

## **Child Care Institutions and Orphans situation : A study in Kamrup Metropolitan district of Assam**

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### **Abstract**

Children who have lost one or both of their parents or who have no survivors, are called orphans. When these children become orphans, they become helpless and become orphans or vulnerable children. To enable them to live well in the society, child care homes have been established by both government and non-government organizations.

### **Objective of the study:**

Despite providing all kind of basic or needy facilities to the orphans, what are the reasons for which orphans coming to the orphanages, how is the condition of orphans after living in the orphanages that has been tried to know through this paper.

### **Methodology:**

Present study adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods, where questionnaire, observation and interview techniques were used as a tools. 110 (hundred ten) orphan children of 5 (five) orphanages were the sample of the study, where simple random sampling were used.

### **Findings:**

Here, it was found that, orphanages staff member are very supportive and taking care of them. And most of the orphanages are well established and in a good environment, which is important for orphan's overall development. Orphanages are tried to provide every facilities, likes- food, Hygiene, personal comfort, health facilities, recreational and educational facilities etc to the orphans. Still, there are many such reasons, due to which orphan children also face many problems. That is why; the present study is to find out the condition of orphans, in terms of psychological condition, physical health condition, education, and financial condition among the orphans. Therefore, this study is important, because, children are the key for the future development of a nation.

**Key words:** Orphans, Orphanage/ Children Care Home, HIV/ AIDS

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Children are the future of a society. That is why for the bright future of the children, it is necessary to build their present well. And through socialization a child first learn and adopts everything from his parents. But at the very small age when a child losses his parents on whom he was dependent, then that guidance is lost from his life. Then that child feels alone and then he is called an orphan or a vulnerable child.

According to Indian National Family Health Survey-Orphan was defined as children who has been abandoned or has lost both parents. JJ Act said that, orphan is a child who is live without biological or adoptive parents or whose legal guardian not taking care of the child. On the other hand, according to UNICEF report, children who lost their one or both parents under the age of 18 years called orphan. So, Orphan is someone whose one or both parents have died, unknown or have permanently abandoned them and who are not able to taking care of their children. Therefore, there is a great need to care for these neglected, abandoned and orphaned children For the upliftment of these children's situation, govt. and NGOs are established Orphanages in every district to taking care and give protection of these children. Orphanages are trying to provide the homely environments to the orphans and provide the daily requirements for the upbringing of the children like-education, medical facilities, food, clothes etc. Orphan does not have any surviving parent to care for them. Therefore they are not socialized properly. And seems to be the most deprived because their suffering is more for love, shelter and affection. They lost their home and fell loneliness and stressful. Therefore, Many times these orphan children faced lots of social and psychological problems. So, present study tries to see those children who are institutionalized because of their orphan hood. And what kind of facilities are provided to the children in the orphanages and what is their condition after living in the orphanage that is try to see this study.

### **OPERATIONAL DEFINITION**

Orphan: Orphan is a child who lost their one or both parents in bellow the 18 years of life.

Orphanage/ Children Home: An orphanage is an institution for those children whose parents are died or unable to care of them. These institutions provide basic need and taking care of them.

Care taker/ Orphanage staff: Care taker are those who working in the orphanages and taking care of them. They are the working staff members .

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:**

- I. Circumstances under which the children are brought to the Institution
- II. Facilities provided by the orphanages
- III. Consequences or condition of orphans who live in orphanages

### **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

The design of the study is meant for a descriptive study of orphans who live in five orphanages in Kamrup Matro District of Assam. For the collection of data both primary and secondary source has been used. Primary data are collected from the field by observation and Interview schedule from the respondents. Present study adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods, where questionnaire, observation and interview techniques were used as a tools. 110 (hundred ten) orphan children of 5 (five) orphanages were randomly selected for this study,

### **BACKGROUND OF ORPHANS AND ORPHANAGES IN KAMRUP DISTRICT**

Before examining the depth of a study it is necessary to have some knowledge about the particular characteristics of the place and respondents of that study. It helps in developing basic knowledge about the problem. The five orphanages that have been taken for this study are described in details bellow-

**Table No-1 orphanages details which are taken for this study**

S.I No	Name of the Orphanages	Category	Year of Est.	Types of home	Address
1.	Assam Sishu Kalyan Sadan	Girls	1956	Children Home	Sundarbari
2.	Sadou Assam Gramya Puthibharal Sangstha	Boys	2009	open shelter home	Panjabari, Batahguli Ganesh Mandir
3.	Kalyani Niwas (ICCW)	Girls	2007	Children Home	Rup nagar
4.	Kasturi Children Home	Girls/ Boys	2012	HIV positive children Home	Suruj nagar, Six mile
5.	Sishu Mangal Kendra	Boys	2015	Drug abuse rehabilitation center/ home	Noonmati, sector-2, near Kali mandir

