VCA and some agencies did not seem to see eye-to-eye.
5. An Aparents Association, "Atmaja" does exist. However, there is little interaction with either the VCA or, with Agencies.

### **Orphanages and Destitute Homes**

### **Bihar and Jharkand**

1. Bihar is the ninth largest and second most-populated state in India. The number of orphans and destitute children too, is very high. In fact, there is no proper count of such children in the state. Even the State Government does not have any record of such children. Our study identified 552 institutionalized destitute children (head-count in homes visited) living in the 13 destitute homes visited.
  
2. As per the records of BVCA, there are 18 institutions in both the states. But apart from these, there are about 7 to 10 more orphanages located in Kishanganj, East & West Champaran, Patna, Katihar, Bhojpur and Buxar districts, which are still not a part of the network developed by BVCA. Some of these institutions are located in remote areas and are working in isolation. In fact, the homes run by religious organizations are reluctant to be a part of this network.
  
3. Also, institutions like Yateemkhana Anjuman Khadimul Islam, Patna have not sought BVCA's or government's support due to their religious nature. Other Yateemkhanas have also been reported to be running in Muslim dominated district of Kishanganj and Katihar. They still are not in an organized form and are being governed by clerics of the community. The rehabilitation of the orphans is done entirely by the management which does not generally seek external help. The male children attend madarasas; the female children do not receive any education. It is learnt that the girls, on attaining maturity are often 'married' to affluent older men; often money is paid to the institution in lieu of such arrangements.
  
4. The total number of adoption agencies, orphanages and destitute homes therefore, will be higher (approximately, 28 – 30, in the two states put together).
  
5. The table below shows the number of institutionalized children in the Orphanages/ Destitute Homes, visited :

1.	Kishore Dal Bal Niketan, Patna	18
2.	Rama Nandi Devi Hindu Anathalaya, Bhagalpur	57
3.	Dipti Mission, Sahibganj	70
4.	Madyanand Ananthalaya, Danapur	24
5.	Aanchal, Patna	00

6.	Jeevan Jyoti Kala Kendra, Muzaffarpur	00
7.	Vishweshwarnath Hindu Anathalaya, Bettiah	37
8.	Woodland Welfare Society, Patna	08
9.	Karuna Nivedita Ashram, Ranchi	17
10.	Missionaries of Charity (5 centers)	105
11.	Yateemkhana Anjuman Khadimul Islam, Patna	100
12.	Prakrit Arogya Ashram, Rajgir	100
13.	Vishweshwarnath Hindu Anathalaya, Begusarai	22
<hr/>		
	Total	552
<hr/>		

It is difficult to assess the exact number of orphans from this population but it is expected that the numbers will be quite high. The staff in the institutions suggested that the numbers were substantial. Also, many of the children had been left there for years without any parental contact. Since these children had been handed over to the institutions either by a parent or relative, notwithstanding the fact that no one ever came to visit or see the child, the child could not be treated as an orphan.

6. Other than the above figures, thousands of orphans and destitute children in Bihar and Jharkhand live on footpaths, railway stations, and juvenile homes. They beg and commit petty crimes to feed themselves. Many of them migrate to neighbouring states- Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai.

7. Four types of orphanages and destitute homes exist in Bihar and Jharkhand in addition to Government-run Remand Homes for children in conflict with the Law.

.. **Christian Missionaries:** Missionaries of Charity have five centers in Bihar and Jharkhand and they have a good network in India and abroad. More than 90% of the adoptions in Bihar, takes place through them. They have a facility of transferring the children from low-demand areas to high- demand areas.

Other than Missionaries of Charity, there are a few more Christian agencies, the concentration being in the tribal areas of Jharkhand. Dipti Mission, Sahibganj and an old Missionary in Bettiah are other Christian agencies, but they are more like childcare homes and are not into adoptions.

**Old style of orphanages:** Most of these orphanages were set up in early and mid 20<sup>th</sup> century by the affluent Hindu landlords, educationists and businessmen in order to protect the interests of Hindu orphans. One of the agendas of the founders of these agencies was to stop the Hindu orphans from going to Christian Missionaries. The names of most of these agencies end with "**Hindu Anathalaya**".

*Shri Rama Nandi Devi Hindu Anathalaya, Shri Madyanand Hindu Anathalaya, Shri Vishweshwarnath Hindu Anathalaya, Shri Ram Sumiran Shilpshala and Kishore Dal Bal Niketan* are old style of orphanages. They have acres of land and property. But due to autocratic style of functioning, financial crunch and lack of trained staff, they are now finding it difficult to sustain. Their own land and property are the only sources of income now.

One problem, which was noticed that they have not been able to adapt to the changing situations and they still follow the same old style of working. That is why some of them are on the verge of closure.

**NGOs set up by new and enterprising social workers:** A new breed of enthusiastic and enterprising social workers have set up their NGOs to work in the field of adoptions. They are new and have better contacts. Despite financial and other problems, they are committed to work. Most of these agencies however, do not have children for adoptions. Only Karuna, Ranchi has five children below six years who can be adopted. Aanchal, Karuna, Jeevan Jyoti Kala Kendra and Woodland Welfare Society are part of this set. But even here, except *Aanchal*, no other agency is being managed and run by trained staff or officials.

**Yateemkhanas (orphanages run by the Muslim Community):** Many of these orphanages are located in Patna and other districts of the state. These orphanages are run by the Ulemas or, clerics and work in isolation. They do not have any external connection other than within the community.

