CHAPTER VII

PROBLEMS AND LIMITATIONS IN THE ADMINISTRATION
OF CHILD WELFARE INSTITUTIONS IN KERALA

7.1 Introduction

The institutions maintained by both government and non-government sector are a great source of relief for children who are neglected without proper care and protection. Their well being depends on the effective administration and functioning of the institutions meant for them. The present study is an objective analysis in this direction.

In the previous chapters the researcher has analysed the administrative procedures that guide these institutions and their functional efficiency. This chapter is mainly focusing on the problems and limitations of welfare administration in the context of institutional services for children.

7.2 Problems and Limitations

A description of various factors that weaken the welfare administration scenario in both government and non-government sectors of Kerala is given below. Some of these problems are unique to the government sector and some to the non-government sector while there are certain problems shared by both sectors. Major problems are noticed in the following areas

7.2.1 Poor Implementation

Implementation refers to the performance of an obligation. Implementation transfers a social welfare policy into a programme. Planning,
implementation and reviewing are essential elements for the success of any programme. Various issues confronted on this front with respect to child welfare institutions are discussed below

7.2.1.1 The pace of implementation is too slow in case of welfare services in both sectors. In the government sector the institutional services are well planned. The Juvenile Justice Act explains the rules and regulations in establishing and maintaining Children’s Homes and describe every minute details with regard to the functioning of the homes and treating of each and every child under its care. But the administration has failed miserably in its implementation. The Child Welfare Committee, which is the competent authority through which a child is to be admitted, was found to be non-existent in Kerala during data collection which was done three years after the rule had come into existence. Similarly, the adoption and foster care of the children, which is described by the Juvenile Justice Act with great importance, is also never practiced. These are examples of poor implementation of programmes in the government sector. Even in the non government sector poor implementation of the welfare programmes exists.

7.2.1.2 All homes in the non government sector are established with an aim to protect, educate, rehabilitate and empower the underprivileged children of our state but the figures from the previous chapter show that these objectives are not attained by many of the organisations.

7.2.1.3 Proper implementation of a programme depends on planning, organisation, staffing, directing and co-ordination which is also lacking in several organizations.
7.2.1.4 Poor implementation results in the wastage of resources invested and delays the achievement of the required goal. Several examples from the government and non-government sector shows that the administrators need to be more concerned and acquire greater responsibility in the proper implementation of welfare programmes.

7.2.2 Pressure Group Influence

Pressure group refers to a body of persons who seek to influence the authorities and legislations or men in power and their decision making. The presence of pressure group influence is found in the sphere of Children’s Homes. The various aspects of this problem is discussed below:

7.2.2.1 Pressure groups can often block the progress of any welfare programme. The pressure groups like political parties, regional lobbies and cliques act with vested interests. This in turn will affect the welfare of the target group and, at their cost, the intermediaries will be benefited.

7.2.2.2 In the government sector, the child welfare committee was not constituted due to the political interference. The case studies in the succeeding chapter will explain how the cliques and the lobbies in the non-government sector act against the interest of the beneficiaries.

7.2.2.3 The beneficiaries in these homes are the weaker categories who lack proper awareness regarding their rights, facilities and privileges as per these programmes. This makes the exploitation by the pressure group much easier.

Pressure group influence is a major factor that spoils the noble concept of social welfare. Those who are supposed to be the protectors and
saviours should never be allowed to act as exploiters. Welfare administration should never give room for vested interest and pressure group influence to stand in the way of welfare programmes from achieving its objectives.

7.2.3 Unbalanced Distribution of Welfare Institutions

One major handicap faced by the welfare administration is the absence of balanced distribution of welfare services to the target group. Stating in simple terms, a demand-supply gap persists. Owing to some reason it has not been possible for the welfare administration to meet the actual demand for service. The various aspects of this problem are discussed below.

7.2.3.1 In the government sector, a regional bias is found and in the non-government sector, a religious bias is found. This situation pushes out certain members of the target group outside the purview of the programme. Good administration should see to it that a welfare programme accommodates all the members within its limits. Limiting the services to beneficiaries of a particular region or religion is the denial of the natural rights, which belittle the purpose and quality of the programme. Achieving cent percent success in equal distribution of welfare service may be a utopian dream task. Still efforts should be made to achieve maximum possible justice and equity in the distribution of welfare programmes through wise, judicious and practical planning and action.