#### ***Assam Sishu Kalyan Sadan-***

‘Assam Sishu Kalyan Sadan’ is the first Orphanage in Kamrup District, which is situated in Sundarbari area of Jalukbari. It is approx 1 K.M from the Assam Engineering College road. This Orphanage was established in the year of 1956. The main aim of this Sadan is to provide food, clothing shelter and education to the children and to uplift them mentally, so that they can thrive in society with high self-esteem after leaving the orphanage. This Orphanage is only for girls and now it has around 38 children. The age group of these orphanage children is 6-18 years old. They all study in government school.

#### ***Sadou Assam Gramya Puthibharal Sangstha***

Sadou Assam Gramya Puthibharal Sangstha is a non profitable organisation which is established in 2009. It is an open shelter home for boys where 05 children are found till December 2021. This orphanage work for the child development. Age group of these children who stay in this orphanage is- 6-12.

#### ***Kalyani Niwas***

Kalyani Niwas is a children home for needy and helpless girl children, which is established in 2007. 6-18 years age group children are stay in this orphanage which is located in Rupnagar, Guwahati. Here, orphanage provided all basic facilities for child labour, child marriage, missing, orphan, trafficked, abandoned children who stay in this orphanage. At present there are 43 orphans live in this orphanage.

### **Kasturi Children Home**

Kasturi Children Care Home is a children home for those orphan children, who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. This child care institution is established on 2012 for taking care of children affected by HIV/AIDS infection and became orphans after the loss of their parents. Till date there are 22 orphans in this orphanage with 5 residential staff members (1 mother, 1 cook, 1 accountant, 1 cleaner and 1 counselor) who are working for them.

### **Sishu Mangal Kendra**

This orphanage was established in 2015 for helping destitute children. It is only for boys. This orphanage was located in Noonmati, sector-2. 6-12 years children are kept in this orphanage.

## **REASONS OR CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THE CHILDREN ARE BROUGHT TO THESE ORPHANAGES**

Orphans are those children who have lost either or both of their parents at the age of less than 18 years or have no one to take care of them. These children become orphans due to various reasons. All the reasons found behind the children being orphans by the field study are written in detail below-

**Table No- 2 Main causes or reasons, that forced children to go to the orphanages**

	Reasons	Number of respondents	Percentage
1	Extremely Poor and helpless single or both parents	28	25.45
2	Broken families	15	13.64
3	AIDS victim parents	14	12.73
4	Parents died/ accident /ill other than AIDS Disease	4	3.64
5	Abandonment by parents	16	14.54
7	Child trafficking/ exploitation and child abuse	4	3.64
8	Illegal sexual relation and child birth and Gender selection/ discrimination	3	2.73
9	Child labour/ street children	20	18.18
10	Unknown	6	5.45
	Total	110	100

Source: field data collection from 24 February 2020 to 12 January 2021

The above table indicates that, majority of the respondents 28 (25.45 percent) came to the orphanages because of their poor family conditions. 15 (13.64 percent) respondents came for the dysfunctional families or broken families, There are 14 (12.73 percent) children who lost their parents to AIDS, 4 (3.64 percent) respondents are found who came to the orphanages because they lost their parents in accident or suicide or in other disease, there are 16 (14.54 percent) respondent who have been abandoned by their own parents, 4 (3.64 percent) children are came in child trafficking cases, 3 (2.73 percent) orphans are found whose parents surrender them or leave the baby at the gate of the nearest orphanage or in front of a hospital or in a dustbin, 20 (18.18 percent) children are came to the orphanage in child labour case and 6 (5.45 percent) children have no idea for which reason they came to the orphanages. They came these orphanages in very small age.

How the children came to this orphanage as an orphan, is presented below by three case studies-

### **Case study – 1**

Deepa Das (age-15, Place- Tejpur) She came to Kasturi Orphanage on 31<sup>st</sup> August of 2012. She came at the beginning of this Orphanage. She lost her mother to HIV in 2010 due to lack of treatment. Her parents worked in a restaurant in Siliguri. Due to HIV, her father's health condition was also not good and so he kept Deepa with her grandmother before he died. But there no one who treated Deepa well because of HIV. Even the clothes and foods were given to her separately which were not touched by them and a room was allotted for living which was far away from their rooms. In the summer day, they forced her to wear cloths covering the entire body. They thought that, mosquito bites can spread HIV. That's why her grandmother also used to tell her to stay away from everyone. And one day they left her in the Orphanage. Now she studies in class IX.