8. Most Destitute Homes are run on private funding and revenues from the property of the owners. Almost all the agencies are on the verge of financial breakdown.
9. Most of the orphanages other than the Missionaries of Charity and a few others, are in state of complete apathy and misery. The rooms are dingy with improper ventilation and lighting. The walls have cracked and the roofs are leaking. Non-existence or lack of toilets has forced the children to go to the open fields. A very few orphanages have fans in the rooms where the children live.
10. The orphans get clothes which are donated to them by the well-wishers. Good food is a dream for most of the children. Financial crunch has forced the officials to feed innutritious food to the inmates. For Instance, children In Shri Madyanand Hindu Anathalaya almost everyday, eat 'sattu'.or, gram flour. The condition of other orphanages is more or less similar.
11. Education up to school level, is available in some agencies; a few of them run their own schools. The quality of the education however is questionable in many cases. Of the 11 destitute homes, 6 run their own school with the help of the State Government. In order to generate revenues to run the home, local children are given admission. The fees that they pay are used to run the orphanage. There is generally, a teacher or two appointed by the State Government. Often the staff of the orphanages double up as teachers. These individuals are neither trained teachers nor, trained social workers.

Very often, the rooms occupied by the inmates are used as a classrooms during the day.
12. Vocational education is imparted in some of the homes. However, such training rarely helps a child's rehabilitation. Also, such training is confined to skills such as carpentry, tailoring, electrician and baking. Immediate job opportunities are not available. Female inmates receive very little vocational training.
13. Girls are in many cases married off. The effort in ascertaining the quality of the marriage or, the groom/ his family is questionable. It is quite likely that many of them end up as domestic help. In one agency run by a specific community, the girls are married off to disabled men from that community.

14. In some agencies (those owned by the erstwhile land owners), the children work on the fields and perhaps, end up as bonded labor.
15. A shocking finding in the states of Bihar and Jharkhand is the existence of an illicit trade where girls mainly tribals are moved into large cities with the lure of employment. While some of them find work as domestic help, many of them end up in the flesh trade. The involvement of orphanages in this, is not known.

## **Maharashtra**

1. The destitute homes in Maharashtra are run either by the State Government or, Social organizations (NGOs). The two sectors together, run over 100 destitute homes and adoption agencies in Maharashtra.
2. The **government agencies** comprise of District Probation Homes and Remand Homes located generally, at district headquarters. Some of the districts have even two or more such homes. Destitute children who are above six and below eighteen years of age, are eligible to live in the government run homes. They include children in conflict with the law, those from very poor families and, orphans. The government provides food, clothing and education to such children.

The homes are run by the Department of Social Welfare, State Government of Maharashtra. The government spends Rs. 450 per month on each child apart from the expenses incurred on education. The superintendents, medical and teaching staff, are on government pay roll. The cooks and housekeeping staff are generally casual workers.

The government also runs State homes for children from Destitute Homes, who are between eighteen and twenty- two. They are imparted formal and non-formal education. They get technical and vocational training in State homes which helps them in their rehabilitation.

In addition, several **non-government organizations** also run destitute homes and adoption agencies. They form a part of the social sector aimed at the welfare of the society. They receive government, corporate, international funds and donations to carry out their activities. They are non-profit in nature and are run by a Board of Trustees. They are required to submit their annual reports to the Charity Commissioner of their area of operation. Almost all the adoption agencies working in the facilitation of adoptions are from this sector.

3. All the agencies in the state are registered with the government. The District Family and Child Welfare Officer who is an employee of State Social Welfare department, monitors the activities of the agencies operating in the district. He

informs all the agencies and the concerned departments in the state when a new permission for a destitute home or an adoption agency is granted or, when one is de- recognized.

4. **The destitute homes in Maharashtra are well maintained irrespective of who runs them.** Children are provided good food, clothing and shelter. The district probation home has different menu for the entire week. The Superintendent checks the quality of the food before it is served to the children. Everywhere, there are trained staff to look after the children.
5. It is an interesting fact that even the taluka places in the state have a destitute home. Most of such homes are run by the voluntary organizations.
6. Probation homes are involved into education and after- care of children who are above six or seven years of age. They are not involved in the facilitation of adoptions. There is only one probation home in the entire state which has a Shishu Greh and which facilitates adoptions- about 10 adoptions in a year.

The limiting factors of this study, did not allow for a clear assessment of the actual numbers of children who are orphans from the children residing in Orphanages/ Destitute Homes / After-care centers. However, it is clear that there are many who are orphans. Also, there are several who apparently, have a parent or, a relative who has left the child in the orphanage. Many such parents do not maintain any links with the child until the child attains maturity when the child is re-claimed as an earning member of the family.

## **Summation of findings**

### **Adoption Agencies**

#### ***Availability of adoptable children***

1. Most Agencies that are located outside metropolitan cities have children (mostly girls) who can be placed in adoption. This is seen both, in Maharashtra and Orissa.
2. Many of the agencies located in metros have long lists of waiting parents-in the range of 50-70. Many agencies were unwilling to reveal the exact numbers.
3. Inter-State transfer of children across agencies or, across states are very few except in Maharashtra where with the permission of the State Welfare Department, transfers within the state take place. Transfers across branches of the same agency with the consent and permission of the Social Welfare Department/ Magistrate / Collector, are quite common in some

4. Many of the agencies are unwilling to consider transfers for fear of being labeled as non- performers (unable to place children in adoption) and the funds being controlled or even discontinued.
5. Aparents who have registered with Agencies in metros prefer to stay there even though the waiting periods are long. Primarily they are concerned about the credibility of the agency from where they wish to adopt and in the absence of any information on the agencies in the non- metros, they prefer to wait.

There is also, the question of the legal and other processes, which often require the Aparent to stay in the location of adoption for lengthy periods of time.