7.2.3.2 The prevalence of the demand-supply gap points to the possibility of unprotected children turning into anti-social activities and being used by anti-socials. If proper care is not taken by the government and by the society for
providing proper guidance to these children, they will be doing a grave injustice to the children. This defect becomes more glaring in a state like Kerala where there prevails a high literacy rate and less urban–rural divide.

7.2.4 Poor Infrastructure

Infrastructure refers to the basic physical facilities such as sufficient land, safe and hygienic environment, proper and sufficient study material, adequate bathrooms, proper kitchen facilities, uninterrupted water supply, library facilities, recreational facilities, proper machinery and space for vocational training and the like. The various problems confronted on this front are discussed below:

7.2.4.1 Unfortunately, all institutions in the government sector and most of the institutions in non-government sector have a weak infrastructure. The inmates are found to be accommodated in congested rooms, unhygienic surroundings and bathrooms, kitchens are far below the minimum standards required, library and recreational facilities are almost absent in many of these institutions. The overall situation of these institutions is painful. Unless the institutions are well equipped, the children under its care cannot expect to have a better life.

7.2.4.2 The shortage of basic facilities undermines the very existence of these institutions. This issue has far-reaching consequences especially in areas like hygiene, sanitation, bathroom and kitchen facilities as these can affect the physical health and well-being of a person. The factors like over crowded space and lack of recreational facilities can have a negative effect on the
mental health of an individual. Thus, in practice, these institutions stand and work against the noble objectives and activities for which they are meant for. This vicious circle (of solution leading to cause and cause leading to solution) requires serious attention and practical remedies.

7.2.5 Bureaucratic Delay

Bureaucracy refers to a hierarchical ordering of authority. The functioning of any institution or enterprise in the modern era would be impossible without bureaucracy. The administration of social, political and economic affairs in the state is seeped in bureaucratic red tape and run on a distinctly defined authoritarian hierarchy and no area is free from it. The various issues faced on this front are the following

7.2.5.1 Bureaucracy causes delay in the administrative process. The miserable state of affairs is such that, if a particular requirement, request or demand of an institution needs to be sanctioned, it has to go through proper channels and then reach the highest authority. This process invariably causes delay leaving the beneficiaries of these institutions to suffer.

7.2.5.2 Another area, which is adversely affected by bureaucracy, is the timely release of grants. Both government and non-government sector always receive grants late.

7.2.5.3 Bureaucracy also gives opportunities for the officials to take out their personal grudge against one institution while showing favoritism towards another. Rather than being based on principles or values, a bureaucratic system is simply a structure developed to carry out various tasks and hence
bureaucracies are highly depersonalized, emotionally detached systems that view every client as a tiny component of a large system. These ill effects of bureaucracy are an inescapable reality faced by the administration. Unless the administrative system comes out of the shackles of bureaucracy, it will continue to be an obstruction in the administration of social welfare and progress of the state on welfare lines.

7.2.6 Poor Resource Mobilisation

Resources refer to the inputs or the ingredients required. It is resources that make any organization functional. Resources can be financial resources, human resources, or any other material resources. Resources are essential for administration as well as service delivery. For the effective functioning of any institution adequate resources should reach right hands on the right time. Lack of resources is a significant problem faced by several welfare institutions in our state in both sectors. Various angles of this problem are discussed below:

7.2.6.1 Lack of human resource is a serious issue faced by the institutions in both the sectors. Human resources are the real executors who make things really happen in desired lines. This is the only resource which has the heart and brain to know the objectives clearly and act accordingly.

7.2.6.2 Dearth of financial resources intensifies the problem. Though a huge amount is allocated in the yearly budget for welfare sector, it does not reach the right hands at the right time.

