BUILDING FAMILY STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS & SUPPORTING POST REUNIFICATION FOLLOW UP OF CHILDREN:

AN ACTION RESEARCH IN VILLUPURAM DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU



RAILWAY children
No child lost to the streets

Research commissioned by
Railway Children India
and SCOPE India

Research Conducted by
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May 2023

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR & CEO

Every 8 minutes a child goes missing with less than half of them being traced, according to National Crime Records Bureau data. There are also many missing children's cases that do not get reported and children who are migrating across cities and states with their family's knowledge on their engagement in child labour. A large majority of these children take the railway route, travel alone and at risk, face negative situations and find themselves away from home and I vulnerable and exploitation circumstances.

Reaching out to these children as early as possible while they are in a moving train or after they arrive at a railway station is important for their protection, family reunification and family reintegration. We aim to prevent children from slipping into street life and suffering all of the further harm and abuse we know that this can bring. Our experience shows that 90% of children we protect at railway stations are reunified with family. However, we can achieve sustainable impact only when children continue to stay with their families and grow to their full potential.

To learn from experience, build our capabilities and work towards sustainable outcomes for children, Railway Children India has been focused on family reunification and reintegration research since 2015. We not only learn and strengthen our programme with children but the research findings are widely communicated with multiple stakeholders to transfer learning and action across sectors.

Building family strengthening systems & supporting post reunification follow up of children: An action research in Villupuram district, Tamil Nadu is one such effort. The goal was to work with children who have been protected and reunified from Villupuram railway station, understand the reasons why children are pushed away from their family, what worked and didn't work during the reunification process and ultimately assess of family reintegration as a support system. With 53 children, we carried out an action research where learnings were one goal, but action for the future was another. Recommendations from this research study will be used to strengthen our programme model in the coming year.



Navin Sukumar Sellaraju
Director & CEO
Railway Children India



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We express our sincere thanks to Dr. Sathya Babu, Director, SCOPE India, and his team for their support and coordination for data collection, facilitating the conduct of FGD, meeting with key stakeholders. The study would not have been possible without their support and coordination.

We are pleased to thank the children participated in the interview, parents for taking their time and shared their views during FGD and the Govt officials – District Child Protection Officer, Protection Officer, Protection Officer (Non- Institution), Probation Officer, Villupuram district and the Superintendent, Govt. Children Home, and the Child Welfare Committee, Villupuram District. We also express our thanks to Railway Protection Force, Government Railway Police, Station Master, Villupuram Railway Station and other stakeholders for their kind support and cooperation for the action research.

A&A ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CCI: Child Care Institution

CCTV: Closed Circuit Television

CHG: Child Help Group

CHL: Child Help Line

CNCP: Child in Need of Care and Protection

CWC: Child Welfare Committee

CWPO: Child Welfare Police Officer

DCPO: District Child Protection Officer

DCPU: District Child Protection Unit

DCWPC: District Child Welfare and Protection Committee

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

GRP: Government Railway Police

ICP: Individual Child Care Plan

KII: Key Informant Interviews

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

PO: Probation Officer

RCI: Railway Children India

RPF: Railway Protection Force

SIR: Social Investigation Report

SJPU: Special Juvenile Police Unit

SM: Station Manager

SoP: Standard Operating Procedure

TC: Ticket Collector

TTE: Travelling Ticket Examiner

VLCPC: Village Level Child Protection Committee



ABOUT RAILWAY CHILDREN INDIA

Railway Children India (RCI), is a child rights organization working with children in need of care and protection at and around railway stations, strives for sustainable changes in the lives of children who are alone and at risk on the streets, transport hubs and across vulnerable communities. We aim to prevent children from slipping into a life on the street and suffering all of the harm and abuse we know that this can bring. .

Our strategy model focuses on four key action areas for change in order to protect the most vulnerable children before, during and after they are lost to the streets:

1. Protecting vulnerable children and supporting their families
2. Strengthening community responses
3. Strengthening child protection systems and policies
4. Strengthening the evidence base

OUR VISION

We believe in a world where no child ever has to live on the streets.

OUR MISSION

Create and enable sustainable change for children living alone and at risk on the street.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In India, every five minutes a child arrives alone at a railway station. Reaching out to these children as early as possible prevents them from thee risk of facing violence, exploitation, trafficking and abuse. Early interventions at the transport terminals prevent children from slipping into street life and suffering all of the further harm and abuse. RCI's experience in the field of working with vulnerable children and families teamed with SCOPE India, a local partner organization working with children in difficult circumstances at Villupuram Railway Station and providing direct support to them. These children as every child, deserve a environment which ensures safety and address their needs and offers opportunities for growth and development. Sustainable reintegration is important but the existing reintegration processes are very basic. There are no thorough risk assessments carried out to understand what caused the child to leave home, and or whether it is safe to return. The lasting impact in the lives of children is incomplete without a robust post reunification family strengthening and community-based child protection preventive programme models.

Building on its previous studies at national and state level, Railway Children India commissioned the action research focusing on a specific district with a goal to support children reunified with families and develop an experience-based evidence model for family strengthening. The research delves into further understand and document gaps in the existing reunification follow up system from the perspective of both children and their families', to be able to develop a family strengthening programme model that ensures permanent reintegration of children into society and factors in collective action to protect them.



MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE QUANTITATIVE STUDY

- It is found that a little higher than three fifth (60.4 percent) of the respondents belong to SC and ST. It indicates that the children belonging to the SC/ST community are highly vulnerable, confront multiple marginalisations and often leave home.
- It is found that seven out of ten respondents are in secondary and higher secondary grades. It clearly indicates that the children studying in secondary and higher secondary schools are more vulnerable than other children and indicate the lack of a support system for adolescents to cope up with their development issues.
- Majority of the respondents (85 percent) belong to a nuclear family, revealing that these children are more vulnerable. Whereas it was found that the family size of nearly half of the respondent (49.1 percent) is four, five for 20.8 percent and six and above for 22.6 percent of the respondents. The vulnerability increases as the family size increases.
- Majority of the respondents (92.5 percent) have their own home. It also to be noted that the SC/ST families are provided with housing schemes and are living in colonies. These houses are grouped as 'own house' category.
- More than half of the households (51%) do not have a toilet facility within their home.
- More than nine tenth of the respondents have electricity (96 percent), mobile phone (94 percent), electric fan (93 percent) and television (91 percent) at home. Less than one fourth of the respondents (23 percent) own agricultural land.
- Majority of the children (94.2 percent) were studying at the time of reunification with their families, and it was found that it has decreased to 88.5 percent at the time of research. This denotes that there is an increase in working children from 3.9 percent to 9.6 percent.
- Major familial circumstances that pushed children away from their families are alcoholic parents (68 percent), forcing the child to study (66 percent), excessive verbal abuse (52 percent), quarrels between father and mother (44 percent) and excessive physical abuse (37 percent).
- Low interest in studies (79 percent), unable to tolerate abuse by their family members (67 percent), sight-seeing and city attraction (54 percent), school related problems (49 percent) and peer influence (35 percent) are the major individual level factors that pushed children away from families.
- Follow-ups as a way of monitoring the situation at home included in person /phone calls (74 percent), counselling support to the family (62 percent) counselling support to children (62 percent), and dry ration supply during Covid (58 percent). Services for access to education, linking with social protection schemes, livelihood support and deaddiction services need to be strengthened.
- Parents, schools and NGOs have a critical role to play in motivating and encouraging children post reunification, so that they remain with their family. The safety, security and love provided by family members, teachers and NGO personnel contributes largely towards retention of children. An end to any kind of physical or verbal abuse or punishment by the family or at school would help the child's retention with the family. Continuous monitoring, support and motivation by parents and teachers for continuing their education is also considered as very crucial factor.



MAJOR FINDINGS FROM KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

- There exist systemic gaps and challenges in rescuing children, tracing their addresses, handing them over to the CWC, developing ICCP, reuniting them with their families and follow up services provided to vulnerable families and children. The due process has not been followed as per established norms and regulations and skipped abruptly in some cases.
- The individual child or group of children traveling with an adult with a valid ticket is considered as safe by railways officials and the RPF. There is a high possibility of traffickers misusing this loophole.
- The procedure for a rescue is not followed. The entry in the DD is not done for all children rescued at the station.
- The child or children traveling with a valid ticket are treated as passengers and the RPF does not act against them even though they might be being trafficked.
- One of the major challenges faced by the stakeholders at the railway station is collecting information about the child - address, details of parents and family. The children might not share their details openly. Identification of the child's address takes a long time. Comforting and counselling children at this stage is critical and should not be rushed during the process.
- Escorting the children to the CWC / CCI from railway station has been entrusted with the CHD or ChildLine. Vehicle facilities are not provided to them.
- In case of children from other states, it takes as long as four to six months to reunite the child with their family.
- The revised SoP for the protection of children, issued by the Indian Railway has not been implemented with its objectives by the stakeholders.
- The stakeholders – DCPU, CWC and VLCPCs face several practical problems in rescuing, tracing, reunifying the children with families and post reunification follow ups.
- It is found that the child protection system -DCPU / CWC / PO at the district level and VLCPC at the ground level do not have much of a role to play after the reunification of children. Periodical follow ups by the stakeholders who are closer in proximity to the communities need to be strengthened, by sending circulars and sharing information.
- The stakeholders are not clear or aware about the post reunification services to be provided to the child and family, indicating the lack of coordination amongst the key duty bearers and the dire need for their convergence for resource sharing.



MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- A detailed orientation on child rights, and the roles and responsibilities of key duty bearers, as detailed out in the Standard Operating Procedure, should be given to all GRP / RPF / TTE / TC to ensure that they have a clear understanding of the SOP and understand the 'best interest of the children' as well as the support mechanisms for the reintegration of children.
- A copy of the SoP should be made available in Tamil, English, Hindi and other languages so that the RPF / GRP can use it as a reference document and can be implemented without any compromise. Simple and visual awareness material about the key components of the SOP must be displayed at the railway station and the offices of the stakeholders to act as a constant reminder.
- The RPF must ensure that every child that travels alone or accompanied by an adult, whether with or without a ticket, is not trafficked or at risk.
- Monthly CHG meetings should be organized to make available a platform to discuss the issues in the rescue and reunification process and collectively find a solution.
- The Child Help desk should be enabled with all facilities-CCTV, Bed and infrastructure facilities as laid down in the SoP to ensure that the children are safe and have access to services like emotional and support guidance, rest and respite. Children rescued shall be supported with essential items such as food, nutrition, dental kits and short term stay. Access to the Railway Hospital and provision for health care for children from Railway Child Line or the Help Desk would create an enabling environment and avoid time delay in accessing the Government Hospital located far away at Mundiyampakkam.
- Accessing of Aadhaar card details using biometrics will help find the families of children with special needs/younger children. Aadhaar identification mechanisms should be made available at all Government homes for easy access and faster identification of families.
- All children should be produced before CWC as per the procedures. SIR should be prepared for each child either by the PO or NGO volunteers.
- It is highly recommended that CWPOs of GRP / RPF should escort the children to the CWC and CCI.
- The role of the DCPU and CWPO/VLCPC is very crucial. Once the child is produced before the CWC, the CWC will transfer the child to the CCI and send an intimation to the DCPU and PO. VLCPC will do the follow up and send a monthly report to the DCPU.
- The DCPU can make a list of special needs children and orphans or semi orphans and follow necessary processes to link them to sponsorships/ Government schemes.
- The Reunification process should consider the Individual Child Care Plan which shall have clear plans to address and act on the push and pull factors at the individual child level and at the family level.
- A Coordination mechanism that will help in the seamless execution of effective case management for follow up and family strengthening support for reunified children shall be developed and spearheaded by the DCPU and implemented through a participatory and coordinated approach.
- Involvement of parents, schools, PRIs and NGOs during the post reunification and family strengthening process is essential so that children are retained with their family. The research indicated that the care and love of family members, teachers and NGO personnel is another important factor that contributes to the retention of children.
- Working with families by promoting positive parenting skills, and teachers with positive discipline techniques and students with life skills helps a child's retention with the family. Continuous monitoring and support by parents and teachers for continuing education is considered as a vital factor.
- Availability of a 'data bank' of skills trainings and institutes and other experts in the state with an interface for easy collaboration and service delivery to children and their families.
- Creating a 'Single Window system' for the reunification and rehabilitation of children protected and produced before the CWC instead of diverting from pillar to post, converge all existing resources and mechanisms to provide an efficient and effective service delivery for the children at risk and in need of urgent care.
- Designating a Nodal focal point at the state level for interstate coordination for the reunification and follow up of children to liaison and network among all stakeholders.

OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Railway Children India (RCI), works with children in need of care and protection at and around railway and bus stations and strives for sustainable changes in the lives of children who are alone and at risk on the streets, in communities and traversing through transport terminals. With the aim to ensure no child ever takes to a life on the streets, RCI works at three levels – at transport terminals; in the local communities, where large numbers of children are found to be leaving their family; and with the government for ensuring long term and sustainable changes.

Our work on the field found that children leaving homes or situations of abuse, violence and poverty use India's extensive railway network to get to cities, in the hope of a better life. Thousands of children arrive at India's vast, chaotic railway stations and find themselves lost, alone and scared, with no idea of where to go or what to do—they end up living on the platforms or taking to a life on the streets. Therefore, rescuing them at Railway stations and ensuring their safety becomes a high priority. The process involves at least three stages in restoring these children, namely, rescue, protection and prevention from risks; the process of reuniting the children with their families or placing them under long term care in case of non-conducive situations within families, and thirdly, following them up to see that the conditions that were responsible for children leaving home do not reoccur, implying family strengthening programmes.

RCI has been ensuring effective reunification of vulnerable children with their families through their implementing partners (IPs). SCOPE India with the support of Railway Children India has worked with children under difficult circumstances at Villupuram Railway Station, providing direct support to such children. Reaching out to children as early as possible while they are in a moving train or after they arrive at a railway station is important for their protection, restoration and rehabilitation, with the aim to prevent children from slipping into street life and prevent harm and abuse. At Villupuram Railway station through collaborative efforts supported by the Indian Railways, more than 2300 were protected and reunified with their family.

A recent study commissioned by Railway Children India to understand the reunification process of children protected at the railway station in India and Tamil Nadu[1] highlighted a multi-stakeholder approach to ensure robust post reunification services to children and their families to prevent separation. It was found that the reintegration processes carried out by CCI's are very basic. There are no thorough risk assessments carried out to understand what caused the child to leave home, and or whether it is safe to return.

The follow up was infrequent and there was little support provided at home to try and address what caused the separation to make sure the child can remain safely at home, and return to school. The purpose of this action research is to help us further understand and document the gaps in the existing reunification follow up system with perspectives from children and their families, enabling us to develop a family strengthening programme model that ensure permanent reintegration of children into society, built on collective action for child protection.

[1] Study on the situation of children in need of care and protection identified and reunified with their families in Tamil Nadu, Railway Children India, 2018

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Overall Objective

- To study the factors promoting reunification and reintegration of children and evolve a framework for family strengthening systems.

Specific objectives

- To assess the root causes that push children away from their family, both at the individual child and family level
- To understand the factors contributing to expediting the reunification of children with families and avoiding long term institutional care
- To understand factors that facilitate children to remain with their families.
- To develop a standardized model for family reintegration focused on preventing children from getting separated from their family

METHODOLOGY

The research will be a descriptive study using both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. It intends to gather the context-specific information from the respondents using appropriate tools and techniques – interview schedule, FGD guidelines, KII guidelines. The data will be collected using the following methods:

i. Interviews with Children using an interview schedule

ii. Focus group discussions (FGDs) with parents

iii. Key-Informant Interviews (KII) with other related stakeholders (District Child Protection officer, Child Welfare committee chairperson, Representatives from VLCPC, Childline representatives, Probationary officer, Dept of Social defence, Rep from CCI).

Initially, proportionate Random Sampling methods were employed. However, it was not possible to meet those children due to various reasons – refusal, non-availability, away at a relative's home etc. The data was collected from the available children reunified with families.

Methods of data collection	Purpose	Respondents	Proposed numbers
Interview Schedule	Root causes that push children away from their family both at individual level of the child and family	Reunified children	53 children
Focus group discussion (FGDs)	Root causes that push children away from their family both at individual level of the child and family and factors contributing to retention of children with families	Parents /care givers	2 FGDs – Male and Female groups
Key-informant interviews	• Factors contributing to expediting the reunification of children with families and avoiding long term institutional care • Factors that facilitated the retention of children with their families.	• DCPO, Superintendent -CCI, PO, VLCPC members, Child line, RPF, GRP and CWC	12

During the entire duration of data collection, field investigators were monitored and supervised and any issue arising during the data collection was resolved immediately. Also, data was regularly scrutinized to assess its completeness, accuracy and consistency and feedback was provided to the teams, regularly, in order to ensure the quality of the data being gathered. In terms of geographical coverage, data was collected from 5 blocks – Kaanai, Kandamangalam, Koliyanur, Tirunavalur, Tiruvennnainallur and Villupuram town.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

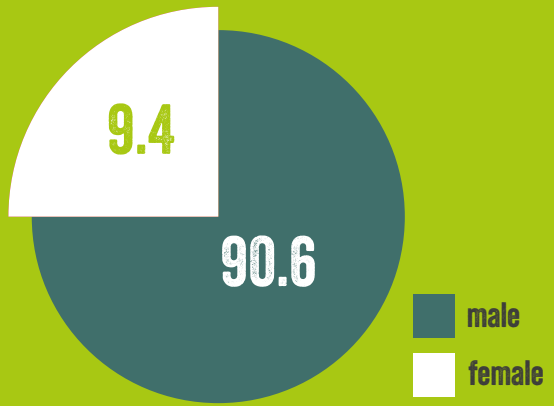
The data is presented using tables and diagrams. Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used for getting inferences.

