CHAPTER VII
SUPPORT MECHANISMS FOR SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION

This chapter is based on the analysis of the data collected. The models highlighted in a previous chapter and the models cited in the literature review have been compared and contrasted. This exercise has been helpful in bringing out the major findings and the emerging trends of reintegration in the Indian context. The key findings have then been supplemented with respondent interviews and observations by the researcher. It is important to note here that the sub-heads in this chapter represent the factors that play a role in either catalyzing or holding back processes of reintegration for JCLs. These factors have been further classified to more in-depth analysis, following a similar framework.

This chapter is specifically in response to the second objective of the study that is to identify and understand the availability of social supports with JCLs to address their custodialisation and post-release problems. The responses from interviews with stakeholders and the researcher’s observations have been analysed to understand the support mechanisms existing in the system to address the process of reintegration. It further explains factors that deter processes of reintegration process. This was not part of the original objectives of the study when initiated. However in the process of data collection, this emerged as a major finding and is therefore being presented. The deterring factors go hand-in-hand with the social support mechanisms and hence is being merged in this chapter for better understanding.

It emerged that children with some social supports are easier to be reintegrated and refrain from recidivism than those with no social supports. Therefore, the first part of the chapter details cases of children with supports followed by issues of children with no supports.

The social supports being discussed here refers to accessible networks available to the child from his/her entry into the juvenile justice system and continuing after release of the child into the community. This is the most vulnerable phase of transition in the life
of the child and therefore requires continuous support to help in sustainable re-entry into the community. Review of literature highlights the existence of re-entry courts to help in smooth transition. However, in India, much is relied on the existence of social support networks.

**Child Centric Factors**

**Family Support**

*Child with family/community support*

It has emerged that social support for juveniles in conflict with law is the most important criterion for successful reintegration of the child. This is because ‘reintegration’ is never ‘*in a vacuum*’ as highlighted by a respondent. To explain her she said that ‘reintegration’ is a two-way process. Alongside the child who is the most important participant in the reintegration process, the family/society/community are equal participants in the process. This two-way process is capable of eliminating ‘labeling’ thus ensuring ‘reintegration’. To quote a victim of child-trafficking who is at present the care giver in an institution of girls,

>You have to revert conditions/environment around, to be able to fit in this member of the society (indicating the individual who has been part of the justice system). Thus without the acceptance from the society this individual cannot earn his/her esteem back and thus be part of his/her original belongingness.

It has rightly been experienced that ‘reintegration’ of a juvenile becomes comparatively easier and more sustainable when there is family/social support in place and in action. A respondent from the ‘NGO Placement’ model in Bharuch shared his experience supporting the above finding,

>Most of the children who get reintegrated very easily and never re-enter the world of crimes are the ones who have families that are functional and are in regular touch with the child. They come for discussion with social worker whenever called and also otherwise voluntarily keep in touch with the agency, that is responsible for reintegration of the child, many a times to find out about the doings of their child. On the other hand children who have run away from their families and do not disclose their background or have families who have given them up, easily fall in the trap of negative peer-influence the moment they are released from institutions. It takes a very long time and more strenuous efforts in order to rewind the lives of such children towards positive orientation. This is all the more significant during post-release phase since this is the time the child gets to come in contact with his/her previous relationships.
There is yet another interesting revelation about the existence of family as ‘social support system’. There are families that are very protective about their children and they back them even if the child is on the wrong path. Such family support can have a negative influence on the reintegration of the child and in fact may draw him/her away from the path of reintegration. A social worker shared his experience about a boy who was found to have been given addiction pills by his father since he could not stand his withdrawal symptoms the moment he was stopped giving addiction pills,

*Whenever he was released his father was always in touch with me and I was always in touch with his family. In this case, I am working for the last two years. Before these two years, he had come to the JJ Home four times. His family is very emotional and takes him out on bail every time he comes to the JJ Home. I discussed a lot with his family, and they requested me not to send him to the Borstal School and kept pleading not to send him far and give him another chance. So I placed him in the NGO Placement programme in the same city. But before placing him in the NGO Placement program, I had sent him for de-addiction. There he made significant progress in getting rid of his addiction. After he got de-addicted, I placed this boy at a local NGO under our NGO Placement program. One thing that happened there is that he overcame his addiction. Earlier he had run away from the de-addiction centre because once his father had given him addiction pills and the authorities came to know that it is his father who is giving him the pills. When confronted, the father admitted this.*

Such relationships are all the more harmful post-release. As stated above, this is the phase that the child is most vulnerable and the slightest provocation can lead to return to his/her past life and relationships that have forced him/her into the world of crime.

