

The Present Situation and Issues relating to children being abandoned in Baby Boxes/cradle in India

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The Present Situation and Issues relating to children being abandoned in Baby Boxes/cradle in India

Delhi Council for Child Welfare has been in the field of Adoption and social welfare activities since 1978 and since then the concept of having a Cradle kept outside the home with an alarm system attached to it has been followed.

This was found necessary as female infanticide was rampant in India and several unwanted children were being found abandoned near hospitals, Parks etc. Due to social stigma and economic constraints too children were being abandoned.

The concept of keeping a cradle outside the institute was initiated to encourage parents not to abandon their child in unsafe places but to leave their child in a home like DCCW (Palna) for the child to receive a safe haven, protection and care and finally to be placed in adoption by couples (mainly childless couples who are progressive in their attitude and thinking).

In India, to ensure security and continuity stringent laws have been framed and with changing times they have been amended. Initially adoption was only allowed for Hindu's. The couples of other faiths were not allowed to adopt, they only could take children as legal guardians. These couples of other faiths were uncomfortable being just Guardians to the child as after the age of 18 neither the couple nor the child had any responsibility towards each other and there was no binding/security for the child. Hence after several years of deliberating finally in 2015 Juvenile Justice Act was formulated and all individuals (single and married) can legally adopt. Religion in adoption does no longer matter.

Procedure for Adoption:

All children received in the cradle need to go through a system to ensure that they are not kidnapped/lost children. A child welfare committee after complete verification declares the child legally free for adoption (a certificate is issued) and only then can the child be placed in adoption with a suitable and willing family.

Before placing a child with a family a complete investigation of the couple – their motive, education family background is all verified by a competent qualified professional Social Worker.

Palna is a home for abandoned children between the ages of new born upto the age of eight. All the basic needs is to be taken care of and so the home has the necessary child friendly infra structure and staff. There is a full time Doctor, a part time senior consultant, Nurses (full time) ,and caregivers(fulltime) to take care of them. We also employ a full time counselor , a supervisor to ensure cleanliness/ hygiene of the home . She is required to take care of the diet/food and clothing of the children. There is also a seamstress who stitches /darns the required clothes. A physiotherapist (Full Time) is also appointed . This is necessary as several times physically/mentally challenged are abandoned too. These children do not go in for adoption and will finally be transferred to a specialized homes.

For the toddlers and the older children a Special Educator and a full time qualified teacher is also appointed. All the above staff is mandatory for a holistic development of the children.

Statistics:

In India Adoption has been centralized and the number of Adoptions taking place in the country is just 3000 a year. The government is working on trying to encourage more adoptions by stream lining the procedure. Delhi Council for Child Welfare has placed about 4000 children since 1978.

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