

**Perception and Practices towards Informal Care of Children: A
Study of Child Care Homes of Kaski**

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This thesis entitled "**Perception and Practices towards Informal Care: A Study of Child Care Homes of Kaski**" has been completed by Mr. Govinda Bhattarai under my supervision and guidance. This is an original research work and I recommend this dissertation for final approval and acceptance by dissertation committee.

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LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

This thesis entitled "**Perception and Practices towards Informal Care: A Study of Child Care Homes of Kaski**" submitted to the Department of Sociology & Rural Development, Tribhuvan University, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara by Mr. Govinda Bhattarai has been accepted as the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Sociology by the undersigned members of the dissertation committee.

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Executive Summary

This thesis is entitled as "Perception and Practices toward Informal Care of Children: A Study of Child Care Homes of Kaski. The study consulted 30 child care homes of Kaski. Availability sampling was used by the study during which interview was the technique used for gathering information. The study was conducted with the objective of identifying perception and practices of child care homes in terms of informal care toward children.

Though family is a primary institution from sociological point of view, the developmental sector identifies care provided by family as non-institutional care. Non-institutional care is synonymous to informal care. Informal care in development sector is understood as the care provided to the children in the settings other than that of institutions, mainly, child care homes.

This study attempted to understand the perception of child care homes i.e. institutions regarding informal care. During the study, it was found that not all of the child care homes were completely aware on the meaning of informal care and the policies of the government. This is a serious issue which should be addressed by the concerned government authorities and the network of child care homes working in the district. Lack of sufficient knowledge on informal care among child care homes might led to the admission of children at child care homes who need not to be admitted. It is not only about the admitting a child at child care home but about changing the socialization process of a child. To be more precise, it is about not letting the child to grow in the way that s/he should be for proper socialization.

The study has come up with the findings that the Government of Nepal has conducted a few programs to promote informal care. However, the programs have not been sufficient enough. Trainings, meetings and discussion sessions with child care homes on informal care are organized by the concerned government offices in the district. Only a few child care homes are aware of the fact that the government has promoted informal care in the communities by rewarding the individuals who are contributing for promoting informal care.

Kinship care has been identified as the most widely practiced forms of informal care in context to Nepal. Kinship care is not only a widely practiced form of informal care but is also most relevant in context to Nepalese society. However, there are concerns regarding the success of

this type of care in limited ethnic groups which could be another subject of study. Despite this fact, government has not done much to promote kinship care and make it more systematic. This study has shown that foster care and community based care are also in existence in Nepalese communities. However, these kind of cares are not in the level of kinship care.

The study has shown that the grow-up of child in institutional settings supports the academic progress of the child to the most. Similarly, the grow-up of children in family or family like settings will contribute for the socialization of children to the most apart from education, health and discipline of children. It is therefore the children should be grown up in families for better socialization.

The latest trend of receiving children by child care homes has suggested that the activities of child care homes are directed toward the promotion of informal care. As all the children go to child care homes through District Child Welfare Board, the responsibility to ensure the presence of parents and relatives is now that of DCWB.

Death of parents, abandoned by parents, having single parents, poverty, having step parents, neglect by parents, sexual abuse, alcoholic parents and so on are found to be cause of arrival of children at child care homes. Other than death of parents and sexual abuse, the children should not stay at child care home for which both the government and child care homes should be responsible enough.

The child care homes have also started promoting informal care. In order to do so, they make in-depth assessment of the child prior to the admission. They also managed for regular communication between children and their parents & relatives so as to make reintegration process easier. Not only this, they also send the children to their parents and relatives during vacations. Wherever applicable, some child care homes are providing support directly to the families thus keeping children with their families. This should be appreciated and promoted by the government as well.

This study has focused on the perception and practices of child care homes toward informal care. In order to understand the real difference in socialization of children in different settings, i.e. in institutional care and informal care, longitudinal studies should be conducted. It is therefore more studies in this sector are necessary. Similarly, the study on the children departed from the institutional care is also equally important.

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Abbreviations:

AD = Anno Domini

BS = Bikram Sambat

CBS = Central Bureau of Statistics

CDO = Chief District Officer

CDR = Central Development Region

CWO = Child Welfare Officer

CCH = Child Care Homes

CCWB = Central Child Welfare Board

DAO = District Administration Office

DCWB = District Child Welfare Board

EDR = Eastern Development Region

FWDR = Far-Western Development Region

GoN = Government of Nepal

MWDR = Mid-Western Development Region

MOWCSW = Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare

SOS = Save our Souls

UN = United Nations

UNCRC = United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child

UNICEF = United Nations Children's Fund

VDC = Village Development committee

WDR = Western Development Region