

REINTEGRATION AND ITS EFFECT ON THE LIVES OF MALE CARE LEAVERS FROM CHILD CARE INSTITUTIONS IN THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

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DECLARATION

I, **SHYJU M** do hereby declare that the Dissertation Titled **REINTEGRATION AND ITS EFFECT ON THE LIVES OF MALE CARE LEAVERS FROM CHILD CARE INSTITUTIONS IN THIRUVANANTHAPURAM** is based on the original work carried out by me and submitted to the Department of Sociology, Loyola College of Social Sciences (Autonomous), University of Kerala during the year 2024-2026 towards partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree Examination in Sociology. It has not been submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship or other similar title of recognition before any University or anywhere else.

Thiruvananthapuram

10/07/2026

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CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled **REINTEGRATION AND ITS EFFECT ON THE LIVES OF MALE CARE LEAVERS FROM CHILD CARE INSTITUTIONS IN THIRUVANANTHAPURAM** is a record of genuine work done by **SHYJU M** fourth semester Master of Sociology student of this college under my supervision and guidance and that it is hereby approved for submission.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the reintegration experiences of male care leavers from Child Care Institutions (CCIs) in Thiruvananthapuram and explores its effect on their social, emotional, psychological, and economic well-being. Care leavers often face significant challenges while transitioning from institutional care to independent living due to limited family support, social stigma, inadequate life skills, and insufficient aftercare services. Despite the growing importance of child protection and rehabilitation, there is limited research focusing on the post-institutional lives of care leavers in Kerala, particularly in Thiruvananthapuram.

The study adopted a qualitative research approach with a case study design to understand the lived experiences of male care leavers. Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with male ex-inmates from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram. The study explored key areas such as housing stability, emotional well-being, education, employment, independent living skills, family support, social relationships, and access to aftercare services.

The findings reveal that many care leavers experience difficulties in securing stable employment, continuing education, obtaining housing, and developing supportive social networks. Emotional challenges such as loneliness, insecurity, and low self-confidence were also common. At the same time, some participants reported positive outcomes, including improved resilience, self-reliance, and personal growth gained through institutional support and life experiences. The study highlights the crucial role of education, vocational training, mentorship, community acceptance, and effective aftercare services in promoting successful reintegration.

The research concludes that reintegration is a complex and continuous process requiring coordinated support from government agencies, Child Care Institutions, social workers, non-governmental organizations, communities, and families.

Keywords: Care Leavers, Child Care Institutions, Reintegration, Aftercare Services, Independent Living, Social Support, Rehabilitation, Thiruvananthapuram.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Alternative care for children separated from their families has become an important concern in child protection across the world. A major part of this support is aftercare, which helps young people adjust to independent life after leaving Child Care Institutions (CCIs). A Care Leaver is a young person who has lived in a government or NGO-run CCI and leaves the institution after turning 18 years old. Although Care Leavers are one of the most vulnerable groups in society, they also have the potential to become independent and productive citizens when proper support is provided.

According to the 2011 Census, India has around 23.6 million orphaned children, which is about 5% of the total child population. Among them, nearly 2.1 million are between 15 and 17 years old, showing that many young people are entering adulthood without family support. In Kerala, there are about 11,100 orphans and nearly 515 orphanages. However, aftercare services for children leaving institutions are still very limited. In Thiruvananthapuram district, there are around 70 orphanages, including 45 institutions registered under the Juvenile Justice Act, caring for nearly 1,500 children, of whom more than 850 are boys. Despite this, there is no aftercare home available for boys in the district.

This study focuses on the experiences of male Care Leavers in Thiruvananthapuram and examines the challenges and opportunities they face after leaving Child Care Institutions and reintegrating into society. Since very limited research has been conducted in the Indian context on this topic, the study also aims to contribute to social work knowledge and encourage further research.

The study follows a qualitative research approach using a case study design. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with fifteen male Care Leavers who had left Child Care Institutions between three and fifteen years ago and were still living in Thiruvananthapuram. Participants were selected through purposive sampling.

The findings show that many Care Leavers experience difficulties in important areas such as education, employment, housing, and life skills. Their transition to adulthood is often affected by instability, social exclusion, emotional struggles, and lack of support. Many are unaware of the government benefits and services available to them and face challenges in accessing support

systems. The research highlights the need for strong cooperation between government departments, non-governmental organizations, communities, corporates, and mentors to meet the needs of Care Leavers effectively.

Finally, the study emphasizes the importance of protecting Care Leavers from further neglect and exclusion by ensuring their inclusion in mainstream society. In line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the study argues that the State has both a legal and moral responsibility to support and protect Care Leavers as part of the child protection system.

1.1.1 Child Care Institutions

Child Care Institutions (CCIs) are established under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 to provide care, protection, treatment, development, and rehabilitation for children who are in need of care and protection or are in conflict with the law. These institutions include Children's Homes, Observation Homes, Special Homes, Open Shelters, Places of Safety, and Specialized Adoption Agencies. CCIs may be managed by government departments or non-governmental organizations, but all institutions must be registered and regulated according to law.

In India, CCIs play an important role in protecting vulnerable children such as orphans, abandoned children, victims of abuse or neglect, and children in conflict with the law. They provide shelter, food, healthcare, education, counselling, vocational training, and rehabilitation services. The main purpose of these institutions is not only to provide protection but also to prepare children for independent and responsible living in society.

1.1.2 Types of Child Care Institutions in India

Under the Juvenile Justice Act, Child Care Institutions are classified according to the needs and conditions of children. Children's Homes provide care and protection for children who are abandoned, orphaned, or neglected. Observation Homes offer temporary accommodation for children in conflict with the law during inquiry proceedings, while Special Homes focus on the rehabilitation of children found guilty of offences.

Open Shelters provide community-based support and temporary care for children in difficult circumstances. Places of Safety are meant for children involved in serious offences and provide secure rehabilitation facilities. Specialized Adoption Agencies (SAAs) facilitate legal adoption

and provide care for children awaiting adoption. These institutions together ensure that children receive suitable care, protection, and rehabilitation according to their individual needs.

1.1.3 Objectives of Child Care Institutions

The major objective of Child Care Institutions is to ensure the safety, protection, and holistic development of vulnerable children. These institutions provide a secure environment where children are protected from abuse, exploitation, neglect, and other harmful situations. CCIs also focus on the emotional, psychological, educational, and physical development of children.

Another important objective is rehabilitation and reintegration. Institutions aim to equip children with education, vocational skills, and life skills that help them become self-reliant individuals. Through proper guidance and support, CCIs help children reintegrate into families and society with dignity and confidence.

1.1.4 Services Provided by CCIs

Child Care Institutions provide various services for the welfare and development of children. Basic services include food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, and protection. Education is provided through both formal and non-formal systems to ensure continuity in learning.

Counselling and mental health support help children deal with trauma, emotional stress, and behavioural problems. Vocational training and life skill education prepare children for employment and independent living. Rehabilitation and reintegration programmes also help children adjust successfully to society after leaving institutional care.

1.1.5 Legal and Policy Framework

The functioning of Child Care Institutions in India is guided by a strong legal and policy framework. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 is the main legislation that governs the care, protection, treatment, rehabilitation, and reintegration of children. The Act emphasizes child rights and a child-friendly justice system.

The Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) supports institutional and community-based child protection services across the country. Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) act as the competent authorities responsible for decisions regarding the care, treatment, rehabilitation,

and placement of children in need of protection. Together, these mechanisms ensure accountability and proper implementation of child welfare measures.

1.1.6 Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 is a comprehensive child-center law designed to protect children in need of care and protection as well as children in conflict with the law. The Act follows a reformative and rehabilitative approach instead of a punitive one.

The Act defines a child as any person below the age of eighteen years. It distinguishes between a “child in conflict with law” and a “child in need of care and protection.” The law aims to provide proper care, protection, development, and rehabilitation to children while ensuring their dignity and rights.

An important feature of the Act is the establishment of Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) and Child Welfare Committees (CWCs). JJBs handle cases involving children in conflict with the law, while CWCs deal with children in need of care and protection. The Act also promotes adoption, foster care, sponsorship, and aftercare programmes as part of rehabilitation and reintegration.

The legislation emphasizes child-friendly procedures, confidentiality, legal aid, counselling, and speedy rehabilitation. It aligns with international child rights principles, especially the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Therefore, the Act plays a major role in strengthening the child protection system in India and promoting the welfare and rehabilitation of children.

1.1.7 Child Welfare Council in Kerala

The Kerala State Council for Child Welfare is an important organization working for the protection and welfare of children in Kerala. Established in 1960, the council provides care, education, rehabilitation, adoption services, and protection for vulnerable children.

The council works in cooperation with government departments and voluntary organizations to implement child welfare programmes across the state. One of its major initiatives is the “Ammathottil” scheme, which allows mothers who are unable to care for their newborns to safely leave them at designated centres for protection and adoption.

The council also organizes awareness programmes, educational activities, and child protection campaigns to promote children's rights and welfare. Through its programmes and services, the council contributes greatly to building a child-friendly society in Kerala.

1.1.8 Juvenile Justice Boarding Institutions in Kerala

Juvenile Justice boarding institutions in Kerala provide residential care, protection, and rehabilitation for children who are abandoned, abused, neglected, or in conflict with the law. These institutions function under the supervision of child protection authorities and the state government.

The major institutions include Observation Homes, Special Homes, Children's Homes, and Shelter Homes. Observation Homes provide temporary accommodation during inquiry proceedings, while Special Homes focus on rehabilitation. Children's Homes provide long-term care and support for vulnerable children, and Shelter Homes provide emergency care and protection.

These institutions provide accommodation, food, education, healthcare, counselling, vocational training, and recreational facilities. Their main aim is to support rehabilitation and successful reintegration into society. Strict rules and monitoring systems are followed to ensure quality care, safety, and protection of children's rights.

1.1.9 Children's Homes in Thiruvananthapuram

Children's Homes in Thiruvananthapuram play an important role in caring for orphaned, abandoned, and vulnerable children. These institutions provide shelter, food, education, healthcare, counselling, vocational training, and recreational opportunities. They function as safe and supportive environments where children can grow with dignity and confidence.

The administration and supervision of these homes are carried out by authorities such as the Child Welfare Committee (CWC), the Social Justice Department, and the Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights. Both government-run and privately managed institutions operate in the district to support children in need of care and protection.

In addition to basic services, children's homes also organize educational and cultural activities that encourage creativity, confidence, and social participation among children. Thus, these homes contribute significantly to the welfare and development of vulnerable children.

1.1.10 Concept of Reintegration

Reintegration refers to the process through which children leaving Child Care Institutions adjust to independent living within society. It involves social, emotional, psychological, and economic adjustment. Reintegration is not simply returning to society physically; it also includes acceptance, support, and opportunities for stable living.

The ultimate aim of institutional care is rehabilitation and successful social reintegration. Effective reintegration helps former inmates lead independent and dignified lives with access to education, employment, housing, emotional support, and social acceptance.

1.1.11 Reintegration Scenario in Kerala and Thiruvananthapuram

In Kerala, especially in Thiruvananthapuram, reintegration is often a difficult process for care leavers. Many children leave institutions after reaching the age of eighteen with limited resources and support systems. Although aftercare programmes exist, they are often inadequate or inconsistently implemented.

Research studies show that many care leavers face challenges such as unemployment, lack of housing, absence of identity documents, and limited emotional support. Institutional limitations such as insufficient funding, lack of trained staff, and poor infrastructure also affect rehabilitation and reintegration services.

1.1.12 Major Challenges Faced During Reintegration

One of the major challenges faced by Care Leavers is economic insecurity. Many struggle to secure stable employment due to inadequate education, lack of vocational skills, and limited social networks. Financial instability increases their vulnerability to poverty and exploitation.

Another challenge is the absence of family support. Many children come from broken or dysfunctional families and therefore lack emotional and social support after leaving institutional care. Social stigma and discrimination also create barriers to employment, relationships, and social acceptance.

Psychological and emotional difficulties are also common among care leavers because many have experienced trauma, abuse, neglect, or rejection during childhood. Inadequate aftercare services further increase the risk of deviant behaviour, substance abuse, and involvement in

criminal activities. These challenges show that reintegration is a complex process requiring continuous support and guidance.

1.1.13 Positive and Negative effect of Reintegration

Successful reintegration can positively influence the lives of Care Leavers by promoting independence, self-confidence, and economic stability. Access to education, vocational training, and employment opportunities helps care leavers become self-reliant individuals. Social acceptance and emotional support also improve mental well-being and confidence. Successful reintegration further reduces the chances of reoffending or returning to institutional care.

However, failed reintegration can lead to homelessness, unemployment, poverty, social isolation, and emotional distress. Lack of guidance and support may force some individuals into substance abuse, criminal activities, or other harmful behaviours. Therefore, the quality of reintegration significantly affects the future life of care leavers.

1.1.14 Role of Aftercare Services and Suggestions for Improving Reintegration

Aftercare services play a major role in supporting children who leave Child Care Institutions. These services help care leavers gradually adjust to independent living and provide support during the transition period. Aftercare services include financial assistance, housing support, counselling, education, vocational training, mentoring, and life skill development.

Guidance and counselling help care leavers make proper decisions and build self-confidence. Vocational training and employment support improve their chances of economic independence. Mental health services are also important in helping individuals cope with trauma and emotional difficulties.