The findings of qualitative methods are summarized and presented as a framework matrix. Preliminary interpretations of the data was shared with SCOPE India for feedback, validation and further clarifications. The preferred format for reporting will be determined after the consultation. The first draft of the report was shared to obtain their perspectives on the same. As a team, the report was reviewed based on the comments and suggestions obtained from the SCOPE and RCI team and necessary revisions were made accordingly.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Personal interviews were conducted with 53 children and the results are presented in the diagram below:

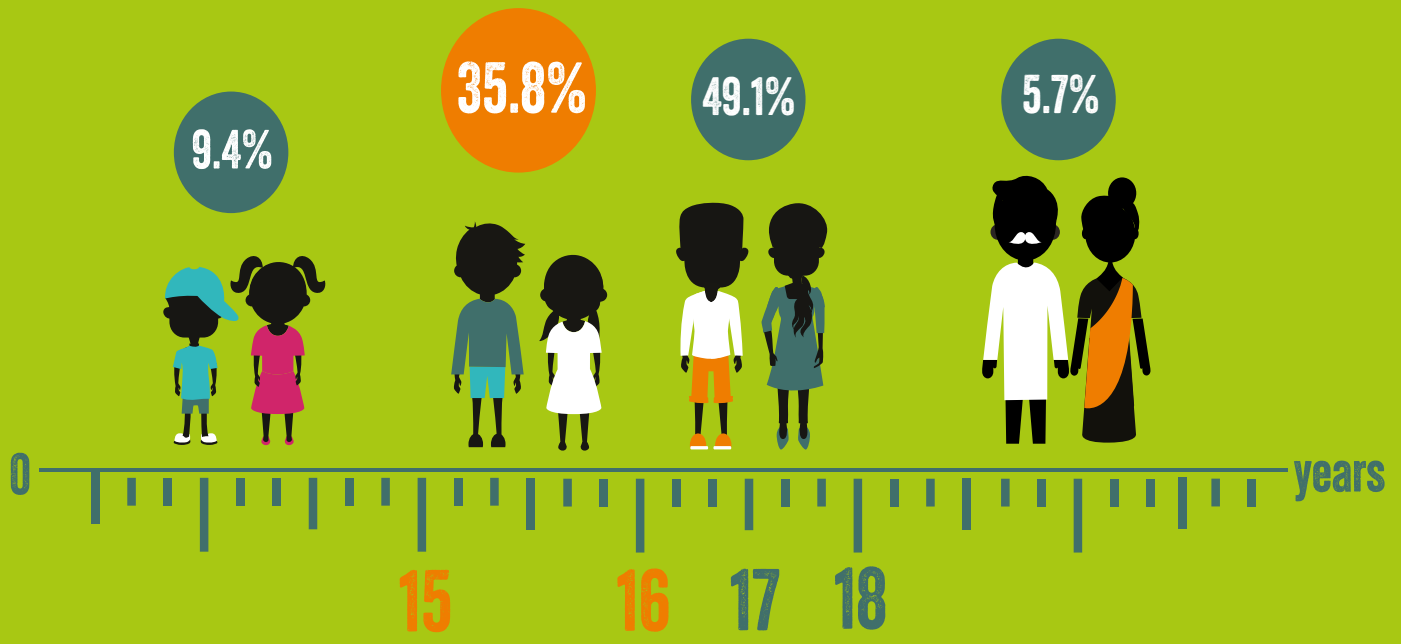
Diagram-1
Classification of Respondents according to Gender



Classification of Respondents according to Gender

Diagram -1 portrays that the majority of respondents (90.6 percent) are male and females constitute a little less than one tenth of the total respondents. It indicates that boys have more opportunities than girls and they are more vulnerable than girls.

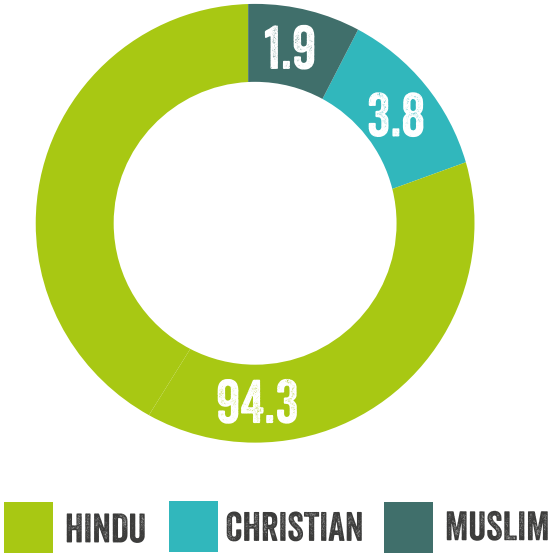
Diagram-2



Classification of Respondents according to Religion

Diagram -3 clearly shows that the majority of the respondents (94.8 percent) practice the Hindu religion, 3.8 percent practice Christianity and 1.9 percent practice Islam. As per the 2011 census of the Villupuram district, majority of the population (91.79%) are Hindu, 4 percent are Christian and 3.87 percent are Muslim. Whereas, the religion of the respondents is not proportionate to the total population. The children practising the Hindu religion are more vulnerable than those practicing other religions.

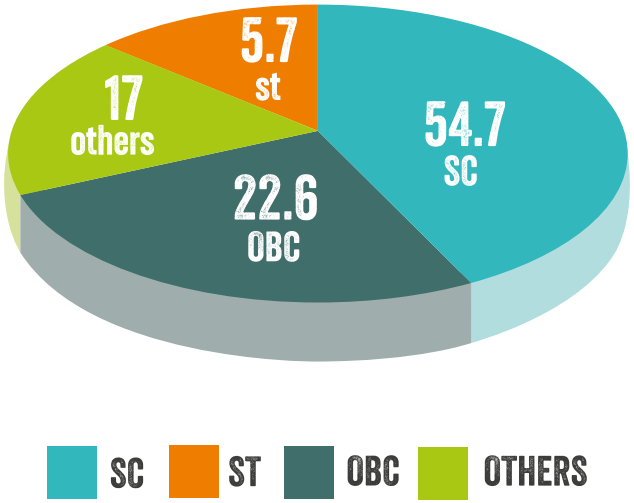
Diagram -3
Classification of Respondent according to Religion



Classification of Respondents according to Caste

Diagram – 4 clearly shows that more than half of the respondents (54.7 percent) belong to the Scheduled caste, Scheduled Tribe constitute 5.7 percent. A little more than three fifth (60.4 percent) belong to SC and ST. As per the 2011 census of Villupuram district, SC (29.37 percent) and ST (2.16 percent) population constitute 31.53 percent. It illustrates that the children belonging to the SC/ST community are highly vulnerable and forced to leave home.

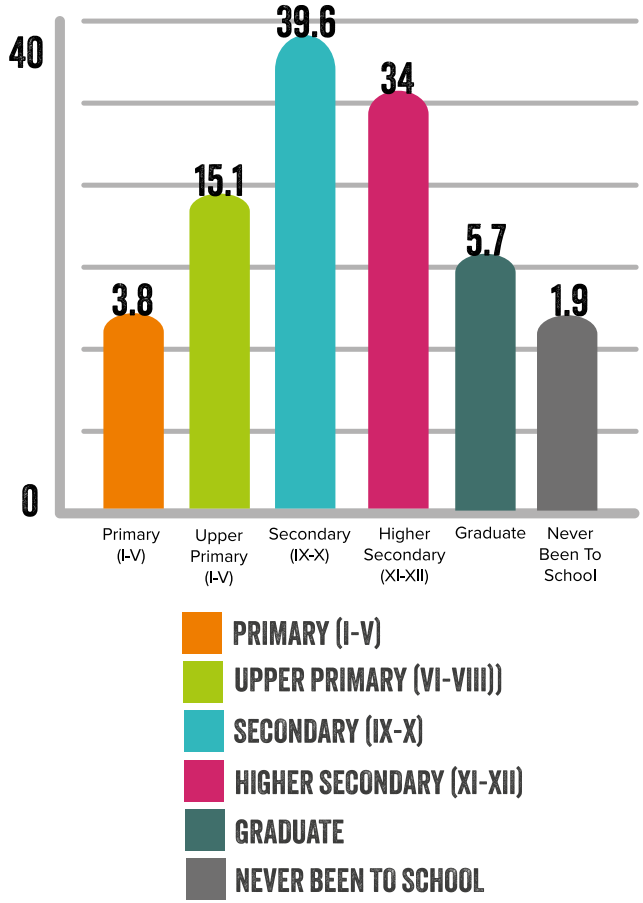
Diagram 4
Classification according to Caste



Classification of Respondents according to Education

Diagram- 5 describes that seven out of ten respondents are in the secondary and higher secondary grades. It clearly indicates that the children studying in secondary and higher secondary schools are more vulnerable than other children.

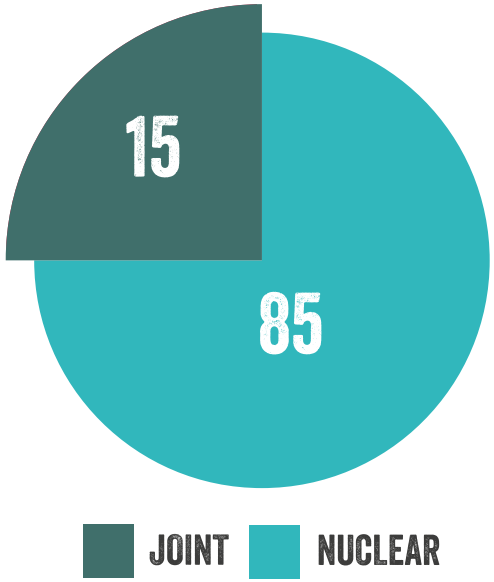
Diagram - 5
Classification according to Status of Education



Classification of Respondents according to Type of Family

Diagram - 6 presents that majority of the respondents (85 percent) belong to Nuclear families and only 15 percent belong to Joint families. It indicates that the children in nuclear families are more vulnerable.

