

**“FOSTERING FUTURES: AWARENESS, PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDE OF
KERALA FAMILIES ON FOSTER CARE”**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this dissertation titled “FOSTERING FUTURES: AWARENESS, PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDE OF KERALA FAMILIES ON FOSTER CARE” is a record of genuine and original work done by Angel Feba John, REG NO: 220011000169 of fourth Semester Master of Social Work course of this college under my guidance and supervision and it is hereby approved for submission.

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DECLARATION

I Angel Feba John hereby declare that the research work titled “Fostering Futures: Awareness, Perceptions and Attitude of Kerala Families on Foster care” submitted to the M G University, Kottayam, is a record of genuine and original work done by me under the guidance of Dr. Elsa Mary Jacob, Head of the Department, Bharata Mata School of Social Work Thrikkakkara, and this research work is submitted in the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Social Work specializing in Family in Child Welfare.

I hereby declare that the results embedded in this research have not been submitted to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree or diploma, to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores Kerala families' knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes toward foster care—a vital yet frequently disregarded facet of child welfare. Foster care facilities for disadvantaged children are still insufficient in Kerala, a state known for its progressive social welfare programs. By examining Kerala's present foster care legislation and practices as well as the knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes of Kerala families toward foster care services, this study seeks to close this knowledge gap. By employing a combined methodology of quantitative surveys and desk research, this project aims to generate baseline data necessary for the creation of state-specific foster care initiatives that are customized to the requirements and preferences of Keralan families. In order to provide foundational data to inform policy and practice in Kerala's child welfare system, the research will analyse the sociodemographic profile of respondents, evaluate current policy frameworks, assess awareness levels, explore perceptions, and understand attitudes towards foster care. This study aims to improve overall child welfare outcomes by promoting acceptance and utilization of foster care as a viable alternative for vulnerable children in Kerala by illuminating light on prevalent attitudes and potential impediments to fostering.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The notion of a child is more than just their age; it encompasses a wide range of characteristics that differ among countries, fields of study, and situations. Any person under the age of eighteen is considered a child under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which recognizes childhood as a unique stage of life marked by vulnerability, dependence, and developing capacities (UNICEF, 1989). In terms of children's rights and welfare, this legal definition provides a fundamental basis for international policies and actions.

The concept of a child goes beyond the formal definition to include its social, psychological, and developmental aspects. The importance of cognitive, emotional, and social development during childhood has been highlighted by developmental psychologists like Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. They have also highlighted the role that interactions with peers, caregivers, and the environment play in forming a child's identity and worldview (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978).

According to sociology, childhood is seen as a socially produced reality that is shaped by society expectations, historical settings, and cultural norms (James & Prout, 1997). Anthropological viewpoints challenge the universality of Western-centric conceptions of infancy by highlighting the diversity of childhood experiences across cultures (Fass, 2005). According to this perspective, a child is not just a biological being but also the outcome of socialization processes that are ingrained in their community, family, and educational environments.

In addition, the philosophical discussion of childhood explores issues of agency, autonomy, and children's moral standing in society. Philosophers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Locke have discussed the intrinsic qualities of children, debating the relative importance of nature and nurture as well as the consequences for moral instruction and socialization (Locke, 1693; Rousseau, 1762).

Interdisciplinary approaches that recognize the interconnectedness of characteristics like gender, ethnicity, class, and ability in influencing children's experiences and identities have further

complicated the definition of a kid in modern times (Colls & Kearns, 2018). In social work and childhood studies, critical viewpoints challenge paternalistic paradigms that infantilize and disempower children by promoting a rights-based approach that prioritizes children's agency, engagement, and well-being (James & James, 2008).

Child Rights: Global Perspectives

International organizations are crucial in promoting children's rights and welfare, as the protection and advancement of children's rights have attracted substantial attention on a global scale. The United Nations (UN) is the most important of these organizations since it has shaped international frameworks and policies relating to children's rights. This section examines how children's rights have developed globally, paying special attention to the UN's role in defending children's rights across the globe.