### **Case study - 2**

Gourav Dey (age- 2 years 6 month) and Bismita Dey (age-5 years), Place- Kasturi Child Care Home). On September 2019, the Dhubri police had rescued a mother with her child near the Dhubri station. After that the child line department gave the child to an NGO and admitted the mother to a government hospital. During treatment, it was revealed that the woman was a HIV positive person, but due to delay in treatment they could

not save her. Because of the virus of HIV in the child's body, that NGO made contact with CWC and in 1<sup>st</sup> January CWC referred him to Kasturi Children Home ( Because this Orphanage work specially for HIV infected children)

### **Case study - 3**

In 5<sup>th</sup> January 2020, a HIV infected girl came to this Orphanage via CWC. Her name is Bismita Dey. Some women left that girl in the CWC office because of her alcoholic and HIV infected father kept her locked in a room and did not come back for two-three days. After that when the counselor went to CWC office for document verification of the new children, she noticed that Gaurav Dey's parents name and address which was mentioned in polio card( which they got from his mother) and Bismita Dey's address was the same. After that counselor went to HIV treatment center and came across the documents of both and saw both belonged to the same family. Currently both live together in Kasturi Children Home. They also lost their father recently in 20th January,2020.

### **FACILITIES PROVIDED BY THE ORPHANGES**

Orphanages are established for the upliftment of orphan children's overall development. Therefore they tried to provide all kind of facilities which are necessary for their day to day life.

**Table No- 3 Facilities provided by the Orphanage**

No	Facilities	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Fully dissatisfied
1	Food and nutritional	34 (30.90%)	45 (40.90%)	21 (19.09%)	10 (9.09%)
2	Hygiene	11 (10%)	24 (21.81%)	55 (50%)	20 (18.18%)
3	Shelter facilities	55 (50%)	35 (31.81%)	12 (10.90%)	8 (7.27%)
4	Leisure time activities	12 (10.90%)	23 (20.90%)	8 (7.27%)	67 (60.90%)
5	Educational facilities and vocational training	22 (20%)	19 (17.27%)	31 (28.18%)	38 (34.54%)
6	Health care	42 (38.18%)	54 (49.09%)	14 (12.72%)	0

#### **Food and nutritional**

From the observation and data collection it is found that for developing immunity system orphanage also try to provide nutritional foods for orphans for their healthy growth. They give breakfast, lunch, dinner according to physician's consultation. 34 (30.90 %) orphans said that they are highly satisfied with the orphanage food facilities, 45 (40.90%) orphans are agree that they are satisfied, 21 (19.09%) orphans are dissatisfied and 10 (9.09%) orphans are fully dissatisfied with the food facilities with are provided by the orphanages.

#### **Hygiene**

From the observation it was found that, most of the orphanages are provided two separate bathroom and toilet for girls and boys. For cleaning cloth and campus maintenance they have one cleaner who properly cleaning the campus every day, one cook for well equipped the kitchen and dining hall and one mother for take care of children. In the hygiene facilities, it was seen that, 11(10%) orphans are highly satisfied, 24 (21.81%) orphans feel satisfied, 55(50%) orphans are dissatisfied with the water, kitchen and bathroom's hygiene facilities and 20 (18.18 %) orphans agree that they fully dissatisfied with orphanages hygiene facilities. Most of the orphanages have not a good drinking water facilities. They have to buy drinking water and the water is also not good.

#### **Shelter**

Shelter is important for orphans to meet their basic need and security. These five homes also provide ventilated room, bad, mate, bed sheet, pillow and all other necessary items according to weather. From these five orphanages, it was found that, 55 ( 50%) orphans are highly satisfied with the orphanage's shelter facilities,

35 (31.81%) orphans are satisfied, 12 (10.90%) orphans are dissatisfied and 8 (7.27%) orphans are agree that they are fully dissatisfied with the orphanage's shelter facilities.