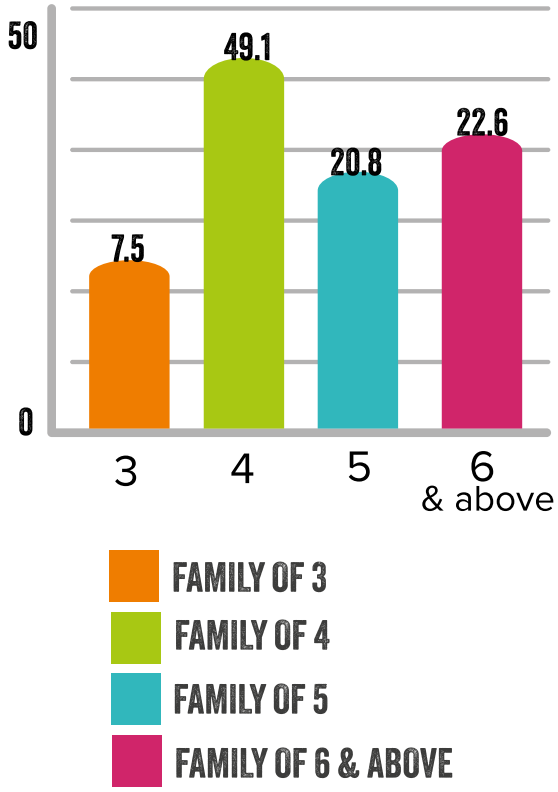
Diagram - 6
Classification according to Type of Family



Classification of Respondent according to Family Size

Diagram – 7 illustrates that the family size of nearly half of the respondents (49.1 percent) is four, five for 20.8 percent and six and above for 22.6 percent of the respondents. The vulnerability increases as the family size increases.

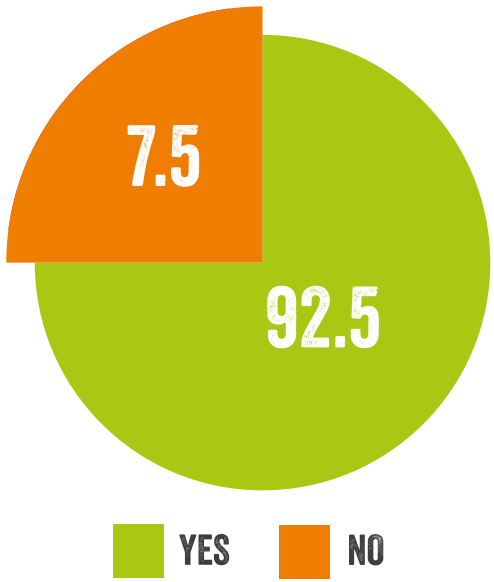
Diagram -7
Classification according to Family Size



Classification of Respondents according to Ownership of House

Diagram – 8 illustrates that majority of the respondents (92.5 percent) have their own house. It is also to be noted that the SC/ST families have access to housing schemes and are living in colonies. These houses are included in the house ownership category.

Diagram - 8
Classification according to ownership of House



Classification of Respondents according to Toilet availability at Home

Diagram – 9 depicts that more than half of the households (51%) do not have a toilet facility at home.

Diagram - 9
Classification according to Availability of a toilet at home



Classification of Respondents according to Household Items Available

Diagram – 10 reveals that more than nine tenth of the respondents have electricity (96 percent), Mobile phones (94 percent), Electric fans (93 percent), Television (91 percent) at their home. Less than one fourth of the respondents (23 percent) own agricultural land.

Diagram - 10
Classification according to household items

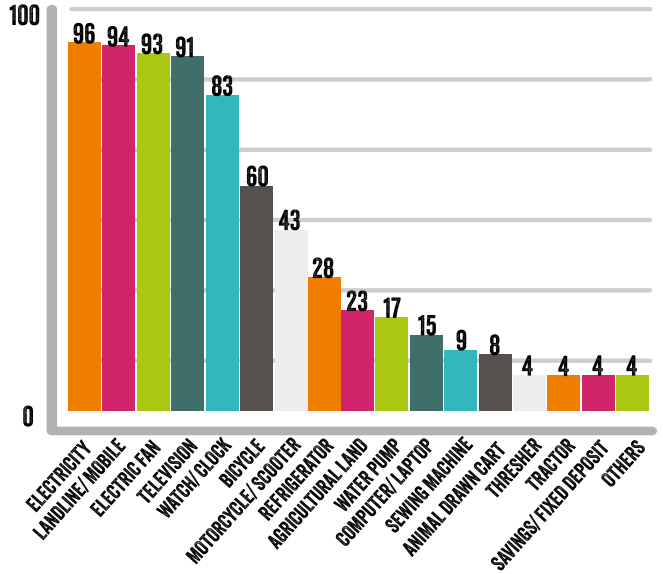


Table -1 portrays that majority of the children (94.2 percent) were studying at the time of reunification with their families and it decreased to 88.5 percent during the action research. It denotes that there is an increase in working children from 3.9 percent to 9.6 percent.

Table 1

Status	at the time of reunification	Current status
Studying	94.2	88.5
Working	3.9	9.6
Others	1.9	1.9

Factors Pushing children away from their families

Diagram 11 illustrates that the major family level factors that pushed children away from their family include alcoholic parents (68 percent), pressure to study (66 percent), excessive verbal abuse (52 percent), quarrels between father and mother (44 percent) and excessive physical abuse (37 percent).

In addition, there are other factors such as sickness of the family members, single / separated parents, lack of recreational facilities and grievances not addressed also contributing as push factors.

Diagram -12 presents that lost interest in studies (79 percent), unable to tolerate the abuse by family members (67 percent), sight-seeing / city attraction (54 percent), school related problems (49 percent) and peer influence (35 percent) are the major individual level factors that push children away from families.

The findings from children were corroborated by KII and FGD. The parents and stakeholders opined that alcoholism, school related problems, peer pressure, domestic violence, verbal /physical abuse, pressure to study, children of single parent / broken families / large families are the major reasons for children leaving home. It was also said that the verbal and physical abuse of children by the parents happens because of the excessive mobile usage / addiction to mobile phone or gadgets and not concentrating on studies and regular work.

Diagram 11
Family level factors

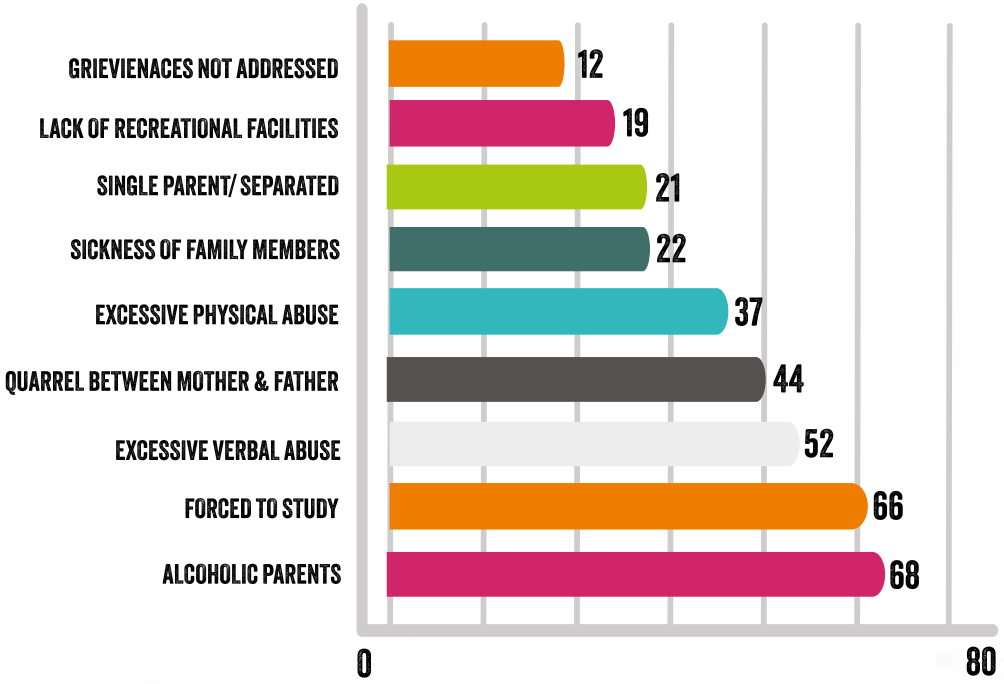
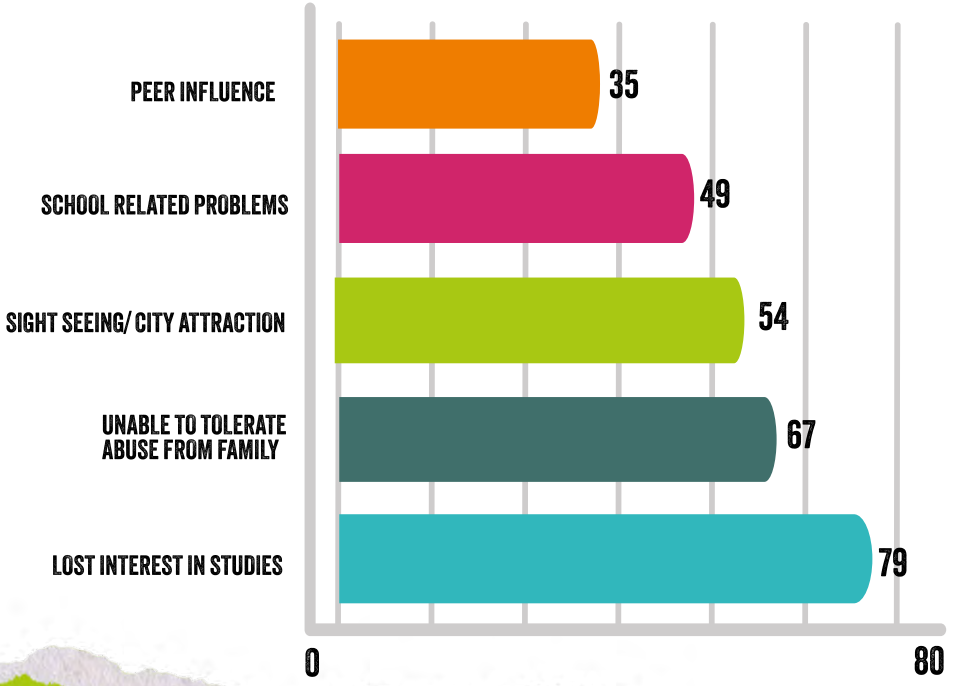