*When the child himself was interviewed in the same case, he admitted,*

*I am very close to my parents. My mother loves me dearly. I know I shouldn’t do certain things, but what to do? I am very spontaneous. Sir (referring to the social worker who had placed him for the NGO Placement program) had sent me far away from my home to the de-addiction centre. But soon I got very home sick, hence I ran away from the centre once after my father used to come to meet me at the de-addiction centre.*

The child was however very repentant of his deeds and wanted to reform himself. This is a good example of how too much of protection/love from family acts as a deterrent to the otherwise ‘social support system’ in order to reintegrate a child.

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1 Borstal School is an institution set up under the Borstal Schools Act, 1929, to provide vocational training and rehabilitative services to adolescents and young adults with a serious offence background.
Figure 7.1 Restorative Framework

The restorative framework points out that the four quadrants show four different levels of authority – permissive, neglect, punitive and restorative. Thus love and control is used in varying proportions to benefit a child. To quote from the International Institute of Restorative Practices,

*The field of restorative practices has significant implications for all aspects of society — from families, classrooms, schools and prisons to workplaces, associations, governments, even whole nations — because restorative practices can develop better relationships among these organizations’ constituents and help the overall organization function more effectively. For example, in schools, the use of restorative practices has been shown to reliably reduce misbehavior, bullying, violence and crime among students and improve the overall climate for learning. Everyone who finds themselves in positions of authority — from parents, teachers and police to administrators and government officials — can benefit from learning about restorative practices.*

(Wachtel 2012)

The restorative approach is the most desired and successful in terms of helping the child reintegrate smoothly into the community.

It was agreed by various stakeholders that children with some supportive relationships are easier to reintegrate than children who are left to fend for themselves. The most successful cases have been of children who have been detained in observation homes with special permission of the JJB where parents / family members or NGOs had regular access to the children. This explains why in a few places, the NGOs working with children in conflict with law operate inside the observation home campus. This
catalyses regular contact with the child in need and hence aids regular follow up and hand holding towards the reintegration process. As a social workers says,

_We have our help desk inside the observation home campus. This ensures that we get to see all children and families coming to the home and also start building rapport with the families as well. This also works the other way around. Children and families see us every day and gradually they start growing trust in us and our presence. By and by they start approaching us for any little help or problem they encounter while getting their children out from the observation home or even during their trial process. We can also start with informal relationships with children while having formal regular counseling sessions with them._

**Child without family/community support**

In stark contrast to the above, it emerged that children without functional family support are difficult to be reintegrated. Here ‘functional family’ refers to a family that takes its responsibilities in helping a child develop positively into a responsible adult. This has been shared by many respondents across all the models of reintegration, in their process of reintegration of a child.

The probation officer in one of the observation homes shared about a boy who had not been granted bail for a long time since his family could not be traced.

_I thought instead of wasting time here (this boy had stayed at the observation home for three years already), he can be sent for training since he said he has studied up to standard 10. I sought permission from magistrate to send him out, but as long as there is case on him he cannot be sent out since his parents were not found. So somebody had to take guardianship and then I took guardianship of the child at my own risk to send the child out for attending the training. That worked wonders. The boy did well in his training and gradually he could build trust in himself from the training institute – trust in him grew so much so that he was left with Rs 10000/- cash to buy necessary stuff for the institute. This in itself was a great achievement since this boy had landed up in the observation home in accusations of theft. Later he passed out successfully from the training institute and started his own business. Now he is settled in life and has a family of his own and keeps in touch with me since it was me who had taken his guardianship. But then you should understand that had he had a family then his time would not have been wasted just staying back at the home in want of bail and getting into productive engagement much earlier._

