



An analysis on public perception towards child adoption in Kerala

Savio Francis Fernandez

Department of Management Studies, Sahrdaya College of Advanced Studies, Kodakara, Kerala, India

Abstract

During the social reform in the 1950's, India focused on finding home for abandoned, destitute, illegitimate and surrendered children. These children were institutionalized and eventually placed for domestic and inter-country adoption. The domestic adoption in India gained its momentum only in late 1980's. Since then important changes have happened in the field of adoption.

Indian adoption policies are sculpted, by several years of ongoing efforts by social reforms lobbyists and child welfare organizations. This is evident from the laws and policies set forth by the government of India. A more recent policy in the chapter IV of the juvenile Justice Act of 2000 implemented the concept of secular adoption whereby, without any reference to the community or religious persuasions of the parents or the child concerned, a right appears to be granted to all citizens to adopt, and all children to be adopted. While this was a positive change, this concept still did not give the legal and legitimate status to the child equal to that of a biological, legitimate child.

Prospective adoptive parents are beginning to understand the legal and social processes of adoption and recognize the need to go through organized child welfare organizations. It is interesting to show that in the last few years, children coming into institutions, either in the form of abandonment or surrendering has decreased considerably. This is cost by family planning and officiating medical termination of pregnancy. Education, globalization and contemporary thoughts have bought about attitudinal changes in broader perspective.

Prospective parents with high education and a higher economic status are self-assured to adopt a girl child and they do not perceive a girl child to be a economic burden (Andal Damodaran, personal communication, 21 dec, 2009).

On the contrary, the researcher finds that some families in certain region with better economic status still consider raising a girl child as a burden because they do not want to spent money for her marriage, and do not want to deal with teenage love interest. The conservative belief is still present in certain region that a male child could be an investment. This study mainly focuses on the perception of public and society towards adopting a child and its different aspects of adoption in Kerala.

Keywords: During, social, abandoned, policies, ongoing

1. Introduction to Study

Adoption as a construction of a family has drawn worldwide research since three decades. India as one of the ancient countries in the Asian continent has gone through major changes in the field of adoption from an informally adopting male child for performing last rites after the death of the adopted parents, India has shown progressive changes.

During the social reform in the 1950's, India focused on finding home for abandoned, destitute, illegitimate and surrendered children. These children were institutionalized and eventually placed for domestic and inter-country adoption. the domestic adoption in India gained its momentum only in late 1980's. since then important changes have happened in the field of adoption.

Adoption is the establishment of parent-child relationship through a legal and social process other than the birth process. It is a process by which a child of one set of parents becomes the child of another set of parents or parent Anaanthalakshmi, Sampoorana, Mushtaq, sheelajayanthi, and charulatha, 2001). Indian adoption policies are sculpted, by several years of ongoing efforts by social reforms lobbyists and child welfare organizations. This is evident from the laws and policies set forth by the government of India. A more recent policy in the chapter IV of the juvenile Justice Act of 2000 implemented the concept of secular adoption whereby, without any reference to the community or

religious persuasions of the parents or the child concerned, a right appears to be granted to all citizens to adopt, and all children to be adopted. While this was a positive change, this concept still did not give the legal and legitimate status to the child equal to that of a biological, legitimate child. Later the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children Act of 2006) cleared this issue, where the adoption was defined as the process through which the adopted child is permanently separated from the biological parents and becomes the legitimate child of the adoptive parents with all he rights, privileges and responsibilities that are attached to the relationship. This act introduced the expression child in need of care and protection.

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The conservative belief is still present in certain region that a male child could be an investment. This project contributes the perception of public on the child adoption and helps to study the factors affecting the adoption among

the adoptive parents

Significance of the Study

Prospective adoptive parents are beginning to understand the legal and social processes of adoption and recognize the need to go through organized child welfare organizations. It is interesting to show that in the last few years, children coming into institutions, either in the form of abandonment or surrendering has decreased considerably. This is cost by family planning and officiating medical termination of pregnancy. Education, globalization and contemporary thoughts have brought about attitudinal changes in broader perspective.

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With increased awareness of psychological implications in the adoption process, we may forecast that training and education for adoption counseling competence will be in field that will gain much more attention to the next decade.

2. Review of Literature

Review of the related literature is one of the important steps in the research process. It consists of summary of findings of research carried out in the past on same directly and indirectly related topics. This review provides insight to the researcher regarding what is already known and what remains to be tested regarding the topic of research. It guides the researcher to avoid duplication and provides useful suggestion for further research of given topic.

Therefore, the main aim of this chapter is to review the literature on child adoption related work. In other words, in this chapter, the study which have been undertaken by various researcher in India and abroad in relation to child adoption.

