

Study Report (Interim) submitted to District Collector Thiruvananthapuram and Chairman Sree Chitra Home on the affairs of SREE CHITRA HOME FOR DESTITUTE AND INFIRM PAZHAVANGADI THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Introduction

Sree Chitra Home is an abode for the socially disadvantaged and the orphaned children who come from a gamut of diverse socio-economic background. The institution, which is Home for 301 children, needs immediate action in the areas of Structural, Personnel and Behavioral fields. Sree Chitra Thirunal, welfare oriented King, His Highness Maharaja of Travancore established the Home in 1934. Initially it was used as rescue and rehabilitation shelter for the destitute, beggars and later it was turned to accommodate poor children for moulding their future.

Aim and Objectives of the institution

- Providing accommodation, food, clothing and medical aid to the poor and infirm
- Protection, care and education of the helpless children
- To undertake such other measures as are intended to afford relief to the deserving poor and destitute persons in the state

The inmates of Sree Chitra Home get priority from the State Government in school and college admissions, employment and other privileges. Most of the inmates are girls. All are provided with education, food, treatment and employment. Most of the girls are married right partners found by the Authorities. Some of them are taken back to family by the relatives. A few inmates spend their whole lifetime at Home.

Administration

The control and management of the Home, subject to the control of the Government, shall vest in a Board of Management constituted in accordance with the provisions of the rules.

Managing Committee

The Managing Committee of Sree Chitra Home is reconstituted recently vide Govt. Notification No. 7214/C2/06/SWD dated 16/9/06 with the following Members:

Non-Official Members

Chairman: District Collector

- 1) Representative of Sri.M.Vijayakumar
(Honorable Minister for PWD and Law)
- 2) Sri.V.Surendran Pillai
(Honorable Minister for Ports)
- 3) Sri.V.Sivankutty, MLA
- 4) Smt.Lalitha Sadasivan (Social Worker)
- 5) Smt. Pushpalatha (Social Worker)
- 6) Sri Rajendra Das, Citra Home Staff secretary

Official Members

- 1) The City Police Commissioner.
- 2) The Executive Engineer, PWD (buildings).
- 3) The Secretary, Thiruvananthapuram Corporation.
- 4) The Additional Secretary, Social Welfare Dept.
- 5) The Additional Secretary, Finance Dept.
- 6) Joint Secretary, Finance Dept.6

Office

Superintendent is the head of the Institution. Presently Smt. Elsy Abraham, Asst. Director on deputation from Social Welfare Department is working as Superintendent. Wardens look after the welfare of inmates and their duty is on shift. Head Warden assigns duties to the wardens and acts as Deputy Superintendent. The Home has two security personnel who work on shifts.

Staff at the Home

SL.NO	DESIGNATION	NUMBER
1	SUPERINTENDENT	1
2	HEAD WARDEN	1
3	MALE WARDEN	2
4	FEMALE WARDEN	4
5	COOK	1
6	TAILORING INSTRUCTOR	1
7	COMPOSITOR	1
8	CLERK - TYPIST	1
9	STORE KEEPER	1
10	SECURITY	2
11	PEON	1
Total		16

Financial Details

YEAR	PREVIOUS BALANCE	INCOME	EXPANDITURE	BALANCE
2008-2009	8017960	1,55,17,543	1,08,12,737	1,08,12,737
2009-2010	1,27,22,766	1,64,52,653	1,19,86,162	1,21,89,257

Inmates

BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
66	235	301

Parenthood

In Chitra Home there are only three orphans, all others have either mother or father or any other relatives like grandparents, uncle etc. All of them go their family and stay during holidays and attend festivals like Onam, Christmas and summer vacations along with relatives. Unfortunately, all the inmates belong to broken families.

Education

The following table shows the number and status of girl children at education institutions.

STANDARD	NO. OF STUDENTS
NURSEY	3
I	10
II	5
III	10
IV	9
V	14
VI	11
VII	17
VIII	18
IX	19
X	27
+1	15
+2	12
ITI	4
TTC	3
DEGREE	10
PRINTING UNIT	14
TAILORING UNIT	14

OTHER STUDIES	5
OTHERS	15
TOTAL	235

Number of Boys and Their School level

STANDARD	NO. OF STUDENTS
I	4
II	6
III	6
IV	7
V	6
VI	7
VII	7
VIII	6
IX	7
X	5
+1	1
OTHERS	4
TOTAL	66

Level of Satisfaction

FOOD	SATISFIED	NOT SATISFIED
BREAK FAST	0	100
LUNCH	85	15
DINNER	95	5

The children are fully satisfied with the food provided at Home especially lunch and the dinner. But according to them the breakfast is not satisfactory. The reason is that the breakfast is regularly provided by the 'Vanchi Poor Fund' sponsors. For breakfast they regularly provide gruels (Kanji) and children develop a hatred towards the item.

Clothing

Inmates get clothes on festival occasions like Onam, Vishu and Christmas. Children get school uniforms once in a year. Often the relatives also get clothes for them.

