



## A Study on the Issues of Women Living in Government and Non-Government Institutions for Women of Mysore, Karnataka

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### ABSTRACT

*According to the constitution of India, women are legal citizens of the country and have equal rights with men (Indian Parliament). Because of lack of acceptance from the male dominant society, Indian women suffer immensely. The status of women in modern India is a sort of a paradox. If on one hand she is at the peak of ladder of success, on the other hand she is mutely suffering the violence afflicted on her by her own family members or society. Twentieth century has brought a great change in the lives of in all walks of life. Yet realities such as women and girls getting trafficked and increased practice of dowry, rape and sexual harassment hit hard against all the development that has taken place. In reality women have to still travel a long way.*

*The institutions selected for the present study are categorized into Governmental and non- governmental institutions for women in Mysore, Karnataka. Descriptive Research Design was selected for the present case study. Universe of the study includes all women residents of the Governmental and non-governmental institutions and the sampling technique used was purposive according to the category of women residents with excluding criteria of mentally ill women. The tool adopted for data collection is interview guide and observation. The findings of the case study thus highlight the need to rehabilitate the inmates of the institutions both economically and socially. Also states, not only psychological factors but physical environment also affects the situation of these women and interventions should concentrate on these factors. Study also emphasis the need to educate the community regarding the need for bringing up girls and to care for women in the community.*

**KEYWORDS :** Women Institutionalized Women, Government Institution and Non-Government Institution.

### INTRODUCTION

The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennia. From equal status with men in ancient times through the low points of the medieval period, to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been eventful. In modern India, women have adorned high offices in India including that of the President, Prime minister, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Leader of Opposition, etc. According India's constitution, women are legal citizens of the country and have equal rights with men (Indian Parliament). Because of lack of acceptance from the male dominant society, Indian women suffer immensely. Women are responsible for baring children, yet they are malnourished and in poor health. Women are also overworked in the field and complete the all of the domestic work. Most Indian women are uneducated. Although the country's constitution says women have equal status to men, women are powerless and are mistreated inside and outside the home.

### Women

Today modern woman is so deft and self-sufficient that she can be easily called a superwoman, juggling many fronts single handedly. Women are now fiercely ambitious and are proving their metal not only on the home front, but also in their respective professions. Women in Indian are coming up in all spheres of life. They are joining the universities and colleges in large numbers. They are entering into all kinds of professions like engineering, medicine, politics, teaching, etc. A nation's progress and prosperity can be judged by the way it treats its women folk. There is a slow and steady awareness regarding giving the women their dues, and not mistreating them, seeing them as objects of possession. The path towards total gender empowerment is full of potholes. Yet realities such as women and girls getting trafficked and increased practice of dowry, rape and sexual harassment hit hard against all the development that has taken place. Thus, if on one hand women are climbing the ladder of success, on the other hand she is mutely suffering the violence afflicted on her by her own family members.

Twentieth century has brought a great change in the lives of women in all walks of life. A large number of gender issues continue to determine the nature and shape of our society like most traditional societies where women cannot enjoy an average quality of life equal to that of men in terms of life expectancy, health, morality, access to

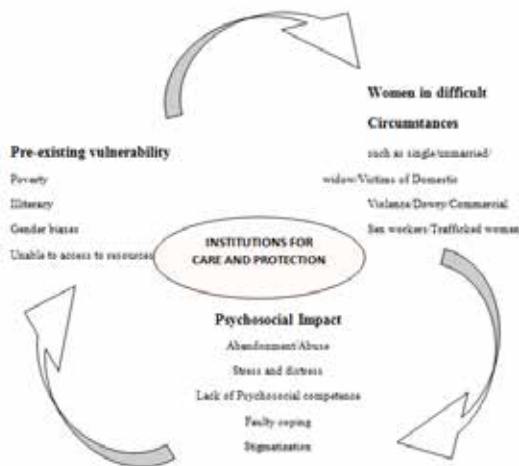
education, access to employment, access to lawful freedoms, and the meaningful exercise of civil and political rights (Ernst, 1995). Although women are the major actors in human resource development, they are neither adequately recognized nor supported by their families or the society. Women represent the major segment of the poor, the malnourished and the illiterate.