#### **Leaser time activities**

For the mental satisfaction and health development extracurricular activities or leaser time activities are very important for children. These five children care home provided both indoor and outdoor play materials for the orphans, like- ludo, carrom, football, badminton etc. They also organized picnic tour and other activities. From the above table it was found that, 12 (10.90%) orphans are highly satisfied with their leaser time facilities, 23 (20.90%) orphans are satisfied, 8 (7.27%) orphans are dissatisfied with their facilities and more than half of the orphans 67(60.90%) orphans are agree that they are fully dissatisfied with their leaser time activities.

#### **Education and vocational training**

Education helps in intellectual development of children in every state of their age. On the other hand vocational training is helping orphans to build a strong foundation for their future. Here, it was found that, 22 (20%) orphans are highly satisfied, 19 (17.27%) orphans are satisfied, 31 (28.18%) orphans are feel dissatisfied and 38 (34.54%) orphans are fully dissatisfied with orphanage's education and vocational training system.

#### **Health care**

After lost of parents orphans are face lots of physical and psychological related health problems. That is why orphanage gives free health check up for every child. Here we can see that, 42 (38.18 %) orphans are highly satisfied with the orphanages health cervices, 54 (49.09%) orphans are satisfied, 14 (12.72%) orphans are feels dissatisfied and no one can strongly disagree with the orphanage health services.

#### **CONSEQUENCES OF ORPHANS WHO LIVE IN ORPHANAGES**

A child always takes emotional and psychological support from his parents and home. But, after the death of his parents, that child loses that support. Because of which it is mostly seen that children face psychological problems in their life, like- anxiety, depression, frustration etc. For this, children are mostly seen that they accept bad habits in their life. For example, alcohol consuming, drug abuse, prostitution etc. But what happens to the mental condition of those children after coming to the orphanage has been explained bellow-

#### **Health condition of orphans**

Distribution of the respondents on the basis of types of disease children have

Types of disease	No. of respondent	Percentage
Headache	16	14.54
High/ low blood pressure	12	10.90
Asthuma	17	15.45
HIV	10	9.09
Low Hemoglobin	39	35.45
Ear pain/ Stomach pain	9	8.18
Urinary/ Skin infection	15	13.64
Common cold and cough	43	39.09
Not applicable	21	19.09

Health condition of orphans is very poor. Among 110 orphans only 21 (19.09%) orphans are healthy children. Rest of the children are suffering or facing diseases like- headache 16 (14.54%), blood pressure 12(10.90), Asthuma 17(15.45%) HIV 10(9.09%), Low Hemoglobin 39 (35.45%), Ear pain/ Stomach pain 9 (8.18%), Urinary/ Skin infection 15 (13.64%) and Common cold and cough 43 (39.09%). Some orphans have also found who were addicted (Drugs , Alcohol, Smoking) before coming to the orphanages. And all these orphanage's health treatments are doing in government orphanages.

**Education and personality development among the orphans**

Table no- Distribution of respondent on the basis of educational impact among the orphans

SL. NO	Education and personality development among the orphans	Yes	No
1.	Orphans love to go to school	47 (42.73%)	63 (57.27%)
2.	Orphans get any kind of bad behavior by an orphan child in school	23 (20.91%)	87 (79.09%)
3.	Go any pic nic and educational tour	74 (67.27%)	36 (32.72%)
4.	Reading news paper and watching news in TV	24 (21.82%)	86 (78.18%)
5.	Like to participation in co-curricular activities	26 (23.64%)	84 (76.36%)
6.	A playground or play materials for orphans	21 (19.09%)	89 (80.91%)

All orphanages try to provide education to the children. But there are many such children too, who get orphanages at a very old age. These children need to be given vocational training to make them capable enough to do something in their life after leaving the orphanage. But except for 1, 2 orphanages, it is not seen to pay attention to vocational training in other orphanages. And there are not many varieties or options for vocational training in these orphanages.

**Financial condition among orphans**

Table no- Distribution of respondent on the basis of financial condition among orphans

SL. NO	financial condition of orphans	Yes	No
1.	Institution provide any kind of financial support while they remain in outside the orphanage	76 (69.09%)	34 (30.91%)
2.	Personal Bank Account of orphans	19 (17.27%)	91 (82.73%)