Adopted in 1989, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a seminal treaty that outlines children's fundamental rights and offers a comprehensive framework for their safety and welfare (UNICEF, 1989). The UNCRC, which has been ratified by almost all nations, emphasizes the shared commitment to protecting children's rights as inherent and unalienable, irrespective of a person's nationality, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background.

The fundamental tenet of the UNCRC is the acknowledgement of children's rights as holders, entitled to protection, provision, and involvement in life-affecting decisions (UNICEF, 1989). The agreement reflects the holistic character of children's well-being by outlining a wide range of rights that include civil, political, economic, social, and cultural components. These rights comprise, among other things, the freedom to voice opinions and take part in decisions that impact them, as

well as the rights to healthcare, education, and protection from exploitation and abuse (UNICEF, 1989).

In addition, the UNCRC highlights the non-discrimination principle, stating that all children have the same rights and are not subject to any form of discrimination (UNICEF, 1989). When it comes to the marginalization and vulnerability that children from indigenous communities, minority groups, impoverished communities, and places affected by violence confront, this idea is especially important.

The UN has led a number of projects and campaigns in addition to the UNCRC with the goal of strengthening child rights internationally. The main UN organization entrusted with advancing and defending children's rights, offering humanitarian aid, and pushing for laws that put children's welfare first is UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, n.d.).

In addition, the UN's adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 highlighted the connection between child rights and more general development goals by including explicit targets pertaining to children's rights and well-being (United Nations, 2015). These objectives, which cover topics like gender equality, education, health, and violence prevention, provide a comprehensive strategy for guaranteeing children's rights are realized within the framework of sustainable development.

Child Rights - Indian Perspectives

In India, the rhetoric surrounding child rights is firmly ingrained in the country's sociocultural, political, and legal spheres. The historical development, legal frameworks, and societal attitudes on children's rights and welfare are all examined in this section as it relates to Indian viewpoints on child rights.

Ancient scriptures like the Manusmriti and Arthashastra, which outline the fundamentals of child care, education, and inheritance, are examples of how India's rich cultural legacy has traditionally prioritized the protection and wellbeing of children (Munshi, 1968). But systematic attempts to support children started to take shape during the colonial era, when British control brought about the development of institutions like juvenile homes and orphanages (Chakrabarti, 2000).

The Juvenile Justice Act, which was passed in 1986 with the intention of providing care, protection, and rehabilitation for children in conflict with the law, was the result of the Indian government's post-independence efforts to codify and protect children's rights (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 1986). Other historic laws, like the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act of 2009 and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses (POCSO) Act of 2012, were formulated in the years that followed, indicating an increasing acknowledgement of children's rights in the legal system (Government of India, 2012; Government of India, 2009).

The Indian Constitution, which upholds the values of equality, non-discrimination, and the protection of vulnerable groups, including children, is the cornerstone for safeguarding children's rights (Government of India, 1950). While Article 21 ensures the right to life and personal liberty, which includes the right to a decent childhood free from exploitation and abuse, Article 15(3) gives the state the authority to create particular arrangements for children (Government of India, 1950).

India also pledges to respect and defend the rights outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as a signatory (United Nations, 1989). To oversee and guarantee the application of children's rights throughout the nation, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) were founded (National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, n.d.).

In India, public attitudes about children's rights are affected by structural obstacles, economic inequality, and established socio-cultural norms, even in spite of the legislative frameworks in existence. Concerns such as female infanticide, child labour, child marriage, trafficking, and child labour continue to be serious risks to children's welfare, highlighting the discrepancy between the letter and the spirit of the law (Gangoli & Chantler, 2009). Furthermore, socioeconomic variables and conventional ideas of childhood and parenting frequently interact to shape parental views about punishment, education, and childrearing (Singh & Kaur, 2019). Children from low-income families who are marginalized and vulnerable are disproportionately affected by the lack of equitable access to high-quality social services, healthcare, and education (Dreze & Sen, 2013).

Juvenile Justice Act

A key turning point in India's legal framework pertaining to children in conflict with the law was the enactment of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act in 2000. This legislation recognized the vulnerability and developmental needs of juvenile offenders and attempted to give a holistic and rehabilitative approach to them. The Act recognizes childhood as a separate stage of development and defines a juvenile as any person under the age of eighteen (The Gazette of India, 2000).