### Situations of the Institutionalized women

Institution or care home is a place where a number of dependent persons are looked after. It is also understood as a physical structure with its inner and surrounding, material and nonmaterial, environment. There are different types of institutions. In most of the institutions, the care provided is observed to be inadequate and primitive. This type of care merely provides shelter, food, and clothing, which is far from rehabilitation. Several women share a large dormitory, dining room, and living room. This type of care implies regimentation of routine and loss of identity. In such institutions, most of the inmates do not like to talk to their superiors about their problems. Inmates are not shown love and affection by the institution authorities. The maturation process of people involves the integration of their personality and their ego function depending on a healthy establishment of identity. In the case of institutionalized women, the majority fails to maintain an identity of their own (Padmam, 2003).

Women who are residing in these institutions are basically come from difficult situations such as women in prostitution, trafficking women, divorced women, unwed mothers, women victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse, women with dowry harassment problem, destitute women and women with mental illness (Vranda *et.al*, 2010). These institutionalized women are less skilled in adjustment to the family and society. This may be due to the unfavorable family environment in which they bone and bought up (Padmam, 2003). The major causes for institutionalization of these women are poverty and insecurity, alcoholism and torture, violence, cruelty and betrayal, sexual abuse and illness.

**Conceptual Framework:** The above mentioned vulnerability factors has serious impact on women's mental health and overall well being of the governmental and non- governmental institutional care and protection. The following figure demonstrates the vicious cycle of pre-existing vulnerability factors that makes women vulnerable to institutionalization.

**Fig- \*THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF VULNERABILITY**

**\*Adopted from the Article on "Psychosocial issues of women in institutions", from Women and Mental Health, NIMHANS Publication number: 75, ISBN-81-86430-00-X.Pp:106**

The present case study has been carried out to examine the unravelling profile of the institutionalized women. It is hoped that the findings of the study would be useful for understanding the situations of institutionalized women and strategies needed to deal their problems.

#### **Institutions selected for the present study:**

The institutions selected for the present case study are categorized into two - Governmental and non-governmental institutions for women in Mysore, Karnataka. Brief descriptions on the services provided by them for these destitute women are presented here.

#### **State Home for Women**

This organization started in 1958. "Dasappa Yashoddamma" is founder of this organization. The reason for starting the institution was for the upliftment of the poor, orphan, vulnerable people, single parent children and prostitutes and to provide a shelter for the protection of their life.

The people who enter the institution should be above 18 years and society valuable people, orphan, single parent children, prostitute missed women, because of property would not complete their education of the order of District commission and judge and police people can be jointed to the institute and also "Sweekara Kehara" & Children welfare association and Juvenile Home can transfer the people to this institute. In this Institute 100 can stay at present 45 women staying in this institution.

#### **Shakthidhama**

Shakthidhama is a registered Non-Governmental organization committed to rehabilitation of distributes and estranged women. Working since the year 2000, have rehabilitated around 400 women in distress. Working for women between the ages of 18-40 years, Shakthidhama strives to provide suitable vocational skills, there by empowering them and making them economically self-reliant. Shakthi dhama is open to all citizens of India without distinction of religion, race, cast, creed or language.

**Santhwana**, A government sponsored free help line is working at shakthidhama provides counseling, and support for women in distress. Shakthidhama also provides short stay facility and legal assistance for women. Since its inception in the year 2001, and have received over 2000 calls, rehabilitated nearly 380 women.

#### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The review of the literature, relevant and related to the topic of the case study under the following headings:

##### **1. Women**

##### **2. Institutionalized women**

##### **1. Women**

The extent of access the women have to the basic amenities and their knowledge levels would become important factors for enhancement of the status of women. The Indian constitution guarantees freedom and equality to all the persons living in the country regardless of sex, class, caste etc. Besides, it provides for equality of status and opportunity and assures the dignity of every individual. But the fact remains that, the Indian women very rarely exercise their rights because of several factors such as lack of information, lack of conducive atmosphere and the decision making being monopolized by the men. In view of this, status of women, particularly from the urban poor families, emerges as one crucial subject, which needs to be studied in details. ( Rao and Somayajulu, 2003).