### ***Administrative and other issues***

6. Agencies are unanimous in their observations about the growing procedural stringencies and the **rising power pockets**. Some of the observations are as follows:

#### *6.1 Lack of trust*

.. Most Agencies feel distressed at the apparent lack of trust that all regulatory bodies display (CARA, VCA, Scrutiny Agency, Judiciary and the State Government) in dealing with them. The entire focus, it would seem, centres around identifying lapses. Most often the regulatory authorities give the impression that all agencies are out to commercialize adoption. Agencies concede that mal-practices have set in, in some agencies and therefore, aggressive monitoring may be necessary. However, equally strong is the belief that the defaulters find ways of getting out and mal-practices continue. It is unfortunate that a few unethical agencies have paved the way for stringent and sometimes unnecessary, controls.

.. With the introduction of several centres of control (which turn into centres of power), the entire process has slowed down considerably. Also, the consequent work pressures take a toll, on the staff.

.. The threat of cancellation of a license looms large all the time; agencies are always fear of being pulled up for the omission and their license withdrawn.

#### *6.2 Voluntary Coordinating Agency (VCA)*

- .. The focus of the VCA's role has shifted more towards monitoring and regulation than coordination and promotion.
  
- .. The VCA is allowed to register prospective Aparents and to do home studies on their own. This results in their own lists of waiting Aparents. Thus when a child is referred to an agency through the Child Welfare Board via the VCA, it comes along with an identified Aparent who was registered with the VCA. The parents registered with the agency take a back- seat.
  
- .. Delays in issuance of 'No-Objection certificates' despite specific guidelines from CARA, are very common.
  
- .. Though tenures of assignment are prescribed for the CARA Steering Committee no such prescription applies to the VCA.
  
- .. Agencies are anguished at the obvious lack of understanding of a child's trauma, in being referred time and again to several parents (to meet the quota of 3 'rejections') only to be rejected. Even after that, the VCA sometimes claims that the agency has not tried hard enough for a local / in-country placement.

### 6.3 *Legal process*

- .. The legal procedure coupled with a lack of sensitivity on the part of the Judiciary, leaves scope for deferment and delay. Often a decision is deferred due to the absence of one of the three members of the JWB. Often dates are set and shifted time and again due to the absence of one of the members; each time the child is taken to the court.
  
- .. Agencies unanimously agree on the need for streamlining processes and, sensitization of the Judiciary .

#### 6.4 *International Placements*

- .. There is a near, clamp-down on international placements.
  
- .. The definition of 'special-needs' not being clear, the VCA most often rejects the 'no-objection' on the grounds that in-country placements should be attempted.
  
- .. While agencies completely agree that the focus should be on in-country placements, they believe that in most cases **they are able to assess the prospects** of a child being placed internally immediately after the child arrives. In those circumstances, keeping the child waiting for an in-country placement which leads to his/ her continued stay at the agency is neither desirable for the child, nor the agency. It leads to the emotional trauma of the child and blocks space for a new child coming in.
  
- .. Agencies while conceding that the Indian child perhaps, does face some negatives vis-a-vis the cultural difference in being brought up by an (apparently) alien family in an alien country, quote the cases of several visiting adoptees who have been successfully nurtured abroad and who are happy and well-settled individuals. Also, their contention is that an international placement is certainly the preferred option to institutional care and half- hearted rehabilitation.

#### 6.5 *Administrative inconveniences*

- .. Reports and Administrative requirements, a consequence of regulation and monitoring by multiple agencies, create immense pressures on the social workers of agencies.
  
- .. Many Shishu Grehs have more children than the stipulated 10, leading to financial and work pressures for the agency and staff respectively.

#### 6.6 *Promotion in non-metros and illegal adoptions*

.. Many agencies believe that illegal adoptions continue unabated. Also, the cumbersome

procedures encourage people to resort to private adoptions.

.. There is very little of promotional effort in the non- metros. Awareness is both poor and distorted. Even in the metros, in view of the changed scenario, it is no longer relevant to encourage adoptions. Agencies opine that Promotion of adoption should now, centre around discouraging illegal adoption and channelising all adoptions through recognized agencies and legal measures.

## 7. Other factors of relevance

### 7.1 *Enlisted Agencies (agencies located in countries abroad authorized by CARA to deal with Indian Placement Agencies)*

.. At present there are 74 recognized Placement Agencies in the country and 254 enlisted

agencies. These include 133 government departments in more than 25 countries. During the year recognition of 19 placement agencies was renewed by CARA and 3 new agencies were recognized. Further the enlistments of 10 foreign agencies were renewed and 5 were enlisted afresh for sponsoring foreign parents for adoption of Indian children\*.

With a clear shift in focus towards in-country adoptions, one would wonder about the fresh enlistment of 5 new international Placement agencies.

.. The status of in-country and inter-country adoptions since 1998\* is, as under:

Year	In-country Adoption	Inter-country Adoption	Total
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1998	1746	1406	3152
1999	1627	1293	2920
2000	1890	1364	3254
2001	1960	1298	3258
2002	2014	1066	3080
2003	1949	1024	2973

\*source: Annual Report 2003-2004 Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India

Quite clearly, the overall numbers of adoptions have come down over the years (3258 at its peak in 2001 to 2973 in 2003). The years 2001 and 2002 show a marked shift in favor of in-country adoptions. However, in subsequent years there is a reduction in numbers.

International adoptions have reduced significantly (1406 at its peak in 1998 to 1024 in 2003). In normal circumstances, it would reflect the effectiveness of the shift towards in-country adoptions. Unfortunately, a reduction in the total number of in- country adoptions belies this claim if any.

## 7.2 *Best Interests of the child*

The (Government of India) Guidelines to Regulate matters relating to Adoption of India Children 1994) clearly focuses on the 'best interest of the child". As the guidelines state Generally in all matters concerning adoption whether within the country or abroad, the welfare and interest of the child shall be paramount.' The best interest of the child is re-inforced in the Convention for the Rights of the Child. 'Best interest' however is not defined and it would seem that all concerned stakeholders concentrate only on the end- segment viz. the actual adoption.