Diagram - 12
Classification according to Individual Level Factors



Details on Services Provided post reunification (in percentage)

Diagram -13 illustrates that the follow-up monitoring in person /phone (74 percent), counselling support to the family (62 percent), counselling support to children (62 percent), dry ration supply during Covid (58 percent) were the major services received by the respondents. Services for education, linking with social protection schemes, livelihood support, deaddiction services need to be strengthened.

Table 2 portrays that the parents, schools and NGOs have a major role in motivating and encouraging children post reunification so that they are retained with their family. The care and love by the family members, teachers and NGO personnel is another critical factor that contributes to the retention of children. Stopping abuse and punishment -v erbal and physical, at home and in schools will help the child's retention within the family. Continuous monitoring and support by parents and teachers for continuing school and education is considered as a very crucial factor.

Diagram 13
Details on Services Received post reunification

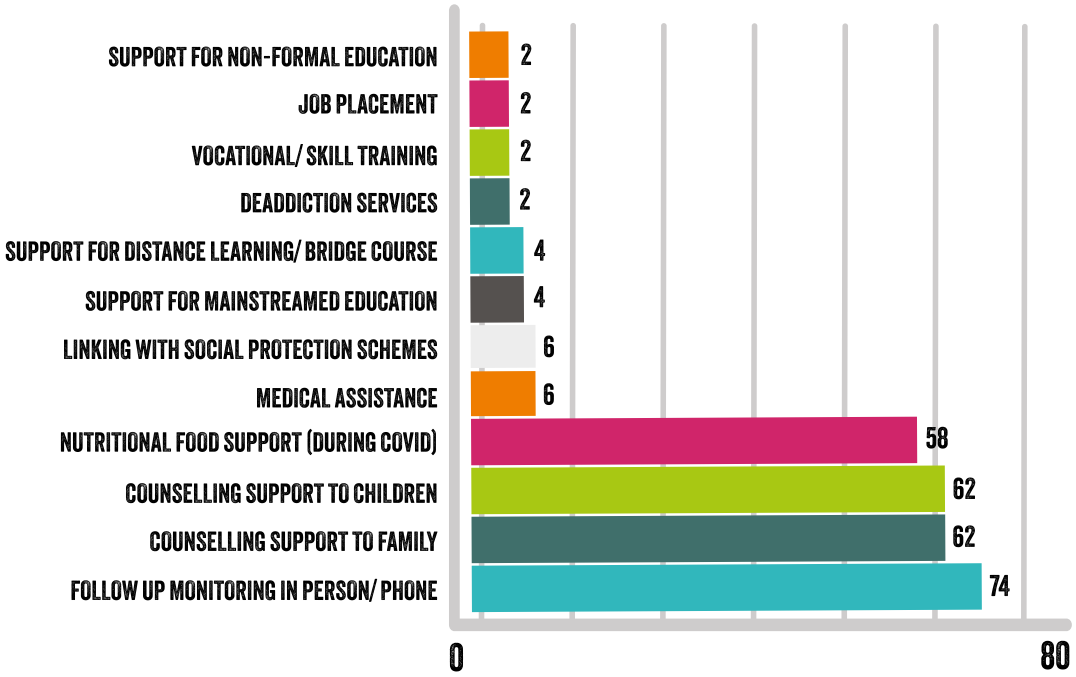


Table:2
Factors supporting the retention of Children post reunification (in percentage)

Factors	Parents	Schools	NGO
Care and love	83	64	52
Monitoring	68	62	54
Food and nutrition	64	11	N.A
Satisfying needs/expectations	13.8	0.0	11
Education	54	68	11
Stop punishments	72	65	N.A
Motivation and encouragement	84	67	69



MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE QUANTITATIVE STUDY

- Majority of the respondents (90.6 percent) are male indicating that boys are more vulnerable than girls.
- 85 percent of the children are in the age group of 15-18 years.
- Majority of the respondents (94.8 percent) are Hindu, 3.8 percent are Christian and 1.9 percent are Muslim. The religion of the respondents is not proportionate to the total population. The children practising the Hindu religion are more vulnerable than those practicing other religions.
- A little more than three fifth (60.4 percent) of the respondents belong to SC and ST. It depicts that the children belonging to SC/ST community are highly vulnerable and forced to leave home.
- Seven out of ten respondents are in secondary and higher secondary grades. It clearly indicates that the children studying in secondary and higher secondary schools are more vulnerable than other children.
- Majority of the respondents (85 percent) belong to Nuclear families. It indicates that the children in nuclear families are more vulnerable.
- The family size of nearly half of the respondents (49.1 percent) is four, five for 20.8 percent and six and above for 22.6 percent of the respondents. The vulnerability increases as the family size increases.
- Majority of the respondents (92.5 percent) has their own home. It is important to note that the SC/ST families have access to housing schemes and are living in colonies. These houses are included under the home ownership category.
- More than half of the households (51%) do not have a toilet facility within their home.
- More than nine tenth of the respondents have electricity (96 percent), Mobile phone (94 percent), Electric fan (93 percent), Television (91 percent) at their home. Less than one fourth of the respondents (23 percent) own agricultural land.
- Majority of the children (94.2 percent) at the time of reunification with their families were in schools and it decreases to 88.5 percent. It denotes that there is an increase in working children from 3.9 percent to 9.6 percent.
- The major family level factors that pushed children away from their family are alcoholic parents (68 percent), pressure to study (66 percent), excessive verbal abuse (52 percent), quarrel between father and mother (44 percent) and excessive physical abuse (37 percent).
- Lost interest in studies (79 percent), unable to tolerate abuse by family members (67 percent), sight-seeing / city attraction (54 percent), school related problems (49 percent) and peer influence (35 percent) are the major individual level factors that push children away from their families.
- Follow-up monitoring in person/phone (74 percent), counselling support to family (62 percent), counselling support to children (62 percent), dry ration supply during Covid (58 percent) were the major services received by the respondents. The services for education, linking with social protection schemes, livelihood support and deaddiction services should be strengthened.
- Parents, schools and NGOs have a major role in motivating and encouraging children post reunification, so that they are retained within their family. The care and love by the family members, teachers and NGO personnel is another important factor that contributes to the retention of children. Putting a stop to abuses and punishments - verbal and physical, at home and school would help the child's retention with the family. Continuous monitoring and support by parents and teachers for continuing their education is considered as a very crucial factor.

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS FROM KII AND FGD

Key Informant Interviews (KII) were conducted with 12 stakeholders and FGD (Focus Group Discussions) were conducted with 8 parents.