Gender inequality begins even before birth and is consistently adverse throughout the life of the Indian women in more than one way. As in Pre-birth, the Sex-selective abortion; battering during pregnancy; coerced pregnancy; in Infancy, the Female infanticide; emotional and physical abuse; differential access to food and medical care.; in Girlhood Child marriage, genital mutilation, sexual abuse by family members and strangers, differential access to food, medical care and education; in Adolescence, Violence during courtship; economically coerced sex sexual abuse; in the workplace, rape sexual harassment, arranged marriage, trafficking; in Reproductive age, Physical, psychological and sexual abuse by intimate male partners and relatives, forced pregnancies by partner; sexual abuse in the workplace; sexual harassment, rape, abuse of widows, including property grabbing and sexual cleansing practices; and in Elderly, Abuse of widows, including property grabbing; accusations of witchcraft; physical and psychological violence by younger family members; differential access to food and medical care (Yadav and Mishra, 2005).

The vulnerable position of women in the society stems from the fact that there are multi causal factors that contribute to it. Across many nations and cultures the challenges that women face all throughout their life cycle is a reality. Women face a number of chronic burdens in very day life as a result of their social status and roles relative to men and these strains could contribute to their rates of depression (Vranda, *et.al.*2010).

Violence against women, both as violent crime (rape, sexual assault) or as domestic violence (spousal abuse, dowry deaths), whose effects on women's health, mental health, economic productivity, self-esteem and the welfare and nutrition of her children, are often underestimated or ignored. A majority of violence committed against women occurs within the home. There has been an increase in reports of domestic torture (cruelty by the husband or his family), with 5.9 cases per 100,000 females being reported in 1994. (National Crime Bureau 1995)

##### **2. Institutionalized women**

Mathew and Parthasarathy (1988) studied the level of reintegration into the community and adjustment of the ex-inmates and destitute. They concluded that the post institutional life is not as miserable as portrayed. They quality of post institutional life can be improved by early intervention.

Studies have found that institutionalization affects the development of social concepts and positive ethnic attitudes adversely. Studies by Ram (1983) and Lakshmi (1980) have shown that institutionalization brings about problems in personality growth and self-concept development.

Quinton, *et.al.* (1984). Studied 81 adult women who had been institutionalized, most before age 5, compared in research with 41 women never admitted into residential care. The ex-institutionalized women had been raised in cottages with 15 to 20 children, mostly school-aged, under the care of a housemother, her deputy, and an assistant. The institutionalized women had been admitted into care due to their parents' inability to care for them, rather than due to any problem behavior of the child. The comparison group was a quasi-random sample from the general population whose parents had some form of psychiatric disorder. Finding shows that, the institutionally-reared women showed a markedly increased rate of poor psychosocial functioning and of severe parenting difficulties in adult life. 25% of the institutionalized women developed personality disorders, while none

of the -non-institutionalized- women exhibited personality disorders. Institutionalized women were predisposed to lives of poverty more than the non-institutionalized women.

There are two equally strong viewpoints about the causes of destitution. The first view is that it is the cruelty against women in various forms such as sexual abuse, neglect, battering, divorce, and male chauvinism that is responsible for destitution. Equally important is the argument that it is the deviant personality of the women concerned that makes them destitute (Padmam, 2003).