There is a strong need to strengthen aftercare programmes and extend support beyond the age of twenty-one. Skill development programmes should be connected to current employment opportunities. Community awareness programmes are also necessary to reduce stigma and encourage social acceptance of care leavers.

Family-based care systems such as foster care and sponsorship can further support smoother reintegration into society. Overall, effective aftercare services are essential for helping care leavers lead independent, secure, and dignified lives.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Child Care Institutions (CCIs) play an important role in the protection, care, rehabilitation, and development of children who are orphaned, abandoned, neglected, abused, or in conflict with the law. These institutions function under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 and are supported through programmes such as the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS). The main aim of these institutions is to provide safety, education, counselling, and rehabilitation for vulnerable children and prepare them for a secure future. However, the real challenge begins when children leave institutional care and attempt to reintegrate into society as independent individuals.

Reintegration refers to the process through which Care Leavers of Child Care Institutions return to family and community life and establish themselves socially, emotionally, and economically. Successful reintegration requires emotional support, social acceptance, education, employment opportunities, life skills, and access to community resources. However, many care leavers, especially male ex-inmates, face serious difficulties during this transition. Although institutions provide protection and basic facilities, many children leave without adequate preparation for independent living.

One of the major problems faced by Care Leavers is psychological distress and emotional insecurity. Children raised in institutions often experience limited family attachment and emotional support. After leaving institutional care, many struggle with loneliness, anxiety, low self-confidence, insecurity, and identity problems. The absence of proper guidance and stable support systems makes it difficult for them to adjust to social life and responsibilities.

Another important issue is social stigma and exclusion. Society often views children from institutional backgrounds differently, which affects their acceptance in the community. Many Care Leavers lack strong family relationships and social support networks, making it difficult for them to adjust to mainstream society. This discrimination negatively affects their education, employment opportunities, social relationships, and overall integration into society.

Economic instability and unemployment are also major challenges during reintegration. Although some institutions provide education and vocational training, these opportunities are often insufficient or not connected to present job market needs. As a result, many Care Leavers

struggle to continue higher education or secure stable employment. Lack of financial security and practical life skills such as financial management, decision-making, and problem-solving further increase their vulnerability to poverty and dependency.

Inadequate reintegration support may also expose care leavers to exploitation, substance abuse, antisocial behaviour, and criminal activities. Although aftercare provisions exist under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, the implementation of these services is often limited and inconsistent. Many Care Leavers do not receive proper follow-up support, counselling, mentorship, or rehabilitation services after leaving institutional care.

In Thiruvananthapuram, several Child Care Institutions work for the protection and rehabilitation of vulnerable children. However, only limited studies have been conducted on the reintegration experiences of Care Leavers after leaving institutional care. There is inadequate understanding about how reintegration affects their psychological well-being, social relationships, education, employment, and overall quality of life. Similarly, the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes, aftercare services, and community support systems has not been fully studied.

Therefore, there is a need for a systematic research study on “Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram.” The study aims to understand the experiences, challenges, and opportunities faced by Care Leavers during reintegration and to examine its social, emotional, psychological, and economic Effect on their lives. The findings of the study may help social workers, policymakers, Child Care Institutions, and rehabilitation agencies to strengthen aftercare services and develop effective reintegration programmes for care leavers.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study on “Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram” is significant because it focuses on understanding the lives and experiences of Care Leavers after leaving Child Care Institutions (CCIs). Reintegration into society is an important and challenging stage in the lives of care leavers. The study helps to understand their social adjustment, emotional wellbeing, lifestyle, and economic conditions after they move from institutional care to independent community living.

By examining their experiences, the research provides a clearer understanding of the opportunities and challenges faced by Care Leavers in society.

The study is also important because it examines the Effect of institutional care on the lives of care leavers. Child Care Institutions provide education, counselling, discipline, vocational training, rehabilitation programmes, and emotional support to children. This research helps to understand how these services influence the personality, behaviour, confidence, coping skills, and independent living abilities of ex-inmates. The findings may identify both the positive and negative effects of institutional care on their long-term personal and social development.

Another important significance of the study is its contribution to policy development and child welfare programmes. The study provides valuable information about the strengths and weaknesses of existing reintegration and aftercare services. By identifying gaps in emotional support, rehabilitation programmes, vocational opportunities, life-skill training, and community acceptance, the study can help policymakers improve child welfare policies and strengthen aftercare provisions under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 and related child protection programmes.

The findings of the study will also be useful for social workers, counsellors, caregivers, non-governmental organizations, and government agencies working in the field of child welfare and rehabilitation. The study can help them design more effective counselling programmes, vocational training initiatives, life-skill education, rehabilitation services, and community-based support systems for care leavers. It may also create greater awareness about the importance of emotional support, social acceptance, mentorship, and continuous follow-up services for successful reintegration.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of strengthening aftercare services for children leaving institutional care. Many care leavers face difficulties related to employment, housing, emotional adjustment, social acceptance, and financial stability.

Finally, the study contributes to the field of social work research by generating knowledge about the reintegration experiences of Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram. Since only limited studies have been conducted in this area, especially in the local context, the research may serve as an important reference for future academic studies, social work practice, child welfare programmes, and rehabilitation services. Thus, the

study is valuable in understanding the realities of care leavers and promoting better reintegration strategies and support systems for their overall wellbeing and development.

1.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced the concept of Child Care Institutions (CCIs) and explained their role in providing care, protection, rehabilitation, and development for vulnerable children under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. It discussed the different types of institutions, the services they provide, and the legal and policy framework that guides their functioning. The chapter also highlighted the concept of reintegration and emphasized that successful reintegration is essential for care leavers to lead independent, stable, and dignified lives.

The chapter further examined the major challenges faced by male Care Leavers after leaving institutional care, including emotional difficulties, social stigma, unemployment, and lack of family support. It explained the importance of aftercare services in helping them adjust to society and identified the need to strengthen existing support systems. Finally, the statement of the problem and significance of the study established the need to understand the reintegration experiences of male Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram. This study aims to contribute to better policies and practices that support their successful transition into society.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE CHAPTER

The review of literature is an important part of the research process as it provides an understanding of existing studies, theories, and findings related to the research topic. The present chapter reviews previous research on Child Care Institutions (CCIs), rehabilitation, aftercare services, and the reintegration experiences of care leavers. The studies discussed in this chapter highlight the social, emotional, psychological, and economic challenges faced by young people after leaving institutional care, as well as the importance of education, vocational training, family support, community acceptance, and aftercare services in promoting successful reintegration. The review also helps identify gaps in existing knowledge, particularly regarding the experiences of male care leavers in Thiruvananthapuram, and provides a foundation for the present study on “Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Male Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram.”

Wanglar (2021), in the study titled “Child Care Institutions in India Investigating Issues and Challenges in Children’s Rehabilitation and Social Integration,” examined the major challenges faced by Child Care Institutions (CCIs) in promoting the rehabilitation and social integration of children in institutional care. The study was published in the journal *Children and Youth Services Review* and was conducted in twenty Child Care Institutions across four districts of Manipur: Churachandpur, Imphal East, Imphal West, and Ukhrul. An exploratory research design was adopted, and data were collected from forty institutional staff members through purposive sampling using semi-structured interviews and observation.

The study found that rehabilitation and social integration are among the most important yet most challenging responsibilities of CCIs. Several institutional barriers were identified, including poor infrastructure, shortage of professionally trained staff, weak alternative care systems, outdated vocational and life-skill training programmes, and unhealthy parent–child relationships. These limitations reduced the ability of institutions to prepare children for independent living and successful adjustment after leaving care.

Wanglar also noted that vocational education and life-skill training were often not aligned with current employment and social needs, making it difficult for care leavers to find jobs and adapt to community life. In addition, lack of emotional support and individual attention created

psychological difficulties that affected children's confidence, social relationships, and overall reintegration process.

The study emphasized that rehabilitation cannot be achieved through shelter and basic care alone. Children need comprehensive support, including counselling, emotional care, education, vocational training, and effective aftercare services. It recommended strengthening institutional facilities, improving staff training, and developing better rehabilitation and aftercare programmes.

This study is highly relevant to the present research on "Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram." It highlights how inadequate institutional preparation, limited emotional support, and insufficient vocational opportunities affect the post-institutional lives of care leavers. While Wanglar's study focused on institutional challenges and staff perspectives in Manipur, the present study explores the lived experiences, challenges, and Effect of reintegration among male Care Leavers in Thiruvananthapuram.

Dutta (2016), in the study titled Institutional Care in India Investigating Processes for Social Reintegration, examined the challenges and processes involved in the reintegration of children and youth leaving institutional care in India. The study was published in the journal Children and Youth Services Review and focused on the policies, services, and rehabilitation mechanisms followed by government and private child-care institutions.

The study adopted a case study approach and examined twenty child-care and aftercare homes in the metropolitan cities of Mumbai and Kolkata. It assessed differences in institutional models, admission procedures, educational and vocational services, preparation for leaving care, and the nature of aftercare support. The findings revealed considerable differences in policies and practices among institutions, which directly influenced the success of social reintegration.

Dutta found that many institutions lacked a standardized framework to prepare children for independent living. Although they provided basic care and protection, they often failed to offer adequate life skills, emotional support, and vocational competencies needed for successful reintegration. The study emphasized that quality education, vocational training, psychological wellbeing, life-skill education, and opportunities for socialization are essential for rehabilitation, but these services were often inconsistent and inadequate.

The study also showed that reintegration outcomes are influenced by several factors, including cultural background, gender, age of entry into care, institutional experiences, preparation for leaving care, and the availability of social support. In the absence of proper aftercare and long-term support, many care leavers experienced insecurity, unemployment, social isolation, and emotional difficulties.

Dutta emphasized that reintegration should be viewed as a continuous process that begins during institutional care and extends into community life. The study recommended stronger policy implementation, better coordination between government and non-government organizations, improved counselling and vocational training, and systematic aftercare programmes.

This study is highly relevant to the present research on Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Male Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram. It highlights the importance of aftercare services, emotional support, vocational training, and community integration in ensuring successful rehabilitation. While Dutta's study focused on institutional policies and reintegration processes in Mumbai and Kolkata, the present study explores the lived experiences, challenges, and social Effect of reintegration among male Care Leavers in Thiruvananthapuram.

Modi, Kalra, and Prasad (2025) in their study titled Young Adults Transitioning from Institutional Care to Independent Living The Role of Aftercare Support and Services, examined the effectiveness of aftercare programmes and support systems available to young adults leaving institutional care in India. The study was published in Institutionalised Children Explorations and Beyond and focused on the challenges faced by care leavers during their transition to independent living.

The study was conducted among forty-seven young adults aged 17 to 29 years who had grown up in various government and non-government Child Care Institutions in New Delhi. The sample included both young adults who had received aftercare services and those who had not. Data were collected through interviews and comparative analysis to assess the Effect of aftercare support on education, employment, housing, emotional wellbeing, and social adjustment.

The findings showed that existing aftercare programmes were not fully effective in preparing young adults for independent living. Although some aftercare recipients achieved higher educational levels than non-recipients, significant gaps remained in employment opportunities,

financial independence, emotional wellbeing, and social support. Many participants struggled to secure stable jobs, manage independent living, and maintain healthy relationships.

The study also identified gender disparities in aftercare services. Female care leavers had lower educational attainment and fewer income opportunities than males. Many continued to depend on institutional residential support, which limited their readiness for independent life. In addition, both aftercare recipients and non-recipients reported similar levels of emotional stress and psychological difficulties, suggesting that existing programmes did not adequately address mental health needs.

The researchers emphasized that aftercare support should go beyond temporary shelter and financial assistance. Successful reintegration requires higher education opportunities, vocational and life-skill training, counselling, psychosocial support, employment assistance, housing support, and strong social networks. The study concluded that inadequate aftercare services increase the risk of unemployment, homelessness, social exclusion, emotional distress, and dependency.

This study is highly relevant to the present research on Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Male Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram. It highlights the importance of emotional support, social inclusion, vocational training, and long-term rehabilitation programmes in helping care leavers transition to independent community life. While Bhargava and colleagues focused on aftercare services and independent living experiences in New Delhi, the present study examines the broader social, emotional, psychological, and economic Effect of reintegration among male Care Leavers in Thiruvananthapuram.

Punalekar (1985) in the study titled *The Rehabilitation of Institutionalised Children: A Case Study*, examined the rehabilitation process of children living in institutional care and the challenges involved in preparing them for successful adjustment in society. The study was published in the *Indian Journal of Social Work* and focused on how institutional care influences the personality development, social adjustment, and future rehabilitation of children in child-care institutions in India.

The study used a case study approach to examine the living conditions, care practices, and rehabilitation efforts within institutions. It analysed the children's social backgrounds, emotional and behavioural conditions, educational opportunities, and the role of institutions in promoting independent living. The study found that many children entered institutions because

of poverty, family breakdown, neglect, abuse, abandonment, or the death of parents, which made them emotionally and socially vulnerable even before institutionalization.

Punalekar observed that although institutions provided food, shelter, education, and protection, they often failed to offer a family-like environment. The absence of emotional warmth, parental attachment, and individualized care led to feelings of insecurity, inferiority, loneliness, and emotional dependency. These experiences later created difficulties in social adjustment and reintegration.

The study also revealed that rehabilitation programmes focused mainly on meeting physical needs rather than preparing children for independent life. Limited opportunities for emotional development, social participation, vocational training, and life-skill education reduced their ability to become self-reliant adults. Punalekar emphasized that rehabilitation should include psychological, emotional, educational, and social development through counselling, guidance, supportive relationships, and community interaction.

