

Case Study

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A Wandering Child Found In Child Care Institution: Case Study

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Abstract

Jeetu (Name changed) is a 13 year old boy. He was caught by the Railway Police Force. He was handed over to the child helpline workers through whom he was admitted to the Child Care Institution. He revealed that he comes from a poor & negligent family. He is habituated to running away from the CCIs and wandering randomly via trains. He has reportedly lived in almost seven CCIs located in different places of the country (India). He dreams of becoming the best truck driver which has made him explore the country for almost three years. The list of places he has visited has astonished the researcher.

The case study of Jeetu, clearly shows how handling a child living in a CCI becomes very challenging for the staff members. This also reveals that there could be negative environment in the CCIs which can be detrimental to the child's development. On the other hand, the case study shows how pathetic conditions at home and parental negligence adversely affect the children.

The dream that Jeetu has been nurturing could also be the dream of numerous children living in the CCIs. These dreams apparently have no basis and perhaps no future. The case study makes an attempt to convey the great challenge lying ahead of the CCIs; to help the children through education and proper rehabilitation, develop as individuals and nurture goals that are realistic.

Note: Identity of the child is kept confidential. Case study has been done with all ethical considerations.

Keywords

Child Care Institutions,
Case Study,
Dreams of Children,
Rehabilitation.

Background and Admission process:

Jeetu (Name changed) is a 13 year old Hindu boy caught by the Railway Police Force while wandering at a railway station. He was handed over to the childline workers through whom he was admitted to the Child Care Institution (CCI).

Family Background:

On interrogation, the officials came to know that he hails from a poor family in Maharashtra. He hasn't been living with his parents, who are separated, since 3 years.

Jeetu's parents are now separated. Mother is looked after by her brother who sends money often. Jeetu had an elder sister who committed suicide. His elder brother goes for daily wages and lives separately.

Other information:

He has travelled across the country for almost three years, mostly by train. He amusingly narrated a list of places he has visited to the researcher. Haridwar, Dispur, Patna, Bexar, Katana, Itrasi, Akola, Busawal, Daund, Sholapur, Kolhapur, Satara, Belgaum, Raybag, Pune,

Lonawala, Bhumashankar abhayaranya, Sangli, Meeraj, Karad, Nagpur, Nasik, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Desur, Chikkodi, Ahmadnagar, Jezuri, Kalubaistan, Hubli, Kanpur, Mathura, and Agra are some of them! Quite a few times during such journeys, he has been caught by the RPF officials and Child helpline workers. He has reportedly lived in almost seven CCIs, located in different parts of the country. He is habituated to running away from the CCIs and travelling randomly by trains to faraway places.

Relationship with Family:

His parents are negligent towards him. His father is a drunkard due to which the marital relationship between his parents is strained and they live separately. Jeetu has feelings of hatred towards his father. He had an older sister who allegedly committed suicide as she could no more bear the harassment meted out by their father. He expressed extreme anger and the wish to kill his father at any given chance. On the contrary, he loves his mother but does not wish to live with the relatives she entrusted to look after him. His mother doesn't work and is looked after by her brother (Jeetu's uncle).

Personal interview:

He has a dream of becoming a truck driver which makes him explore many places visiting them directly. He thinks this is the best strategy one can adopt to be the best driver because the map of all places get embedded in the brain easily. While telling about this plan, he asked the researcher about the distance between two places. When the researcher gave answer, made out of some guesswork, Jeetu laughed and told of an exact place where a milestone is located and even challenged the researcher to go verify in case of any doubt.

The time of going to and returning from the school is the best time to escape, hiding behind trees or in the bushes; he says winking his eye and laughing aloud. He would then catch any train and hide in the toilets in case he felt he would be caught by the railway officials.

He told the researcher that he once visited Patna with his brother. This visit and the associated experience became the bases for his future behaviour.

Visiting a place in daytime, wandering around and then sleeping on empty berths of any random trains was his idea of travelling. He tricked his fellow

passengers narrating sympathetic stories to get some money and food for survival but has reportedly never begged to anyone. Jeetu never feared starvation and said that he was mentally prepared in case of any emergency. However he had known of some places where he could get access to free food served to poor pilgrims.

The money he collected for almost three years accounted approximately to Rs. 20,000 to 30,000. He also mocked at people who fell to his trap. He remembered some instances wherein he was given Rs. 500 by fellow travellers.

At the CCI, he enjoys his solitude as he thinks the other inmates are immature and useless. He stays awake at night time and sleeps during the daytime. In his opinion, the staff members are harsh because they allegedly abuse and beat him up. He also says that things can be worse when he gets transferred to worse CCIs. Hence he thinks of escaping again because the greatest joy and freedom lie outside the CCIs as there would be no one to question him or stop him.

Wandering to different places by train, visiting amusement parks, going for movies, swimming in canals, rivers and pools were the activities that made him happy and not the life at CCIs. Moreover, there used to be neither control nor any harassment unlike the current conditions at the CCIs. This, according to him, is what freedom means. He sometimes shows violent behaviour as a consequence of the false promises of the staff members regarding his release. He reportedly abuses the staff members verbally. Punching the floor, banging his head against the walls, yelling at the staff members are some of his expressions of aggression for being "caged".

Future goals:

After class 12, he wants to get a license for driving trucks. He plans to buy a lorry with his uncle's help. He wishes to earn a lot of money and buy a bungalow, a car and hire police and guards for protection. After this, he wants become a pilot and get a license for flying. He wishes to construct a CCI with the best infrastructure equipped with the best school. He doesn't wish to marry but wants to dedicate his life for 'children in need of care and protection'. He wants to offer maximum facilities to the children and ensure that they are free from problems. He says that children would never feel like running away from his CCI. He even wishes to make a will leaving behind all his wealth to a few successful students.

Conclusion

The case study of Jeetu, clearly shows how, handling a child at the CCI becomes very challenging for the staff members. This also reveals that sometimes there could be a negative environment in the CCIs which may lead to aggression in children. On the other hand we can see how pathetic conditions at home and faulty parenting patterns can have a negative impact on children. The dream that Jeetu has been nurturing could also be the dream of many children living in the CCIs. These dreams apparently have no bases and perhaps no future. The great challenge lying ahead of the CCIs is to make them understand that such dreams are vague and they have to have realistic goals which can be achieved through education and proper rehabilitation.

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