Medical care

INMATES	SATISFIED (%)	NOT SATISFIED (%)
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BOYS	90	10
GIRLS	80	20

Medical checkup is done once in a week. A doctor and a nurse from Fort hospital visit on a weekly basis and take care of health requirements of the inmates. In case of any emergency the warden/ elder inmates take the patient to the nearest hospital.

Recreation

Caroms, Chess and Television (without cable connection) are the three recreational facility available at Home

Satisfaction with the recreation facilities provided

INMATES	SATISFIED (%)	NOT SATISFIED (%)
BOYS	5	95
GIRLS	10	90

Requirement of facilities for recreation

GIRLS' PREFERENCE	BOYS' PREFERENCE
Gardening Kitchen garden Indoor games Picnic, Outing, Tour and temple visit.	Basket Ball Badminton Volley Ball

Safety

The safety of the Home is quite inadequate

INMATES	SATISFIED (%)	NOT SATISFIED (%)
BOYS	100	0
GIRLS	10	90

The study shows that the boys feel safe at Home. On contrary girls feel frightened to reside at Home. It is reported that, mostly, three to four times they wake up at night feeling unsafe that someone entered the room and harm them. Many times strangers entered the Home and frightened them, Children said.

Housing and related facilities

INMATES	SATISFIED (%)	NOT SATISFIED (%)
BOYS	30	70
GIRLS	10	90

The study shows that the children are not satisfied with the housing facility provided to them. The buildings are in a dilapidated condition and due to the lack of mosquito nets, sleepless nights are common. The coats provided are in bad shape and even they are insufficient in number. Due to this the children sleep on concrete floors and it becomes all the more worse during rainy /winter season.

Sharing personal problems

According to the study boys, though rarely, share their problems with other inmates. In certain cases they share their problems with particular warden/wardens only who try to solve their problems. Contrary to this, girls will not share their problems with others at Home fearing that they may get insulted.

Counseling at Home

Presently there is no counseling taking place at Home. Problems of the children are unsystematically handled by the elder children or the wardens. At the same time, it has to be noted that children have no trust on wardens and are hesitant to share their personal problems with them.

Physical Torture at Home

There is no noticeable physical torture reported at Home apart from some light punishment by the wardens, teachers and some minor scuffle between the inmates.

Delinquency Details

It is found from the study that there are no juvenile delinquents staying at Home. But some inmates were sent to the Juvenile Home, after being caught when they were trying to escape from the Home.

Use of Mobile Phones

Use of mobile phone is strictly prohibited at Home. A coin box facility is provided for the inmates. But it is evident during the study that most of the senior inmates (15 years and above) have their own mobile phones. The shocking thing is that majority of the phones are equipped with cameras. This is a serious issue since this can intrude into the privacy of female inmates.

Marital Counseling

There had been 30 marriages taken place at Home for the last 5 years. Premarital counseling has been given to all of them. 20 of them (70%) have come back with some adjustment problems with their Partners and families.

Rehabilitation programmes at Home

There are two kinds of rehabilitation training given to the children i.e. tailoring and printing. At present there are 14 inmates learning tailoring and 14 others learning printing.

Lights and Fans

Proper lighting and fans are not provided at Home both in the male and female ward. More than half of them are not working properly.

Waste management

Waste management is a lacuna since there is no proper waste disposal system existing at Home. They are being dumped carelessly and scattered all over the premises in buildings inside the campus of the Home.

Kitchen and Dining Hall

Both are not modern and technologically advanced. Children take food by sitting on the floor without even mats/sheets.

FINDINGS

Following are the major problems found at home during the study.

I) STAFF

- 1) Poor quality of the staff.
- 2) Untrained staff.
- 3) Most of the Wardens are not loving, sympathetic, caring and have no concern to the children.
- 4) Most of the Wardens are hated by the kids.
- 5) Superintendent has got poor support from the staff.
- 6) There is no proper direction, guidance and motivation to the children from the part of staff.
- 7) Poor co-ordination in control at all levels of day- today administration.

II) CHILDREN

- 1) Children are indisciplined and ill-mannered.
- 2) Most of the kids have the habit of bed-wetting.
- 3) Hygiene and cleanliness are in bad shape due to lack of awareness and proper guidance.
- 4) Scuffles and mild ragging is common.
- 5) Lesbianism.
- 6) Girl children are not psychologically prepared to face marital life.
- 7) Romance common among them, even if they are caught with their partners at theatres, park or somewhere they are not bothered about that, as the institution lacks proper accountability and they are not scared of any social stigma.
- 8) Laziness.

SUGGESTIONS AND THE CHANGES THAT HAS TO BE TAKEN PLACE IMMEDIATELY

1. Structural Changes

- The dormitory for the boys is in a dilapidated state. There are no full side walls and through the grills, plenty of mosquitoes enter into the dormitory and making it difficult for children to sleep. As the main drainage of the city runs by the side of the building bad smell disturb breathing. All the furniture are rusty and old. Ceiling fans and the electrical wiring is also quite old and inadequate. Since the building and the entire infrastructure is old, it is beyond repair. The best option shall be to demolish the structure and build a new one, rather than opting for some repair works or providing the children with mosquito nets and making other temporary arrangements.

