

# Impact of Orphanage tourism on child Exploitation

Abid Suhail Nika<sup>1</sup>, Nasiba Mehraj<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Doctoral Fellow, Department of Tourism Studies, Central University of Kashmir

<sup>2</sup>Doctoral Fellow, Department of Tourism Studies, Central University of Kashmir

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## ABSTRACT

One of the novel concepts that have emerged in the tourism industry is volunteer tourism. It encompasses the type of holidays in which the tourists voluntarily pay visit to orphanages besides taking part in the activities that involve leisure and pleasure. The volunteer tourism is gaining momentum internationally and has led to the latest trend of visiting orphanages over the globe. While visiting a foreign country the tourists take part in visiting an orphanage. There are many orphanages that are set up just to mint money and make huge bucks out of it, through the donations or fees that is charged from visitors. Nowadays, the business of running an orphanage has become quite profitable but at the cost of child exploitation. Although there is little research done on this subject, it has been suggested by media and NGO's that many issues arise with orphanage tourism and study on this subject is the matter of concern. The objectives of the current research were; to provide background of the research and highlight the information regarding the orphanage tourism including its social and economic impacts, which take into consideration the negative and positive impacts of orphanage tourism. This research studies the relation between the orphanage tourism, child exploitation and emotional instability. The study is qualitative in nature and is based on secondary data. The results from the current study revealed that orphanage tourism is not completely safe and is not a better option considered for promoting development. Furthermore, it does not help to attain better long term outcomes. It is evident from the literature obtained by the pediatric and child psychiatry that orphanage tourism is not an effective and is not humane mode of providing assistance to infants and even families. The group that consists infants and young children are specifically vulnerable to different physical and mental hazards of the care provided in orphanages, there are many ill effects that cannot be lessened to an acceptable level even after incurring huge expenditures.

**Key words:** Orphanage tourism, Child exploitation, psychosocial hazards

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## I. Background of the Study:

Orphanage tourism is often referred to a type of tourism that involves visiting to an orphanage for sometimes and is included as a part of the trip that is scheduled which involves visiting different places. There are many visitors who choose to spend most of the time in orphanages and play with the children staying there. They read and write with them and even teach them. There are many people who find this experience very emotive and uplifting, and even life changing at sometimes. Those who pay visits to such places for a little period of time, feel that they can help these institutions by providing donations which will ultimately help the orphans. But there are many aid organisations, in which orphanage tourism is truly an ugly phenomenon, as it turns out to be most vulnerable members of society into mere tourist attractions. Today, there are more than 8 million children living in orphanages worldwide, many of them with living parents.

Today, there are more than 8 million children living in orphanages worldwide, many of them with living parents. In favorable cases, the underprivileged children receive shelter, food and education. And on the contrary at some places they are isolated, exploited, starved. Tourists who travel to such countries are often approached by the children who keep on asking visitors to pay frequent visits before they leave.

In this visit to orphanages, people watch different performances that are performed by the children of orphanages asking for the donations to help assist the institutional costs. In other way we can say that tourists visiting these institutions are unintentionally creating demand for such institutions and this exchange has eventually resulted in evolving the orphanage tourism industry.

In conjunction with UNICEF, a campaign was launched by Friends International in October 2011 to put a stop to orphanage tourism in Cambodia. Orphanage Tourism risks children for exploitation, and involve them in different evil practices. This type of Tourism is prevalent across Southeast Asia. In some parts of the north of Thailand, particularly around Chiang Mai,

there are many such orphanages in which the children from Thailand's ethnic minority are admitted, after being considered the underprivileged people in the society. There are number of such institutions running as orphanages in the southern area of the Thailand which charge upto US \$ 400 per week from volunteers, so that they can spend time with the children. Early studies documented the adverse effects that long-term institutional care had on young children's emotional, social, and cognitive development (Goldfarb<sup>[1]</sup>, 1945; Bowlby<sup>[2]</sup>, 1951; Provence & Lipton<sup>[3]</sup>, 1962; Spitz<sup>[4]</sup>, 1965).

At present, there are studies that suggest orphanage care is not satisfactory or a good option for children who can no stay with their own families. As per UNICEF, more the foreigners visit the country, more the orphanage institutions keep exploiting children for the sake of money and in his process the children face abuse. As Myanmar embraces for maximum arrivals following decades under military rule, UNICEF is warns against the spread of orphanage tourism, where the institutionalized care of minors has turned into a business, with children from different poor families are recruited and are ready to be projected as orphans and extract money from foreigners.

The orphanage tourism business is well established in Cambodia and Indonesia, where children are forcibly separated from their families and late are exploited and are seen as money making machines. There are many cases which are kept intentionally unsightly to raise the donations from the tourists. Most of the people visiting these places are backpackers or retired persons who are willing to help the developing countries by donating their hard earned money for a noble cause, but reality remains unseen.