There were other instances that were shared by respondents about how without family support, it becomes difficult for a child to be reintegrated. A family offers stability to the child. With a floating population, it becomes easy for a child to be drawn into the company of habitual groups, thus removing him/her gradually out from the reintegration programme. Social support also refers to stable relationships that acts as
a strong support system for reintegration of a child. A respondent reconfirms this by sharing her experience,

Therefore in case of children without a family support that can provide stable relationship at the backdrop, we advise them to talk to us, even when in an emergency. Because if you (referring to the individual child who is in conflict with law) are in an emergency and you keep depending on the unstable sector, then the chances of slipping into that circle remains very high. Therefore we wanted them first to break those contacts and grow new ones.

**Child under Professional Supervision**

It is also agreed by stakeholders that children should be under supervision when they go back to their community. This helps in reintegration, by aiding in the aftercare process. There is universal agreement that when children come out of the observation homes on bail or after release, they are extremely vulnerable since they get back to their original contacts and peer groups that might have aided in their entry into the juvenile justice system in the first place. Therefore, supervised aftercare is the need of the hour. The mentoring process of children in the NGO Placement model responds to this need of aftercare. Other stakeholders that do not have planned aftercare inherent in the models agree to such need. A probation officer who is active in the issue of reintegration of juveniles in conflict with law shares,

There should be provision for children who have gone back to their families for concentrated work in their community. Some mandal/CBO working there so that they can follow up the cases – corporator/police station working in that area.

She further adds,

One effort that we had made with the DCP of the area – He had made groups in every such slum area from where there are too may influx of JCL cases. Mahila mandal, youth mandal, corporators, CBO groups and every evening for two hours he would sit with such groups of children to talk to them or even made arrangements for vocational trainings for such children. There was very good response to such effort. There was an industrial area and he had contacted the industries for jobs of such children (children who have gone back to the community). Such effort should be replicated in all places.

A member of the JJB in Kolkata who has been making efforts to make reintegration of such children possible shared,

In observation homes, children are a floating population. Over there to rehabilitate a child is very very difficult since the child is there only for about 14 days, then he/she goes out on bail.
Another stakeholder who has been an academician actively working on issues of child protection also shared his disappointment,

\[ \text{We need children to stand by for a certain period of time in order to be able to have a} \]
\[ \text{continued dialogue with them. In observation homes they are hardly there for a couple of} \]
\[ \text{weeks. To build rapport with the child and then start with any work on reintegration is a} \]
\[ \text{time-taking process and it is necessary to have continuity in that process.} \]

The realization for the need of supervision of children was felt across among all respondents. One of the social workers stated,

\[ \text{We have to move out even for follow up and supervision because when we talk of rehab} \]
\[ \text{its probably calling/asking ‘kaise chal raha hai’ but then reintegration smoothly ‘huya} \]
\[ \text{hai ki nahi who bhi dekhne ki jaroorat hoti hai’}. \]

Children themselves realized the need for supervision as a support for healthier reintegration. One child who has been reintegrated and is a self-dependent individual now reflected his journey towards reintegration and said,

\[ \text{All this while I was always in touch with the staff, always went back to the organisation for} \]
\[ \text{several reasons – today I am very frustrated, today I am in urgent need of money, today I} \]
\[ \text{want to pursue a paraprofessional course, today I just want to shout at somebody etc. And they} \]
\[ \text{were always there to listen to me. Even in my mind I always believed that even when nobody would be there, the organisation would be there. Before you (addressing the researcher)entered this room Madam, there was Chandan(name changed to respect privacy) Sir and he was very happy to see me; few months back I had met with an accident and for four months I was on bed and thereafter my treatment was on for another six months. I had to get my admission done and I did not have money. Sir had called me up and came to see me knowing that I have met with an accident; I told him Sir I do not have money, so he said ok, you take money and get your admission done and sent a boy to get my admission done. Till date I haven’t returned his money and he has never reminded me for the same. So the staff is always there still now whenever I need them, but at the same time they also make me realise that now the organisation will not support you anymore, even if I ask them for stipend, but they say that no now that you are working and self-dependent, we cannot help you. So it is a very healthy relationship and having somebody backing you is a very protected feeling that all children need.} \]