The review of literature discussed focused on the situation of institutionalized women in our State; the disadvantages faced by them in institutions and need for qualitative studies among these women. It revealed that, books, articles and studies with special attention to institutionalized women are very few in our country. The present case study investigates the situations of the women from different backgrounds living in Government and non-government institutions for women of Mysore, Karnataka.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to know the profile of the institutionalized women. Descriptive Research Design was selected for the present case study. Researchers took consent from the Authorities as well as inmates of the institution to conduct the case study. Researchers explained them about objectives of the study and the ethical considerations of the study. Universe of the study includes all women residents of the Governmental and non-governmental institutions and the sampling technique used was purposive according to the category of women residents with excluding criteria of mentally ill women. The tool of data collection is interview guide and observation were the main methods of data collection. The main source of information was the personal in-depth interview with an interview guide based on the objectives of the study. Systematically collected data was processed, analyzed the cases and prepared the case studies. Each case has been supported with assessment.

### OBJECTIVES

- To know the profile of institutionalized women through case study.
- To know socio demographic profile of the institutionalized women.
- To understand causes for institutionalization.

### Definitions

#### Profile:

"A group of screening test selected to establish a base line and to get maximum diagnostic information"(Oxford Dictionary). In this study profile means institutionalized women their socio demographic data, causes for institutionalization problems faced by them and their future plans.

#### Institutions:

This term refers to the Governmental and non-governmental institutions, where women in need of care and protection are provided residential care.

#### Institutionalized women:

Institutionalized Women refers to women who are in difficulty situations residing in governmental or non -governmental Institutions for care and protection.

### Case study

Case study is one of the methods in qualitative research, it favours intensive analysis of one or a few cases using in-depth unstructured interviews, observation, and narrative rather than depending on numerical reporting (Mark,1996). In this case study means an intensive description and analysis among destitute women from Government and non-government institutions for women, of Mysore, Karnataka.

### PROFILE OF THE INSTITUTIONALIZED WOMEN

The present case study covers inmates of the two institutions, one governmental - State Home for Women and Shakhthidhama, Non -Governmental institution. Information about the number of inmates is furnished in Table 1. The ages of the inmates ranged from 18 to 60 years.

**Table 1 Number of Inmates in the Institutions**

Ages	No. of Inmates	
	Stat Home for women	Shathidama
18 – 28 years	37	12
28 – 40 years	1	6
40 – 60 years	2	0
Total	40	18

A total of 40 destitute inmates are staying in the State Home for women and 18 are staying in Shakhthidhama.

**Table 2 Religious Composition of Inmates**

Religion	No. of Inmates	
	State Home for women	Shathidama
Hindu	33	13
Muslim	5	5
Christian	2	0
Total	40	18

Details on the religious composition of the inmates are given in Table 2. It was seen that the inmates belonged to the three major religious groups and majority are belongs to Hindu Religion.

**Table 3 Distribution of Destitute Inmates Based on Educational Level**

Educational level	No. of Inmates	
	State Home for women	Shathidhama
S.S.L.C.	5	7
Bachelor Degree	15	0
Diploma	5	0
Illiterate	14	10
Total	40	18

It was found that a large number of inmates are illiterate (Table3). Surprisingly, 15 of them had bachelor degree qualification.

**Table 4 Distribution of Inmates Based on their Socio-economic Status**

Socio – economic status	No. of Inmates	
	State Home for women	Shathidama
Low	28	14
Average	9	3
High	3	1
Total	40	18

Table 4 shows that more inmates came from homes of low socioeconomic status in both institutions.

In the following section presents 6 cases of inmates, classified according to the major cause for institutionalized.

### STATE HOME FOR WOMEN

Case No.1 – Poverty and insecurity

Name : Ms. N  
Age : 17  
Father : Alive  
Mother : Alive  
Sisters : 2  
Brothers : 1

Ms. N came to State home for Women in 2000. Her family was in financial crisis. Her father was an alcoholic and in huge debt. She was

interested in studies. They were in total confusion on how to lead their life. Her mother also not in a position to take their family so they decided to join in AnathaAshramam. From there she came to State home for Women.