Another important finding was that institutionalized children often faced stigma and discrimination after leaving care, affecting their employment opportunities, relationships, and acceptance in society. The lack of family support and follow-up rehabilitation services increased the risk of unemployment, social isolation, and dependency.

The study recommended individualized rehabilitation planning, family-based care approaches, counselling services, vocational education, community support, trained social workers, and systematic aftercare programmes. It stressed that child-care institutions should function as developmental environments rather than merely custodial centres.

This study is highly relevant to the present research on Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Male Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram. Punalekar's findings on emotional insecurity, inadequate rehabilitation planning, lack of family-like care, and social stigma help explain the long-term difficulties faced by care leavers. While the study focused on institutional rehabilitation, the present study specifically examines the reintegration experiences and the social, emotional, psychological, and economic Effect of reintegration among male Care Leavers in Thiruvananthapuram.

Browne (2017) in the study titled *Children in Care Institutions*, examined the conditions, challenges, and developmental Effect of institutional care on children living in residential care

settings across different countries. The study explored how institutionalization affects the physical, emotional, psychological, and social development of children and emphasized the importance of family-based and community-based approaches for successful rehabilitation and reintegration.

The study noted that children are placed in care institutions for reasons such as poverty, abandonment, abuse, neglect, family breakdown, conflict, disability, and lack of parental care. Although institutions provide protection, shelter, education, and support, Browne argued that prolonged institutionalization often has negative developmental consequences because institutions may not provide the emotional attachment, individualized attention, and family-like environment necessary for healthy development.

One of the major findings was that children in institutions often experience emotional deprivation, attachment difficulties, low self-esteem, anxiety, and behavioural problems. Limited stable relationships and parental bonding can affect psychological wellbeing, communication skills, emotional regulation, and interpersonal relationships, which later create challenges during reintegration into society.

The study also pointed out that institutional care can lead to social isolation and dependency. Because children have limited interaction with the wider community and few opportunities to develop independent living skills, many care leavers struggle to adjust after leaving care. Inadequate preparation for independent living increases the risk of unemployment, homelessness, poverty, exploitation, and social exclusion.

Browne strongly advocated for deinstitutionalization and family-based alternatives such as foster care, adoption, kinship care, and community-based rehabilitation. The study emphasized that reintegration programmes should include rebuilding family relationships, emotional support, life-skill development, education, vocational training, and community participation. It also highlighted the importance of aftercare and follow-up services such as counselling, mentorship, educational assistance, employment support, and psychosocial services.

This study is highly relevant to the present research on Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Male Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram. Browne's findings on emotional deprivation, social isolation, dependency, and inadequate preparation for independent living help explain the difficulties faced by Care Leavers after leaving institutional care. While Browne provides an international perspective, the present study specifically

examines the reintegration experiences and social Effect among male Care Leavers in Thiruvananthapuram.

Zvarebwa (2022) in the study titled Reintegration Challenges Faced by Juveniles Formerly Detained in Children's Rehabilitation Centers in Zimbabwe (2022) : The Case of Northcot Training Institute, examined the social, psychological, and economic challenges experienced by juveniles after leaving rehabilitation institutions in Zimbabwe. The study was submitted as a Master's thesis to Vytautas Magnus University.

The study adopted an exploratory qualitative design based on a constructivist approach to understand the lived experiences of former juvenile detainees. Purposive sampling was used to select five former detainees and two social workers for in-depth interviews. Life-history methods, visual lifelines, and ethnographic thematic analysis were used to analyse the data.

The findings revealed that juveniles faced many reintegration challenges after release, including socio-economic difficulties, stigma and discrimination, social exclusion, psychological distress, unemployment, and the risk of reoffending. Negative attitudes from families and communities often led to rejection, emotional insecurity, and isolation.

The study also found that support systems for care leavers were inadequate. Participants needed continued assistance in livelihoods, mental health services, substance abuse counselling, educational support, family reintegration, and community acceptance. Poverty and unemployment further increased the risk of recidivism and antisocial behaviour.

Zvarebwa (2022) emphasized the important role of social workers in promoting successful reintegration through a developmental and rights-based approach. The study recommended stronger counselling services, livelihood support, mental health interventions, community awareness programmes, and better coordination among government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and social workers. It concluded that reintegration should be viewed as a continuous and supportive process rather than a one-time event.

This study is highly relevant to the present research on Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Male Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram. Zvarebwa's findings on stigma, social exclusion, unemployment, lack of support systems, and psychological distress help explain the reintegration difficulties faced by ex-inmates. While the study focused on former juvenile detainees in Zimbabwe, the present study specifically

examines the social, emotional, psychological, and economic Effect of reintegration among male Care Leavers in Thiruvananthapuram.

Modi, Kalra, and Prasad (2025) in the study titled *Is Someone There for Them? Care Leavers' Experiences, Challenges, and Support During and After Residential Care*, published in the book *Social Support of Young People in and after Residential Care: Is Someone There for You?*, examined the experiences, challenges, and support systems available to care leavers during and after their transition from residential care to independent life.

The study highlighted that the transition from residential care to adulthood is often stressful and uncertain. Although institutions provide shelter, education, and basic protection, many young people struggle after leaving care because of inadequate emotional support, weak social networks, and limited preparation for independent living. As a result, care leavers often face greater disadvantages than young people raised in family settings.

A major finding of the study was that emotional and relational support plays a crucial role in successful reintegration. Many care leavers reported feelings of loneliness, abandonment, insecurity, and anxiety. Those who received consistent support from caregivers, mentors, social workers, and peers were better able to cope with the demands of independent living.

The study also found that care leavers faced serious economic and social challenges, including difficulties in accessing higher education, stable employment, housing, and healthcare. Limited financial resources, inadequate vocational preparation, and poor life skills—such as money management, communication, decision-making, and problem-solving—reduced their ability to live independently.

Another important finding was the Effect of social stigma and discrimination related to their institutional background. Negative attitudes affected their relationships, employment opportunities, and sense of belonging. The researchers emphasized that social acceptance and supportive communities are essential for successful rehabilitation.

The study stressed the need for structured aftercare and long-term support, including counselling, mentorship, educational assistance, vocational guidance, housing support, mental health services, and community participation. It concluded that reintegration is a gradual process that requires sustained professional and social support.

This study is highly relevant to the present research on *Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Male Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram*. The findings on

emotional insecurity, weak support systems, social stigma, unemployment, and inadequate life-skill preparation help explain the difficulties faced by Care Leavers during reintegration. While Modi and colleagues discussed care leavers' experiences in a broader context, the present study specifically examines the social, emotional, psychological, and economic Effect of reintegration among male Care Leavers in Thiruvananthapuram.

Jose, Jacob, and Joseph (2021) in the study titled A Study on the Care Leavers in Kerala, examined the experiences, challenges, and aftercare support systems available to young people transitioning out of Child Care Institutions (CCIs) in Kerala. The study focused on the role of aftercare services in helping care leavers reintegrate into mainstream society and on the social, emotional, educational, and economic difficulties they face after leaving institutional care.

The study explained that aftercare refers to support—financial and non-financial—provided to young people aged eighteen to twenty-one after they leave institutional care. The researchers noted that this transition is a highly vulnerable period. Many care leavers face difficulties in finding housing, obtaining identity documents, continuing higher education, accessing skill development opportunities, securing employment, and receiving psychosocial support.

The findings showed that inadequate or absent aftercare support increases the risk of homelessness, unemployment, educational discontinuity, substance misuse, and social exclusion. Many care leavers struggled to manage independent living because they lacked emotional support, practical life skills, and stable support systems.

The study emphasized that aftercare should go beyond temporary shelter and financial assistance. Effective rehabilitation requires comprehensive services such as education, vocational training, counselling, mental health support, life-skill development, and continuous supervision. It also stressed the need for coordination among Child Care Institutions, aftercare homes, social workers, and community organizations to ensure long-term support.

The researchers further found that many care leavers in Kerala experienced emotional insecurity, low confidence, and social isolation. Weak implementation of aftercare programmes and inadequate follow-up often prevented them from achieving economic independence and social adjustment. The study recommended strengthening aftercare policies and improving implementation through structured programmes, mentorship, counselling, vocational guidance, housing support, and psychosocial services.

This study is highly relevant to the present research on Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Male Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram. Its findings on homelessness, unemployment, emotional insecurity, social exclusion, and inadequate aftercare support provide valuable insights into the problems faced by Care Leaver safter leaving care. While Jose and colleagues focused on aftercare services across Kerala, the present study specifically examines the broader social, emotional, psychological, and economic Effect of reintegration among male Care Leavers in Thiruvananthapuram.

Keshri (2023) in the study titled Understanding Orphaned Young People's Experience of Leaving Care in India (2023) : A Qualitative Study, published in the journal Developmental Child Welfare, explored the experiences, emotions, and challenges faced by orphaned young people transitioning out of institutional care in India. The study examined how care leavers experience the process of leaving Child Care Institutions and adjusting to independent life.

The study adopted a qualitative research design and used interviews and narrative-based interactions to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of care leavers. It emphasized that leaving care is not simply a physical move from an institution to society, but a complex emotional and social process that significantly shapes the future lives of young people.

One of the major findings was that many participants experienced fear, uncertainty, and anxiety while preparing to leave care. They expressed insecurity about employment, accommodation, financial stability, and social acceptance. The absence of family support and reliable emotional relationships increased their vulnerability, and many felt unprepared for independent living because they lacked guidance, mentorship, and practical life skills.

The study also found that many care leavers struggled with identity and a sense of belonging. Having grown up in institutional settings, they often found it difficult to build meaningful relationships and adapt to community expectations. Emotional loneliness, low self-confidence, and social exclusion were common experiences, which negatively affected their psychological wellbeing and adjustment.

Another important finding was the challenge of economic survival after leaving care. Many participants faced difficulties in accessing higher education, vocational opportunities, stable employment, and safe accommodation. Limited educational qualifications, inadequate career guidance, and experiences of exploitation and discrimination created barriers to economic independence.

Keshri (2023) emphasized the importance of comprehensive aftercare and long-term rehabilitation services, including counselling, life-skill training, emotional support, educational assistance, vocational guidance, mentorship, and follow-up services. The study also highlighted the need for child-centred and rights-based approaches that involve care leavers in planning their future and strengthening community acceptance.

This study is highly relevant to the present research on Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Male Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram. Keshri's findings on fear of independent living, emotional insecurity, social exclusion, unemployment, and lack of support systems help explain the reintegration difficulties faced by ex-inmates. While the study focused on orphaned young people across India, the present research specifically examines the broader social, emotional, psychological, and economic Effect of reintegration among male Care Leavers in Thiruvananthapuram.

Karandikar and Charegaonkar (2019) in the study titled Aftercare for Young Adult Orphans (2019), published by the Pune International Centre, examined the importance of aftercare services for young adults leaving institutional care and the challenges they face while transitioning to independent living.

The study highlighted that children in orphanages and Child Care Institutions often receive support only until they reach the age limit set by institutional policies. After leaving care, many young adults are expected to manage life independently without adequate preparation, family support, or financial security. This sudden transition creates emotional stress and increases their vulnerability to social and economic problems.

One of the major findings was that care leavers frequently experience emotional insecurity, loneliness, and a lack of belongingness. Having spent most of their childhood in institutional settings, many struggle to build supportive relationships and adjust to community life. The absence of family networks and stable emotional support often leads to isolation, anxiety, and low self-confidence. The study emphasized that emotional support and mentorship are essential for successful adjustment.

The study also found that economic instability and unemployment are among the most serious challenges faced by care leavers. Many lack higher educational qualifications, employable vocational skills, and career guidance, making it difficult to secure stable employment and achieve financial independence. Limited income and lack of affordable housing further increase the risk of homelessness, poverty, and dependency.

Another important observation was that existing aftercare programmes are often inadequate. They tend to focus on temporary shelter and limited financial assistance rather than comprehensive rehabilitation. Many care leavers reported insufficient support in counselling, life-skill development, higher education, employment assistance, mental health care, and social integration.

Karandikar and Charegaonkar stressed the importance of life-skill education, including communication, financial management, decision-making, problem-solving, interpersonal relationships, and emotional coping. They recommended stronger aftercare policies and comprehensive support systems involving government agencies, social workers, educational institutions, employers, and community organizations. Suggested interventions included mentorship programmes, career guidance, psychosocial counselling, housing support, and community-based rehabilitation.

This study is highly relevant to the present research on Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Male Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram. Its findings on emotional insecurity, unemployment, inadequate aftercare, and difficulties in independent living help explain the reintegration problems faced by ex-inmates. While the study focused on orphaned youth in the broader Indian context, the present study specifically examines the social, emotional, psychological, and economic Effect of reintegration among male Care Leavers in Thiruvananthapuram.

2.2. RESEARCH GAP

Although several studies have been conducted on Child Care Institutions, rehabilitation, aftercare services, and reintegration of care leavers, there are still significant gaps in research related to the post-institutional lives of ex-inmates, particularly in the context of Thiruvananthapuram. Existing studies mainly focus on institutional care, child protection policies, and general rehabilitation processes, while limited attention has been given to the long-term reintegration experiences and life outcomes of Care Leavers after leaving Child Care Institutions.