**Child with Productive Engagement**

Productive engagement for children is another pre requisite for a successful reintegration plan. It has been experienced that children who loiter idly often get affiliated with other groups of children or adults who are up to negative activities. These children on release from observation homes, are easily pulled back to their original groups and gets dissociated from the reintegration process. Hence for a successful reintegration plan, it is very important that children are enrolled back to
their school (if they are in school-age) or some industrial training (suiting their skill, interest and capacity). A respondent in the study shared the reason behind such productive engagement,

> Any education institution or vocation or religious group or any other constructive association have inherent values and learning attached to them. Such values help in pulling people away from negative associations. In normal circumstances the family and school helps in making such value-additions. In absence of a functional family (not a vulnerable or broken family), the peer group and or other such associations of the child, performs such role. Thus we try to enroll back the child into school, or else associate him/her with other communities that he/she would be interested to. We also keep an eye on him/her with regular reports from the social worker in charge of supervision of the child.

Thus it is very important for individuals to get dissociated with previous relationships that are not productive. A veteran worker who has been a respondent in the present research study shared,

> What we realized is that till they are dependent on these past contacts/past life it is very difficult for them to make this shift to the mainstream, therefore you need to have maximum time and dependency on the mainstream. Hence we try to engage them with something productive based on their interest area so that they start growing newer engagements and newer relationships.

It is learnt that being attached to positive values deters an individual from committing crimes, as stated by a respondent,

> Character building education gives a social relationship that helps the whole group of contemporaries to behave/act in a certain socially prescribed way.

**Child with Shelter**

Protective shelter has been stated as a prerequisite for the proper reintegration of a child, in one of the models studied in the Indian context. A veteran social worker who had also been in the founding team for the NGO Placement programme shared,

> We realized that if we had a programme for women and they were living on the streets then they would keep awake the whole night and come to the programme in the morning and go to sleep, or cannot concentrate; the drop-out rate was very high; then we thought okay, if we have this unstable group we will not place them directly into the NGO placement program, we will let them come to our workshop, let them stay there and till they reach a point that they have a stable shelter. So when we say a stable shelter we mean that they are either in their family or in a shelter that is run by an institution or a group home.

Thus all children without a home are admitted into an institution where it is ensured that he/she is under supervision and also have a set routine so as to keep him/her
mentally and physically fit to help attend the targeted reintegration programme. A social worker thus shared,

*If he doesn’t have a place to go back, then we associate him with a shelter home of an institute and provide him with food and also a stipend as out of pocket expenses and also with a travel allowance of minimum ticket value to ensure that he can attend our programme with full concentration and ease.*

Another respondent also agrees to the need of having a fixed shelter by sharing her experience of a woman who had neither family or fixed shelter to return to. This girl was also not willing to take any shelter provided by the organization responsible for her reintegration. She insisted, that she goes back to her previous associations making promises that she would be attending regular activities conducted by the organization,

*In the beginning this girl was quite regular in attending our programmes, but then gradually her attendance started becoming irregular and then she became a drop out. When we sent out our social workers to find her whereabouts we came to know that she has started staying with a man that she claimed to be in love with. We do not interfere in anybody’s personal matter and hence we left her at that point assuring her to be there for her and with her in case she needed help. After a few months this girl was back to our organization having left by the man. Again she started with her regular programs and was recovering in her shelter that we had fixed for her but again she dropped out of the programme after a couple of more months and opted out of the shelter, this time the man that she was with, did not allow her to attend our programme......*

When the issue of children having a proper shelter was discussed with respondents in one of the models, one of them shared his experience,

*We tried to work with children who are in the process of their trial by the JJB, but the moment their trial is over and send back to the community, we lost touch with them. We can still reach out to children if they have a home address in another district through CBOs working in such places; but for children living on the streets we sometimes just have street encounter or encounter or a chance encounter at the railway station. I myself need some help in this regard from organizations working successfully with such children. I need to learn how they keep in touch with such children. That I realize is the biggest challenge.*

**Institution-Centric Factors**

Among institution-centric factors, there becomes evident a few significant factors that influence the reintegration of juveniles in conflict with law. Among the mostly highlighted ones that have emerged from the data collection process are the staffing pattern, availability of funds, the network of services and the availability of government support.
These are presented. However, the order in which they are presented here represents no particular choice of factors.