#### Case No.2 - Love affair

Name : Ms. R  
Age : 21  
Qualification : B.A  
Father : Alive  
Mother : Alive  
Sisters : 2  
Brothers : Nil

Ms. R studied up to BA in College in Hunsur, Mysore Dist. She was in love with Mr. X. She belongs to rich family and her father was very strict. Her father did not know about her love affair. One day her Father decided to conduct Ms. R's marriage with her relative. But she was not interested to marry her relative. Ms. R told her father about her love affair. Her father strictly opposed her decision to marry Mr. X. So Ms. R decided to run away and marry with Mr. X. She left her home and gone to Mr. X's home. They both were decided to go somewhere and live. Before that Ms. R's Father had given compliant against Mr. X. Police came and arrested Mr. X and admitted Ms. R in State home for women.

#### Case No.3- Torture

Name : Ms. B  
Age : 23  
Qualification : SSLC  
Father : Alive  
Mother : Dead  
Sister : 1  
Brother : Nil

Ms. B Ms. B lost my mother when she was in 9 years old. Her father again married another lady. But she could not her step-mother. Step-mother used to scold her and give so much of household work. She stated going for a house made job, there also she faced lots of torture. One of her neighbor observed all her problems and suggested her to go for "Balakeyaara Balamandira" in Bangalore and after her 18 years they send her to State home for women in Mysore.

#### SHAKTHI DHAMA (Non- Governmental Institution)

##### Case No.4-Poverty and insecurity

Name : Ms. S  
Age : 19  
Qualification : SSLC  
Father : Dead  
Mother : Dead  
Sisters : 3  
Brother : 1

Ms. S hailing from poor family, she was working in a House in Tamilnadu, as a house maid. That Family after some years decides to shift to other State. They wanted Ms. S to accompany her and work at their house. Since Ms. S was not willing to shift and work with them, she disagreed their offer and came to Mysore. She was standing near to bus stand in confused state with no money with her, not knowing what to do. Observing her staying/ roaming around Bus Stand, police picked her up and admitted her to Shakti Dhama.

Now she feels safe and secure at Shakti Dhama and in future she is planning to get a decent job and live independently.

##### Case No.5 - Torture and insecurity

Name : Ms. J  
Age : 19  
Qualification : SSLC  
Father : Alive  
Mother : Dead  
Sisters : Nil  
Brothers : Nil

Ms. J a native of Andhra Pradesh lost her mother when she was very young. Her father married soon after her mother's death. Step moth-

er of her tortured and also her grandmother joined her. Grand mother tried to snatch her father's property. Ms. J got scared and dejected with the situation flees from that place and end up coming to Mysore. She was standing in the suburban bus stand continuously for hours together. Observing her activities, policemen does enquiry and admitted her to this organization.

##### Case No.6 - Abuse and Violence,

Name : Ms. L  
Age : 21  
Qualification : SSCL  
Father : Dead  
Mother : Dead  
Brother : 1

Ms. L is a resident of Mysore city. Once day she was calling someone it got dialed to wrong number. She got connected to one Mr. X. They became friendly through phone connection. It leads to love between these too. Later it turned to be a physical relation in due crises. Unfortunately she became pregnant. She became panic and demanded Mr.X to marry her immediately but he rejected her proposal. Again she compelled him to marry her through all means. Mahesh took her to Madikeri. While travelling Mr.X pulled Ms. L from the car and freed away.

A passenger by noticed Ms. L and pitying to her condition, she admitted her to near by hospital and gave treatment. Also he lodges a complaint against Mr.X

Police got information through Ms. Land succeeded in arresting Mr.X. Now rejected Ms. L, in her helpless condition, got herself admitted to Shaktidhama by the police authorities.

#### ANALYSIS

The socio demographic profile of the residents shows that, all religious category women were admitted in both Governmental and non- Governmental institutions. Majority of them had completed SSLC and a highest qualification of degree. 18-28 years age group members are high in number. More than 95 percentage residents came from low socio economic background and very few had a background considered to be middle income group of Karnataka

The Case studies show that among the reasons cited for institutionalization financial problems at home are found to be the major one followed by disrupted family relationships. Institutionalization of women was found to be due to several social disadvantages that either reflect pre-existing ones or are the consequence of serious problems with personality of the individual in our society. Pre-existing disadvantages include poor education, living conditions and family relationships, specifically cruelty, violence, sexual abuse, subordination and devaluation inherent in patriarchal domination. As Bachrach (1988) stresses, women typically experience a variety of social disadvantages as a consequence of social oppression that contributes to their social disablement.