- Alexandra L. Frye (2010)) – studied on the college students perception on adoption (the university of Alabama). This study included 514 participants. The findings in this research suggested that the adoption is still a preference for the formation of a family, although the child is completely unrelated.
- Robin Anne Shura (2010) – studied on the intercountry adoption: a theoretical analysis (Case Western Reserve University). The aim of the research is to engage in a preliminary theoretical analysis of intercountry adoption as asocial and cultural practice, informed by two competing frameworks of sociological theory.
- Diana. L: Baltimore (2008)– understanding the concept of adoption; a qualitative analysis with adoptees and adoptive parents (Iowa State University).

3. Objectives of the Study

- To study the public perception of child adoption.
- To understand the concept and guidelines of adoption.
- To understand the adoption rules for single women.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Population

The population is infinite. The study is conducted with sampling method for collecting survey data about the population, were convenience sampling is used since the population is infinite. The sample size consist of 50 respondents, were the respondents are conveniently selected.

4.2 Data used

- Primary data
- Secondary data

Primary data: primary data ae original data which are collected for the first time for a specific purpose. They are collected firsthand information by the researcher specially for addressing the problem at hand.

Secondary data: secondary data are those which have already been collected by others. They are available in the form of published or unpublished sources.

Types of Adoption Open in India

- **Open adoption-** where adoptive parents and birth parents keep in touch with each other.
- **Semi-open adoption-** this is a kind of adoption that does not involve direct contact between the birth parents and the adoptive parents
- **Closed adoption-** this kind of adoption involves no contact between the adoptive parents and the birth parents where both the set of parents do not have any kind of communication or information about each other.
- **Intra-family adoption-** this adoption happens in a family where the biological parents of a child die, get married to someone else, or are not in a capacity to take care of their child, a member of the family or the step-parents may legally adopt that child.
- **Domestic adoption-** refers to the adoption that happens within the country where the adoptive parents and the birth parents belong to the same country, and the adoption happens within the country is called domestic adoption.
- **International adoption-** involves adopting a child from outside the country or giving the child to a couple who are not a native of that country.

Fundamental Principles Governing Adoption

- The following fundamental principles shall govern adoption of children from India namely,
- The child's best interest shall be of paramount consideration, while processing any adoption decision.
- Preference shall be given to place the child in adoption with Indian citizen and with due regard to the principle of placement of the child in his own socio-cultural environment, as far as possible.
- All adoption shall be registered on child adoption resource information and guidance system and the confidentiality of the same shall be maintained by the authority.

Eligibility Criteria for Prospective Adoptive Parents

- The Prospective adoptive parents shall be physically, mentally, and emotionally stable, financially capable and shall not have any life-threatening medical condition.

- Any prospective adoptive parents, irrespective of his marital status and whether or not he has biological son or daughter can adopt a child subject to the following:
- The consent of both the spouses for the adoption shall be required, in case of a married couple.
- A single female can adopt a child of any gender.
- A single male shall not be eligible to adopt a girl child.
- No child shall be given in adoption to a couple unless

they have at least two years of stable marital relationship.

- The age of prospective adoptive parents, as on the date of registration, shall be counted for deciding the eligibility and the eligibility of prospective adoptive parents to apply for children of different age groups shall be as under:

Table 1

Age of the child	Maximum composite age of prospective adoptive parents (couple)	Maximum age pf single prospective adoptive parent
Up to 4 years	90 years	45 years
Above 4 and up to 8 years	100 years	50 years
Above 8 and up to 18 years	110 years	55 years

- In case of the couple, the composite age of the prospective adoptive parents shall be counted.
- The minimum age difference between the child and either of the prospective adoptive parents shall not be less than twenty-five years.
- The age criteria for prospective adoptive parents shall not be applicable in case of relative adoptions and adoption by step parent.
- Couples with three or more children shall not be considered for adoption except in case of special need children as defined in subsection (21) of regulation 2, hard to place children as mentioned in regulation 50 and in case of relative adoption and adoption by step parent.

- The single parent should have an additional family support.
- According to the rules the adoptive parents has to be medically fit and financially settled.
- According to the Hindu adoption and maintenance act of 1956 Indian citizen who are Hindu, Jains, Sikhs or Buddhist are allowed to adopt not more than one child of a particular sex.
- For foreigners, NRI, and those Indian nationals who are Muslim, parses, Christian or Jews, according to the guardian and wards act of 1890, the parents only acts as a guardian till the child attains the age of 18.
- One can adopt a child from recognized private placement agencies, Shishu grehas, or state adoption cells.

Adoption Rule in India for Single Women

- A minimum age different of 21 years between the single mother and the adopted child is required if they are of opposite sexes.
- A single parent should be between 30-45 years in age if she wishes to adopt child in the age group of 0-3 years. The upper limit for a child is older than 3 years is 50.