**Sufficient and professionally trained and sensitive staff**

It has emerged that the nature of staff in an organization has a great influence on the reintegration process. This becomes especially true for staff in direct contact with children that are the care givers. Children who land up in observation homes are very vulnerable and hence they need to be handled with sensitivity and empathy. Professionally trained staffs are likely to have these qualities due to their professional training. There may also be staff that are not professionally qualified but have inculcated such qualities with years of working and also by virtue of their nature. Children feel comfortable with such staff and hence are seen to be more cooperative in nature. This encourages them to confide their deep secrets in them and hence lessen their internal burdens to move ahead in life constructively.

One of the respondents who was a juvenile in conflict with law and now reintegrated shared his experiences in his process of reintegration, about his frustrations, depressions, withdrawal symptoms, revolt inside the observation home by not showing up to the JJB and getting involved in fights and tussles with other boys inside the home. He shares,

> I was stressed. I did not accept my offence, since I used to think that it was in defense that I attacked and my intention was not to kill the man, it was an accident. So I never acknowledged my offence. The magistrate was also indifferent, he just used to defer cases to later dates, not even hearing or talking or discussing about any particular case that was produced before him. I observed this for three to four times and then I stopped going to the court for one and half years. I knew that nothing is going to happen; I also gradually got involved in lots of fights inside the home, used to remain very frustrated.

The same respondent also shared how that one person that he came in contact with at a later period of his stay in the observation home, influenced him positively and made him to change his mind and cooperate with the worker that turned out to be beneficial for him. To quote him,

> ...then one advocate came, M (name not disclosed for reasons of privacy) who became my friend. In the beginning I did not trust her also but every time she used to come and sit with me and convinced me that whatever happens I am there with you. After she came, my case started. I liked the way she took a stand for me, even fought with the judge for me; but others were always very apologetic and tried to explain things to me.
Another respondent shared his experiences about the point person in the organization who was in regular touch with the boy and how his nature helped the boy to transform positively,

Sir (referring to the care giver he was in contact with, in the organization) never forced me, but just said that now that you have got driving license, you practice driving with some friend and then you can look for a job. This non-invasive attitude of Sir actually gradually helped me get rid of all the negative feelings I had grown inside me all this while and I started looking at the positive side of life. I started feeling that somebody is always there for me and with me and I started feeling more confident and worthy.

In this case, the respondent discussed about the professional training of all staff in the institutions that are dealing with ‘reintegration’ of the child and all institutions involved in the process.

In another case, a respondent who has been actively involved in designing programmes on ‘reintegration’ shared her experience during the process of conducting a needs assessment study preceding the programme designing. She also discussed about professionally trained staff as a pre-requisite for a successful reintegration programme,

Caregivers are the ones who cater to all kinds of vulnerable children who live in institutions and they all need the same kind of skills to deal with such children – be it children in conflict with law, or children in need of care and protection or children who are victims of trafficking.

Besides the nature of staff, the staffing pattern also influences the reintegration process of children. It has been learnt that there is a dearth of staff especially in grant-in-aid homes and the superintendent him/herself has to look after counseling in addition to administrative work. This respondent who is a superintendent of a grant-in-aid home shared,

There are two kinds of staffing pattern of observation homes and they are different from Government and grant-in-aid ones. In grant-in-aid homes the superintendent looks after administration as well as counseling of the child, no social worker attends the CWC/JWB. In Government homes there is a superintendent, two to three probation officers/other workers. So there is a limitation in grant-in-aid homes. In government homes there is a minimum of 4 posts – one superintendent, one probation officer, one counsellor and one social worker.