It is important to consider that every child who is being placed in adoption has undergone intense trauma. The intensity differs form child to child but the trauma

exists in each of them. The trauma continues and is often aggravated by the following:

- .. Non-availability of personal care and identification with one single individual. To add to this during infancy, the period of 0-6 months, except that the infants are well fed and hygiene is ensured, little conscious effort is made to address the age-specific needs of the child. This period being the most important phase for the brain development of the child, the significance of 'best interests' being applicable to this stage can hardly be over- emphasized.
  
- .. Likewise, every time a child is adopted and leaves for a 'home' those left behind are left wondering when it will be their turn. The significance of 'best interests' being applicable to this stage can hardly be over-emphasized.
  
- .. Repeated references and related rejections/ non-acceptance by Aparents leaves a severe impact on the child. Similarly scrutiny by officials where the child becomes the centre of discussion leaves a huge, negative impact on the child. The significance of 'best interests' being applicable to this stage can hardly be over-emphasized.
  
- .. Every time the child is taken to court and has to wait for hours for something which s/he hardly understands can hardly leave the child un- impacted. The significance of 'best interests' being applicable to this stage can hardly be over-emphasized.
  
- .. The age of 0-6 years are most significant for the social development of a child. Every additional day spent at the agency impacts him/ her, negatively. Despite the best efforts agencies cannot provide for the companionship, socializing or heterosexual interaction that a child so needs at this stage. The significance of 'best interests' being applicable to this stage can hardly be over-emphasized.

It would seem that there is an intense paradox in the intention of 'best interest' and its actual application. Unfortunately, Adoption agencies, sometimes unknowingly and unwillingly contribute to this. Most agency workers form some kind of attachment with the children who reside with them. They identify the children as "our children". This sense of attachment casts a consequent responsibility on them to place the child and they would rather have the child waiting for a home with them, than moving the child to another agency where a parent may be waiting.

## **Destitute Homes and Orphanages**

1. An assessment of the position prevailing in orphanages in Maharashtra and Bihar would seem to suggest that the level of care and re-habilitation, can be only as good as the State makes it. Quite clearly the extent of re-habilitation in Maharashtra is of a much higher standard than that prevailing in Bihar.
2. Clearly, large numbers of children who are confined to Destitute Homes / Orphanages are those that are eligible for being placed in adoption. Keeping them confined to such homes amounts to depriving the child of his right to a home.
3. Also, the case of those children who have no contact with a parent / relative for several years but continues to remain in the orphanage simply because he is not relinquished, needs examination .
4. Most certainly, there is scope for a virtual movement of children from Destitute Homes and Orphanages, into adoption.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

CARA's pre-determined objectives of Adoption in India are that any initiative taken in improving the adoption- position in the country must be directed towards in-country adoptions. To the extent possible, such adoptions should also, happen locally. CSA entirely agree with this view.

Our recommendations while keeping the aforesaid directive in mind also, looks at the current realities identified in our study.

## **Waiting Adoptable children**

1. Without doubt, children are available for adoption. Most certainly, many of the agencies located in non- metros have children waiting to find homes. **Immediate efforts must be made to move the children across agencies and where necessary, across states.** Having said that, we are aware that all the waiting children may not find homes in their local states nor even, some of them, in India. In the circumstances it would unfair to keep them waiting in institutions in the hope that local awareness can be generated and the children can then be placed. We recommend:

.. a clear, and case by case assessment of all such children

.. efforts to place them in -country within a period of 6 months by moving them across agencies and where necessary, across states.

.. If this does not happen, it is preferable that they be placed internationally

### ***Promotion***

2. The desired levels of In-country child adoption in India cannot be achieved unless extensive promotional effort is initiated. Promotion would include awareness on adoptions as also, awareness of the negatives of illegal adoptions. Given that substantial budgets are used for promotional work and that the present-day need is different from what it was, we believe that the **promotional effort needs to be planned as a state- level and state-specific, campaign.** The VCA with facilitation by the State Government, must actively coordinate with the print and electronic media (newspapers, magazines and Television) to focus on adoption. Advertisements, editorials, advertorials, articles, etc. must be positioned alongside TV coverage. This must be supported by workshops, seminars, road-shows, etc. The campaign may be extensive and spread over, about 6 months.

We recommend that the initiatives be taken by the Social Welfare Department of the State Government.

### ***Best-Interest of the Child***

3. As we have said earlier, our intrepretion of the 'Best-interest-of-the-child" does not begin with the final placement. In fact, the child's specific needs, in the light of the trauma that each adoptable child has gone through, begins on the day the child comes in for adoption- even before, for the abandoned or lost child. We recommend

.. **A case by case assessment of each child that has remained in an agency for more than a year.** CARA or the State Social Welfare Department should set up a Working Group consisting of representatives from Adoption agencies to determine the action to be taken with regard to each child.

.. Every endeavor must be made to minimize the time spent by a child in an agency / institute.

.. Sensitization programs (distinct from procedures, law, etc.) covering the child-developmental aspects related to the trauma that a child has already undergone and the need for proper understanding and positioning of the adoption. Such programs should include the Police, Buaracracy, Judiciary and Media. (both print and electronic).

.. **Customized Training** should be imparted to Childcare workers and Social Workers from Agencies. Such training should cover Childcare, Counseling and Documentation.

We recommend that CARA set up a Working Group to examine the functional requirements and thereafter assign the task of developing the program(s) to a reputed Training Institute that specializes in Child Development. All Social Workers from Adoption agencies must thereafter be given the training.

#### ***Administrative inconveniences***

4. The negatives of Administration and processes / procedures are so many and so marked, that it needs separate examination. It appears that the absence of clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities and more importantly, of accountability, has led to an extensive and perhaps, unnecessary monitoring machinery.