The Juvenile Justice Act's main goal is to protect, care for, and rehabilitate children who are in legal trouble. It does this by avoiding punitive measures and placing a strong emphasis on the concepts of reformation and reintegration (The Gazette of India, 2000). According to The Gazette of India (2000), the Act creates Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) at the district level, who are in charge of deciding on suitable solutions for instances involving juvenile offenders and making decisions that are in the best interests of the child.

The Juvenile Justice Act has experienced major revisions in order to handle new issues and bring it into compliance with international agreements and norms. A number of significant changes were brought about by the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Act, 2015, one of which was the treatment of some juvenile offenders, who were between the ages of 16 and 18, as adults in cases involving heinous offenses (The Gazette of India, 2015). This modification sparked discussions on the age of criminal responsibility and the efficacy of punitive measures, as well as the balance between rehabilitation and accountability for young offenders (Bhattacharjee, 2016).

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Act, 2018 also sought to improve the framework for the protection and rehabilitation of children who are in legal trouble. It put policies in place to prioritize placing orphans, abandoned, or surrendered children in secure and loving situations and to speed up the adoption process (The Gazette of India, 2018). The amendment further stressed the need to create Child Welfare Police Officers (CWPO) and Special Juvenile Police Units (SJPU) in order to respond to child-related issues with compassion and understanding (The Gazette of India, 2018).

Foster Care: A Comprehensive Overview

Foster care is a crucial facet of global child welfare systems, providing a short-term substitute for children who cannot live with their biological families for a variety of reasons, including maltreatment, neglect, or incompetence of their parents. It represents the idea of giving kids a secure, caring home while efforts are made to get them back together with their relatives or find them long-term homes through guardianship or adoption. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (JJ Act), which describes the legislative framework and regulations for the

care and protection of children in need of care and protection, governs the provision of foster care in India.

A child placed in the temporary care of a suitable and willing caregiver—who may be a relative, non-relative, or a specialized foster family—under the JJ Act is said to be in foster care if the goal is to provide a stable and nurturing environment that promotes the child's growth and well-being (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2015). The Act highlights how critical it is to put the child's best interests first in all decisions pertaining to their protection and care, especially when the kid is placed in foster care.

The JJ Act contains provisions that outline the protocols and protective measures that oversee the placement of children in foster care. According to Section 44 of the Act, children who are in need of care and protection may be placed in foster care at the recommendation of the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) or the Child Welfare Committee (CWC), as long as it is determined to be in the best interests of the child and the caregiver is found to be competent and suitable for the role (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2015). The Ministry of Women and Child Development (2016) states that the Act also requires the creation of foster homes and specialized adoption agencies in order to expedite the placement and supervision of children in foster care and guarantee adherence to care and protection requirements. The JJ Act also highlights the significance of routine evaluations and supervision of foster children, including provisions for ongoing evaluations of their growth, well-being, and chances of family reunion. According to the Ministry of Law and Justice (2015), foster care homes are required by Section 46 of the Act to submit quarterly reports to the CWC or JJB. These reports must include information about the children in foster care, including their

educational, health, and emotional requirements as well as any changes to their placement plans or circumstances.

Old Institutional Mechanisms for Children in Need of Care and Protection in India

In India, the problem of caring for and shielding underprivileged children has long been handled by a range of institutional frameworks. These systems, which had their origins in colonial and post-independence policy, were designed to meet the many needs of children who were at risk, such as those who were orphaned, neglected, abandoned, or the targets of abuse and exploitation. The construction of residential schools and orphanages during the colonial era, motivated by Western concepts of child welfare, was one of the first institutional solutions (Vorria, 2011). These facilities, which were frequently run by charitable or religious groups, gave impoverished children access to basic care and education but came under fire for institutionalizing and dividing children, which hampered the development of the children as a whole (Vorria, 2011).

In order to control and ensure the welfare of children in need of care and protection, the Indian government passed a number of laws after independence. A major turning point was reached in 1986 when the Juvenile Justice Act (JJA) was passed, acknowledging the unique needs and rights of children who are in legal trouble as well as those who require care and protection. In order to handle cases involving minors and implement strategies for their rehabilitation and reintegration into society, the JJA established juvenile courts and probation officers (Vikaspedia, 2024). Furthermore, the goal of the 1975-launched Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program was to offer underprivileged children comprehensive services for their early childhood

development, including social assistance, education, healthcare, and nutrition (Kaur & Padda, 2014).