From above table we found that, 34 (30.91%) orphans agree that they not face any financial problem but more than half of the orphans 76 (69.09%) said that they face financial problems in the orphanage. Children express their feelings by telling that when they want to buy something from outside for their needs like- buying birthday gift and all, sadly they are not able to buy it. On the other hand, as per the rules of JJ Act 2016, every orphanage child should have their own bank account and it is the responsibility of the orphanages workers to open the account for the children in their own name. But, here only 19 (17.27%) orphans agree that they have their own bank account but more than half of the orphans 91 (82.73%) do not have their own bank account. On the other hand, Government fund is not sufficient for most of the orphanages. According to one of the Kasturi children home's staff member (which orphanage is work for HIV positive orphans)said that, govt. funds come through the State AIDS Control Society for which the fund does not come directly. They got an amount quarterly for HIV orphan's food, emergency treatment and for their education. That is why sometimes they face financial problems to manage some of the remaining expenses of children. It is also found that funds are still the same as it was release in 2013, there has been no increase of fund growth over time. So, the needs of the children are also met by external funding. Like- Sometimes when some parent comes with their children to celebrate their child's birthday in orphanage they gives some important things which they needed, Sometimes celebrity, and political leaders comes to visit the orphanage and they donate some amount of rupees, foods, cloths etc for children.

**Psychological impact-**

Table No- Distribution of respondent on the basis of psychological condition of orphans

SL.NO	Psychological condition of orphans	Yes	No
1.	Getting moral support, love and affection from the staff when they gets hurt	47 (42.73%)	63 (57.27%)
2.	Feel disgusted with some restriction and strict rule	78 (70.91%)	32 (29.09%)
3.	Get angry and aggressive quickly	86 (78.18%)	24 (21.82%)
4.	Suffering from frustration and depression	89 (80.91%)	21 (19.09%)
5.	Fell lonely or thoughtful	84 (76.36%)	26 (23.64%)
6.	Try to commit suicide	32 (29.09%)	78 (70.91%)
7.	Try to run away from the institution	59 (53.64%)	51 (46.36%)
8.	Children able to control their emotions	67 (60.91%)	43 (39.09%)
9.	Family members or relatives come to meet you	53 (48.18%)	57 (51.82%)
10.	Children communicate their problems with others and try to mix with other children	85 (77.27%)	25 (22.73%)

From the above table it was found that, the psychological condition of orphans is not very good. Here, it is seen that, more than half of the orphans 63 (57.27%) agree that they are not getting moral support and love from the caregivers. 78 (70.91%) orphans said that they feel disgusted with some restriction and strict rules which are imposed by the orphanages. A large number of orphans 86 (78.18%) agree that they quickly get angry and aggressive in small things. 89 (80.91%) orphans said that they are suffering from frustration and depression, 84 (76.36%) orphans said that they fell lonely in the orphanages, 32 (29.09%) orphans said that they tried to commit suicide in many times, 59 (53.64%) orphans try to run away from the institution, 67 (60.91%) orphans are those orphans who able to control their emotions and there are 43 (39.09%) orphans who are not able to control their emotions, 53 (48.18%) orphan's relatives are coming to meet them and 57 (51.82) orphan's family members are not coming or not alive to meet them, 85 (77.27%) children able to communicate their problems with others and try to mix with others and 25 (22.73) orphans are not able to communicate their problems with their friends and caregivers.

### **Shelter and condition of orphans**

In these orphanages children with different age (0-18 years) live together and the school going older children needs to be given a separate rooms, for that they need more space. But among five orphanages four orphanages have not found any individual plot or home from the government yet. They are doing their work in a rent house and for that they have to pay a large amount of rents per month, which becomes a big expense for this orphanage and not able to provide separate rooms for elder children. To live with small children, many times older children feeling disturb in their sleeping and reading.

### **Recreational facilities and condition of orphans**

Orphanages are provided both indoor and outdoor play materials to the orphans. But for the rented house, it is not able to provide all kind of outdoor play materials to orphans. They have not sufficient infrastructure facilities to play according to the purpose of children. When I interrogate to the children, most of them did not want to live in that orphanage, because there is no playground for them and there is no sufficient place to roam around.

### **SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION**

1. Staff members of the orphanages should be trained properly in terms of taking care of children.
2. It is very important to give proper guidance and proper counseling to the children from time to time for their mental and psychological development.
3. Vocational training should be provided to the children in every orphanages, so that it will be useful in their future
4. Every child's personal bank account should be opened and given. So that, the accumulated money will be useful in the future of the children.
5. Along with seeing the financial condition of the orphanages, the govt. should also pay attention to whether the govt. funds are well utilized for the children or not.

During this study, we found that when a child lost their parents, they suddenly lost guidance or care in their life. As a result, they feel alone and face a number of social and psychological issues. To ensure the future of these helpless and needy children, the government should pay special attention to them, because children are the backbone of our society.

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