Also, With only about 3000 adoptions per year, an administrative machinery consisting of

CARA, the State Social Welfare Department, the VCA, the Scrutiny Agency, the Judiciary and finally the Adoption agency itself hardly seems justified. It is our belief that **de-centralization may provide answers** to several issues of discontent. If Maharashtra is an example to go by, it would appear that the larger the involvement of the State, the better the end results.

We recommend the setting up of a Working Group to examine the matter.

### ***International Placements***

5. The question of international placements needs to be explored suitably. While conceding that cultural differences make the transition of an adopted child into an adoptive western home quite difficult, the feedback received from several parents in the west, and also, that of adoptees (several of whom visit the country) gives us the conviction that such placements are perhaps, better alternatives to a child remaining institutionalized. Also, the question of 'special-needs' needs to be addressed. The decision as to who can be declared a 'special needs child' cannot be left to the whims and fancies of an individual.

CSA is not aware of any study that assesses the success or otherwise, of an international placement and strongly recommend such an initiative under CARA's supervision.

### ***Non-Resident Indians***

6. Though the CARA Guidelines place NRIs second on priority list for adoption of Indian children until recently, they were considered in par with Indians. With the new regulations that require clearance from the VCA, apparently some disparity is felt by NRIs

**We strongly recommend that the status of NRI on par with Indians be immediately restored.**

### ***Virtual network for children to move into adoption***

7. Our studies in Bihar and Maharashtra clearly reveal that:

State Destitute Homes and Orphanages may have several children who are orphans and can with due diligence and subject to the legal process, be moved into adoption.

The status of rehabilitation that exists in such homes, even in the states that are better off, is less than the desired levels; very few children from these homes

actually get rehabilitated. At best, an extent of literacy is achieved, but the child is far from being able to fend for and support himself/ herself, when grown.

If Adoption is the better alternative and if there are children who are young enough to be adopted, it is desirable that we find ways and means of moving at least some of these children onto adoption.

**We recommend a state-level study for one state, preferably Bihar, to examine the feasibility of such movement.**

## **Conclusion**

We at CSA are convinced that **Networking is the answer** to most of the issues that have emerged. Several agencies- both Government and non- government, address the same problems each in its limited way and repetitiously. Children continue to languish in some agencies while in others, parents continue to face the anguish of prolonged waiting. Children who can never find homes in domestic placement continue to languish because someone who has the authority or, has assumed the authority thinks that he has the right to prevent the movement; the child seems forgotten in the entire exercise.

**The focus must shift from regulation to promotion** and each stakeholder must function in the best interest of the child. Also, the overlap of functions must be eliminated. Those involved in regulation should continue to regulate; those who have a promotional role must confine their initiatives to promotion.

The focus of adoption can not remain agency-centered. The focus must shift to the 'best interest of the child' and all measures must be coordinated such that optimization of the benefits of adoption to the destitute child is achieved.

The time is opportune for CARA to perhaps, widen the adoption network and also include orphans from orphanages and destitute homes for children. Also, CARA should perhaps, manage by exception and focus largely on policy matters. Delegation of authority, clarification of roles and responsibilities, and accountability are some of the immediately desired outcomes. CARA would do well to include the Adoption Community and work through stakeholders, particularly State Welfare Departments.

## **Networking to enhance Indian Adoptions**

### **Report on Adoption Agencies, Orphanages and Destitute Homes in Bihar and Jharkhand**

CSA visited the agencies listed below; for purpose of confidentiality, the names of the institutions (other than the VCA, Patna), are not indicated here.

#### **BIHAR VOLUNTARY COORDINATING AGENCY, PATNA**

##### Background

The State of Bihar is considered to be among the poorest in the country. The State also has one of the highest number of neglected children and children living in difficult circumstances, being destitutes and abandoned due to poverty and other reasons. While deliberating upon the 'Adoption programs' in the country inter alia, the Supreme Court of India in its judgment pronounced that every State should have a Voluntary Coordinating Agency (VCA) to ensure proper implementation of the laws pertaining to adoption and neglected children. Prayas and East & West Educational Society have established the statutory body as a separate society, named Bihar Voluntary Coordinating Agency in response to the Supreme Court's judgment. The Society has a network with NGOs and the State Government to regulate and facilitate in-country and inter-country adoption of children.

BVCA is recognized by CARA, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India to promote adoptions and create awareness about adoption.

##### Activities

- .. Capacity building of NGOs through training and workshops
- .. Advocacy on child labor and child rights
- .. Research on neglected children in Bihar

##### Special Features

- .. Extension of Prayas model for street and neglected children to other states for the first time.
- .. Collaboration with other NGOs.

## Funding

- .. Terre Des Hommes (TDH), Germany, CARA.

## Number of Staff

- .. Four.

## **NGO 1**

### Background

The NGO works in the field of education. The society is one of the promoters of BVCA. Though, the society is not directly involved in running an orphanage or adoption center, they help others in doing so. Advocacy for adoptions is one of their major activities.

The Society runs a school for about 70 poor children. The parents of a few children have criminal background. Some of them are also serving jail- sentences.

### Activities

- .. Primary and secondary education to poor and underprivileged children of the society.
- .. Advocacy for adoptions, child labors, juvenile justice.

## Funding

- .. State and central government schemes.

## **Orphanage 1**

## Background

The Orphanage located Patna, is one of the oldest orphanages in the city and was set up in 1960. The institution also runs a school in the same premises. The school imparts education to the girls up to standard VIII. Subsequently, the girls are sent to another School for higher secondary education. The institution makes arrangements to support those girls who opt for higher education, otherwise, they are married off, after they complete their matriculation. This is the policy of this institution.