The study also reveals that a few of the inmates take shelter in the institutions due to strained family relationships. They were either thrown out of their houses by their husbands or lovers or by their own parents or came out on their own owing to cruel physical and mental torture. According to the authorities, these women are highly talkative, easily suggestible, irresponsible, unskilled, and highly emotional. Study findings supports the findings of Vranda *et.al*, (2010) that, women who are residing in these institutions are basically come from difficult situations such as women in women victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse, women with dowry harassment problem, destitute women and women with mental illness.

#### MAJOR FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this Case study was to know the Profile of the Institutionalized women so used descriptive research design. Case study and observation were the main methods of data collection. The main source of information was the personal in-depth interview with an interview guide. Six case studies conducted to give a qualitative dimension for the study. Universe of the study includes all women residents of the governmental and non-governmental institutions and the sampling technique used was purposive according to the category of women

residents with excluding criteria of mentally ill women.

### Major findings

1. Profile of the residents shows that, all religious category women were admitted in both Governmental and non- Governmental institutions.
2. Majority of them had completed SSLC and a highest qualification of bachelor's degree.
3. 18-28 years age group members are high in number
4. Majority of the residents came from low socio economic background
5. Majority of them are failed making adjustment with their family members
6. Financial problems at home, marital disharmony, domestic violence, alcoholism and sexual harassment were the major reasons of the institutionalization of these women irrespective of both governmental and non-governmental institutions.
7. The majority ended up at the institution owing to severe financial problems.
8. Most of them had been sent to the institutions because their parents did not have any other place to keep their daughters in security.

### Suggestions

1. Improvement in interpersonal relationship with the relations of the inmates is the primary requirement.
2. Family counseling is needed for each inmates
3. To overcome the poor economy, government should introduce income oriented programmes to minimize this problem.
4. The government and the media -TV and Radio – that has great outreach may be instructed to take up women's issues seriously and educate women regarding their legal rights as well as the alternatives that are open to them.
5. Specializes staff should be attached in these institutions
6. The problem of every woman is related to her past and its events which are affecting her achievements. So the adequate knowledge about their past life is necessary for their authorities, and outsiders they involve for job or marriage.
7. Isolation of institutionalized women can be removed by arranging various activities in the institutions and communities.
8. Inviting people to come forward and visit these institutions and share their experiences with these deprived women so that they may come to know: Humanity is still living in human hearts and love is not deserted.
9. All the personnel in the institution should be made aware of rights of women in the institution through training and orientation programme
10. Awareness training and short-term personality development courses may be given to the inmates so as to make attitudinal changes in them, which would help them accept changes willingly.

### Conclusion

As one of the methods in qualitative research, case study favors intensive analysis of one or a few cases using in-depth unstructured interviews, observation, and narrative rather than depending on numerical reporting (Mark,1996). The findings of the case study thus highlight the need to rehabilitate the inmates of the institutions both economically and socially. Also states, not only psychological factors but physical environment also affects the situation of these women and interventions should concentrate on these factors. Study also emphasis the need to educate the community regarding the need for bringing up girls and to care for women in the community.

It is hoped that this humble case study will motivate and help the social planners, social welfare authorities and social workers in thinking of and in taking functional steps to ensure and improve the lot of these vulnerable sections of the society. The situations of the institutionalized women are not greatly exposed to the society, social planners and NGOs. Researchers believe that this case study will bring out the situation of the destitute women in the institutions to the notice of the social planners, social workers, policy makers who are dedicated to bring up the well being of these neglected populations of our society. The results of this study can be used as evidence data - guide line and frame of reference to institutionalized women for bringing appropriate policy changes at the institution and government level by the policy makers and social workers.

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