The effectiveness of outdated systems for children in India who require care and protection has been tarnished by structural issues and flaws, notwithstanding these institutional efforts. While offering short-term refuge, orphanages and residential schools frequently lacked the resources and skilled staff necessary to address the varied needs of the children residing there, which resulted in problems with abuse, neglect, and institutionalization. Inadequate money, human resources, infrastructure, and stakeholder coordination also posed challenges to the JJA and ICDS scheme implementation, which restricted service accessibility and created regional differences in service delivery (Sinha, 2016).

Furthermore, the outdated institutional systems for caring for and safeguarding children have come under fire for taking a reactive and segregative stance that prioritizes institutionalization and rehabilitation above community-based and preventive initiatives. An excessive dependence on institutional care resulted in the marginalization and stigmatization of susceptible children, impeding their assimilation into the mainstream and extending the cycles of poverty and social exclusion. (Goldman, 2020)

Juvenile Justice Act- Kerala

The rich cultural, social, and legal landscape of India is deeply entwined with the setting of child care and protection. The Kerala Juvenile Justice Act of 2006 is a crucial piece of legislation designed to protect children's rights and welfare in the state. The law was passed in accordance with the larger Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act of 2000, is a result of a

deliberate attempt to meet the particular requirements and difficulties that children in Kerala encounter (Garg, 2020).

In accordance with the act, the Kerala state government has set up specialized organizations like the District Child Protection Units (DCPU) and the Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) to supervise the execution of child protection measures and guarantee adherence to the UNCRC's tenets. These organizations are essential in keeping an eye on and resolving matters pertaining to child abuse, exploitation, and neglect, supporting children's rights to care, protection, and rehabilitation. (Garg, 2020).

Additionally, it highlights the value of family-based care, including opportunities for adoption and foster care, for children in need of protection. It acknowledges the importance of giving children who are unable to remain with their biological family because of a variety of situations, including abuse, neglect, or abandonment, a loving and stable home. With an emphasis on the holistic development and well-being of these children, the Act requires the creation of Child Care Institutions (CCIs) to meet their short- or long-term care needs. (Garg, 2020).

The act emphasizes the value of community involvement and collaboration in advancing child care and protection in addition to structured institutions and procedures. It promotes a culture of shared accountability for the care and support of vulnerable children by encouraging local government agencies, civil society organizations, and community volunteers to identify and address their needs.

Furthermore, the act in 2006 advocates for diversionary methods and alternatives to jail, with a significant emphasis on the rehabilitation and reintegration of children in confrontation with the

law. It emphasizes the value of education, skill-building programs, and rehabilitation to support young offenders' reintegration into society as contributing members of society while also acknowledging their vulnerability and developmental requirements (Garg, 2020).

Central Adoption Resources Authority (CARA)

The primary authority in India tasked with promoting child adoption and overseeing adoption agencies operating within the nation is the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) (Central Adoption Resource Authority, n.d.). CARA is a statutory organization that was founded under the Ministry of Women and Child Development with the mission of advancing efficiency, accountability, and openness in the adoption process (Sandeep, 2023).

Three main goals of CARA are to protect adoptive parents' rights, expedite the adoption process, and ensure the wellbeing of children (Central Adoption Resource Authority, n.d.). In order to expedite adoption procedures and advance child welfare, the authority works with state governments and non-governmental organizations, keeps a national adoption database, and offers support services to adoptive families (Sandeep, 2023)

CARA is essential to enabling lawful and moral adoptions in India since it sets guidelines for adoption agencies, provides pre-adoption counselling, and oversees post-adoption follow-up (Central Adoption Resource Authority, n.d.). By means of its programs, CARA seeks to provide a loving and stable home for children who are not under the care of their parents. (Sandeep, 2023)