There is a scarcity of verified and systematic research studies specifically examining the lives of Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram. Most available studies are conducted in broader national or international contexts and do not adequately address the local social, cultural, and economic realities faced by care leavers in Kerala. As a result, there

is insufficient understanding regarding how reintegration affects the emotional wellbeing, social relationships, education, employment, and independent living of Care Leavers within the local context.

Furthermore, there is limited qualitative and quantitative research that tracks the long-term experiences of Care Leavers from boarding homes and Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram. Existing literature provides very little information about their personal experiences, reintegration barriers, support systems received, coping mechanisms, and the changes in their life trajectories after leaving institutional care. The effectiveness of aftercare services, rehabilitation programmes, and community support systems in ensuring successful reintegration also remains inadequately explored.

Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this research gap by systematically examining the reintegration experiences and the social, emotional, psychological, and economic Effect of reintegration on the lives of Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram. The study aims to generate locally relevant knowledge that may contribute to strengthening rehabilitation policies, aftercare services, and social work interventions for care leavers.

2.3 CONCLUSION

The review of literature highlights that reintegration is a complex and challenging process for Care Leavers after leaving Child Care Institutions. Previous studies consistently show that many care leavers face difficulties related to education, employment, housing, emotional wellbeing, social acceptance, and independent living. Lack of family support, social stigma, inadequate life skills, and insufficient aftercare services often create barriers to successful reintegration. At the same time, the literature emphasizes that education, vocational training, emotional support, mentorship, and effective aftercare programmes can significantly improve the chances of a successful transition to adulthood.

The reviewed studies also demonstrate that reintegration should not be viewed as a one-time event but as a continuous process requiring long-term support from institutions, families, communities, social workers, and government agencies. Although valuable research has been conducted on rehabilitation, aftercare, and care leavers in different national and international contexts, there remains a significant lack of studies focusing specifically on the lived experiences of male Care Leavers in Thiruvananthapuram.

The literature review further reveals a research gap regarding the social, emotional, psychological, and economic Effect of reintegration in the local context. Therefore, the present study seeks to address this gap by examining the experiences, challenges, support systems, and life outcomes of male Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of more effective rehabilitation policies, aftercare services, and social work interventions for care leavers.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Methodology is an important part of any research study as it explains the methods and procedures used to collect, analyse, and interpret data. This chapter presents the research methodology adopted for the study titled “Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram.” The study aims to understand the lived experiences, challenges, and opportunities faced by male care leavers during their transition from institutional care to independent community life. The chapter describes the research approach, research design, study area, population, sampling method, sample size, tools and methods of data collection, and sources of data used in the study. It also explains how information was gathered from respondents to examine the social, emotional, psychological, and economic Effect of reintegration. The methodology provides a systematic framework for conducting the study and ensures the reliability and validity of the research findings.

3.2 TITLE OF THE STUDY

Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Male Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram

3.3. RESEARCH APPROACH

“Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram” this study adopts a qualitative research approach to understand the lived experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by Care Leavers during their reintegration into society. Since the study focuses on personal experiences, emotional wellbeing, social adjustment, and independent living after institutional care, the qualitative approach is considered most suitable.

This approach helps the researcher gain detailed and in-depth information about the social, emotional, psychological, and economic realities of care leavers. It enables the exploration of participants’ experiences regarding institutional life, family relationships, employment, social acceptance, and aftercare support. The study mainly uses a phenomenological perspective to understand the meanings and experiences of reintegration from the viewpoint of Care Leavers themselves.

Data for the study may be collected through in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, case studies, and observations using purposive sampling techniques. The collected data may be analysed through thematic analysis to identify important themes and patterns related to

reintegration experiences. The qualitative approach is expected to provide rich and meaningful insights that can contribute to improving rehabilitation policies, aftercare services, and support systems for Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study titled “Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram” adopts a qualitative case study research design to gain an in-depth understanding of the reintegration experiences of Care Leavers after leaving institutional care. The case study design is suitable for the study because it helps the researcher explore the personal, social, emotional, and economic realities of care leavers within their natural social setting.

The study follows a phenomenological orientation to understand the lived experiences, perceptions, and meanings attached to reintegration by Care Leavers themselves. Selected cases of Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram are chosen through purposive sampling techniques. Data may be collected through in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, case histories, observation, and field notes.

The collected data may be analysed using thematic analysis to identify major themes and patterns related to reintegration experiences and their Effect on the lives of ex-inmates. The case study design is expected to provide rich and detailed insights that may help strengthen rehabilitation programmes, aftercare services, and support systems for care leavers.

3.5 RESEARCH QUESTION

General research Question

What are the key challenges and positive life outcomes associated with the reintegration of Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions into mainstream society?

Specific research questions

- 1.What are the major challenges faced by male Care Leavers during their reintegration into society after leaving Child Care Institutions?
- 2.How does reintegration affect the social, emotional, and psychological well-being of male Care Leavers?
- 3.To what extent do education, vocational training, and employment opportunities influence the successful reintegration of male Care Leavers?

4.What role do family support, social relationships, and community acceptance play in the reintegration process of male Care Leavers?

5.How effective are the existing aftercare services and support systems in helping male Care Leavers achieve independent and stable living?

3.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1. Reintegration

Reintegration refers to the process through which individuals who have lived in Child Care Institutions return to society and adapt to independent community life. It includes their social, economic, educational, emotional, and occupational adjustment after leaving institutional care.

2. Child Care Institution (CCI)

A Child Care Institution is a residential facility established for the care, protection, education, rehabilitation, and development of children who are in need of care and protection, as recognized under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act.

3. Care Leaver

A care leaver or ex-inmate is a young person who has spent a period of childhood or adolescence in a Child Care Institution and has subsequently left the institution upon reaching the prescribed age or through rehabilitation measures.

4. Aftercare

Aftercare refers to the support services provided to care leavers after they exit a Child Care Institution. These services may include assistance with housing, education, employment, counselling, financial support, and independent living skills.

5. Independent Living

Independent living refers to the ability of care leavers to manage their daily lives without institutional support. It includes securing accommodation, employment, financial management, decision-making, and maintaining social relationships.

6. Social Support

Social support refers to the emotional, informational, and practical assistance received from family members, friends, community members, institutions, and government agencies that helps individuals cope with challenges and improve their well-being.

3.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present study is guided by Mike Stein's Sphere of Aftercare Framework, which focuses on the experiences of young people leaving institutional care and their transition to independent adulthood. Stein argues that the successful reintegration of care leavers depends on the availability of adequate support systems during and after their transition from institutional care.

The framework identifies several important dimensions that influence the lives of care leavers, including housing, education, employment, health, emotional well-being, social relationships, financial stability, and life skills. These dimensions are interconnected and play a significant role in determining the quality of reintegration outcomes.

In the context of this study, the framework helps to understand how male ex-inmates from Child Care Institutions experience reintegration into society and how various forms of support influence their adjustment to independent living. The study examines participants' experiences in relation to housing, education, employment, social support, emotional well-being, physical health, financial status, independent living skills, and legal awareness. By applying Stein's framework, the research seeks to analyse the opportunities, challenges, and support mechanisms that shape the lives of care leavers after leaving institutional care.

Thus, Mike Stein's Sphere of Aftercare Framework provides a useful theoretical basis for understanding the reintegration process and assessing the factors that contribute to the successful transition of former inmates into society.

3.8 SOURCES OF DATA

The study utilized both primary and secondary sources of data.

1 Primary Data

Primary data were collected directly from the respondents through semi-structured and in-depth interviews. Observation and case study methods were also used to gather detailed information regarding the participants' experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to reintegration after leaving Child Care Institutions.

2 Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected from various published and unpublished sources, including books, journals, research articles, dissertations, government reports, policy documents, census

reports, institutional records, and relevant websites. These sources provided background information and theoretical insights relevant to the study.

The combination of primary and secondary data helped to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research problem and strengthened the validity of the study findings. The researcher visited the subjects at their houses and work places to gather data regarding their life and after the CCI.

3.9 PILOT STUDY

Before the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted to assess the suitability and effectiveness of the research tools and procedures. The pilot study was carried out among a small group of respondents who possessed characteristics similar to those of the actual study participants but were not included in the final sample.

The primary purpose of the pilot study was to evaluate the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the interview questions and to identify any practical difficulties that might arise during data collection. It also helped the researcher estimate the time required for interviews and assess the respondents' understanding of the questions.

Based on the feedback received during the pilot study, necessary modifications were made to the interview guide. Ambiguous questions were revised, additional probing questions were included, and the sequence of questions was reorganized to facilitate a smoother interview process.

The pilot study contributed to improving the reliability and validity of the research instrument and enhanced the overall quality of the data collection process.

3.10. SAMPLING

In the present study titled **“Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Male Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram,”** the researcher adopted **purposive sampling** for selecting the respondents. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are deliberately chosen based on specific characteristics relevant to the study. Since the research focuses on the reintegration experiences of male care leavers, only those individuals who had previously resided in Child Care Institutions and had transitioned into society were selected. This approach enabled the researcher to identify participants who possessed direct experience and valuable insights related to the phenomenon under investigation.

The use of purposive sampling was appropriate because it facilitated the collection of rich, detailed, and meaningful data regarding the social, emotional, educational, and economic effects of reintegration on male care leavers. By selecting respondents who met the inclusion criteria and could provide relevant information, the researcher was able to gain a deeper understanding of their lived experiences and the challenges they encountered after leaving institutional care. Therefore, purposive sampling contributed significantly to achieving the objectives of the study and ensuring the relevance and quality of the data collected.

3.10.1 Sample size: - The sample size for this study was 15 male care leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their relevance to the research objectives.

3.10.2 Population: - The population of the study comprised male care leavers aged 18 to 30 years who had previously resided in Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram. The study focused on this age group because they had already transitioned from institutional care and could provide valuable insights into their reintegration experiences, challenges, and support systems.

3.10.3 Area of study : The study was conducted in Thiruvananthapuram District, **Kerala**. The district was selected as the study area because it has a number of Child Care Institutions and a significant population of care leavers. The research focused on male care leavers residing in different parts of Thiruvananthapuram who had transitioned from institutional care to community life. The study area was selected because it contains several Child Care Institutions and provides access to the target population required for the research.

3.11 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Purposive sampling is a widely used non-probability sampling technique in qualitative research where participants are selected based on the researcher's judgment and the specific purpose of the study. Unlike probability sampling methods, purposive sampling does not provide every individual in the population with an equal chance of selection. Instead, it focuses on choosing participants who possess particular knowledge, experiences, or characteristics that are essential for addressing the research questions. This method is especially useful when studying a specific group whose experiences are central to understanding a social phenomenon. In the present study, purposive sampling was employed to select **male care leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram** who had experienced the process of reintegration into society. The respondents were chosen because they could provide firsthand accounts of

their transition from institutional care to independent living. Through this technique, the researcher was able to gather in-depth information about their experiences, challenges, coping strategies, and the overall impact of reintegration on various aspects of their lives. Hence, purposive sampling was considered the most suitable technique for achieving the objectives of the study and obtaining comprehensive insights into the reintegration experiences of male care leavers.

3.12 TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

The study used the following tools for collecting primary data:

1. Interview Guide: A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect detailed information from the participants. The guide consisted of open-ended questions related to their experiences in Child Care Institutions, transition to independent living, social relationships, education, employment, housing, and challenges faced during reintegration.

2. In-depth Interviews: In-depth interviews were conducted with the participants to understand their lived experiences and personal perspectives. This method enabled the researcher to gather rich and detailed qualitative data regarding their reintegration process.

3. Observation: Observation was used to gain a better understanding of the participants' living conditions, social interactions, and day-to-day experiences. Observational notes supplemented the information obtained through interviews.

4. Case Study: Case studies of selected participants were prepared to obtain a comprehensive understanding of individual life histories, institutional experiences, and post-care adjustment processes. The case study method helped to explore the complexities of reintegration in greater depth.

3.13 Data Analysis

The data collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and case studies were analysed using the thematic analysis method. After the completion of data collection, all interview responses were carefully transcribed, organized, and reviewed multiple times to gain a thorough understanding of the participants' experiences. The data were then coded and categorized into meaningful themes based on recurring patterns, ideas, and issues emerging from the participants' narratives. The themes were developed in accordance with the objectives of the study and the theoretical framework adopted for the research. The analysis focused on understanding the experiences of male care leavers during their reintegration into society after

leaving Child Care Institutions. Particular attention was given to themes such as housing, education, employment, social relationships, emotional well-being, physical health, financial status, independent living skills, and legal awareness. The findings were interpreted and presented descriptively, supported by relevant quotations and case illustrations from the participants. Secondary data from books, journals, research articles, and policy documents were also used to supplement and contextualize the primary data. The thematic analysis enabled the researcher to identify key patterns, challenges, and support mechanisms influencing the reintegration process of care leavers.

CHAPTER 4: CASE NARRATIVES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the case studies of male Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram and examines their experiences of reintegration into society. The case studies provide a detailed understanding of the respondents' family backgrounds, institutional experiences, educational and occupational journeys, social relationships, emotional well-being, and the challenges they encountered after leaving institutional care. Through an in-depth analysis of individual life histories, the chapter explores how factors such as family support, education, employment opportunities, social acceptance, life skills, and aftercare services have influenced their transition to independent living. The narratives reveal both the positive contributions of Child Care Institutions in shaping resilience, discipline, and personal development, as well as the difficulties faced by care leavers, including social stigma, economic insecurity, emotional distress, and limited community support. These case studies offer valuable insights into the realities of reintegration and help to understand its overall Effect on the lives of former inmates.