The summary of the findings are presented in the following table:

Non Compliance with Railway SoP	Recommended Strategies to overcome
The child / children having a valid ticket is treated as a passenger and the RPF does not act against them even though they might be under the threat of trafficking. The child or group of children travelling with an adult with a valid ticket is considered as safe. The traffickers might misuse this assumption. NGOs are not allowed to rescue children if they possess a valid ticket. This is a serious concern. The traffickers always ensure that the child is travelling with valid ticket so that nobody can question	• Orientation on child rights and their roles and responsibilities as per the Standard Operating Procedures should be given to all GRP / RPF / TTE /TC to ensure that all of them are on same page. Sensitization of RPF and GRP on child rights, trafficking and migration will them help understand the issues better. Also, new developments in the child rights space need to be well communicated and explained. • It is also important that RPF/GRP personnel at all levels be oriented on a periodic basis. • A copy of the SoP should be made available in Tamil, English, Hindi and other languages so that the RPF / GRP can use it as a reference document. • 6.1 of the revised SoP clearly mentions that unobtrusive surveillance should be done on the suspected child /children traveling with or without any adult member. It needs to be adhered to strictly. The RPF should ensure that the child traveling with or without a ticket is not being trafficked or at risk.
The train stops at the railway station for a short time. The NGO can only rescue children on platforms. If they find some children in the train and want to talk to them, it if difficult as they cannot board the train without a ticket. At times, children will be trafficked or are at risk which needs immediate intervention to protect the child.	• The staff with an ID card may be permitted to travel to the next station in case they need to support the child. • The staff may be provided a season ticket to next stations and be allowed to travel in all trains in case it is difficult to allow them to travel without a ticket. • The staff can inform the escorting police or TTE /TC so that they can be vigilant and act as per 7.1 of SoP to protect children. The role of the station master is very crucial in ensuring coordination.
As per the Railway SOP – monthly Child Help Group[2] (CHG) meetings should be conducted and documented for creating a better safety net at the station. This meeting is not conducted properly, and issues are not discussed. Many stakeholders – DCPU, CWC etc are not aware of this system at the station level.	• Monthly CHG meetings should be organized which would help discuss the issues during the rescue and reunification process and help in collectively finding a solution. • It is an opportunity to come together to plan a child-friendly railway station. The minutes of the meeting should be shared with all members.
The Child Help Desk is not well-equipped with adequate infrastructure facilities. For example, the staff has to submit the list of belongings of the children – mobile phone, purse, money, bags etc to the CWC during a handover. In one of the cases, a boy accused the staff of stealing his money. As a process, the staff had a witness (another staff member) and got a signature from the child for the list of materials received from him. After showing the list to him, he admitted that he wanted to take revenge as the staff was was responsible for sending him to the CCI.	• The Help desk should be enabled with all facilities - CCTV, bed and infrastructure facilities as laid down in the SoP to ensure that the children are safe. • Children rescued shall be supported with essential items such as food, tooth paste, soap, brush and a bed
Procedure for the rescue is not followed. The entry in DD is not done.	• All children found at the station need to be included in the DD records. This will help prepare the Memo before producing the child before the CWC and for further follow up. • The entry should also be done in the register maintained by the Station Master. The cross checking may be done during the monthly meetings.

[2] Child Help Group (CHG) constitute key stakeholders representing the commercial and operating staff of the Indian Railways, working at the station and the Railway Protection Force, Government Railway Police and Childhelpine staff. The Station Manager is the chairperson of the CHG that meets monthly and the minutes of the meeting are shared with the ADRM as per the provision under the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the protection of children in contact with the Railways, issued by the Indian Railway dated 23.12.2021

Challenges in Reunification	Recommended Strategies
One of the major challenges faced by the stakeholders at the railway station is collecting information about the child - address, details of the parents and family. The children might not openly] share their details. Identification of the child's address takes a long time. There is difficulty in gathering information of interstate migrant children as there is no facility for translation. In case of children from other states, it takes four to six months to reunite the child with their family.	• Access to Aadhaar card details using biometrics will help find the families of children with special needs/ younger children. Aadhaar identification mechanisms should be made available at all Government homes for easy access and faster identification of families. • At the CWC level, to collect the data on family background, address of the family or extended family in case a child belongs to other Southern/ Western districts but is only able to recollect the names of the district and not his/her full address, they should proactively inform the concerned district officials or offices to locate any complaints of missing children filed to speed up the reunion process after collecting verified data • Once the address is found, the intimation may be sent to the concerned CWPO of the police station for further action. • The Child Help Group / Child Welfare Committee should identify and keep the list of people who can support them for translation, to facilitate the discussion with children. The list should be available with the CHG, CHD, CWC and CCI. • Introducing 'AI supported technology' to help the frontline workers with translation to interact with children from other states. E-governance on-line tools with training to excel technical expertise shall be provided. • Availability of a functional 'integrated system' for the interstate children's reunification and follow up • Designating a Nodal focal point at the state level for interstate coordination for the reunification and follow up of children to liaison and network among all stakeholders.
All children were directly handed over to parents /caregivers at the station level on the same day. The root causes or causative factors for pushing children out of families are not analysed critically and manifestations only addressed in haste. Most often a broken family or illness of a parent/domestic violence/alcoholic parent etc. were amongst some of the issues faced by children. But all these children were reunified without going through the system. Without a memo children away from the family are handed over at the railway stations and railway child line. RPF /GRP /SM feel that it is more convenient for them to handover the child directly to the parents.	• Police and other stakeholders should be made to understand that there is a reason why the child doesn't feel safe at home and is pushed out and seeking safety at other places like Railway stations. Therefore, if the problems are not fixed at home it may cause the child to leave home again. It is not as simple as finding a child in a school uniform and sending the child home the same day. • All children should be produced before CWC as per the procedure. The CWC will direct them to a short stay facility. • SIR should be prepared for each child either by a PO or NGO volunteer. • The children should be brought into the system so that the PO or CHG or NGOs can visit the family and submit the SIR to the CWC. • Creating a 'Single Window system' for the reunification and rehabilitation of children protected and produced before the CWC instead of diverting from pillar to post, converge all existing resources and mechanisms to provide an efficient and effective service delivery for the children at risk and in need of urgent care.
Some of the reunified children left their homes for various reasons including adequate space and time not being given to them to discuss the causative factors pushing them out of their families. Children are reunified without following due processes leading to a repeated pattern of children leaving home and taking to the streets.	• A minimum of two or three sessions of counselling need to be carried out during short stays - highly recommended • ICP for each child should be prepared before reunifying them with their family and follow up after reunification

Challenges in Reunification	Recommended Strategies
Health and Mental health support to rescued children is not keenly looked into. Three children's families agreed that there were mental health issues with their children but no proper health follow ups were done.	• A master Health Check-up for children is necessary once a child is rescued to be able to identify issues of substance abuse, sexual abuse or other physical injuries. A follow up on the health status of the child shall be actively pursued. • The process of mapping mental health experts in each district of Tamil Nadu shall be accelerated and services to be extended to CCIs for both children and staff. • Ensuring the availability of professional counsellors at the district level to support children with mental health issues. • Mental Health Care and Support System for all children who are in need of care shall be provided through counselling at school, community and district levels.
Escorting children to the CWC / CCI from the railway station has been entrusted with the CHD or ChildLine. Vehicle facilities are not provided to them.	• It is highly recommended that the CWPOs of the GRP / RPF should escort the children to the CWC and CCI
Children with intellectual disabilities need to be transferred to the Mayiladudurai home and children from other districts need to be transferred to the concerned CWC.	• The concerned SJPUs / CWPOs should be engaged in escorting them. It was suggested to allocate a vehicle for transferring the children. Required fund arrangements may be done at the district level.
Age detection and the ossification test is taking about two to three days and this time delay needs to be reduced.	• Medical officers should be instructed to give priority to rescued children. • Railway health units must be empowered to issue certificates to avoid unnecessary delays.
The children at the open shelter are not allowed to receive treatment from railway health units. The staff had to take them to the Mundiyabakkam medical college for treatment which is a time and resource consuming process.	• 3.4 of the SoP clearly states that the medical facilities limited to the OPD in railway heath units will be extended to the rescued children by the railways, free of cost, till the child is produced before the CWC. • In the monthly CHG meeting, it needs to be discussed and instruction should be given to doctors and other staff across the railway health units. • A report on the number of children supported every month should be submitted by the doctor and recorded in the meeting minutes.
There is a request from GRP and RPF that there is no feedback mechanism to check/they were not told what had happened to the children whom they had produced before the CWC and what the current status of the child was (if he is still in the reception unit). Sometimes there were orders or questions from higher authorities which they were unable to answer and were faced with scepticism.	• In the monthly meetings, the status of children should be reviewed and discussed. Updates should be given to the members of the CHG at the railway station.
Some parents are not willing to take their children back due to their child being involved in drug abuse or substance abuse, becoming a challenge for railway child line.	• Proper treatment should provided to the children with the support of the parents before reunification • Counselling services should be given periodically • Peer volunteers / CHG should monitor the child closely
Missing child link is not working properly	• Merging different online portals (like missing link, track child etc) into a national child tracking system at the national level to facilitate the reunification of children • Need to strengthen the missing children link and updating by the officials- with password access and ID- for children who are coming into the system.

Challenges in Reunification	Recommended Strategies
The chairperson of the CWC is not appointed yet. There is a vacancy for member positions too.	• The Government should appoint the full CWC bench at the earliest. • Systems need to be in place to fill the vacancies within three months' time.
There is hesitancy in taking girl children, children with mental illness or physical disabilities after 5 pm, as there are no facilities available for them.	• CWC members should understand and attend to children 24X7 either in person or through a telephone. All CNCP including (Girl children/Mental illness or physical disabilities) need to be admitted without delay or hesitation. If the CWC is not willing to support such children this might cause differences in reaching out to children at the Railway station. NGOs may tend to leave these children and will only help children whom they will not have problems admitting into the system.
The understanding of the PO is that he does not have any role to play with CNCP.	• Sensitizing officials and orienting them on their roles and responsibilities are very important. It needs to be done by the Dept. of Social Defence. • All children coming under the system need to have at least 2 sittings with the PO before SIR and ICCP needs to be prepared and shared with the CWC before reunification. The PO should meet the parents and provide the needed support to connect to Government schemes and other support like admitting child to school or ending stigma and discrimination at the community level.