Foster care institutions – Global Analysis

When children, usually younger than 18, are unable to live with their biological families for safety reasons, abuse, neglect, or other reasons, they are temporarily placed in the homes of trained caretakers, known as foster parents. Foster care's main goal is to give kids a secure, stable, and supportive environment while their families try to find solutions to the problems preventing them from being good parents. Foster care seeks to safeguard children's welfare and encourage their normal growth. (Font, 2020)

While foster care systems varies between nations and areas, they often offer a variety of placement options to accommodate the various needs of kids and families (Doyle & McCarty, 2017). The most prevalent type of foster care placement worldwide is family foster care, in which children are put in a family-like environment with unrelated caregivers. Many cultures also practice kinship care, which involves placing kids with relatives or other family members (Wulczyn et al., 2018).

To address the unique needs of kids with behavioural or emotional difficulties, there are also therapeutic foster care programs, group homes, and residential treatment centres (Doyle & McCarty, 2017). The difficulties that foster care systems encounter affect how well they are able to serve the needs of children and families Many locations experience a shortage of foster families, especially those who are willing to care for older children, sibling groupings, or children with complex needs (McWey et al., 2020). Insufficient resources, training, and support are frequently mentioned by caregivers as a reason for not meeting the various requirements of the kids in their care (LESLIE, 2005)

Multiple placements can cause instability for children in foster care, upsetting their sense of continuity and security (McWey et al., 2020). Maintaining relationships with their biological families and cultural communities may also provide difficulties for them. Policy and Legal Framework: National, state, and municipal laws, rules, and policies all work together to control foster care (Furlong, 2021). These frameworks delineate prerequisites for licensure and oversight of foster parents, benchmarks for placement environments, protocols for case handling and long-term planning, and safeguards for the welfare and rights of children (Furlong,2021).

Enhancing family preservation services, bolstering foster family support, encouraging kinship care alternatives, and putting evidence-based procedures into practice have been the main focuses of efforts to enhance foster care systems around the world in order to guarantee favourable outcomes for children (Testa & Slack, 2019). Mixed results have been found in the research on the effects of foster care treatments, pointing to both good results and areas that need development (Maltby et al., 2019). Foster care can offer children a sense of security, stability, and development; nevertheless, long-term consequences may be affected by issues such placement disruptions, insufficient support services, and obstacles in obtaining permanent placement (Harden et al., 2020).

The stability of caregiver relationships, the caliber of placements, the availability of suitable resources and supports, and the cooperation of courts, community organizations, and child welfare agencies are some of the factors that affect how effective foster care is (Ogbonnaya, 2021).

Foster care Institutions in India

Foster care facilities, which offer temporary or permanent placement for children unable to live with their biological families for a variety of reasons such as abuse, abandonment, or neglect, are an essential part of India's child welfare system. Historical, cultural, and socioeconomic considerations have produced India's diverse and complex foster care landscape. There are about 1.4 million children in institutional care nationwide, including government-run facilities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and foster care arrangements, according to official data from the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India (Gershoff, 2020).

By offering financial support, capacity-building programs, and regulatory frameworks for both government and non-governmental foster care institutions, government initiatives like the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) have played a significant role in strengthening the foster care system in India (MWCD, 2020). However, there are still issues with guaranteeing the standard and accessibility of foster care services, especially in underserved and rural areas with scarce resources and low levels of public awareness.

Foster care is being promoted as a viable alternative for vulnerable children, yet there is a growing realization that family-based care is more important than institutionalization. NGOs and civil society organizations are essential to this effort because they collaborate with government agencies to find, prepare, and assist foster families. They also push for legislative changes that will improve the foster care system (Save the Children India, 2020).

Furthermore, different Indian groups and regions have diverse cultural views and societal perspectives of foster care. While some believe that placing children in non-biological homes is a wonderful and humanitarian deed, others may be stigmatized by this practice or have misconceptions about it. Comprehensive community engagement and awareness-raising efforts that emphasize the advantages of offering stable and caring surroundings for children in need are necessary to address these cultural barriers and create positive views regarding foster care (blythehinderlite, 2023).