Personal profile of the studied male Care Leavers from the child care institutes in Thiruvananthapuram.

Case	Age	Religion	Educ ation	Age of leaving the institute	Job	Domicile
Case 1	28	Christian	12	18	Fishing	Vizhijam
Case 2	26	Christian	10	15	Fishing	Poovar
Case 3	30	Christian	10	15	Fishing	Vizhijam
Case 4	22	Hindu	12	17	Water supply	Aruvikara
Case 5	27	Christian	12	17	Pvt Job	Neyyattinkara
Case 6	25	Hindu	12	18	Pvt Job	Amaravilla
Case 7	24	Christian	10	15	Fishing	Poovar

Case 8	28	Christian	12	17	fishing	Vizhijam
Case 9	28	Christian	10	15	Fishing	Poovar
Case 10	28	Hindu	10	15	Coolly	nedumangade
Case 11	20	Hindu	10	15	coolly	Neyyattinkara
Case 12	30	Christian	10	15	Fishing	Poovar
Case 13	28	Hindu	12	17	Coolly	Amaravilla
Case 14	27	Christian	12	18	Pvt Job	Amboori
Case 15	26	Christian	10	15	Fishing	Vizhijam

Case 1

Background of the Respondent

The case A respondent entered the institution at the age of eight while studying in the third standard. His childhood was marked by severe poverty, neglect, and family instability. The family consisted of his father, mother, and two siblings. His father was addicted to alcohol and failed to take responsibility for the welfare of the family. As a result, the family experienced extreme financial hardship, often lacking proper food and shelter. The respondent stated that his father discouraged him from attending school and showed little interest in his education.

The family survived mainly through the small income earned by his mother through daily wage labor. Observing the difficult condition of the family, local panchayat members intervened and approached the Child Welfare Committee (CWC). With the hope that at least one child could be provided with a better future, the respondent's mother agreed to send him to the institution.

Institutional Life and Education

The respondent stayed in the institution for nearly ten years, from the age of eight until he turned seventeen. During this period, he continued his education and completed his Plus Two studies. Although he was academically weak and struggled in his studies, the institutional support enabled him to continue schooling up to the Higher Secondary level. However, he was unable to pass the Plus Two examination.

The institution provided him with basic necessities, discipline, and protection during his formative years. Despite the challenges he faced in childhood, the structured environment of the institution contributed significantly to his personal growth and resilience.

Transition After Leaving the Institution

At the age of eighteen, the respondent left the institution. He recalled that during that time he strongly desired freedom and wanted to leave the institution as quickly as possible. He mentioned that he carried resentment towards many people associated with his earlier life experiences.

After leaving the institution, he engaged in several different types of jobs. Due to his young age, lack of work experience, and limited social support, he was frequently exploited by employers and often did not receive fair wages for his labor. Nevertheless, earning his own income gave him a sense of freedom and satisfaction.

However, the absence of institutional supervision and guidance exposed him to negative influences. The respondent reported that he gradually developed harmful habits, including alcohol consumption. He also experienced social isolation after returning home. Unlike many of his peers, he did not have close friendships or a supportive social network. Most of his relationships developed within his work environment, but he felt that these friendships lacked sincerity and trust.

Challenges of Reintegration

The initial phase of reintegration into society was extremely difficult for the respondent. He struggled to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and accommodation. During this period, the support of a distant relative and a friend he had met in the institution played an important role in stabilizing his life. Their assistance helped him gradually organize his personal and social life.

Over time, through hard work and persistence, the respondent was able to improve his living conditions. By the age of twenty-seven, he had built his own house and obtained important government documents and identification records, which strengthened his social and economic stability.

Present Situation and Reflection

At present, the respondent lives with his wife and two children as a small and stable family. Reflecting on his life journey, he acknowledged that the experiences and discipline gained from the institution helped him develop mental strength, resilience, and the ability to face life's challenges. Although his reintegration process involved significant hardships, he eventually succeeded in establishing a stable family life and achieving social adjustment.

This case highlights both the protective role of institutional care and the multiple challenges faced by Care Leavers during reintegration, particularly in the areas of employment, social acceptance, emotional adjustment, and independent living.

Case 2

Background of the Respondent

The second case respondent entered the institution at the age of twelve and began his high school education while residing there. He belonged to a family consisting of his mother and an elder brother. When the respondent was five years old, his father abandoned the family, leaving his mother solely responsible for raising the children. His mother worked as a daily wage laborer to support the family financially.

Due to her work commitments, there was often no one available to supervise or care for the children at home. The respondent and his brother frequently failed to attend school regularly. Concerned about his future and character development, the respondent's mother, with the support of the parish priest, decided to admit him to the institution. Although she initially intended to send both children, the elder brother refused to join. Since the respondent was still young at that time, he had little choice but to enter the institution.

Institutional Experience and Education

The respondent stayed in the institution for approximately three and a half years and continued his education there until completing the tenth standard examination. Reflecting on his institutional experience, he stated that he did not initially feel that the years spent in the institution had made a major difference in his life. However, later in life, when he had to face the practical realities and struggles of adulthood, he realized the value of education and wished that he had continued his studies further.

One of the significant positive experiences during his stay in the institution was the discovery of his artistic talent. He received recognition and prizes for his drawing skills, which helped

him identify an ability that had previously remained unnoticed. The respondent expressed regret that he could not continue in the institution longer, as he believed that further support and training might have enabled him to develop this talent into a career path.

Despite these limitations, the respondent acknowledged that the institution helped him make better decisions in life and develop personal goals. He was also able to form meaningful friendships with like-minded peers during his stay. These friendships later contributed to the establishment of a joint business venture.

Challenges During Reintegration

After leaving the institution, the respondent encountered several social challenges within his community. Because he had been admitted to the institution, rumors spread within the village that he had been involved in drug addiction and was sent there for rehabilitation. These misconceptions negatively affected his social reputation and created difficulties in his personal relationships, including marriage prospects.

The respondent further explained that many people were reluctant to offer him employment opportunities due to these social stigmas. Individuals who knew his family background often hesitated to trust him with work responsibilities. An additional factor contributing to this discrimination was the criminal involvement of his elder brother, which further damaged the family's social image within the community.

Present Situation and Reflection

At present, the respondent undertakes various small and large-scale jobs to support himself and continues to live with his mother. Although he faced considerable social stigma and limited opportunities after leaving the institution, he recognizes that the institution played an important role in shaping his decision-making abilities, life goals, and interpersonal relationships.

This case highlights the complex nature of reintegration among ex-inmates, where institutional care can provide opportunities for personal growth and skill identification, while social stigma, community perceptions, and family background continue to create barriers to acceptance and social inclusion.

Case 3

Background of the Respondent

The case C respondent entered the institution at the age of five while studying in the first standard, along with his three elder brothers. The respondent belonged to a family in which the father had abandoned the family shortly after his birth. Consequently, the children were raised solely by their mother under difficult socio-economic conditions.

Due to the absence of proper parental supervision and behavioral issues involving the elder brothers, local community members intervened and arranged for all four children to be admitted to the institution. The respondent remained in the institution until completing his tenth standard education.

Institutional Experience and Personal Development

The respondent described his experience in the institution as highly positive and supportive. He stated that he received significant love, care, and emotional support from the sisters in the institution. This nurturing environment contributed greatly to his personal growth and development.

The institution also provided opportunities for skill development and extracurricular participation. The respondent became an active member of both the football team and the square team of the institution. In addition to extracurricular activities, he performed well academically and secured good marks in his studies.

The respondent emphasized that the educational support available in the institution was much better than what he experienced at home. He received tuition assistance and structured academic guidance. After school hours, students were encouraged to spend two hours studying with the sisters, followed by one hour of recreational activities and games. According to the respondent, this disciplined routine helped him develop a sense of order, responsibility, and purpose in life.

Educational Achievement and Career Development

The respondent credited the institution for helping him understand the importance of education and motivating him to pursue a stable future. Along with some of his friends from the institution, he prepared for the POC examination and eventually secured a government job. The structured environment and encouragement he received in the institution played a significant role in achieving this milestone.

After leaving the institution and returning home, the respondent continued his education while simultaneously engaging in small jobs to support his studies financially. This experience strengthened his sense of independence and responsibility.

Family Dynamics and Differential Experiences

Although the respondent viewed the institution as a positive turning point in his life, he acknowledged that his brothers did not benefit from the institutional experience in the same way. According to him, his brothers perceived institutional life as restrictive and burdensome rather than supportive. This difference highlights the varied ways in which children respond to institutional care depending on their individual attitudes, experiences, and coping abilities.

Present Situation and Reflection

At present, the respondent continues to maintain a strong relationship with the institution and the sisters who cared for him. He stated that they remain a source of emotional support and assistance during difficult situations in life. Reflecting on his journey, the respondent believes that the institution played a crucial role in shaping his disciplined lifestyle, educational aspirations, and professional success.

This case demonstrates the positive Effect that institutional care can have on children from vulnerable family backgrounds when adequate emotional support, educational opportunities, discipline, and mentorship are provided. At the same time, it also illustrates that the outcomes of institutionalization may differ among siblings depending on personal experiences and individual adaptation.

Case 4

Background of the Respondent

The case D respondent entered the institution at the age of ten while studying in the fifth standard. His family consisted only of his father and grandmother. When the respondent was three years old, his mother abandoned the family. Following this, his father, who worked outside the home, depended on the respondent's grandmother to care for the child. However, when the grandmother's health condition deteriorated, the father was unable to provide adequate care and decided to admit the respondent to the institution.

Institutional Experience and Educational Development

The respondent continued his education in the institution until completing his Plus Two studies. He described the educational environment within the institution as highly supportive and beneficial. According to him, the institution provided good facilities and favorable conditions for learning, which contributed significantly to his academic success. During his studies, he consistently performed well and secured first rank in his class.

In addition to academic support, the institution offered various forms of training and guidance aimed at preparing children for their future lives. The respondent acknowledged that these programs were highly useful in developing his confidence, discipline, and practical outlook toward life.

Reintegration Challenges and Struggles

After completing his Plus Two education, the respondent returned home and initially began working in a private institution while pursuing further studies. However, the transition from institutional life to independent living was extremely difficult for him.

The respondent explained that only a few people in his hometown recognized or supported him after his return. He experienced severe financial difficulties while trying to continue his higher education. At times, he struggled even to obtain regular meals and depended on food provided by neighbors. In order to survive and continue his education, he engaged in small-scale jobs such as catering work before eventually securing a more stable job alongside his studies.

Social Relationships and Emotional Adjustment

At present, the respondent lives with his father, and their household remains small and socially isolated. The respondent stated that he does not feel mentally prepared to establish a family life similar to that of others and has little interest in marriage or family responsibilities.

He also reported limited participation in community and social activities. At his workplace, he maintains only minimal interaction with colleagues and does not actively seek friendships or close social relationships. Furthermore, he shows little interest in entertainment activities or peer socialization. His life appears to be characterized by emotional withdrawal and limited social engagement.

Present Situation and Reflection

Despite the many hardships he faced after leaving the institution, the respondent strongly believes that the institution played a crucial role in shaping his present life. He acknowledged

that the education, discipline, and opportunities provided by the institution enabled him to secure employment and achieve stability in life.

This case illustrates the significant role institutional care can play in educational achievement and vocational preparation among vulnerable children. At the same time, it highlights the emotional and social adjustment difficulties that some Care Leavers experience during reintegration, particularly in forming interpersonal relationships, participating in community life, and developing a sense of belonging within society.

Case 5

Background of the Respondent

The case E respondent entered the institution at the age of twelve. His father had died when he was five years old, and his only surviving family member was his grandmother. Following the death of his father, he was raised by his grandmother under difficult socio-economic circumstances.

The respondent lived with his grandmother until the age of twelve. However, as she grew older and became unable to care for him properly, local panchayat members intervened and referred the case to the Child Welfare Committee (CWC). Subsequently, he was admitted to the institution for care and protection.

Institutional Life and Education

The respondent stayed in the institution for approximately six years and continued his studies there until completing his Plus Two examinations. During this period, the institution provided him with food, shelter, education, and basic care.

Although he completed his schooling, the respondent felt that his institutional experience had limited positive influence on his overall personal development. He believed that the institution mainly fulfilled his basic needs rather than contributing significantly to his future growth or aspirations.

The respondent recalled that he had good abilities in sports and games during childhood. However, he expressed disappointment that these talents were not properly encouraged or developed during his stay in the institution. He felt that, with proper guidance and opportunities, he could have transformed his abilities into a meaningful career or life opportunity.

Reintegration and Family Responsibility

After completing his Plus Two education, the respondent returned home. At that time, his grandmother was living in severe hardship and required care and support. Due to his family responsibilities and financial difficulties, he discontinued his further studies and began engaging in wage-based work to support both himself and his grandmother.

For nearly two to three years, he continued to care for his grandmother while managing his livelihood through various jobs. Later, with the assistance of panchayat members, his grandmother was admitted to an old-age home, which reduced some of his caregiving responsibilities.

Present Situation and Reflection

At present, the respondent lives alone in his house and is involved in a small business along with some of his childhood friends. Although he has achieved a degree of independence, he continues to reflect critically on his institutional experience.

The respondent believes that the institution primarily provided him with physical survival needs such as food and accommodation, but did not significantly contribute to skill development, talent enhancement, or long-term life planning. His reflections indicate feelings of missed opportunities, particularly regarding the development of his sporting abilities and future career prospects.