The institution also, imparts vocational training in areas such as tailoring, embroidery, etc. It is felt that the training does not provide employment opportunities for the adult orphan.

At present there are 18 orphans of which, 17 are girls. The orphanage has been facilitating adoptions for a number of years, but a very few people express their willingness to adopt the girls.

## Activities

- .. Free education to the orphans up to class tenth.
- .. Facilitation of adoptions.
- .. Imparting vocational training

## Funding

- .. Donations
- .. Tuition fees collected from the students other than the orphans.

Present Number of Orphans / Destitute children

.. 18.

## **Orphanage 2**

### Background

Orphanage 2 was established in 1925 in Bhagalpur district. This orphanage has its own building and land. Like most of the orphanages, this orphanage too, runs a school in their premises in which students other than the orphans are also allowed to study. The orphans get free education in the same school along with other children. There is no financial support from the government.

At present 57 orphans live here. Of these, 23 are in the age group of 0 – 6, 13, between 6 and 10, 16, between 10 and 15 and 5, between 15 – 25. Out of the 57 orphans, there are eight girls who are between 3 and 12 years. Despite the financial constraints, the management has been trying it's best to keep the children in a better condition.

Since 1970, eight orphans have been adopted. The management like other orphanages in Bihar follows a very simple legal process. The adoptive parents are asked to submit an application to the management to adopt a child. The officials then go through the social-economic background of the parents. The management representative and the adoptive parents go to the District Court and sign the legal papers before the magistrate. This makes parents eligible to take possession of the child.

### Funding

.. Donations

.. Tuition fee collected from the students other than the orphans.

.. Revenue from agricultural land and building.

### Number of Staff

.. Seven.

Present Number of Orphans / Destitutes

.. 57.

### **Orphanage 3**

Background

The orphanage is located in Sahibganj, Jharkhand. It is basically a children's home where orphans and destitute children from the tribal community live. Many parents come to the mission and leave their wards here, because they cannot afford to bring them up. A large number of such children go back to their homes once they attain the age of 18 years. At this age, they can start earning for their families and support their aging parents. There are about 70 children in the organization. The place is neat and clean; the children get good food to eat and clothes to wear.

Activities

.. Education up to a minimum level is imparted to the children.

.. Vocational training.

Funding

.. Foreign donations.

Present Number of Orphans / Destitutes

.. 70.

## **Orphanage 4**

### Background

This orphanage is similar to the one in Bhagalpur. But it is in a very bad condition. In fact, the gentleman who manages the orphanage is about 75 years old. He seems unable to manage the orphanage now. He is also not mentally healthy to control the 24 children living there. All the children are above 3 years of age.

There is a government run school in the premises where the children undergo primary education.

The children are fed "Sattu" a local food made out of gramflour. All the children are living in one room. A few shops on the front side of the orphanage have been given on rent, which is the only source of income apart from some donations by the local community.

### Funding

- .. Rent from the shops owned by the orphanage.
- .. Donations.

### Number of Staff

- .. Two.

### Present Number of Orphans / Destitute children

- .. 24.

## **Orphanage 5**

### Background

The Orphanage was established recently. Founded by a former employee of BVCA, the orphanage has been working in the promotion and facilitation of adoptions since its inception. The orphanage is supported by BVCA in the fulfillment of their objectives.

The Orphanage has facilitated six adoptions in one year. Housed in two rented rooms, this agency is solely funded by its Founder, who also is an employee of Bihar Government. She is perhaps, the only trained social worker with an MSW degree, working in the field of adoption in Bihar.

#### Activities

- .. Adoption felicitation.
- .. Promotion of adoptions

#### Funding

- .. Self-funding by the founder.
- .. Donations.

#### Number of Staff

- .. Five.

#### Present Number of Orphans / Destitute children

- .. Nil.

#### **Orphanage 6**

## Background

Registered as an Adoption agency, this NGO is located in Muzaffarpur about 90 kilometers north of Patna. The agency has taken a room on rent in Hotel Bihar near Bhagwanpur Chowk in the town.

This is one of the agencies which has applied to CARA for a license. There are no children at present.

## Activities

- .. Adoptions facilitation.
- .. Promotion of adoptions through various means.

## Funding

- .. Donations.

## Present Number of Orphans / Destitute children

- .. Nil.

## **Orphanage 7**

## Background

The orphanage was established in 1947 at Bettiah town of Bihar. At that time orphans and destitutes were sent to the Holy Cross Society, the only orphanage working in Bettiah. To counter the inflow of Hindu children into a Christian orphanage, a local landlord set up this orphanage. He also, donated 75 acres of land to the orphanage. The land is a major source of income for the orphanage even today.

It is learnt that several of the children are used to work on the fields.

#### Activities

- .. Adoptions facilitation.
- .. Promotion of adoptions
- .. Formal and informal education (agriculture)

#### Funding

- .. Revenue from land and building.
- .. Donations.

#### Number of Staff

- .. Five.

#### Present Number of Orphans / Destitute children

.. 31.

## **Orphanage 8**

### Background

The Orphanage was primarily started to educate children through formal education system. The society runs a few schools in different locations in Patna. The Founder, had rented a place where the children are housed. She takes care of their educational and other needs.

At presently eight girls in the age group of 3 to 20 years are in the institution and most of them have lost either of their parents. Some of the girls are staying with their mothers in the institution.

### Activities

- .. Education to the orphans and destitute children up to secondary level.
- .. Childcare.

### Funding

- .. Self-funding by the founder.
- .. Donations.

### Present Number of Orphans / Destitute children

.. 8.

## Orphanage 9

### Background

The Orphanage in Ranchi is one of the agencies where a closely-knit family of orphans lives. The love and affection for each other is both, visible and amazing. The Founder, having lost his wife and children, himself takes care of each child. He is supported by some local business families. He motivates all the children to pursue their studies and hobbies.