Thus the follow up of cases becomes a problem and thus aftercare suffers. She again shared,
On getting bail and released to parents, there is no provision of follow up of such cases. We want to follow up, but there is so much work that we can’t do that on our own, if there is no provision by law or no extra staff appointed for the purpose.

Another respondent who is a social worker herself and is extremely dedicated to her work on reintegration also expressed her concern over follow up of cases due to the dearth of staff. She acknowledged,

In our organization, we are just the three of us. Two of us sit in two different centres and we look after all cases that come to the JJB. Right from establishing rapport with the parents and the family to supporting them in all types of problems that they encounter with the system, to assisting the police department in accompanying children, to preparing home visit report of each child, to training the JJB and other functionaries on some functionalities of the system etc. is done by only the three of us. Therefore although we realise that that aftercare is a must in order to ensure proper reintegration, we fall short on that. We fail to follow up with cases once they seem to reform themselves, and then keeping in touch with them becomes by chance if children wish to keep contact with us voluntarily or their families call us up if their children falter. If they do not call up we understand that they have not faltered from their path and that they have been properly reintegrated in their own lives constructively.

There is lack staff to carry out the activities in all phases of reintegration of a child. Without any of the required intervention at a particular point throughout the period from which a child enters the juvenile justice system, till a while after he/she exits from the system, the reintegration process gets punctured and hence defunct. There is provision for staff at the Government level but then they remain vacant. This is the complaint received from many respondents. One of them is quoted below,

Today our organisation is there, tomorrow it will not be there. After all, we are an NGO. Like this role is actually that of a probation officer but our organisation is doing this. The post is vacant, so we are doing the role of the probation officer.

Adequate finance

Availability of funds is another factor that influences reintegration for children in conflict with law. This is especially true when a programme is not government funded. Thus a programme that starts off as a project of an donor agency gets hampered/disrupted in many cases when funding stops, especially if the implementing organization is financially not in a position to take the project forward. During an interview with a respondent, he shared about a programme that had started showing results within a very short span of time, thus encouraging the replication of the project in other places of the state. However it had to be discontinued with the dearth of funds.
The programme was started in 2009 and continued through 2011. It was funded by UNICEF and conducted by the Department of Women and Child Welfare. UNICEF was the main funder and changed its mandate in the state and we did not have enough funds to continue the programme.

On further enquiry about why would such huge funds be required or why the Government did not continue with its own funds, he shared his understanding,

Salaries of the experts had to be given. Where would it come from without funds? Nobody is so dedicated as to explore options of volunteering once a week at least so as to maintain continuity and then propose for fresh fund with some other aid agency. Moreover juveniles in conflict with law is not a priority area of the Government so as to mobilize other funding resources.

Another respondent agreed to this,

The issue of children in general have been neglected in India – either as victims or offenders whichever way. Secondly the whole concept of rehabilitation/rehabilitated activities per se has not received the required attention in India at all, even the rehabilitation of other offenders is still a far cry.

Contrary to this limitation of projects getting discontinued due to dearth of funds, there is another side to the coin. It has been learnt that there are some projects that have an inherent structure of replicating. The Training of Trainers (TOT) is an example of such programmes. While on one hand, training is given to care givers and they work directly with the children in process of reintegration, at the same time, the set of people getting trained are expected to train another set of caregivers in another phase of the programme, adding to the module their experiences from implementing the learning from the training directly on individuals. As a caregiver said,

Our programme went on for about six years in three different phases, each phase thus taking off from the previous one. This was continued long after funding from the main source was stopped. This was possible because we had used TOT (training of trainers) as a strategy in the first phase. Thus in the following phases we continued with the training, clubbing it as part of our organisational other trainings, this way the cost got shared and the work still continued.