7.2.6.3 Scarcity of infrastructural facilities is also an impediment in the path of Children’s Homes. Scanty facilities spoil the very objective of these
homes. Until the crisis in human, financial and other resources are overcome, these institutions cannot flourish

7.2.7 Low Quality of Services

Services refer to the assistance or benefit given to the target group. The facilities for education, vocational training, counselling and rehabilitation are essential services in institutional care. Various facts found on and related to this front are discussed below

7.2.7.1. The quality of institutional care depends on the quality of these services. Unfortunately in all government institutions and most of the non-government institutions either no or low quality of these facilities are seen. First of all education is not given to all children, those who are given education are sent to government schools where no extra effort is taken to develop the child’s personality, outlook, creativity and the like. High standard of education cannot be expected here and hence the academic performance of children is also poor. Possibilities of higher education are almost absent.

7.2.7.2 Vocational training is not given due importance in all Children’s Home in both the sectors. Vocational training also does not cover the entire children of any homes. There is no planning and aptitude assessment done before imparting the training. Training facilities planned in many home are not functioning due to non-availability of qualified instructors. Moreover training is not provided in any recognised or certified course which helps them in getting a job later.

7.2.7.3 Counselling facilities which is an indispensable part of institutional
care appears to be an area of least concern for the administrators. Government sector does not have a regular full time counsellor, even in non-government organizations they are found in small percentage. Part time counsellors visit the home on an irregular basis. Such a service is not really helping them as it does not give the counsellor enough time to establish a good rapport with the children and to work on each case in detail. The counsellors keep changing often and, therefore, children also do not feel like repeating the problem again and again to different persons. Moreover all counsellors found in these homes do not have a professional background which further weakens the whole situation.

7.2.7.4 Rehabilitation is one of the main objectives of these homes but the percentage of successful rehabilitation is very low in both sectors. Once the inmates attain the age of eighteen they are either discharged with parents or sent to other homes. No efforts are taken to see whether the children are rehabilitated familially, occupationally and socially. Lack of a scientific approach to educate, train, counsel and rehabilitate these children reveals the low quality of services provided by the institution in both sectors. This low quality of services prevents them from attaining the goal for which they are established.

7.2.8 Weak Manpower Policy

Manpower policy refers to the recruitment and deployment of the human resources. Unfortunately in both government and non-government sectors manpower policy followed is found to be very weak. Various aspects of this problem are discussed below
7.2.8.1 Unscientific recruitment of the staff weakens the welfare sector. A social welfare agency requires people with various skills and capacities to carry out the work. The job specifications of different post being different, the selection should be done keeping in mind the requirements of the job. One will find a very small percentage of staff qualified in social work profession, welfare administration and management in the welfare institutions in Kerala. Further there are no elaborate or strict selection procedures. Influences and recommendation comes in way of appointment as competency and experience of the candidate is often ignored. This results in low quality of services.

7.2.8.2 Inadequacy of staff in most of the organizations is a big problem. In order to attain the objectives of protecting, educating and rehabilitating the beneficiaries, one cannot compromise in appointing staff in the posts such as superintendent, warden, counsellors, vocational instructors, rehabilitation officers, medical officers, teachers, administrative staff, watchman etc. Unfortunately all of them are not found in all homes in adequate number. Naturally all the responsibilities will fall on the few existing people. This will enhance pressure or burden on the existing staff and the net result is a long gulf between welfare expected and welfare provided.

7.2.8.3 The problem of unstable staff is also found in many homes. In the government run homes most of them are temporary employees. They keep changing once their term ends or quit the job when a better opportunity arises. Similarly, in the non-government organisations, highly ambitious professionals do not stick on as their future prospects are limited. Minimum
chances for a hike in remuneration and low scope for promotion creates dissatisfaction among employees and they are always on the look out for a better offer. Only a rare minority with a service mind stick on. Well trained and committed staff constitutes the backbone of any organization. Smooth functioning of the institution depends on proper staffing, division of labour and co-ordination among them. But the lack of skilled staff, inadequate and unstable staff adversely affects the functioning of the welfare institutions.

7.2.9 Inadequate Training

Training refers to the imparting of the skills and abilities required for the performance of a task. Children’s Homes presents a poor picture regarding the training required for the effective performance of social welfare. Various aspects of the problem are discussed below

7.2.9.1 The question of adequately trained and qualified personnel is very closely related to the quality of service. This study reveals that it has not been possible for the administrators to lay down and implement a clear policy for the training of welfare workers. As most of the employees in the welfare services are not professionally qualified, training for them can not be ignored. Training in social work principles and methods, dynamics of human behaviour, resource mobilisation, planning, organization, co-ordination, budgeting, evaluation, record keeping and the like are very essential for welfare workers.