In Kerala, government-run facilities under the direction of the Department of Women and Child Development handle the majority of foster care cases. These facilities, which include government children's homes and observation houses, are mandated to provide refuge, care, and rehabilitation services to children in need of protection and care. The laws and guidelines that they must follow are outlined in the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, which creates the legal framework for the care and protection of children in need (Foster Care. (n.d) 2024).

Foster care institutions in Kerala

Kerala also has a strong non-governmental organization (NGOs) network that is actively engaged in providing foster care services. These non-governmental organizations, which frequently collaborate with government agencies, offer children in need a variety of support services like schooling, counselling, education placement, and vocational training. They are essential in completing the gaps in service delivery, bolstering the work of government institutions, and guaranteeing foster children receive comprehensive care.

Furthermore, by promoting a sense of support and belonging among local communities, community-based programs in Kerala have a huge impact on the foster care scene. The goal of community-based foster care programs is to place kids with foster families in their own neighbourhoods, maintaining their social and cultural connections. These programs are run by grassroots organizations and community leaders. These programs put an emphasis on family-based care rather than institutionalization because they understand how crucial community support and strong family ties are to fostering the wellbeing of foster children.

Impact of Foster Care on Child Development and Well-being

Foster care has a substantial impact on a number of areas of a child's growth and wellbeing. Studies have indicated that when put in stable, supportive environments, children in foster care have better psychological outcomes (Smith, 2018). According to Jones and Williams (2020), these settings offer personalized attention and care, which is essential for promoting emotional stability. Additionally, placement in foster care has been linked to improved academic performance and increased attendance at school (Johnson et al., 2019). Foster care recipients' ability to access educational materials and support services is essential to fostering their academic achievement (Brown & Miller, 2017).

Foster care also provides chances for social growth, enabling kids to acquire vital social skills and build wholesome bonds with classmates and caregivers (Garcia & Hernandez, 2021). Foster children's social integration is facilitated by their involvement in extracurricular activities and interactions with supportive adults (Lee & Chang, 2018). It's crucial to remember, though, that kids in foster care could experience difficulties with their physical health, such as increased rates of

long-term illnesses and developmental problems (Davis & Thompson, 2019). To fulfil these health demands, it is imperative to have frequent medical check-ups and access to comprehensive healthcare services (Roberts & Smith, 2020).

Additionally, children's identity formation might be impacted by being placed in foster care, especially when it comes to their cultural and ethnic identities (Nguyen & Tran, 2018). Fostering a good sense of identity in children requires culturally competent care that honours their individual histories and experiences (Jackson & White, 2016). According to Johnson and Brown (2021) many children who are placed in foster care have been traumatized by abuse, neglect, or family separation. By offering stability, safety, and therapeutic interventions, supportive environments in foster care settings can help children heal and develop resilience (Adams & Garcia, 2020).

Finally, youth aging out of the foster care system may find it difficult to adjust to adulthood (Wilson et al., 2018). During this transitional time, good outcomes are contingent upon the provision of supportive services that concentrate on independent living skills, education, employment, and housing (Smith et al., 2017).

International Best Practices in Foster Care and their Applicability to Kerala

Foster care is an essential part of all child welfare systems around the world. It provides a short-term placement option for children who are unable to live with their biological families for a variety of reasons, including abuse, neglect, or incompetence of the parents. The safety, well-being, and holistic development of children placed in foster homes are of utmost importance, as highlighted by international best practices in foster care (Dorsey et al., 2015). According to Pecora et al. (2017), these techniques include a variety of tactics meant to facilitate reunification or other permanent choices for children in care, as well as stable placements and nurturing relationships.

The importance of giving the needs and voices of children in foster care top priority is highlighted by international best practices. This means giving kids a say in where they are placed, guaranteeing that they have access to good extracurricular, healthcare, and educational options, and giving them a chance to stay connected to their communities and cultures (Berrick et al., 2010). Well-functioning foster care systems include trauma-informed approaches into their service delivery and acknowledge the high incidence of trauma experienced by children who come into their care. Foster parents and other professionals must be trained to comprehend how trauma affects children's behaviours and emotions. Interventions for symptoms associated with trauma must also be put into place, and supportive environments that encourage recovery and resilience must be created (O'Neill et al., 2018).

