Analysis of Government Policies About Orphanages: Myths And Realities: A Case Study of Sarhadi Yateem Khana In District Mardan

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Abstract
An orphanage is an institution devoted to the care and up-bringing of children who have lost their parent(s). All over the world countries have devised policies and programs for protection and well-being of the orphans. This study aims to analyze Government policies in Sarhadi Yateem Khana; an orphanage of District Mardan. Center of this study is to analyze the educational, food and recreational aspects of the policy. The study has used qualitative research design using interview schedule as tool of data collection. There were gaps between the policy and its actual practice in all the areas. The Government should take initiatives in fulfilling the financial needs of the orphanage which is the core cause of the various weaknesses in the facilities. Similarly the authorities and caregivers of the orphanages must be provided with opportunities for professional advancements keeping in view national and international standards of care.

Key words: Orphan, Orphanage, Policy, Myth and Reality, Food, Education, Recreational facility, Mardan

I. Introduction
Child population makes up 2.2 billion of 7 billion world’s population. Exact figures are not available; no all nations have accurate census information. But according to the recent report, “The Report on the Situation of World Children” published by UNICEF in 2014, there are 153 million of orphans. The regions where most orphans live are Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. According to the report, among the orphans over 71 million orphans live in Asia. Similarly, about 40,800,000 live in South Asia. Pakistan is among the top ranked countries in this regard and ranked as No.8 having approximately 4,200,000 orphans. The definition of orphan varies from country to country and region to
region but in the light of its main indicators, an orphan is defined as a child up to 15 or 18 years of age, who has lost his father, mother or both parents (Smart, 2003). Although the definition of orphan varies but I will use the term orphan as defined by Rose Smart in my research study.

It is every child’s birthright to live, get education, healthcare, shelter and protection against physical, moral and psychological abuse. Due to orphan hood these children are deprived of the above mentioned basic requirements and facilities. In order to fulfill its commitment of safeguarding and developing the well-being of the orphans, the people place deprived children in large residential institutions like orphanages, destitute homes and charity educational institutions in socio-economically poor Asian countries. An orphanage is an institution dedicated to the care and up-bringing of children who have lost their parent(s) (Rather & Margoob, 2006). In most cases, Institutional care was introduced early in the twentieth century by missionaries or colonial governments, replicating what was then familiar in their home countries (Tolfree and David, 1995). Millions of children around the world currently reside in residential institutions. Globally, it is estimated that over 2 million children are living in orphanages. In most developing countries, no one knows how many children reside in such care and how many residential institutions are presently working (Williamson and Greenberg, 2010).

Throughout the world countries have devised policies and programs for protection and well-being of the orphans and deprived people in light of their cultural outlook, vision and resources. In line with the international community, both Federal and Provincial governments of Pakistan devised policies and programs for caring and rearing of children with focused on their health, education, shelter, psychosocial protection, security, nutrition etc. in the orphanages. Here in my research myths correspond to the policies devised by the government or private sector in orphanages which regulates the functions of the orphanages. And realities mean the actual practice of those policies. The same is the case in Mardan; the second most important city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where three prominent orphanages are working in Mardan, Sarhadi Yateem Khana Shamsi Road Mardan, Pakistan Sweet Home Baghdada Mardan and Al Islah Centre Shiekh Maltoon Mardan. In light of the available literature, figures and my personal observations, the present study is devised to look into the ideal and actual position of care and rare of orphans in Sarhadi Yateem Khana Shamsi Road Mardan. The present study is designed to explore the real position of educational, food and recreational facilities provided in the selected Orphanage at Mardan city.

2. Literature Review

The practice of putting orphans in this type of institutional care is prevailing in the poor Asian countries from the last many years (Rather and Margoob, 2006). Most of the researchers and people are against the orphanages on the basis that orphanages are expensive to operate and have little to fulfill the emotional needs of the orphans (Drew, 1998). Similarly orphans in orphanage can face social and emotional problems (Ahmad & Mohamad, 1996). On the other hand, orphanages can be seen as workable option for the care of the orphans as kinship care cannot handle and provide that much care and attention to the orphans. If the orphanage is close to conventional family setting then it will affect the health of the orphans positively (Ahmad, Qahar, & Siddiq, 2005).
2.1 Education Facility

According to Miller (2008), educating orphan is an important element in their social well-being and reducing poverty. Education has the power to bring enormous improvements in the lives of orphans by granting knowledge and life skills. Education has a great role in the psychosocial development of orphans. It gives them hope in chaotic times. The access of the orphans must be ensured to quality education (UNAIDS, n.d). The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2007) argue that severe barrier to the enrollment of the children is not only the school fee but also textbooks, school supplies and uniforms.