7.2.9.2 In the government sector though the Juvenile Justice Act insists that all the staff right from the ministerial level need to be trained, this is not
properly implemented. Training is given only to permanent staff in government sector and most of the staff is temporarily appointed. Moreover even for the permanent staff training is not planned and implemented in a systematic manner. Training is given once in a while.

7.2.9.3 In the non-government sector institutions are not taking any initiative to organise training for its employees. Only those staff whose salary is paid by the government grant receives training by the grant giving authority. This again is not done on a systematic basis and the entire staff is not covered in this programme. Proper training can bring about huge difference in the welfare services. Training inspires and motivates people to go that extra mile which they would otherwise hesitate. Each training session is a step towards perfection. Training keeps professionals updated and boosts their confidence and hence has to be given to the employees on a continuous basis.

7.2.10 Lack of Commitment

Commitment refers to the obligation or dedication that comes from a person towards a goal or a person or an institution. Commitment is a quality that is recognized and appreciated in human beings. Children’s Homes suffer from the degree of commitment that it receives from its personnel. The various aspects of this problem are discussed below

7.2.10.1 In the field of social welfare the term commitment has great relevance. The primary responsibility of all those engaged in service sector is their commitment to the clients. There are people directly and indirectly involved in providing welfare services. People engaged in service delivery are
directly involved and the policy planners and administrators are indirectly involved; the commitment of these two categories of officials matter a lot in determining the quality of welfare services.

In our state unfortunately majority right from the grass root level to the highest ranking official involved in the welfare services lack commitment. They have not been able to imbibe the spirit and essence of social work. They consider it just like any other profession and a means for drawing a monthly salary and fail to develop service mind in them. The main reason for the lack of commitment is that they are bored of the monotonous work they do. Authorities are not taking any steps to give them training sessions or workshops to boost their morale, confidence, motivation and the like. Further no attempts are done to evaluate or reward their performance. The result is that no one bothers to take an extra effort in bringing light to the life of others.

7.2.10.2 The feeling of commitment is a pre-requisite for any staff as the area they work on is welfare. Only those feel committed can serve the purpose and contribute positively. Otherwise, they may develop an indifference towards the beneficiaries which will accelerate the existing problems and may create new ones. In the nut shell, the existence of non-committed personnel nullifies the very purpose of Children’s Homes.

7.2.11 Absence of Technology

The world is now witnessing widespread technological revolution. Technology in any field keeps the people updated, hastens the procedures, simplifies the complex administrative processes, provides better and easy
information, and improves efficiency and competence. In welfare institutions technology can be used in the areas of administration, service delivery and in networking. Though the whole world is in the grip of this revolution it is sad to notice that our welfare administration and services are untouched by it. If paper is replaced by computer it can save a lot of time. Difficulties caused in the welfare institutions due to the lack of emphasis on technology is discussed below.

7.2.11.1 Most of the staff in welfare institutions is not provided with a computer. If at all some of them are given a computer, they are not properly trained in using them which in turn complicates the whole process. As a result storage, updating and retrieval of data become difficult in these organisations. The researcher faced difficulty in getting accurate information regarding the number of children, categories of children and similar details from the homes in both sectors. The absence of a computer made it difficult for the authorities to give an immediate and accurate response.

7.2.11.2 While considering the vocational training given in these institutions it is seen that the situation is not much different. In several institutions vocational training is still given in carpentry, type writing, tailoring and so on. The inmates are not trained according to the need of the hour such as training in computer hardware and software, mobile phone repairing, DTP and the like.

7.2.11.3 Child welfare institutions also do not maintain an official website to disseminate information regarding them to the public or try to establish
contact with similar organizations or people with philanthropic disposition. The immense scope for raising funds through websites are also not considered by the welfare institutions As long as our welfare services fail to make use of this technological revolution, the services will remain substandard.