This case highlights the varied experiences of Care Leavers within institutional care settings. While the institution succeeded in providing protection and meeting immediate basic needs, the respondent's experience also reveals the importance of individualized attention, talent development, and career guidance in ensuring meaningful reintegration and long-term personal growth among children in institutional care.

Case 6

Background of the Respondent

The case F respondent entered the institution at the age of seven. His mother passed away when he was three years old, after which his father remarried. Following the remarriage, the respondent experienced various family-related difficulties and gradually became neglected within the household. He felt that he was treated as a burden in the family environment. Due to these circumstances, his father admitted him to the institution for care and education.

Institutional Life and Educational Development

The respondent remained in the institution for approximately twelve years and continued his education there until completing his Plus Two studies. He was academically talented and performed well in his studies throughout his institutional life.

The respondent viewed his stay in the institution as a positive and transformative experience. He described the institution as a blessing in his life, emphasizing that it provided him with stability, discipline, and opportunities for growth. According to him, the structured environment and training he received in the institution helped him develop organizational skills, self-discipline, and the ability to face life's challenges with confidence.

After completing his Plus Two education, arrangements were made for him to continue his higher studies while staying at the house of one of his father's friends. He successfully completed his further education and later returned home.

Reintegration Challenges and Social Adjustment

Although the respondent eventually achieved stability in life, his transition from institutional care to independent living involved several struggles. While staying at his father's friend's house for further studies, he experienced financial difficulties and often lacked money for personal expenses. He also felt socially isolated during this period.

Unlike many of his peers, he did not have a wide social circle or opportunities for entertainment and leisure activities. Most of his close friendships were formed with fellow students from the institution rather than with people from his hometown. Even today, he has only a limited number of acquaintances in his native place.

The respondent's relationship with his father remained distant after leaving the institution. Over time, he became emotionally detached from both his father and his hometown.

Present Situation and Reflection

At the age of twenty-seven, the respondent secured employment in a private bank. One year later, at the age of twenty-eight, he got married. At present, he lives with his wife and two children and maintains a stable family life.

The respondent strongly believes that the institution played a decisive role in shaping his future. He acknowledged that the care, discipline, and training received during his institutional life enabled him to overcome personal struggles and build a secure and organized life. Despite

facing emotional and social difficulties during reintegration, he was able to achieve educational success, employment stability, and family security.

This case demonstrates how long-term institutional care, combined with educational support and life-skills training, can positively influence the reintegration and life outcomes of vulnerable children. At the same time, it also reflects the emotional distance and social isolation that some Care Leavers continue to experience in relation to their families and native communities after leaving institutional care.

Case 7

Background of the Respondent

The case G respondent entered the institution at the age of ten while studying in the fifth standard. His mother abandoned him during his early childhood, and as a result, he was raised in the house of his maternal aunt until the age of ten. Due to severe financial difficulties faced by his maternal family, he was later admitted to the institution for care and education.

Institutional Experience and Education

The respondent stayed in the institution until completing his tenth standard studies. He described himself as being highly interested and talented in football during his childhood. However, despite his abilities in sports, he did not receive sufficient encouragement or support to further develop his talent and pursue opportunities in the sports field.

Academically, the respondent faced difficulties and was unable to pass the tenth standard examination. He identified this academic failure as the main reason for discontinuing his education. Following the completion of his tenth standard examinations, he returned to his maternal home and later became involved in his family's traditional occupation related to seafaring.

Reintegration and Economic Challenges

After leaving the institution, the respondent experienced significant financial struggles. Although he began working independently, he continued to depend economically on his maternal family for support. The transition from institutional life to independent living was challenging, particularly due to unstable income and the absence of strong emotional and social support systems.

The respondent explained that he often faced emotional distress and hopelessness during periods of crisis. He recalled experiencing recurring thoughts of ending his life during particularly difficult moments. He also expressed feelings of insecurity regarding his place within the family and society. According to him, he constantly feared being rejected or displaced from the household in which he currently lives, which created ongoing emotional tension and psychological distress.

Social and Emotional Adjustment

The respondent's narrative reflects limited emotional security and social belonging after leaving institutional care. His inability to continue education, combined with the lack of encouragement for his talents and unstable family support, contributed to feelings of uncertainty and low self-worth. Although he managed to engage in livelihood activities, he continued to experience emotional struggles and mental stress related to his social position and future stability.

Present Situation and Reflection

At present, the respondent continues to be associated with seafaring work while relying partly on the support of his maternal family. Reflecting on his life, he recognizes that institutional care provided him with shelter and education during a difficult stage of childhood. However, he also feels that the absence of sustained emotional support, career guidance, and encouragement for his talents limited his opportunities for personal development and long-term stability.

This case highlights the psychological and emotional challenges that some Care Leavers experience during reintegration into society. It demonstrates how financial insecurity, weak family support, interrupted education, and unfulfilled talents can contribute to emotional distress and social instability among former inmates of child care institutions.

Case 8

Background of the Respondent

The case H respondent entered the institution at the age of twelve while studying in the eighth standard. His family consisted of his father, mother, and two younger brothers. According to the respondent, he was admitted to the institution due to concerns regarding his behavior and character during childhood.

The respondent perceived unequal treatment within the family, particularly in comparison with his younger brothers, whom he believed received greater care and consideration from his parents. These experiences contributed to feelings of emotional neglect and resentment within the family environment.

Institutional Experience and Education

The respondent remained in the institution until completing his Plus Two education. During his stay, the institution provided him with education, discipline, and a structured environment that contributed positively to his personal development. He acknowledged that the institutional experience helped him develop order, responsibility, and direction in life.

The respondent stated that the education and training he received from the institution played a significant role in helping him secure employment and establish stability in adulthood. The disciplined environment of the institution enabled him to improve his behavior and make constructive life decisions.

Reintegration Challenges and Emotional Struggles

Despite the personal benefits gained through institutional care, the respondent experienced considerable emotional distress related to his separation from family and community. After completing his studies, he did not wish to return home because of the anger and disappointment he felt toward his parents for admitting him to the institution and for what he perceived as unequal treatment within the family.

Instead of returning to his parental home, the respondent stayed with relatives after completing his education. However, the emotional distance from his family, combined with the attitudes of relatives and others in the community, caused him significant mental stress. He felt that, although the institution had positively shaped his life, it had also resulted in the loss of relationships with relatives, friends, and broader social connections.

The respondent's experience reflects the emotional complexity of reintegration, where institutional care may contribute to personal growth while simultaneously creating feelings of social alienation and emotional separation from family and community networks.

Present Situation and Reflection

At present, the respondent lives with his wife and children in a location away from his native place. He chose to settle in a different area primarily for better employment opportunities and

to create a stable environment for his family. Over time, he has distanced himself from his hometown and former social environment.

Reflecting on his life journey, the respondent acknowledged that the institution played an important role in shaping his personality, discipline, and employment opportunities. At the same time, he continues to associate his institutionalization with emotional pain, strained family relationships, and the loss of social belonging.

This case highlights the dual Effect of institutional care on ex-inmates. While institutionalization can contribute positively to behavioral change, education, and employment stability, it may also result in emotional alienation, weakened family bonds, and challenges in maintaining social relationships during reintegration into society.

Case 9

Background of the Respondent

The ninth case respondent entered the institution at the age of five and began his formal education after being admitted there. He belonged to a large family consisting of seven siblings. Due to his father's prolonged illness, the family faced severe financial hardship. The economic condition of the household became extremely poor, and the family struggled to provide even basic necessities such as food and clothing.

Recognizing the difficult circumstances of the family, the parish vicar intervened and arranged for the respondent to be admitted to the institution. The institution then became the primary environment for his upbringing, education, and personal development.

Institutional Experience and Personal Development

The respondent remained in the institution until completing his tenth standard education. During his stay, he not only received formal education but also acquired various personal and social skills. He described the institution as a place that provided him with care, discipline, guidance, and opportunities that were not available in his family environment due to poverty. A major influence in his life was the dedication and service-minded attitude of the sisters working in the institution. Observing their commitment and spiritual life inspired the respondent to pursue a religious vocation. After completing his tenth standard education, he joined the seminary and eventually became a priest.

The respondent acknowledged that the institution played a significant role in shaping both his spiritual identity and life direction. According to him, the values, discipline, and spiritual atmosphere of the institution strongly influenced his decision to dedicate his life to religious service.

Reintegration and Social Relationships

Although the respondent achieved educational and spiritual success, his connection with his native community gradually weakened over time. He explained that only his immediate family members were aware of the positive changes and life lessons he gained through the institution.

At present, he maintains contact mainly with his parents and siblings. However, he has very limited interaction with people from his hometown and has no close friendships or social relationships within the local community. He expressed the feeling that, after entering the institution at an early age, he became emotionally and socially detached from his native place. The respondent described this experience as a form of uprooting, where prolonged institutionalization and later seminary life created distance between himself and the social environment of his childhood community.

Present Situation and Reflection

Currently, the respondent serves as a priest and continues to live a spiritually oriented life. Reflecting on his journey, he views the institution as a turning point that rescued him from severe poverty and provided him with opportunities for education, personal growth, and vocational direction. At the same time, his experience also highlights the social consequences of long-term institutional care, particularly the weakening of community ties and limited social belonging within one's native place. While the institution positively transformed his life and enabled upward mobility, it also contributed to emotional and social distance from his local community and peer relationships. This case illustrates how institutional care can significantly influence life trajectories by providing stability, education, and value-based guidance, while also revealing the complex Effect of institutionalization on community integration and long-term social relationships.

Case 10

Background of the Respondent

The case J respondent entered the institution at the age of seven while studying in the second standard. He remained in the institution until the age of fifteen, completing his tenth standard education there.

The respondent lost his father at a very young age, and following this loss, his mother remarried. As a result, the responsibility for his upbringing fell upon his grandmother. However, due to her declining health and inability to continue caring for him, local panchayat members intervened and facilitated his admission to the institution.

Institutional Experience and Education

The respondent spent approximately eight years in the institution, where he received education, shelter, and basic care. He completed his tenth standard studies during his stay. Although the institution provided him with educational opportunities and stability during childhood, the respondent did not describe any major achievements or significant personal development resulting from his institutional experience.

Compared to some other respondents, he appeared to have had limited emotional attachment to the institution and did not report strong experiences of mentorship, skill development, or long-term support. Nevertheless, the institution provided him with a structured environment during a vulnerable period of his life.

Reintegration Challenges and Economic Struggles

After leaving the institution, the respondent returned to live with his grandmother and began working as a daily wage laborer. The transition from institutional life to independent living was extremely difficult for him. He explained that he faced considerable challenges in finding employment and establishing financial stability.

The respondent had very limited social support in his native village. He lacked close relatives and had only a few acquaintances in the community. This social isolation made his reintegration process more difficult. Eventually, he was able to secure work with the assistance of friends from the institution and contacts associated with his former schoolmates.

Despite obtaining employment, the respondent felt that he had not yet been able to build a stable or successful life. He remained unmarried and lacked a supportive family network or strong social relationships.

Social Isolation and Emotional Outlook

The respondent's narrative reflects significant emotional distress and social alienation. He expressed feelings of loneliness and disconnection from society. According to him, apart from receiving education through the institution, he had not achieved anything meaningful in life.

He also demonstrated a negative perception of the social world around him, stating that he viewed most people and situations as hostile or threatening. This outlook suggests ongoing emotional struggles, insecurity, and difficulties in developing trust and belonging within society.

Present Situation and Reflection

At present, the respondent continues to live with his grandmother and engages in daily wage labor for survival. His life remains marked by economic hardship, social isolation, and emotional dissatisfaction. While institutional care provided him with educational access and protection during childhood, it did not fully equip him with the social support, emotional resilience, or opportunities necessary for successful long-term reintegration.

This case highlights the challenges faced by some Care Leavers who continue to experience social exclusion, economic insecurity, and emotional isolation after leaving institutional care. It underscores the importance of sustained post-institutional support, community integration, counseling, and livelihood assistance to ensure meaningful rehabilitation and social inclusion among former inmates of child care institutions.

Case 11

Background of the Respondent

The case K respondent entered the institution at the age of fourteen while studying in the ninth standard. He belonged to a small family consisting only of his mother, as his father had abandoned the family during his childhood. The respondent had no siblings and was raised solely by his mother under difficult circumstances.

According to the respondent, he was admitted to the institution because of behavioral issues and irregular school attendance during adolescence. His mother, who struggled to manage his behavior and ensure his education, sought institutional support for his care and discipline.

Institutional Experience and Personal Development

The respondent remained in the institution for approximately two years and completed his tenth standard education during this period. Although he did not consider his institutional experience to have brought major changes to his overall life circumstances, he acknowledged that the discipline and formation he received during those years positively influenced his character and personal outlook.

The respondent stated that the institution helped him develop greater respect and affection toward his mother and elders. He also learned the importance of hard work, responsible living, and financial discipline. According to him, the institution taught him how to use money wisely and avoid unnecessary spending.

The structured environment and guidance provided during his stay contributed to positive behavioral changes and improved his sense of responsibility.

Vocational Training and Reintegration

After completing his tenth standard education, the respondent returned home. Soon afterward, his mother arranged for him to stay with a distant relative, where he learned tailoring, which was the profession practiced by the head of that household.

The respondent worked there for approximately four years, gaining practical skills and vocational experience. During this period, he earned a small income that helped him meet his personal expenses and develop financial independence. Eventually, he established his own tailoring business and became self-employed.