2.2 Food Facility

According to The Framework for the protection, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children, 2004, the orphans are at extreme danger from malnutrition and sickness and they are less likely to get the required medical care. Further according to Lang (2003), one of the important components for the support of orphans is food and nutrition. Under nutrition causes more than one half of deaths in children in developing countries.

2.3 Recreational Facilities

According to strategic framework for orphans and vulnerable children, 2001, it is essential to incorporate effective measures into other activities of the orphans which include structured recreation, art culture and sports activities that allow isolated orphans and other vulnerable children to integrate socially. Ratey (2008) suggests that exercise and physical activity helps brain cells grow, modify, and work together, promoting memory maintenance and learning. Through recreation a person learn new skills, he gets fun and achieve stability in their lives (Recreation facility plan, 2010). Through recreational activities, youth learn how to bargain with the peers, resolve conflicts and work together. Parks and other recreational facilities and activities help the young to develop relationships with non-parental adults (Hillman, Erickson, and Kramer, 2008).

3. Methodology

Locale of the study is Sarhadi Yateem Khana Mardan (Orphanage), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The orphanage is run by the well-known Qazi family of Mardan from decades through financial help of the donors. It is located on college-shamsi road near District Head Quarter Hospital, in Mardan city. There are 70 orphans in the orphanage. The study is qualitative in nature where the primary data is collected through in-depth face to face interviews with the orphans (4 in number), caretakers (3 in numbers), managing director, and director of the orphanage (1 each) along with observations. The collected data through interviews, observation and secondary documents is analyzed by interpretive approach.

4. Discussion

The collected data is discussed under different themes emerged from the primary data, observation, and secondary documents as follows

4.1 Education Facility by the Orphanage:

According to the policy on orphanages in Pakistan under Pakistan Bait-ul-mall Act the orphanages in Pakistan shall ensure the provision of free quality education to the orphans in the best schools of the area to the highest level. On the contrary, most of the orphans of Sarhadi Yateem Khana go to the Government schools and only talented
students of the orphanage are provided with a chance to appear in the entry tests for enrollment in the private school. In this regard the interviews from the authority of Sarhadi Yateem Khana reveal that they are financially unable to enroll all the orphans in English medium private schools. They wish to open their own school but the funds were not supporting their idea. The Managing Director said the community makes many promises to cooperate in their educational plans but they do not fulfill their promises. As the Managing Director of the orphanage argued:

“...many organizations, schools and the affluent people promises us to support us in initiating better educational initiatives for the orphans but the problem is, the people forget their promises and as usual the plans remain unaccomplished but we are working on our own school building and hopefully soon we will get into a school In Sha Allah. ...” (Managing Director).

There is no skill development initiative in Sarhadi Yateem Khana but there was a computer lab. The authority of the orphanage told that there were skill development initiatives in the orphanage in the past but they were abolished due to the lack of interest of the orphans but they are planning it. This finding is in coincidence with the research finding of Rather and Margoob (2006), who researched the orphanages in Kashmir who argued that stress should be laid on the income generating abilities of the orphans through skill development initiatives in the area of their interest.

According to Miller (2008), the children not only need to be enrolled in the schools but they also need compulsory uniform, shoes and school supplies. The Sarhadi Yateem Khana provide all these necessary materials to the orphans in the orphanage. There is also no proper career counseling of the orphans at Sarhadi Yateem Khana but there is proper arrangement of Religious education in the orphanage.