Network of services

One organisation or agency is never in a position to take care of all aspects of work that requires to take care of the complete reintegration of an individual child. The success of an organisation to be able to reintegrate a child depends a lot on the establishment of a good network of services of the organization with others offering a
variety of services required for the individual. A respondent while sharing about the success of a case of reintegration shared,

*This boy was given basic skills like electrical repairing was what we got him into. That skills was not a part of our organisation but we link up with institutions offering so; we need to take special permission to take a child outside with an escort.*

The NGO Placement model has established its pillars on the availability of a network of organizations where children are placed and a mentor identified in each such organization to closely supervise of the child. A respondent from the organisation shared the logistics in associating a child with NGOs, says,

*Once a child’s interest area and his skill is matched by our experts, we start communicating with the organisation where the child would be placed. We have a printed pamphlet which describes about our organization, our principles, objectives and our expectations from the host organization. The pamphlet is then customized specifying the role of this NGO where our child would be placed. The role of the mentor is also mentioned in it.*

One child who is reintegrated and is now working with the agency that offers services to observation homes and to organizations working on reintegration of juveniles in conflict with law, shared her experiences,

*I belong to an organization A (name undisclosed on reasons of privacy). A works for observation homes corporation schools and for organizations that work with vulnerable children; we run a mobile library –for books and for toys. We also take children out on tour, trips to different places of interest. We go with books to different observation homes – Yerawada, Nanapeth, Mundwa (girls observation home) and others. We go to these institutions and distribute books to children. Then we sit there for an hour. After their reading we collect the books from them and then we discuss with them about the readings they have made from the books. We look for sponsors and then take children out, so we had taken them out to Purandargarh, Balaji Mandir, Sajjangarh, every year we take them out to some places, then we tell them the history of that place where we take them.*

It has been learnt that there are various services available. However, they are not accessible to juveniles in conflict with law, merely the availability of a network of services is not a solution, accessibility to those services is also an issue that needs to be paid attention to, in order to ensure reintegration to this group. One of the respondents agrees to this learning and states,

*There should be some schemes, some de-addiction centres for children, since they do not admit JCLs. One child was here, addicted but the centre does not have any proper institution, no de addiction centre takes him. Most cases of theft are due to addiction of children. In those rehabilitation centres for de-addiction, they do not take these JCL cases.*
State recognition

Review of literature on juvenile justice work has shown that the OJJDP (Office of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention), United States of America have adopted the Intensive Aftercare programme (IAP) model of reintegration. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) was established by the President and Congress through the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act of 1974, Public Law 93–415, as amended. Located within the Office of Justice Programs of the U.S. Department of Justice, OJJDP’s goal is to provide national leadership in addressing the issues of juvenile delinquency and improving juvenile justice. OJJDP sponsors a broad array of research, program, and training initiatives to improve the juvenile justice system as a whole, as well as to benefit individual youth-serving agencies. OJJDP provides leadership, direction, and resources to the juvenile justice community to help prevent and control delinquency throughout the country. (Intensive Aftercare for High Risk Juveniles, a community care model, US Department of Justice, 1994)

Many projects under this programme have been implemented by various states across America. The projects taken over by these states form various components of the whole programme of reintegration and complement each other in their functions. The projects, therefore, are experiments in each of the three phases of the IAP model, thus conforming to Altschuler and Armstrong’s (1990) aftercare model. The success of the model and its various projects thereof shows that having Government support in implementing a model of reintegration not only ensures continuous funding but also ensures implementation of the programme in a wider base thus giving better exhibitory results. The groups of delinquents catered to, also shows a huge variety of the types of delinquents involved in the programme.

On the contrary, the Creative Skills Development Model although was successful and hence replicated in all observation homes of the state, had to be stopped because there was no government support to the programme after the UNICEF changed its mandate of funding. As shared by one of the respondents of the programme,

We were very keen to continue the programme and in fact there were verbal demands even from the children in observation homes, but then our hands are ties. Who would be paying salaries of the experts involved? And who would pay for the instruments used in the project? There is no NGO also ready to take the programme ahead due to various
political reasons. Had the Government supported the programme even without UNICEF sponsors, then we could have continued it.

**Situation Centric**

It has been experienced and learnt that ‘reintegration’ is also a chance-specific fact in many cases. This implies that many cases get reintegrated not because of any of the qualities of either the child, the family or the organization in charge of the process, but because of merits of the case alone. Such cases occasionally do appear among the organisation’s merit list. Below are stated a few such situation centric facts that aid in the reintegration of JCLs.