7.2.12 Lack of Professionalism

Professionalism refers to the essential qualities especially the competence and skills required to practice a profession. Professionalism demands training and expertise. It is inevitable in drawing social welfare policies and delivering social welfare services. Any welfare programme should contain the mission and philosophy of social work profession. In an institutional set up the employees are expected to be experts in dealing with the problems of each individual, beneficiaries as a group, their family and community at large. They should be skilled in various methods and techniques of social work such as Case Work, Group work, Counselling, Crisis Intervention etc. Skills in observation, listening, clarifying, problem solving, developing professional relationship, devising therapeutic approach, experimenting innovative solutions are also expected out of them. They are expected to stick on to the values and principles of social work and never forget their ethical responsibilities to individuals and society at large. In the institutional set up of Kerala, above mentioned aspects of professionalism is lacking.

7.2.12.1 None of the organisations in government or non-government sector have at least a single person who is competent and skilled as mentioned
above. The term professionalism still appears to be new to our welfare institutions. As a result, various emotional, personal, adjustment problems of the inmates are unattended. Purely unprofessional bunch of employees in the welfare institutions have also given rise to strained relationship between the staff and the beneficiaries and among the staff.

7.2.12.2 What happens to a child who enters the child welfare system is almost totally dependent upon the quality and number of the workers who provide the services and support to that child. The case studies presented in different chapters of this study has revealed that lack of professional dealings not only solved the problems of children but in some cases has even complicated it. Absence of professionals weakens the quality and competence of institutional services for children in our state.

7.2.13 Lack of Follow-Up and Efficient Review Committees

Follow-up refers to an extended analysis and assessment of an individual or a programme and review refers to a critical re-consideration of a subject. Follow-up of individual cases and review of the entire programme is an essential aspect of any welfare programme.

7.2.13.1 Proper follow-up is required to ensure the complete success of a social welfare program. The Children’s Homes might be successful in protecting children temporarily, but it can happen that once the child leaves the welfare institution, due to one or other reason, he may turn into undesirable activities. Proper follow-up facilities can prevent the children who leave the institutional care from turning into deviant behaviour. Follow-up
facilities can guarantee a minimum safety to the children who leave institutional care. Unfortunately, there is a complete absence of scientific follow up arrangement in institutions.

7.2.13.2 Apart from individual follow-up a close examination and reviewing of the entire programme is also essential. This will help to identify the defects of the programme on time. A timely incorporation of the changes in the objectives, implementation procedure, need of the target group and so on in the programme is required. Setting up of review committees can serve this task. Though there are evaluation and inspection carried out in the homes, one can conclude that they end up as a routine activity without doing much regarding the timely modification of the programme because the face of institutional welfare services for children in both government and non-government sector has not changed much over the years.

7.2.14 Lack of Community Participation

Institutions are to be rightly perceived as a part of community and there shall be a two way interaction process between the institutions and community. A proper interaction between institutions and community can enhance the service delivery capabilities of the institutions by making use of the community resources and can extend their services to families and communities thereby improving the standards of life in the community. The shortcomings due to the lack of community participation is institutional services are discussed below
7.2.14.1 Community is not much aware of the welfare services provided by government and non-government institutions. Though there are Suhrit Samitis and Neighborhood Committees existing in both sectors, they represent a small percentage of the community and they fail to take an active role in helping the beneficiaries. Most of the time their activities get limited to monthly meetings and giving donations. Institutions are not taking any initiative to make them active participants in providing welfare services.

7.2.14.2 Community outreach programmes are also not undertaken by these institutions. The scope of providing crisis intervention services to the community, identifying high risk areas and people in the community, providing preventive services and family intervention services etc are not utilized by the institutions as well. The channel of communication between institutions and community is narrow and as a result the inmates experience alienation.

7.2.15 Absence of Proper Maintenance of Records

Recording or documentation is an important element of professionalism. In the field of social welfare, documentation has much significance. Records provide clarification, authenticity, interpretation and evaluation and are meant for professional use.

7.2.15.1 These records should contain all details pertaining to institution and inmates. Usually in all homes, records pertaining to administrative procedures such as attendance register, admission and discharge register and the like are maintained. But personal records on inmates are not present every where.
Even though some organisations maintain such register they are incomplete. A personal record should contain the inmates’ personal data, family history, health report, counsellor’s report on the behaviour and mental status, details of personal improvement and remarks by teacher, caretakers and vocation instructors. Such a full-fledged report is missing in all homes.