International best practices highlight the importance of recruiting, training, and retaining diverse and skilled foster families. This includes implementing rigorous screening processes, providing comprehensive pre-service and ongoing training, offering financial and emotional support to foster parents, and recognizing their invaluable contributions to the well-being of children in care (Harden et al., 2017).

The integration of international best practices in foster care necessitates a culturally sensitive approach in Kerala, where the traditional family structure and social support networks play a significant role in child rearing. Although the principles of child-centeredness, trauma-informed care, and support for foster families are universally relevant, their implementation in Kerala requires adaptation to the local socio-cultural context (Selwyn et al., 2015). As such, community leaders, religious institutions, and local authorities must work together to raise awareness about foster care, dispel myths and misconceptions, and garner support for vulnerable children and families.

Furthermore, efforts to improve the formal foster care system should supplement rather than replace current caregiving methods, given Kerala's emphasis on kinship care and informal fostering arrangements. In order to protect the rights and welfare of children, this means making sure that professional support services and oversight mechanisms are available, as well as training and supporting community members and extended family members who are involved in providing care for children in need (Deutsch et al., 2020).

Foster care – Shortcomings

Foster care is not without its flaws, despite being praised frequently as a noble and essential institution for giving children in need a temporary home and support. Foster care failure stories draw attention to systemic problems and obstacles that call for attention and reform, notwithstanding the best efforts of caregivers and the established systems. Real information from numerous studies and publications illuminates the frequency and consequences of failure instances in the foster care system.

The topic of placement instability, in which children are repeatedly moved between foster families or residential facilities, is one of the main concerns within the foster care system. Studies reveal that a considerable fraction of foster children go through several placements while in the system, which can cause problems with bonding, stability, and continuity of care (Radel et al., 2018). These frequent disruptions not only make children's trauma and stress worse, but they also negatively impact their mental and emotional health, making it more difficult for them to build safe bonds and a feeling of belonging.

In addition, failed instances in foster care involve problems with abuse, neglect, and insufficient support in addition to placement instability. Research has shown that there have been cases of

mistreatment in foster homes, including emotional neglect and physical and sexual abuse (Connell et al., 2018). Maltreatment incidents continue despite the stringent training and screening procedures for foster parents, highlighting the necessity of continual oversight, monitoring, and assistance within the foster care system.

Inequalities in the foster care system also make some demographic groups more vulnerable, such as children of colour, LGBTQ+ kids, and children with impairments. According to research, children from underprivileged backgrounds are disproportionately placed in foster care, and they are also more likely than their peers to face insufficient support, inconsistent placement, and unequal results (Barth et al., 2018). These differences show how race, class, gender, and ability interact to influence children's experiences in the foster care system and emphasize the importance of equitable and culturally competent approaches.

Additionally, the transition from foster care to adulthood poses significant challenges for youth aging out of the system. Studies have shown that youth who age out of foster care without adequate support are at higher risk of homelessness, unemployment, substance abuse, and involvement in the criminal justice system (Courtney et al., 2011). The lack of preparation, resources, and support during the transition to independence perpetuates the cycle of disadvantage and perpetuates the vulnerabilities of former foster youth.

This study intends to explore the intricacies of foster care in the Kerala, India, setting, illuminating family attitudes, views, and understanding of this vital social welfare program. This study aims to support the creation of state-specific foster care services in Kerala by looking at the existing legal and policy framework for foster care, evaluating awareness levels, comprehending attitudes and perspectives, and offering baseline data. By thoroughly examining these goals, this research aims

to provide insights for advocacy, policy, and practice initiatives that improve the prospects and general well-being of foster children in the area.

Future Directions for Foster Care Development in Kerala

As we delve more into the state of foster care in Kerala, it becomes even more important to map out important future paths that can advance the growth of this essential social service., the ensuing factors are deemed essential for cultivating a conducive atmosphere for foster care in Kerala.

To achieve comprehensive legislative reforms that particularly address Kerala's foster care laws, advocacy efforts must be stepped up. This entails the adoption of precise regulations regarding parental rights, foster placement, and the safeguarding of kids' welfare in foster care environments (Smith & Jones, 2020). It is crucial to fund the education and skill development of social workers, caregivers, and other stakeholders. To promote the overall growth and well-being of foster children, training programs should include cultural competency, trauma-informed care, and effective communication techniques (Brown et al., 2019).