Stakeholders in Adoption Process

- Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)
- State Adoption Resource Agency (SARA)
- Specialized Adoption Agency (SAA)
- Authorized Foreign Adoption Agency (AFAA)
- District Child Protection Unit (DCPU)

5. Primary Data Analysis

Table 2

SI No	Variable Under Study	Frequency	Percentage
1	Single adoptive parent adopting		
	Strongly agree	18	36%
	Agree	17	34%
	Neither agree nor disagree	9	18%
	disagree	5	10%
	Strongly disagree	1	2%
	total	50	100
2	Agreement of family on adoption decision		
	Strongly agree	3	6%
	Agree	18	36%
	Neither agree nor disagree	23	46%
	disagree	6	12%
	Strongly disagree	0	0
	total	50	100
3	Revealing the truth of adoption affect the kids		
	Major affect	23	46%
	Moderate affect	7	14%
	neutral	16	32%
	Minor affect	3	6%
	No affect	1	2%
	total	50	100
4	Gender preference on child Adoption		

	Very necessary	1	2%
	necessary	11	22%
	Neither necessary nor unnecessary	10	20%
	unnecessary	17	34%
	Very unnecessary	11	22%
	total	50	100
5	Established financial footing while adopting a child		
	Very important	17	34%
	Important	20	40%
	Neither important nor unimportant	10	20%
	Unimportant	2	4%
	Very unimportant	1	2%
	Total	50	100
6	Parents of adopted children can expect more trouble		
	Strongly agree	2	4%
	Agree	8	16%
	Neither agree nor disagree	18	36%
	Disagree	18	36%
	Strongly disagree	4	8%
	Total	50	100
7	Opinion on children of one race adopted by parents of another race		
	Strongly agree	10	20%
	Agree	19	38%
	Neither agree nor disagree	14	28%
	Disagree	4	8%
	Strongly disagree	3	6%
	Total	50	100
8	Awareness about the laws		
	Completely aware	2	4%
	Very much aware	3	6%
	Slightly aware	34	68%
	Very much unaware	4	8%
	Completely unaware	7	14%
	Total	50	100
9	Religion affect child adoption		
	Always	7	14%
	Often	8	16%
	Sometimes	20	40%
	Rarely	6	12%
	Never	9	18%
	Total	50	100
10	Adoption create awareness		
	Always	15	30%
	Often	10	20%
	Sometimes	17	34%
	Rarely	8	16%
	Never	0	0
	Total	50	100
11	Loyalty of adopted children towards their parents		
	Definitely	15	30%
	Probably	25	50%
	Maybe	10	20%
	Probably not	0	0
	Definitely not	0	0
	Total	50	100

6. Findings

After studying and analyzing the public perception on child adoption within questionnaire survey of the public in Thrissur, a brief summary is illustrated below:

- Majority of the respondents support a single parent adopting a child.
- Most of the agreement is seen among the family members on the adoption decisions made by the adoptive parents.
- Revealing the truth of adoption towards the kids create major effect.
- Gender preference among the parents has reduced to some extent but still it is visible in some group.
- Most parents attempt to adopt child at a very young age is to protect the family values, to protect the social values, to enhance the behavioral development and to avoid attachment issues.
- Less people prefer to adopt child above 5 years.
- Majority of the respondents shows it takes qualities like care, concern and kindness to love an adopted child.
- Increased adoption decisions are seen among the people because of infertility in men and women.

- 70% of respondents know a parent who has adopted a child.
- Established financial footing is important before adopting a child.
- Neutral and disagreement is seen on that statement that adopted children cause more trouble.
- 38% of agreement is seen on parent of one race adopting a child of another race.
- The survey shows that 14% of the respondents are completely unaware about the laws related to child adoption.
- The adopted child is mostly safe in the hands of adoptive parents.
- Religion play and important role in child adoption.
- Nowadays there is more adoption seen among the people.
- Sometimes adoption creates strong awareness among the society.
- Adopted children will be loyal towards their adopted parents.
- Positive rating is seen on the public attitude towards child adoption.

7. Suggestions

- Adoption awareness programme should be conducted in order to promote the awareness of adoption among prospective adoptive parents.
- Using social media to promote education on adoption by creating Facebook pages specifically for the adoption.it is a great tool to have family and friends share your page to reach and educate more people.
- Recruiting and preparing families for adoption to provide post adoption services.
- Easing the financial barriers for adoption the government needs to mobilize funds to create network of post adoption services that will provide adoptive families with the support that will enable them to succeed as lifelong caregivers.

8. Conclusion

It would be incorrect to say that the most precious resource of the world are the children and they make mankind look forward to make the future a better place to live. Those committed to human rights and to children's rights should focus on the genuine and most significant needs of children, parents, and communities, rather than engaging in false romanticism. They should also focus on the genuine and most significant evils that children face. Children need loving, nurturing parents to raise them. They need food and shelter and affection. They need protection from disease and disaster. Large number of children in the poorer countries of the world live in truly desperate circumstances.

In this study an attempt was made to explore the public perception towards child adoption in Thrissur.

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