Post Reunification	Recommended Strategies
CWPC/VLCPC members are not aware of the existence of such a committee. It is found that the DCPU /CWC / PO and CWPC/VLCPC do not have much of a role to play after the reunification of children	• Training of the CWPC/VLCPC across each panchayat on child rights, protection and other support mechanisms • Developing a Standard Operating Procedures for the CWPC/VLCPC so as to improve their overall performance • Child Protective mechanisms shall be appropriately linked at the grassroot level without exerting any undue burden or pressure on those who approached with a rescued child • Ensuring Convergence among the District child protection unit (DCPU), child welfare committee (CWC) and the child welfare and protection Committee (CWPC) at the district level • The role of the DCPU and CWPC/VLCPC is very crucial. Once the child is produced before the CWC, the CWC will transfer the child to the CCI and send an intimation to the DCPU and PO. • The warden of the CCI should arrange for counselling services for the child. • The PO needs to prepare an ICP and submit it to the DCPU and CWC. • The DCPU coordinates with the CWPC and shares the ICP to be followed up by the CWPC/VLCPC . • The CWPC/VLCPC will do the follow up and send the report monthly to DCPU. • The DCPU will review the report once in three months during the DCWPC meeting headed by the District Collector. • The DCPU can make a list of special needs children and orphans or semi orphans and take necessary steps to link them to sponsorship/ Government schemes.
Services provided to the child and family are not clear to the stakeholders	• The type of services provided to the child and family along with the follow up by VLCPC/CWPC/CHG[3] / NGO are given in diagram 2.1 and table 2.1. This is only an indicative list and the DCPU and CWPC s can identify more opportunities and provide comprehensive care and protection to the child and family. • Bringing in convergence to provide all possible support to the child and his/her family so that the child is retained • The Ready reckoner of all available schemes under various departments shall be consolidated and made available in local languages so as to speed up the application and accessing process. • Availability of a 'data bank' of skills trainings and institutes and other experts in the state with an interface for easy collaboration and service delivery to children and their families.

[3] The Child Help Group (CHG) at the sub-district/Ward/PRI level to be formed by the district Child protection Unit as per the newly launched Standard operating Procedure (SOP) for the Child Helpline issued under the "Mission Vatsalya" by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, dated 31st March 2023. The CHG would consist of volunteers who would reach out to children in need of care and protection and support them as per the communication from the district child helpline.



POST REUNIFICATION FOLLOW UP AND FAMILY STRENGTHENING FRAMEWORK

Based on the discussion with stakeholders (Interview with children, KII and FGD), the following framework is developed for better and comprehensive services to be provided to retain children within the safety net of the family and support by the community.

Table 2.1 Services to be provided to children

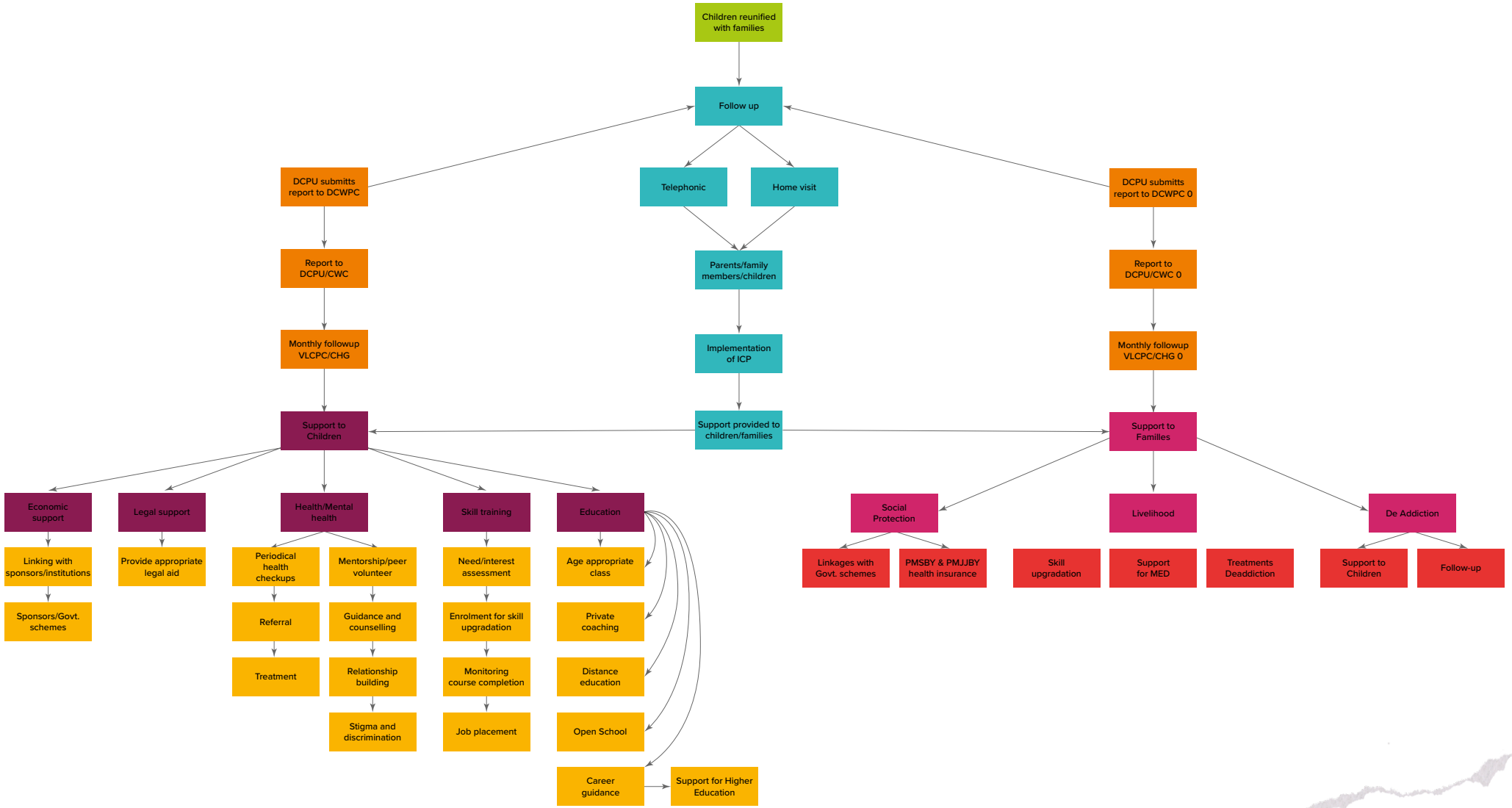
Type of services	Activities	Who is responsible	Support required from	Time period
Education				
The child should be mainstreamed into a regular school to an age-appropriate grades	Identification of schools in and around his / her home (not applicable if the child is already studying)	CHG and VLCPC	Local NGO	Two working days
	Counselling to the child and family and consultation	CHG / VLCPC	Local NGO	Three days
	Finalizing the school	CHG /VLCPC	Local NGO	Three days
	Meeting with HM and applying for enrolment	CHG /VLCPC	DCPU	Five days
	Enrolment in school	CHG /VLCPC	HM	One week
	Providing appropriate support for education materials	CHG /VLCPC	Local philanthropist / PRI / SHG / SMC	One week
Open School For children who cannot attend regular school due to their age – can appear for 10th std. 14 years of age as on 31st August for those who want to take the first exam in April-May and 28/29 February for those who want to take their first exam in October-November.	Applying for open school	CHG /VLCPC	DCPU	April – May October – November
	Providing educational materials	VLCPC	Local philanthropist / PRI / SHG / SMC	As and when required
	Local volunteer for teaching	CHG /VLCPC		As and when required
	Applying for exams	Volunteer	NGO	As and when required
	Follow up	CHG	DCPU	Monthly
Private Coaching – tutorial college – X or XII failed or want to appear directly	Identifying the coaching center	VLCPC	DCPU	As and when required

Type of services	Activities	Who is responsible	Support required from	Time period
	Enrolment for desired stream	CHG /VLCPC	NGO	As and when required
	Arranging sponsors/ Financial support if required	CHG /VLCPC	NGO	As and when required
	Preparing for Examination	Volunteers /CHG	VLCPC	As and when required
	Completion of course	Volunteers /CHG	DCPU	As and when required
Distance Education	Discussion with child and family	Volunteers /CHG	DCPU	As and when required
	Support them to choose the course for Distance education	Volunteers /CHG	DCPU	As and when required
	Support for payment of fees	VLCPC / CHG	DCPU	As and when required
	Enrolling the child for Distance education stream	NGO /CHG	DCPU	As and when required
	Monitoring the continuation of education	VLCPC /CHG /NGO	DCPU	As and when required
Economic Support	Assessing the eligibility of the child	VLCPC /CHG /NGO	DCPU	One week
	Recommend for Sponsorship / foster care / fit institution under ICPS	DCPU	VLCPC /CHG	two week
	Opening bank account	DCPU	VLCPC /CHG	One month
	Avail sponsorship scheme	DCPU	VLCPC /CHG	Three months
	Map out the sponsors / philanthropist in each Panchayat	VLCPC /CHG	PRI	One week
	Link the child with sponsors to ensure the continuation of education	VLCPC /CHG	PRI	Two weeks
	Follow up and monitoring	VLCPC /CHG	School teachers	Monthly
Skill Training	Assessing the need / interest of the child	NGO /CHG		One week
	Setting goals	NGO /CHG	DCPU	One week
	Identifying suitable skill development institutions	DCPU	DCPU	One week
	Enrolling the child for skill development	NGO /CHG	DCPU	Three months
	Follow up and monitoring	VLCPC	DCPU	Monthly
	Job placement	NGO /CHG	DCPU	After completion of the course