- The compound walls are to be further strengthened by raising the height and using bricks and barbed wire. As the railway track runs just parallel to the compound wall, this will ensure the security of the children and prevent the entry of anti-socials in the Home premises.

- Toilets and bathrooms are beyond repair and they have to be totally rebuilt. The children take bath in the open air, as the bathrooms are dirty and filthy. Out of the 13 toilets, only two are in a functional state.

- There need to be ample entertainment facilities for the children to watch TV channels and movies. As of now, there is a TV set without any cable connection or antenna. They need to be given enough facilities for entertainment as they find it extremely boring to spend the holidays and vacation time. Indoor games like chess and carom can be encouraged. At the same time, recreation should in no way affect their studies and strict supervision is to be maintained. A kitchen garden can be maintained, for which there is enough space in the premises of the Home. When back from school, they can do weeding and watering the plants. This can be done in batches, giving every child an opportunity on rotation basis. This will inculcate discipline and enkindle them with a positive attitude towards work and also a homely feeling. All these can be done using the unutilized funds which is estimated around 1 crore during 2008 – 2009 (based on the audit conducted on 2008-09). The institution lacks a play ground. The area behind boys ward can be utilized for making badminton, volley ball and basket ball courts.

2. **Personnel:** Presently the Home has only two security guards. It's difficult for them to reach every corner of the institution especially at girl's block.

- A minimum of two security personnel at the female ward and another two for the security of the entire Home are to be deployed.

- At least, four competent and experienced female psychologists are to be appointed exclusively for the girls. Here, the ratio to be maintained is 1:50, i.e., one psychologist for fifty children. The services of Psychologist are badly needed for boys too.

- The Warden has to be an outsider and not selected from the inmates. The outlook and the attitude of a Warden definitely affect the inmates. The inmates are normally cut off from the rest of the world and therefore their experience is very limited. As the inmates are living away from parents/relatives and suffer from destitution they lack the knowledge of the functioning of a normal social life. These children are to be brought up with sufficient education and they are to be instilled with the right set of values to manage a good family and social life. An inmate from among them may not be able to guide the rest as he/she lacks

vision and experience. So a proper guidance of somebody from the outer world can better the vision of the inmates and prepare them for a better future life.

- Since the Home is situated in the heart of the city, there has to be regular night patrolling by the police to ward off the disturbance of outside anti-social elements.
- Particular days shall be fixed for permitting children to move outside for essential purposes like purchase, visit to temple etc. Children should be permitted to move only in batches accompanied by warden on duty.

3. **Behavioral**

- The attitude and the behaviour of most of the inmates are not at par with the lives of the common people in the larger society. The behavioural patterns differ from child to child as they come from different social and family circumstances. The negativity of a few children can affect the lot of others very easily. Also, the surroundings of the Home which is the breeding ground of all sorts of antisocial activities, flanked by Bars and Crowded street, is not a good place for moulding the future citizens. The Home, after all, is situated not in a residential area, but in a commercial area.
- Most of the inmates do not share the feeling at Home that it is their domicile. They seem to be mere beneficiaries of a scheme enforced/implemented by the government. Thus, it becomes their right to get things done for them. When they destroy the lamps, doors etc. of the Home, it becomes quite evident that they do not feel it as their own Home. This is again true about maintaining the hygiene or even using habits of toilet. It becomes somebody else's duty to clean or flush the toilets. The idea here is not to pester the inmates but to make them do something which is being done by the children in common households.
- The girls are to be taught the kitchen works. These behavioral changes can be brought about through regular counseling by competent psychologists.
- The children are to be given only the food available in a middle class household. If they are fed with chicken dishes and 'Sadyas' (grand dinners that are being sponsored) all the time, they will never be able to adjust to a family life of normal standards. Instead, even when there are sponsored meals (which are quite frequent), let it be in accordance with a menu prepared beforehand based on nutritional values, rather than luxury.

- All the adolescent children are to be prepared for their future life. They are to be counseled regularly to prepare to become responsible fatherhood/motherhood and to their career. This is most important as they all come from broken families.

4. Proper Career/Vocational focus

- Children are to be given career counseling as they move to higher levels. There has to be regular motivational sessions and interactive sessions with celebrities from all walks of life – Administrators and Executives, Judges, Teachers, scientists, film stars, singers, social activists, intellectuals, etc.
- Those who exhibit curricular and co-curricular excellence are to be given special attention and promotion.
- There are many individuals/ organizations taking tuition for the inmates. This has to be streamlined.

5. Infrastructure:

- The institute is having large number of inmates. Presently during an emergency like hospitalization, it is extremely difficult to take them to the hospital as it does not have any vehicles of their own. To tackle this serious issue a light vehicle (Jeep/Omni van) can be purchased or at least take on a monthly rent basis.
- Presently there is a block for inmates under construction by Kerala Vyapari Vyavasayi Ekopana Samithy. Initiatives need to be taken to complete the remaining work in this building and hand over to the institution.