**Many organizations/people working for the cause**

In certain places, during certain periods of time, the issue of reintegration becomes very high among the stakeholders thus increasing awareness about the issue. This enables the said case to be disposed fast by the JJB in a hurry to clear pendency because of a number of organizations/people creating pressure to reduce pendency. Among the cases released, there might be a child who is repentant of a chance act of delinquency. This case gets reintegrated easily on account of this ‘pending-case-clearance-drive’.

A respondent who is also a social worker with an organization working on reintegration states,

*This boy is just thirteen years old, just stepped into teenage. He is lucky that he did not have to be detained in the observation for long. It just happened that this case came to us on Friday and the same week a new judge was appointed for our JJB who took up the mission of clearing off pending cases. Thus non-serious cases were immediately ordered to be cleared. This boy thus got released on Monday itself. We have already started counseling him and his father and it has started to show results in his repentance and readiness to restart his school and education.*

The JJBs were not functioning every day, the people were not turning up, lot of cases were transferred just like that but clients were clueless about where to go, till today there has been a lot of influence of private lawyers in the JJB – the set up is just like a regular court. So the usual tendency among them is to ensure their fees by pulling the matter every day. Some Rs. 1000-3000 everyday is what they earn. So there are plenty of reasons due to which the pendency was very high. Now ever since our intervention, the pendency has drastically come down and the recidivism rate has also decreased, it is right in front of our eyes that this change occurred.
**Child is an offender by chance**

In some cases an offender commits an offence merely out of curiosity. This is evident in the following case of a thirteen year old boy who is very good at computers. Out of curiosity, he opened an email account with a false name and invited some high profile woman as friend. Later, he thought of making some easy money and on his fake identity he started demanding money citing his poverty. He got caught in the trap laid out by the woman and now the boy is very repentant. To quote him,

*Didi (referring to the researcher) I am really very sorry for what I have done. It was just my curiosity for making some easy money. I had often such emails with similar outcries in the name of known friends saying that I am in dire need of money, so I thought of trying out the trick myself. I feel extremely sorry. I want to get back to my original life, my own set of friends, the trust of my parents etc. I have stayed in this observation home only for one and half days, but I still think this episode in my life should never have happened.*

After talking to this respondent, the social worker said from his experience,

*It is very easy to reintegrate this boy if we show a little bit of sensitivity. The parents need to be counseled so that they do not start mistrusting the child. He is of very young age and needs love and trust. He is very good at computers and that should not be taken away from him. It is good that this boy did not have to be detained in the observation home for long otherwise there are all chances of mingling with boys that are mostly older to him and trying to influence him in other offences.*

**The child is value-oriented**

In many cases of reintegration, it has been learnt that a child has been dragged into the juvenile justice system by articulating the interpretation of the law. Such children may be taken aback as a result of this transformation in their life. They seem eager to cooperate with the system as well as with social workers and others working for them, to move on life. A child responded,

*I was in love with the girl who was staying opposite to our house and she also used to come to her gallery to see me regularly. One day one of her uncles noticed this and me picked up by the police under false allegations. I am brought up by a single parent. My father has left us to live with another woman. She got extremely depressed at my sudden absence. I am very frustrated too. I did not want to hurt my mother and I did not do anything to be picked up by police. My mother made me study in a good school. I feel so sorry for her. I want to get out of this place and go back to school. I have to make my mother’s dreams for me come true. She has got nobody except me.*

As a response to the above, the social worker in the case acknowledged that the child is extremely repentant of his act of stalking the girl. He said that the boy was very
cooperative and that he would be released soon, but before that the social worker needed to talk to his mother and also his maternal uncle (who visits the boy in the observation home often) to shift from their present place of stay so as to avoid the girl and her family.

Sharing this case, the social worker agreed that such cases in which the child belongs to a family where both the child and the family are cooperative get reintegrated easily. It has also been seen that such cases of reintegration are sustainable.