Type of services	Activities	Who is responsible	Support required from	Time period
Health / mental health support	Linking with local VHN /UHN	VLCPC	VLCPC /NGO	One week
	Periodical health check up	VHN	VLCPC /NGO	monthly
	Referral services if required	VHN	VLCPC /NGO	As and when required
	Proper treatment at the Govt. health facility	VHN	VLCPC /NGO	As and when required
Peer volunteer / mentorship	Identifying / Designating a mentor or peer volunteer	DCPU	VLCPC	One week
	Guidance / counselling	Mentor /peer volunteer	NGO /VLCPC	Once in a week
	Support the child in building a relationship with family and friends	Mentor /peer volunteer	NGO /VLCPC	Regularly
	Protect the child from stigma and discrimination	Mentor /peer volunteer	NGO /VLCPC	Regularly
Support to Family				
Livelihood support				
Skill upgradation	Assessing the skill sets of family members	NGO /CHG	NSDM /SSDM	One week
	Setting the goal	NGO /CHG	NSDM /SSDM	One week
	Identifying suitable skill development institutions	NGO /CHG	NSDM /SSDM	One week
	Enrolling eligible family members for skill development	NGO /CHG	NSDM /SSDM	Two months
	Follow up and monitoring	NGO /CHG	NSDM /SSDM	regularly
	Job placement	DCPU	NSDM /SSDM	After completion of the course
Support for MED	Identify potential in the village /area	Mahalir thittam	DCPU /VLCPC	As and when required
	Support the family to develop a business development plan	Mahalir thittam	DCPU /VLCPC	As and when required
	Arranging financial support to start MED activities	Mahalir thittam	DCPU /VLCPC	As and when required
	Follow up	Mahalir thittam	DCPU /VLCPC	As and when required
Linkages with banks	Support the family to get loans from formal financial institutions	Mahalir thittam	DCPU /VLCPC	As and when required

Type of services	Activities	Who is responsible	Support required from	Time period
Linking with Social insurance and social protection schemes	Identifying eligible schemes for each family members	NGO /CHG / VLCPC	DCPU	One week
	Support them with applying for required documents	NGO /CHG / VLCPC	DCPU	Two week
	Follow up with concerned officials at the block / district level	NGO /CHG / VLCPC	DCPU	One month
	Enrol the eligible family members for social and health insurance – PMSBY (Rs.20 every year) and PMJJBY (Rs.436) and Chief Ministers Health insurance	NGO /CHG / VLCPC	DCPU	One week
De-addiction services	Identifying private and Govt. de-addiction centres	DCPU	DSWO	List should be available readily
	Counselling to the family and addicted person	Counsellor – NGO /DCPU	DCPU	Within a month
	Admission for treatment	VLCPC	DCPU	Two months
	Follow up and monitoring	VLCPC	DCPU	After the treatment
Follow up by the Community	Phone follow up with the parent and child	DCPU / NGO	VLCPC	Monthly
	Home visits and meeting with the child and parents	VHN / VLCPC / CHG	DCPU	monthly
Monitoring education	Monitoring academic performance	Teachers	VLCPC	Regularly
	Absenteeism	Teachers	VLCPC	Regularly
Implementation of ICCP	Develop ICCP	VLCPC	DCPU	Regularly
	Support for implementation	VLCPC	DCPU	Regularly
	Follow up	VLCPC	DCPU	Regularly
Periodical follow up by VLCPC / CHG	Follow up visits	CHG / VLCPC	-	Monthly
	Submit the report to the CWC / DCPU	VLCPC	NGO	Monthly
	DCPU submits report to DCWPC	DCPU	VLCPC	Once in three months

Annexure: Post Reunification follow up and Family strengthening framework- flow chart



RAILWAY children
No child lost to the streets

ANNEXURE

CASE STORIES:

Child Nithesh – Livelihood materials support – Juice Mixer for Juice Centre.

Nithesh was found roaming at Villupuram Railway junction bunking school and planned to visit Pondicherry. He was reunified with their family as per the guidance of the Child Welfare Committee. Child's father was a daily wage labour and mother was a Homemaker. His family was struggling to fulfil the family needs. The mother wanted to start a juice centre to support the family, but she could not afford to invest for the materials. So, the child's family requested to support juicer mixer which was provided to the family to start a small business. The mother runs the centre and earns Rs. Xxx per day. A livelihood provides the family and children social protection and ensures continuation of education for Nithesh.

Nithesh's family is one the three families provided livelihood support by Railway children India. The mini tiffin centres run by two families had a business up gradation with a new wet grinder provided by RCI.

The follow up was infrequent and there was little support provided at home to try and address what caused the separation to make sure the child can remain safely at home, and return to school. The purpose of this action research is to help us further understand and document the gaps in the existing reunification follow up system with perspectives from children and their families, enabling us to develop a family strengthening programme model that ensure permanent reintegration of children into society, built on collective action for child protection.

Case Story 2: Jaya Prakash – Vocational training support

Jayaprakash was reunified with his parents when he was protected at Villupuram Railway junction. He was studying 10th class at the time of rescue. His parents were daily wage labours. Jayaprakash, could not pass 10th exam, even after 2nd attempt so he did go for higher secondary school. Later he was enrolled to an ITI for learning a vocational skill – welding. But due to the family circumstances Jaya Prakash was unable to pay the tuition fee which potentially force him to stop attending the ITI. RCI had supported him to pay the fee. This helped him to continue the course and complete it.

Jaya Prakash is one of the 4 children supported to continue the vocational skill courses in the ITI and Polytechnic. Other three children pursue Electrician, Hotel Management and Diploma in Electrical and Electronics Engineering courses respectively which would upskill them to get decent employment once they complete the courses.

SERVICES PROVIDED TO REUNIFIED CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DURING THE ACTION RESEARCH

As part of the action research interview were conducted with children and their families. During this process a comprehensive needs assessment was conducted to identify the specific requirements of the families including their educational needs, nutritional needs, livelihood and vocational skill training.

This assessment helped identity 59 children who required various supports either to continue education, vocational skill and nutritional support and livelihood support since their families suffers from loss of livelihood and poor socio-economic conditions. Railway children India through its partner SCOPE India supported 17 children and their families with dry ration. 3 families were supported to start small enterprises, 35 children were given educational materials and 4 older children enrolled in to vocational skill courses. These supported directly and indirectly supported 130 children and adults in Villupuram district.

ANNEXURE:

State level workshop for disseminating the findings of the action research.

A workshop was organized for the dissemination of the findings of the research on 23rd June 2023 at Hotel Vestin Park, Chennai. Dr. Thanasekera Pandiyan, Joint Director, Department of social Defence, Tamil Nadu presided over the event. Mr. Devenyan, Co-Convenor, Child Rights Watch and Mr. A. Aloysius, Convenor, Tamil Nadu Alliance facilitated the workshop.

Participants including government officials, social workers, researchers, and NGOs working in the field of child protection, migrant workers shared their inputs and recommendations to strengthen the system to serve reunified children and their families.

Key recommendations:

1. Creating a ‘Single Window system’ for the reunification and rehabilitation of children protected and produced before the CWC instead of diverting from pillar to post, converge all existing resources and mechanisms to provide an efficient and effective service delivery for the children at risk and need an urgent care.
2. Introducing ‘AI supported technology’ to help the frontline workers with translation to interact children from other states.
3. Availability of a functional ‘integrated system’ for the inter- state children’s reunification and follow up and a ‘data bank’ of skill trainings and institutes and other experts in the state with an interface for easy collaboration and service delivery to children and their families.
4. Convergence among District child protection unit (DCPU), child welfare committee (CWC) and the child welfare and protection Committee (CWPC) at the district level
5. Training to CWPC in each panchayats on child rights, protection and other support mechanisms
6. Availability of skill training opportunities for children who could not be re-enrolled into mainstream education.
7. Designating a Nodal focal point at the state level for inter- state coordination for the reunification and follow up of children to update the liaison and network among all stakeholders.
8. Victim compensation system and One Time Settlement-OTS shall be actively pursued in all cases-either POCSO or death of parent.
9. Ready reckoner of all available schemes under various departments shall be consolidated and made available in local languages so as to speed up the application and accessing process.
10. Mental Health Care and Support System for all children who are need of care shall be provided with counselling at school, community and district levels.
11. Action research in other districts where need and issues are prevalent shall be supported with resources.

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