7.2.15.2 In the absence of these qualified and skilled staff, such a report cannot be expected in these homes. This is yet another indicator of the absence of professionalism

**7.2.16 Absence of Effective Management**

Effective management is crucial to the success of any welfare programme. Efficient management depends on the professionalism of the ones at the top of administration. Those at the top should be inspirational, ethical, innovative, practical and understanding. They should also possess excellent leadership skills.

7.2.16.1 The qualities of management are not found in the managers or superintendents of both government and non-government sectors. Most of them seem to have forgotten their mission and show an indifferent attitude, some appeared to be dictatorial. All these naturally result in strained relationship between the management and the staff and the net result is that the real purpose of the organisation is lost. In the absence of good interpersonal skills the administrators fail to run the home, co-ordinate the activities of the staff and control the inmates.

7.2.16.2 A need is felt for the social service organizations to change their man
management and financial management policies. An efficient management will look for transforming the service delivery capabilities and enhance cross organization collaboration in service delivery. It will also try to improve the programme outcome with improved service planning.

7.2.17 Lack of Proper Guidance

Establishing an organization is comparatively simple but its sustained functioning depends on the funds and guidance they receive. The government sector has excellent guidelines for its functioning. The Juvenile Justice Act serves this purpose. Lack of proper guidance is often seen to be interfering with the performance of non-government sector.

7.2.17.1 The rules framed by the Board of Control for Orphanages and other Charitable Homes are incomplete. Each home is allowed to make their own by-laws. The social Welfare Advisory Board, Social Welfare Department and other funding agencies do not cover all the homes under its purview. They give instructions only to homes funded by them which again is incomplete. Moreover, the lack of professionally trained persons further weakens the functioning of the home.

7.2.17.2 Proper guidance can make the NGOs responsive to the needs of the target group. It can also improve the outcome of the programme, cut down the costs associated with service delivery and can avoid duplication of services. Guidance is also felt necessary in areas of identifying talented and capable workforce.


7.2.18 Lack of New Initiative

Initiative refers to the power to begin something. Lack of new initiatives is found in both sectors. The institutions in both sectors continue to follow the same pattern of functioning. Divergent thinking and experimentation is not applied by the administrators and staff.

7.2.18.1 In the government sector once in a while amendments are made but its implementation is very weak. Though there is a recent attempt to Modernise Government Programmes (MGP) by the State Government and though Social Welfare Department is also included in it, the Children’s Homes are excluded from this programme as they function as per a particular legislation (Juvenile Justice Act). Therefore the scope for improvement of Children’s Homes in government sector through MGP is lost.

7.2.18.2 In the non-government sector very few organisations have tried innovative methods and they stand ahead of other institutions while the majority runs through the same old track without contributing much for the beneficiaries and society. These homes can do wonders with a little innovation in the various areas of service delivery such as infrastructure, education, vocational training, counselling, community and family outreach programmes, rehabilitation and so on.

7.2.19 Absence of Co-operation between NGOs

7.2.19.1 A huge number of NGOs are involved in providing institutional welfare services for children across the length and breadth of our state. But unfortunately there exists an unhealthy competition, hostility or indifference
among them instead of Co-operation. They fail to imbibe the team spirit instead they stand alone. If they function on the basis of a give and take policy they can go a long way together. Instead of coming together and discussing on the problems faced, innovative techniques to improve services and other areas of common interest, they march on parallel lines. NGOs fail to draw inspiration from other successful organisations and the absence of communication and co-operation between these homes narrows down the scope for improvement.

7.3 Conclusion

It can be concluded on the basis of this study that institutional services for children in need of care and protection in Kerala exhibit very poor administration and service delivery. Most of the homes lack enough infrastructure, resources, trained and professional hands and proper facilities with regard to education, health, rehabilitation, entertainment and the like. All these lower the quality of services provided. The final result is that the target group becomes ever dependent and never self-sufficient. It also does not provide them intellectual and emotional growth. Thus the services provided fail to attain its real goal. A combined effort on part of all homes, administrative bodies and departments concerned is required to review their performance, analyse the scope for improvement and develop a plan to overcome these problems and limitations.