Generous local businessmen have donated most of the electrical fittings and playing instruments. The institution, however seems to be in an acute financial crunch which is evident by seeping roofs in all the rooms and old clothes worn by the children. Despite all this, this agency houses some extraordinary children.

### Activities

- .. Education
- .. Facilitation of adoptions.
- .. Training in various extra curricular and vocational activities.

### Funding

- .. Donations.

### Number of Staff

- .. Three.

Present Number of Orphans / Destitute children

.. 17.

## **Orphanage 10**

### Background

The Orphanage is one of the oldest of a network of orphanages and destitute homes in Bihar and Jharkhand. They have a large number of children living in their five centers spread across Bihar and Jharkhand. These centers are located at Ranchi, Patna, Bhagalpur, Dumka and Jamshedpur.

Out of about seventy legal adoptions which take place in the two states, more than 90% are through this agency. They have a large network in India and abroad. The main center is at Ranchi and all the legal procedures for adoptions are carried out from Ranchi even for the other centers.

The Agency has a facility for transferring children from low-demand areas to high-demand areas for adoptions.

### Activities

.. Domestic and international adoptions.

.. Childcare.

### Funding

.. Government.

.. International aid.

Present Number of Orphans / Destitute children

.. 105.

## **Orphanage 11**

### Background

Established in 1929, this orphanage, one of the wealthiest orphanages of past is now, on the verge of closure due to financial problems and negligence of the government. Presently, there are twenty-two orphans in the institution who are imparted vocational training for their rehabilitation. The minimum age for taking a child is eight years and he is supposedly rehabilitated by eighteen. As a matter of policy, no girl child is admitted here. The management feels that their rehabilitation is the most difficult task.

The orphanage is spread over 23 acres of land on which children themselves grow food crops and vegetables. Lack of financial support has worsened the condition of this institution and it may close anytime.

### Activities

.. Vocational training

### Funding

.. Donations from individuals and local bodies.

Number of Staff

.. Ten.

Present Number of Orphans / Destitute children

.. 22.

Annexure-2

**Networking to enhance Indian Adoptions - A study on Adoption Agencies and Destitute Homes in Bihar and Maharashtra (supported by feedback from Orissa and West Bengal)**

Report of Adoption Agencies, Orphanages and Destitute Homes in Maharashtra

-

CSA visited 32, government / semi-government and NGO-run Destitute Homes and Adoption Agencies covering Ahmednagar, Aurangabad, Jalna, Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur, Ratnagiri, Solapur, Pune, Nashik and Latur. Reports on seventeen of these are given below. Those not covered here are destitute homes for children run by government/semi-government funds. The status of the children in most of these are similar. They are generally decently looked after. For the purpose of confidentiality, the names of the institutions are not indicated here.

An assessment of children who are legally free for adoption and are waiting in Adoption agencies, to find parents, is given below:

Name of the agency	No. of Legally free children		Total
	Males	Females	
Agency 1	05	09	14
Agency 2	NA	NA	73
Agency 3	01	02	03
Agency 4	NA	NA	10
Agency 5	02	02	04

Agency 6	01	02	03
Agency 7	00	00	00

There are ten more legally free children at one of the agencies; all of them are above six years of age.

### **Agency 1**

This is a semi Government organisation which runs a juvenile home and an adoption center. 279 destitute children, consisting of 130 males and 149 female, live here. The home has 23 orphans who are free for adoption. Out of these, 14 are in the age group of 0 to 6 years comprising of 9 females and 5 males.

The infants are being looked after very well. There are two 'aayas' on duty round the clock to look after these children. The room where these infants live is very spacious and has cribs for all the children. It has got a huge space where children can move and play without getting hurt. The aayas also live in the same room.

The observation home promotes adoption through posters and radio advertisement. They are able to place about 10 orphans every year.

### **Agency 2**

This agency is located in Ahmednagar. They have gained a bad reputation due to certain apparently, illegal practices . A lot of news reports have also been published against them. Presently, they are facing a legal battle. Their future depends upon the ruling of the Court, The agency has 10 destitute children.

### **Agency 3**

The Agency was established by the members of Lions club, Aurangabad in 1971 to support destitute children. All the trustees are well known industrialists and businessmen of Aurangabad. They generously donate money to the balsadan.

Presently there are 11 destitute boys ; 5 of them are in the age group of 10 to 12 years, 6 are between 12 and 15. Girls are not allowed to stay in the home.

The Home also gets regular government grants under various schemes. The money is spent on education, food and clothing. The Balsadan does not have it's own school. Children are sent to different schools and colleges for their education. An in-house teacher who teaches the children in the evenings extends additional support. Her focus primarily is on improving the English language of the children. Almost all the destitute children find employment in the business establishments run by the Trustees. In fact, many of them are presently working as technical and non-technical trainees in various manufacturing and non-manufacturing units and are likely to find permanent employment soon.

#### **Agency 4**

The Aurangabad branch of this agency which has its main center in one of the metropolitan cities, has the maximum number of children free for adoption. It is learnt that about 73 orphans are available at present. All are in the age group of 0-6 years.

The Agency has better facilities than any other destitute home in entire Marathwada region of Maharashtra. Children's rooms are very clean and have proper ventilation and light. They get good food and clothing.

The Agency staff were reluctant to provide information on the actual number of children available.

#### **Agency 5**

This Agency in Aurangabad is a very small but well-organised adoption agency. The agency has 5 children at present and all are below five years. Three of them are males while two are females. The children here are looked after very well. The agency is able to place about 4-5 orphans every year. The office of the Agency has a lot of informative posters and pictures on adoption. Two resident Auxiliary Nursing Midwives are there to take care of the children.