Unlike some other respondents, the respondent's transition from institutional life to work life was relatively smooth because he entered vocational training immediately after leaving the institution. This helped him avoid prolonged unemployment and financial instability.

Present Situation and Reflection

At present, the respondent lives with his wife, two children, and mother as a stable family unit. He continues to manage his tailoring business and leads an independent life.

Reflecting on his experiences, the respondent believes that the institution played an important role in shaping his behavior, values, and life attitude rather than directly influencing his economic status. The institution contributed to his emotional maturity, discipline, and sense of responsibility, which later supported him in building a stable family and professional life.

This case illustrates how institutional care, even over a relatively short duration, can positively influence behavioral development and value formation among adolescents. It also highlights the importance of vocational training and family support in facilitating successful reintegration and long-term social stability among former inmates of child care institutions.

Case 12

Background of the Respondent

The case L respondent entered the institution at the age of ten while studying in the fifth standard. He belonged to a family consisting of his mother and two younger brothers. His father abandoned the family shortly after the birth of the youngest child, leaving the mother solely responsible for raising the children.

Due to severe financial difficulties, the respondent's mother worked as a daily wage laborer to support the family. Later, all three brothers were admitted to the institution at different times when they reached the fifth standard, as the mother found it difficult to provide proper care, supervision, and educational support on her own.

Institutional Experience and Education

The respondent continued his education in the institution until completing his tenth standard studies. During his stay, the institution provided him with educational opportunities, discipline, care, and guidance. The respondent later chose to join the seminary with the desire to become a priest.

The institutional environment played a significant role in shaping his spiritual outlook and vocational aspirations. The disciplined lifestyle and religious atmosphere within the institution influenced his decision to pursue priestly formation and dedicate his life to religious service.

Family and Social Relationships

The respondent stated that, after entering the institution, his relationships became largely limited to his mother and brothers. He maintained very little contact with people from his native place and knew only a few close neighbors in the local community.

According to the respondent, his attachment to his hometown gradually weakened after institutionalization. Even during vacation periods, he rarely stayed at home for more than a few days. Over time, he lost interest in visiting relatives or maintaining wider social relationships within the community.

This prolonged separation from his home environment contributed to a sense of emotional and social distance from his native place. The respondent's experiences indicate that institutional life and subsequent seminary formation reduced his involvement in local social networks and community interactions.

Present Situation and Reflection

At present, the respondent continues his priestly formation and remains committed to a spiritually oriented life. Reflecting on his experiences, he acknowledges that the institution provided him with stability, education, and direction during a difficult stage of childhood marked by poverty and parental abandonment.

At the same time, his experience also reveals the social consequences of long-term institutionalization, particularly the gradual weakening of emotional attachment to one's hometown, relatives, and local community. Although the institution positively influenced his educational and spiritual development, it also contributed to social detachment and limited community integration.

This case highlights how institutional care can offer protection, educational support, and vocational guidance to vulnerable children while also shaping long-term patterns of social relationships and community belonging among former inmates.

Case 13

Background of the Respondent

The thirteenth case respondent entered the institution at the age of five and began his formal education after being admitted there. His mother abandoned him when he was only one year old, while his father was employed abroad in the Gulf region. During his early childhood, he was raised by his grandmother until the age of five.

Due to the absence of parental care and the limitations faced by his grandmother in continuing to support him, the respondent was admitted to the institution for care, protection, and education.

Institutional Experience and Education

The respondent remained in the institution until completing his Plus Two education. The institution provided him with a stable environment, educational opportunities, discipline, and emotional support throughout his formative years.

Reflecting on his institutional experience, the respondent stated that the values and lessons learned during his stay gave him the confidence and resilience needed to face difficult situations in life. According to him, the institution not only protected him from a vulnerable childhood but also helped shape and direct a life that might otherwise have been negatively affected by abandonment and instability.

The respondent acknowledged that the institutional environment contributed significantly to his emotional strength, self-discipline, and determination to succeed in life.

Reintegration Challenges

After completing his Plus Two studies, the respondent returned to his hometown. However, the reintegration process was extremely challenging during the initial period. He explained that he had very few social connections in his native place and lacked close acquaintances, relatives, or friendships within the community.

The respondent faced severe financial difficulties and emotional stress after leaving the institution. The absence of a supportive social network made the transition to independent living difficult and created feelings of isolation and uncertainty.

Employment and Economic Stability

In order to improve his financial situation, the respondent later joined his father abroad for work. His overseas employment significantly improved his economic condition and provided him with long-term financial security.

Through his earnings, he was able to purchase land in his hometown, construct a house, and establish a stable family life through marriage. He continues to work abroad and remains financially secure.

The respondent viewed overseas employment as an important turning point that enabled him to overcome the economic hardships experienced during the early phase of reintegration.

Present Situation and Reflection

At present, the respondent lives as part of a stable family and continues his employment abroad. Reflecting on his life journey, he strongly believes that the institution played a decisive role in shaping his character, resilience, and future success.

According to the respondent, the institution equipped him with the courage to withstand crises and the discipline needed to build a meaningful life. He considers the education and values received from the institution as the foundation for his present achievements, including financial stability, home ownership, and family life.

This case demonstrates how institutional care can positively influence the long-term life outcomes of vulnerable children by providing education, discipline, and emotional resilience. At the same time, it highlights the challenges of reintegration, particularly social isolation and economic insecurity, faced by Care Leavers during the transition from institutional life to independent adulthood.

Case 14

Background of the Respondent

The fourteenth case respondent entered the institution at the age of nine while studying in the fourth standard. He belonged to a family facing severe socio-economic and personal difficulties. His mother had a physical disability that made walking difficult, while his father struggled with alcoholism and was unable to provide proper care and support to the family.

Due to the financial crisis at home and the inability of his mother to take care of him adequately, the respondent's maternal uncle intervened and arranged for his admission to the institution. The institution thus became an important support system during his childhood.

Institutional Experience and Educational Development

The respondent remained in the institution until completing his Plus Two education. He described himself as a good student and performed well academically throughout his institutional life. The institution provided him with a stable environment, educational opportunities, discipline, and guidance, all of which contributed significantly to his academic and personal development.

According to the respondent, the training and formation received in the institution positively shaped his attitude toward life and motivated him to pursue higher goals. The disciplined

environment and encouragement from the institution helped him develop self-confidence, perseverance, and responsibility.

Reintegration Challenges and Higher Education

After completing his Plus Two studies, the respondent initially returned to his family home. However, he soon encountered financial difficulties, emotional stress, and family-related problems that made it difficult for him to continue his education and maintain stability.

In response to these challenges, he moved to his maternal uncle's house, where he received support and accommodation. During this period, he engaged in part-time work while continuing his higher studies. Balancing employment and education was challenging, but it enabled him to become financially independent and continue pursuing his goals.

Employment and Present Situation

After completing his studies, the respondent secured employment in the Kerala Water Authority. This achievement marked a major turning point in his life and provided him with long-term financial stability.

With the income from his employment, he was able to construct his own house near his workplace and later got married. At present, he leads a stable and independent family life.

Reflection on Institutional Effect

The respondent strongly believes that the education, discipline, and personal formation received from the institution were central to his success in life. He acknowledged that the institution not only provided him with educational opportunities but also instilled the determination and resilience necessary to overcome poverty, family problems, and emotional struggles.

This case illustrates the positive role that institutional care can play in enabling vulnerable children to achieve educational success, employment stability, and social mobility. It also highlights the importance of supportive relationships, particularly extended family support, during the reintegration process and transition to adulthood.

Case 15

Background of the Respondent

The fifteenth case respondent entered the institution at the age of eight while studying in the third standard. His family consisted only of his mother and grandmother. The respondent's mother was deaf and unable to speak, which created significant communication and socio-economic challenges within the family. His father abandoned the family when the respondent was only one year old, leaving the responsibility of his upbringing to his mother and grandmother.

Due to the vulnerable condition of the family and the lack of adequate care and support, the respondent was admitted to the institution for protection, education, and upbringing.

Institutional Experience and Education

The respondent continued his education in the institution until completing his tenth standard studies. During his stay, the institution provided him with shelter, food, education, and basic care. However, the respondent experienced considerable academic difficulties and described himself as being weak in studies throughout his school years.

Although the institution ensured access to education and basic stability, the respondent did not achieve significant academic success. His educational limitations later affected his opportunities for higher studies and skilled employment.

Reintegration Challenges and Livelihood

After leaving the institution, the respondent faced severe financial and social difficulties while attempting to reintegrate into society. Without advanced educational qualifications or vocational skills, he began engaging in small-scale and temporary jobs in order to earn a livelihood.

At present, the respondent works in the local fishing sector and goes to sea with local fishermen for fishing activities. This occupation provides him with a source of daily income, though his economic condition remains modest and unstable.

Social and Economic Difficulties

The respondent explained that the transition from institutional life to community living was extremely challenging. Upon returning home, he encountered both financial hardship and

social difficulties. The absence of strong family support, limited educational achievement, and poor socio-economic conditions made it difficult for him to establish stability and social security.

His experiences indicate that, although institutional care provided temporary protection and basic education, reintegration into society remained difficult due to limited resources, inadequate social support, and restricted livelihood opportunities.

Present Situation and Reflection

Currently, the respondent continues to live with limited financial security while working in fishing-related activities. Reflecting on his life, he recognizes that the institution provided him with care and support during childhood, but he continues to struggle with economic instability and social challenges in adulthood.

This case highlights the difficulties faced by Care Leavers with limited educational achievement and weak family support systems. It demonstrates the need for stronger post-institutional rehabilitation measures, including vocational training, employment assistance, and community support, to ensure successful reintegration and improved quality of life among former inmates of child care institutions.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from male Care Leavers who lived-in Child-Care Institutions (CCIs) in Thiruvananthapuram. The analysis is based on the life histories and experiences shared by the respondents through in-depth interviews. The study examines how reintegration has influenced their social, emotional, psychological, educational, and economic lives. Through thematic analysis, several major themes emerged from the narratives, including family background, educational experiences, employment and livelihood, social relationships, emotional well-being, family support, social stigma, independent living skills, and aftercare support. These themes help to understand the challenges and opportunities experienced by care leavers during their transition from institutional care to independent adulthood. The findings indicate that reintegration is a complex process shaped by both personal resilience and external support systems.

5.2 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Theme 1: Family Background and Reasons for Institutionalization

The findings show that almost all respondents entered Child Care Institutions because of poverty, parental abandonment, death of a parent, alcoholism, family breakdown, neglect, or inability of caregivers to provide adequate care. Most respondents came from economically and socially vulnerable families. Institutional care provided protection, food, shelter, education, and stability during childhood. These findings indicate that institutionalization functioned as a protective intervention against severe deprivation and family instability. Case 4 responded that “Poverty in my family and the death of my father led me to this institution”

Theme 2: Educational Experiences and Personal Development

Most respondents reported that the institution helped them continue their education and develop discipline, responsibility, and life values. Several respondents completed Plus Two education, while some pursued higher education and secured stable employment. Educational support, tuition, extracurricular activities, and guidance from caregivers positively influenced their development. However, a few respondents felt that their talents and abilities were not sufficiently encouraged. Case 8 responded that “The education and social values I received

from the institution Navajeevan and its sisters have enabled me to live a life that protects my family without falling into the wrong path”

Theme 3: Employment and Economic Reintegration

Employment was one of the most significant challenges during reintegration. Many respondents initially struggled to find stable jobs and experienced financial hardship. Some worked as daily wage laborers, fishermen, or in temporary jobs before achieving stability. Others obtained government or private-sector employment after completing their education. Respondents with better educational qualifications experienced smoother transitions into the labour market. Case 9 responded that

“ I would have dropped out of high school, but my studies at this institution have given me a good job and a family life”

Theme 4: Social Relationships and Community Integration

Many respondents experienced difficulties in building social relationships after leaving institutional care. Several reported weak community participation, limited friendships, and poor social support networks. Some respondents maintained strong bonds with former institutional friends and caregivers, while others felt isolated from both family and community. Case 3 responded that

“ I have made many friends through studying at the Boys' Home and now I get their help to get a job.”

Theme 5: Social Stigma and Discrimination

A number of respondents reported experiencing stigma because of their institutional background. Community members often held negative assumptions about them, affecting employment opportunities, social acceptance, and personal relationships. Such experiences reduced self-confidence and increased feelings of exclusion. Case 15 responded that “ After going to this institution, I forgot my country and my people. They also forgot me. I later had a very isolated life.”

Theme 6: Emotional and Psychological Well-being

Several respondents described feelings of loneliness, insecurity, emotional distress, and uncertainty during the initial phase of reintegration. Some experienced emotional withdrawal and difficulty trusting others. Others displayed resilience and confidence developed through institutional discipline and support. Emotional well-being largely depended on the availability of supportive relationships and stable life opportunities. Case 6 responded that

“It was very difficult for me to not have family and other loving relationships like other children while I was in this institution.”

Theme 7: Family Support and Reintegration Outcomes

The study found that respondents who received support from family members, relatives, mentors, or caregivers adjusted more successfully than those who lacked support. Family support provided emotional security, practical assistance, and social acceptance. In contrast, weak family relationships contributed to isolation and adjustment difficulties. Case 1 responded that

“I have received great support from family and friends both during and after I left this institution.”