But UNICEF points out nearly 100 years of research which explicates that even though there is the best institutionalized care it puts children at risk of abuse and makes them vulnerable to mental and physical disorders. It reads that the level of violence orphanages are known to be higher than in their families; children that are raised in orphanages are prone and known to have problems in making healthy social relationship in adulthood; and are more likely to have problems than their peers. Taking into account the orphanages in Myanmar there are 17,322 children registered at orphanages, UNICEF found that only 27% are actually orphans. It is feared that the pace at which the orphanage tourism is growing could separate more minors from their families.

## **II. CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

The above review reveals that there is virtually no evidence to support the fact that group care enriches the accomplishments of the goals of the child welfare services. There is no new or old evidence to indicate that shelter care, or group care in general, is a sound approach to caring for most children entering child welfare services. Group care should only be the option for those children who suffer serious mental illness and posses self destructive behaviour. Group care is an expensive affair and it should be restricted to the children who hold the genuine evidence that the child would be taken due care and superior to what the families or other communities in the society provide them. The important question regarding the suitability of institutional care for children and youth remain unanswered.

Researchers and professionals who take up the child welfare issues have observed that group care of children is used to the full, only when the children with serious problems are addressed under certain time periods. Otherwise it has been seen that group care placement remains ill defined and applied inconsistently. The questions, "How long?" and "What type of treatment for whom?" have yet to be answered. Future group care research should use standardized measures, large comparison groups, and statistical analysis. Treatment variables and their effect on residents with different conditions and needs should be isolated and followed over time.

Moreover different authors hold different views about residential care and orphanage tourism, some of them are as follows:

- "Residential care is now seen as an unsatisfactory long-term option when children cannot be looked after by their own parents. Stable placement through adoption or fostering is much preferred in order that a child may have a chance to form the long term affectionate relationships that are now generally seen as important for normal social development." – David Quinton
- "In the long term, institutionalization in early childhood increases the likelihood that impoverished children will grow into psychiatrically impaired and economically unproductive adults." – Frank, Klass, Earls, and Eisenberg
- "Even holding conduct disorder in childhood constant, the fact of being reared in an institution (a variable that indexed a range of adversities) increased the risk of pervasive social dysfunction in adult life." – Zoccolillo, Pickles, Quinton, and Rutter
- "Thiue children we interviewed did not like living in institutions, and their comments included criticism of institutions for the absence of some essential qualities of parental care. The children clearly preferred other forms of surrogate care, which scored considerably higher on those prized qualities. Their comments indicate a wide gap between the blueprint for institutions found in professional writing and the reality of institutions as the children perceived it." – Malcolm Bush

- "This review indicates that there is virtually no evidence to indicate that group care enhances the accomplishments of any of the goals of child welfare services: it is not more safe or better at promoting development, it is not more stable, it does not achieve better long-term outcomes, and it is not more efficient as the cost is far in excess of other forms of care." – Richard Barth
- The best way to support vulnerable children and their families is to support the vocational training and community based initiatives, rather than visiting orphanages and directly funding the orphanage. Inspired Adventures does not support visits to orphanages and we strongly encourage participants of our adventures to avoid them when travelling to such countries.

### III. FINDINGS FROM LITERATURE

The above analysis indicate that, there is no such evidence that shows group care helps enhance the achievements of different goals of welfare societies that work for children. It does not significantly help in the development or safety of children; neither do such organisations achieve long-term outcomes. It is not efficient as the costs incurred are more than any other form of care. It cannot be considered the sound approach to take care of the children deprived of certain rights. The idea of group care should be restricted to those who suffer mental illness of experience self destructive behaviour as this type of care is expensive and not possible for general group containing all types of children. The youth that recognizes emotional instability or some behavioral disorders help the children by different forms of treatments rather than correcting them with old traditional forms of institutional care, that have deleterious consequences.

The evidence from the pediatric and child psychiatry literature also makes it clear that orphanages are neither an effective nor a humane mode of assistance to infants and families. It can be said that infants and young children are particularly vulnerable to the medical and psychosocial dangers of institutional care, negative effects that cannot be reduced to a tolerable level even with massive expenditure. The available data from all sources consistently indicate five areas of risk to infants and young children in orphanage care:

- (1) infectious morbidity,
- (2) nutrition and growth,
- (3) cognitive development,
- (4) socio-affective development, and
- (5) physical and sexual abuse in the institution.

However 'lavishly funded' by whatever as yet unspecified mechanism, orphanages would still entail inescapable risks to the short-term physical health and long-term emotional development and social competence of infants and young children. Institutions are inherently unsuitable for the emotional needs of human infants, even if one optimistically assumes that physical and sexual abuse of institutionalized infants and young children could be largely prevented.

Residential care is considered to be the unfavorable long term option for children who cannot be looked up by their parents. The other options available for these children are stable placements through adoption or fostering is a better option in order that a child may have a chance to form the long term affectionate relationships that are now generally seen as important for normal social development. In both groups (the ex-residential care women and the women, who had never been in residential care) lack of marital support was associated with poorer parenting but this effect was much stronger amongst the women who had been in children's homes. This suggests that their backgrounds had made them more vulnerable to the effects of current hardships. There are virtually no systematic investigations of the outcome from other kinds of institutional care and none comparing two different kinds of children's homes using established measures of psychological and social functioning in adulthood.

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