### **Agency 6**

This is a family run destitute home which has 40 destitute children who belong to different districts of Marathwada region. All the destitute children are male and are over 6 years of age. The atmosphere of the home is more like a hostel. In fact many of the inmates have their parents who are poor and live in villages. They have left their children in this destitute home so that they can pursue their studies in schools and colleges of Aurangabad. The destitute home is housed in the residence of the founders who run the home.

This home has not placed any destitute so far and are not planning one even in future. They run on government grants. Dominance of family members may be noticed in the running of the home.

### **Agency 7**

Government Juvenile home, Aurangabad has 105 destitute children in the age group of 5 - 18 years. All are male. Adoption is not a priority here and the management does not promote adoption. Children live here and go to educational institutions of Aurangabad for their education.

### **Agency 8**

This home is located in Satkar Nagar in Jalna. It is a government run agency which runs on government grants. The Juvenile home has 35 inmates. Some of them have committed crimes while a few have parents who are in jail.

The home also runs a school up to the 10<sup>th</sup> standard in association with another local school. The school has a separate home for destitute children apart from the Juvenile home. Out of 70 destitute children, only two are below six years of age.

### **Agency 9**

This agency has been de- recognised by the Department of Social Welfare. The agency was a registered as an adoption agency. Misuse of government grants by this agency was reported which followed its de-rocgnition and subsequent closure. This was the only registered adoption agency in Jalna.

### **Agency 10**

The Agency is located at Mantha taluka in Jalna district. There are 25 male destitute children the age group of 5 - 15. It may be noticed that the destitute homes located at taluka places have their own schools which get grants from Zillha Parishads. Unlike the cities, the children living in destitute homes at taluka places are from nearby villages. Most of them have either both or one parent. Parents send their wards to destitute homes due to poverty or certain family problems.

### **Agency 11**

Visiting a Balsadan at a taluka place in Maharashtra gives similar experiences. No difference could be found here too. This home has similar environment as homes at Mantha and Ghansavari. There is one very good thing in Maharashtra that the destitute children do not have to fend for themselves. They can find an alternate home close to their homes. Even the poor parents can come and see them occasionally. This destitute home has 30 boys.

### **Agency 12**

This Agency in Ghansavari taluka of Jalna district is a destitute home for boys only. There are 50 boys in the home. The children study in the school which is run by the society within the premises.

Adoptions rarely take place from the destitute homes located at taluka places. They are being run by an individual or a group of individuals because they get grants from governments of Maharashtra and India.

### **Agency 13**

This District Probation Home in Satara is one of the most organised probation homes in entire Marathwada and Western Maharashtra regions of the state. Presently, 148 destitutes live here, of which 72 are girls. Barring a few children in conflict with the law, most of them come from poor families. Many children have their parents living in Mumbai as mill workers or daily daily wage workers. Some of the children have been living here for many years waiting for their parents to return and take them back to their respective homes.

The government spends money on the education and upbringing of these children who are in the age group of 6 to 18 years.

### **Agency 14**

It is a home set up specially for those destitute children who are above 18 years of age. Destitute children can stay in this home until the age of 22. The government imparts a lot of technical training to these destitute children.

The trades in which the training is imparted are, electrician, carpentry, tailoring, food processing, etc. The home also supports the children in pursuing their higher education. A destitute is expected to leave the home when he or she is 22.

### **Agency 15**

This Balgruha is located on Khandgaon road at Latur. The devastating earthquake in early nineties had made ways for the creation of destitute homes and orphanages in Latur and Osmanabad districts to rehabilitate the orphans whose parents had died. The number of orphans then was very high and a lot of national and international funds were pouring in.

This is a home which has separate homes for destitute children as well as women. They are also into facilitation of adoption and have been issued a license by CARA for in-country adoptions.

### **Agency 16**

This Shishu Sadan in Latur gets grants under the 'Shishu Greh' scheme of central government. This home is also a licensed adoption agency which has permission to facilitate inter-country adoptions.

One can observe a lot of similarities in the adoption agencies. Firstly, all the adoption agencies have been initiated by NGOs or trusts. Secondly, government does not play a vital role in the promotion or facilitation of adoptions directly. It gives funds to NGOs for this cause. Lastly, all of them have trained staff round the clock to take care of the children.

Shishu Sadan also falls in the same category. They receive funds from abroad and Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of India.

### **Agency 17**

ANNEXURE-3

**Feedback Form**

(For institutions)

01.	Name of the Institution	
02.	02. Address	
03.	Telephone No.	
04.	Fax	
05.	E - mail	
06.	Year of Establishment	
07.	Registration No	
08.	Contact Person	
09.	Designation	
10.	Funding Sources	
11.	Type of organization	

**12. Children in the Institution :**

Sr. No.	Age Group (in yrs)	Orphan		Destitute		Others	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
01.	0 – 2						
02.	2 – 4						
03.	4 – 6						
04.	6 – 8						
05.	8 – 10						
06.	10 – 12						
07.	12 – 15						
TOTAL							

**13.. Details of Adoptions in last 5 years :**

Year	Domestic	International	Total
	Males	Males	

	Females		Females		
1999 – 2000					
2000 – 2001					
2001 – 2002					
2002 -2003					
2003 -2004					

14. Adoption promotion initiatives, if any

16. Government support in promotion of adoption if any

17. What is the legal process followed by you while facilitating an adoption ?

18. Which social, cultural and political hazards do you generally face at the time of facilitating the adoptions ?

19. What are the rehabilitation measures for the children ?

Education :

Vocational Training :

--

Others :

--

20. What are the reasons for the non-adoption of a child ?

--

21. Any other information, which you feel, is important :

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The remand home and balgruha at kagal, district, Kolhapur was set up by a local politician.