4.2 Food Facility by the Orphanage

According to the policy on orphans and orphanages, “The orphanage will ensure the provision of free nutritious balanced diet according to the weekly menu, keeping in view the age of the orphans. On contrary, there is no menu system in Sarhadi Yateem Khana. The provision of food depends on charities from the community. The affluent people of the community send mutton to the orphanage which is then served to the orphans time by time. But the food is fresh and served in a clean environment. An extract from the interview of an orphan of Sarhadi Yateem Khana is:

“... The food is very good, there is meat, rice and everything here but there is no menu. Although our likes and dislikes are considered and there is a dining room, we all sit there for our lunch, tea and dinner. The food is presented and served in a good manner ....”

(Orphan)

In the same way, regarding the absence of menu the President of Sarhadi Yateem Khana said:

“... There is no menu; the people send mutton in charities, sometimes two goats, sometimes three. The meat is in such a huge amount that if the people gave us money for the meat it would have been better for us, similarly people send rice etc, the breakfast of the orphans is also notable, we give healthy breakfast to the orphans. . .” (President)

4.3 Recreational Facility by the Orphanage

In this regard the field data from Sarhadi Yateem Khana reveals that the orphans of Sarhadi Yateem Khana mostly play outdoor games but the indoor games are limited.
The Discourse

The orphans play outdoor games outside the building of the orphanage in a ground called The Company Bagh as the ground inside the orphanage is short and the orphans cannot play outdoor games. Most of the orphans in the orphanage demanded for a vast and large ground in the orphanage. The authorities of the orphanage had appealed to the government that the government should come forward and support the orphanage financially for repair and enlargement of the ground.

There is no mini library in the Sarhadi orphanage. According to the policy, the orphanage must ensure the trips of orphans to parks and scene places. Data from Sarhadi Yateem Khana reveals that there is no proper system of tours or picnics of the orphans. The arrangement of tour or picnic depends on the sponsorship and the funds available. The interviews reveal that some prominent affluent people sponsors the tour and take the orphans to nearby scene places, similarly the NGOs sometimes take the orphans to scene places.

Similarly there are no proper social gatherings of the orphans in Sarhadi Yateem Khana. Investigating the facility of TV and Cable facility the field data reveals that there is a TV in the Sarhadi Yateem Khana and the orphans use to watch it in the noon and at night. But there is no concept of recreational club in the orphanage which is very important in terms of recreation. The orphans sit with the elders of the orphanage at evening and that is their only social gathering.

“….we meet our friends outside in the playground, we have gossips, and in these gossips we learn new things. We also sit with the elders of the orphanage mostly in the evening or at night and learn new things from them. It teaches us good lessons...” (Orphan)

5. Conclusion

With regard to the study objectives, policy and empirical evidences it is concluded that the facilities in the orphanage are good and agreeable but there prevail gaps between the policy and its actual implementation. In education, there is lack of skill development initiatives, career counseling and quality education. In food, there is lack of menu system although its quality is pleasing. Recreational facilities also lag behind the standards. There is lack of mini library, proper indoor games, social gatherings, recreational club and lack of adequate ground for playing. There is no proper and scheduled arrangement of recreational tours. The root cause of all the gaps in the orphanage resides in the unavailability of proper funds, which calls for the Government and the community to come forward and take initiatives to support the orphans.

5.1 Suggestions

There is a lack of a statistics regarding orphans and orphanages in Pakistan and a comprehensive policy on the subject is also lacking. Therefore, preparation of comprehensive policy document and data base of the orphans is requiring the attention of the government. Further, the policy document may also be made accessible to all especially the concerned authorities, organizations and individual researchers. The registration of the orphans may also be made mandatory. Active involvement of and collaboration among governmental, non-governmental organizations, local communities, the faith-based communities, families and caregivers, along with children and youth are needed. Similarly the number of the caretakers should be in proportion to the number of the orphans in the orphanage in order to give proper attention and time to the orphans.
5.2 Education Facility

Various government agencies, companies and foundations need to fund programs aimed at providing quality education for the orphans. The community should sponsor maximum number of the orphans for their quality education in English Medium Schools. Stress should also be laid on skill development initiatives, career and psychological counseling, computer usage and informal education of orphans. Training of orphans is also central.

5.2.1 Food and Recreational Facilities

A menu system for food should be followed in Sarhadi Yateem Khana with balanced nutrient diet. Indoor games facility, adequate ground, recreational club. And Mini library must be made available. Social gatherings and picnic facility on constant basis is also vital.

References