Theme 8: Independent Living Skills and Resilience

Many respondents learned responsibility, discipline, time management, and self-reliance through institutional life. Despite facing significant challenges, several respondents demonstrated resilience by securing employment, building houses, supporting families, and creating stable lives. Their experiences show the importance of life-skill development in preparing children for adulthood. Case 2 responded that

“The personality development classes that Nava Jeevanelle conducted for us during the holidays have been very beneficial.”

Theme 9: Aftercare Services and Support Systems

The findings reveal that most respondents received limited formal aftercare support after leaving institutional care. Many depended on friends, relatives, former caregivers, or personal

effort to overcome difficulties. There was little evidence of structured long-term follow-up, counselling, housing support, or employment assistance. Case 13 responded that

“When I studied at the institution, I received food and education. When I left, I struggled a lot financially and for a job, but I received no help from society.”

5.3 INTERPRETATION

The analysis of the experiences of male Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram reveals that reintegration is a complex and multidimensional process influenced by family background, institutional experiences, social support systems, and individual resilience. The findings indicate that most respondents entered institutions due to poverty, parental abandonment, death of parents, alcoholism, family conflict, and neglect. This suggests that Child Care Institutions functioned as important protective environments that provided safety, education, and stability during childhood.

The study further shows that institutional care had a significant positive Effect on the educational and personal development of many respondents. The education, discipline, guidance, and value formation received within the institutions helped several care leavers develop confidence, responsibility, and life goals. Those who completed higher levels of education were more likely to secure stable employment and achieve economic independence. This demonstrates the important role of education in promoting successful reintegration and long-term social mobility.

However, the findings also reveal that the transition from institutional care to independent living was often accompanied by economic difficulties. Many respondents struggled to find employment, continue their education, and meet their basic needs after leaving the institution. Those with limited educational qualifications faced greater challenges in securing stable jobs and achieving financial security. This indicates the need for stronger vocational training and employment support programmes for care leavers.

Social relationships emerged as another important factor influencing reintegration outcomes. While some respondents benefited from friendships and support networks developed during institutional life, others experienced social isolation and limited community participation. The findings suggest that strong social connections contribute positively to adjustment and well-being, whereas weak social support systems increase vulnerability during the transition period.

The study also highlights the negative Effect of social stigma and discrimination. Several respondents reported being judged or misunderstood because of their institutional background, which affected their social acceptance, employment opportunities, and personal relationships. Such experiences created feelings of exclusion and reduced self-confidence, making reintegration more difficult.

Emotional and psychological challenges were common among many respondents. Feelings of loneliness, insecurity, emotional distress, and uncertainty were frequently reported, particularly during the early stages of reintegration. The absence of stable family relationships and emotional support contributed to these difficulties. At the same time, respondents who received encouragement from family members, friends, mentors, and caregivers demonstrated better emotional adjustment and greater resilience.

The findings further reveal that institutional life helped many respondents develop important independent living skills such as discipline, time management, responsibility, and self-reliance. These skills enabled several care leavers to overcome challenges, secure employment, establish families, and achieve social stability. This indicates that life-skill education is an important component of successful rehabilitation and reintegration.

Finally, the study found that formal aftercare services were largely inadequate. Most respondents received little or no structured support after leaving institutional care and depended mainly on relatives, friends, former caregivers, or their own efforts to overcome difficulties. The lack of systematic follow-up, counselling, housing assistance, and employment support increased the challenges faced by care leavers during reintegration.

Overall, the findings indicate that reintegration is not a single event but a continuous process requiring emotional, social, educational, and economic support. While Child Care Institutions contributed positively to the development of many respondents, the absence of effective aftercare services and community support created significant barriers to successful reintegration. Therefore, strengthening aftercare programmes, vocational guidance, counselling services, and community-based support systems is essential for improving the quality of life and social inclusion of Care Leavers in Thiruvananthapuram.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS & SUGGESTIONS

6.1. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study identified several major challenges faced by Care Leavers after leaving Child Care Institutions. The transition from institutional care to independent living was found to be a difficult phase for many respondents, affecting different aspects of their lives. The study highlights issues related to housing, independent life skills, emotional well-being, social relationships, physical health, education, vocational development, economic independence, and financial literacy. These findings provide a deeper understanding of the reintegration process and the need for adequate support systems to ensure the successful rehabilitation and social integration of Care Leavers.

6.1.1. Housing

The findings of the study reveal the various challenges and experiences faced by Care Leavers after leaving Child Care Institutions. One of the most significant issues was housing insecurity. Respondents without family support or stable homes struggled to find affordable and safe accommodation, while a few who had parental or in-law support experienced comparatively better living conditions.

6.1.2 Emotional well-being and Transition to Adulthood

Emotional well-being emerged as another major concern. Most respondents experienced stress, anxiety, loneliness, and emotional distress due to trauma, financial pressure, and lack of support systems. Although counselling services were available within institutions, access to mental health support declined drastically after leaving care. None of the respondents sought professional psychological help, mainly because of stigma and lack of awareness.

The study found that respondents faced significant challenges in accessing higher education and stable employment due to inadequate preparation, lack of skills, and the stigma associated with being identified as “orphans.” Many struggled to compete in university admissions and the job market.

Respondents also lacked proper guidance in personal and financial management after leaving institutional care. Unlike their peers who receive emotional and financial support from parents, Care Leavers often had limited or no support systems. Institutional support after leaving care was also minimal, partly due to lack of follow-up mechanisms and the respondents’ tendency to disconnect from institutions.

Another important finding was the strong reluctance among respondents to be identified as “orphans” or “aid recipients.” Because of this stigma, many avoided seeking help or support services. These combined factors resulted helplessness and confusion during their transition to independent adulthood.

6.1.3. Physical Health

In terms of physical health, respondents generally considered themselves healthy; however, healthcare was not given priority unless serious illness occurred. Challenges such as expensive treatment, lack of health insurance, poor nutrition, and absence of caregiving support during illness were commonly reported.

6.1.4. Independent life skills

The study also found that independent life skills among respondents were limited. Institutional life did not provide sufficient opportunities to learn practical skills such as decision-making, financial management, social interaction, and adjusting to independent living. Many respondents felt unprepared for the sudden freedom and responsibilities after leaving care.

6.1.5. Social relationships

The findings further revealed that institutionalization negatively affected social relationships. Respondents reported difficulty in trusting others, maintaining close relationships, and integrating socially. Limited interaction with the outside world and the stigma associated with institutional upbringing created barriers in forming friendships and relationships. Lack of exposure to gender interaction and absence of relationship guidance also made some respondents vulnerable to unhealthy relationships.

6.1.6. Education and Vocational Challenges

The study also highlighted educational and vocational challenges. Several respondents discontinued education because of financial difficulties, lack of guidance, or the pressure to earn a living. Many felt that their educational qualifications and vocational skills were insufficient to achieve their career aspirations. Vocational training was often chosen out of necessity rather than personal interest.

6.1.7. Economic and financial status

Economic independence and financial literacy were found to be major areas of concern. Respondents faced pressure to become financially independent at a very young age. While some had employment, their income was low and unstable. The study further revealed poor financial literacy among respondents, including limited knowledge about banking, savings,

insurance, and financial management. Institutional care had not adequately prepared them for handling financial responsibilities independently.

6.1.8. Identity and Legal Awareness

The study found that respondents had limited awareness regarding their legal rights, entitlements, and Aftercare provisions. Many were unaware of the support they could legally expect from the government after leaving Child Care Institutions, reflecting inadequate legal literacy among Care Leavers. Although all respondents possessed an Aadhaar card, more than half lacked important identity documents such as PAN cards, passports, and voter IDs. This indicates insufficient transition planning and inadequate support from Child Care Institutions in helping Care Leavers obtain essential legal documents and awareness about their rights and responsibilities.

6.2. SUGGESTIONS

- Respondents and care leavers should be recognised as vulnerable youth, and their views should be included in planning for their social reintegration and independent living.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment should ensure reservation opportunities for Care Leavers in higher education and employment.
- Aftercare homes and hostel facilities for boys should be established in Thiruvananthapuram, along with housing support across districts.
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health support should be made accessible through counsellors, peer mentors, and regular counselling services.
- Care Leavers should receive guidance in education, career choices, vocational training, and skill development according to their needs and aspirations.
- The National Legal Services Authority should provide legal aid, legal awareness, and support in obtaining identity documents and accessing government services.
- Workshops should be organised to improve financial independence skills and create employment opportunities through collaboration with government departments and corporates.
- Child Care Institutions should introduce transition planning programs that help inmates develop independent living skills before leaving care.
- Every inmate should have a mentor to provide guidance, social exposure, and support in developing communication, leadership, legal awareness, and self-confidence.

- Peer support groups should be formed to encourage social interaction, sharing of information, self-advocacy, and mutual support among care leavers.

6.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study titled “Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram” is subject to certain limitations that may influence the scope, depth, and generalization of the findings. One of the major limitations is the difficulty in identifying and reaching a large number of ex-inmates. Many former inmates are dispersed across different locations, have migrated for employment or personal reasons, or lack updated contact information after leaving Child Care Institutions. In several cases, there are no proper follow-up records maintained by institutions, making it difficult to trace participants for the study.

Another important limitation is the possibility of sampling bias. The study mainly depends on the willingness of Care Leavers to participate. Those who agree to participate may already be comparatively stable and better reintegrated into society, while individuals who continue to face severe social, economic, or emotional difficulties may remain inaccessible or unwilling to participate. As a result, the voices and experiences of the most vulnerable Care Leavers may not be fully represented in the research findings.

The reliability of the data collected also presents a limitation. Since the study relies largely on personal narratives and self-reported experiences, responses may be affected by memory lapses, selective recollection, or emotional influences. Participants may hesitate to disclose sensitive details related to abuse, neglect, criminalization, family rejection, or institutional experiences due to fear of stigma, judgment, discrimination, or possible legal implications. This reluctance may result in incomplete or guarded responses, thereby affecting the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the data.

In addition, discussions regarding childhood trauma, abuse, neglect, and social stigma may create emotional discomfort or distress among participants. Such sensitive topics may influence the emotional well-being of respondents during interviews and may also limit the extent to which participants openly share their experiences.

Another limitation arises from the diversity among Child Care Institutions themselves. Not all institutions provide the same quality of care, rehabilitation services, educational opportunities, counselling support, or aftercare assistance. These variations make it difficult to generalize the findings to all Child Care Institutions. Similarly, reintegration experiences differ widely

depending on cultural, social, familial, and economic backgrounds, which further limits the universal applicability of the study findings.

Finally, the lack of uniform aftercare policies and monitoring mechanisms poses a significant challenge in systematically assessing reintegration outcomes. Differences in institutional support systems, government interventions, and community acceptance make it difficult to compare the long-term Effect of reintegration across different individuals and settings. Therefore, the findings of the study should be understood within the specific context and limitations under which the research was conducted.

6.4 CONCLUSION

This study, titled “Reintegration and Its Effect on the Lives of Male Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions in Thiruvananthapuram,” examined how former inmates of Child Care Institutions (CCIs) adjust to life after leaving institutional care. The study explored their experiences, challenges, and the social, emotional, psychological, and economic Effect of reintegration on their lives. The findings show that reintegration is a very important and challenging stage in the lives of care leavers. Many respondents reported that the Child Care Institutions played a significant role in shaping their lives by providing food, shelter, education, discipline, and moral guidance. For several respondents, the institution became a turning point that helped them overcome poverty, neglect, and family problems. The values and skills they learned in the institutions contributed to their confidence, resilience, and ability to face life independently. At the same time, the transition from institutional care to society was not easy. Many respondents experienced financial hardship, unemployment, lack of family support, emotional loneliness, and social stigma. Some struggled to continue higher education, find stable employment, or build trusting relationships. The absence of proper guidance and emotional support after leaving care made reintegration more difficult for many participants. The study also revealed that successful reintegration was strongly influenced by factors such as educational opportunities, vocational skills, supportive relationships, and aftercare services. Respondents who received encouragement from caregivers, friends, relatives, or mentors were better able to cope with challenges and establish stable lives. Many participants eventually achieved positive outcomes such as employment, marriage, and family stability.

However, the findings indicate that existing aftercare services are often limited and inconsistent. Many care leavers need continued support in areas such as education, employment, housing, counselling, life-skill training, and mental health services. Strengthening these support systems is essential to help Care Leavers become self-reliant and socially integrated.

In conclusion, reintegration is a gradual and complex process that can have both positive and negative effects on the lives of ex-inmates. While institutional care provides a foundation for growth and development, long-term success depends on the availability of continued support, social acceptance, and opportunities for independent living. The study emphasizes the need for stronger aftercare programmes, better policy implementation, and community support to ensure that care leavers can lead dignified, productive, and meaningful lives in society.

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APPENDIX

Interview guide

- 1.What are the challenges faced and benefits received after leaving CCI by care leavers ?
- 2.What are the key challenges and positive life outcomes associated with the reintegration of Care Leavers from Child Care Institutions into mainstream society?
- 3.What are the major challenges faced by male Care Leavers during their reintegration into society after leaving Child Care Institutions?
- 4.How does reintegration affect the social, emotional, and psychological well-being of male Care Leavers?
- 5.To what extent do education, vocational training, and employment opportunities influence the successful reintegration of male Care Leavers?
- 6.What role do family support, social relationships, and community acceptance play in the reintegration process of male Care Leavers?
- 7.How effective are the existing aftercare services and support systems in helping male Care Leavers achieve independent and stable living?