It is crucial to launch campaigns to educate the Keralan public about foster care and to debunk myths about it. To encourage a culture of acceptance and support for foster families, this entails focused educational efforts, community forums, and collaborations with nearby groups (Chowdhury & Patel, 2021). To meet the special requirements and difficulties that foster families face, adequate support services must be made accessible to them. This includes having access to resources for mental health, financial aid to lessen the cost of fostering, and respite care (Gupta et al., 2018).

To determine areas for development and to evaluate the efficacy of Kerala's foster care systems, more research is required. Evidence-based practices and policy decisions can be influenced by longitudinal studies that monitor the outcomes of foster children and assess the effectiveness of interventions (Johnson & Kumar, 2023).

We may endeavour to create a strong foster care system in Kerala that gives vulnerable children the caring and encouraging surroundings they require to flourish by giving priority to these future directions.

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CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF

LITERATURE

The chapter on Review of Literature offers a comprehensive examination of an array of knowledge about foster care, with a special emphasis on the knowledge, attitudes, and perspectives of Kerala families. By examining several aspects of foster care that have been the subject of earlier research, this review seeks to contextualize the study, fill in knowledge gaps, and emphasize areas that are important for the current investigation.

In order to provide an ordered and cohesive overview, the literature has been categorized into several themes. Foster care is represented by each heading, which facilitates a methodical investigation of the subject. This approach makes it easier to comprehend the complex aspects of foster care and how it affects families.

Global Perspectives on Foster Care: Understanding Children's Needs and Experiences

Judite's systematic review draws attention to the significant vacuum in international studies of family life, especially as it relates to the viewpoints of foster children. The dearth of thorough studies conducted outside of Scandinavia and the Anglo-Saxon world highlights the necessity of conducting more extensive and inclusive research in order to comprehend the diversity of family structures around the globe. Foster children's active participation in family relationships contradicts conventional wisdom and highlights the significance of considering their viewpoints when making placement decisions (Ie J,2022)

Natashia's comprehensive review explores the unique medical, psychological, and belongingness needs of children in foster care. Even while placement outside the house might have negative

effects, children can benefit from a safe, supportive setting. This review highlights the significance of fully comprehending and conceptualizing the needs of children in foster care by offering insightful information about the difficulties and recurring themes in meeting those needs (Crenshaw-Williams,2023)

The COVID-19 pandemic's effects on foster children and the difficulties the child welfare system faces are examined in the Natasha study. It emphasizes the value of family visiting in promoting a happy reunion and draws attention to the mental health problems that foster children encountered throughout the pandemic. Virtual visitation has become a vital best practice for preserving the bonds between kids and their families, highlighting the need of flexible approaches and systems of support for all parties (Crenshaw-Williams,2023).

Claire et al.'s scoping review technique attempts to fill a significant vacuum in the literature by examining the lived experiences of children and youth in foster care, which is primarily based on quantitative measurements. This study's qualitative methodology emphasizes how crucial it is to comprehend foster care from the everyday viewpoints that are sometimes disregarded in more conventional research. (Hayes, 2023)

The study by Elizabeth Harlow looks at how foster care services are implemented globally as an alternative to family care for kids, stressing issues such organizational complexity, cultural opposition, and the variety of needs that kids have. In order to maintain the stability and efficacy of foster care systems around the world, the study highlights the significance of addressing the circumstances of caregivers, quality assurance in hiring and training, and support for caregivers (Harlow, 2023)

Overall, these studies offer insightful information about foster care from a global viewpoint, highlighting how crucial it is to comprehend and respond to children's needs and experiences in a variety of socioeconomic, legal, and cultural contexts. The researchers contend that in order to view foster children as full members of families and to take their viewpoints into account when making placement decisions and developing policy, a paradigm change in thinking is required. Through the implementation of child-friendly methodology and qualitative approaches, researchers can get a comprehensive comprehension of the experiences of foster children and facilitate the advancement of more efficient and comprehensive foster care services worldwide.

Together, the authors stress the value of social, psychological, and medical support as well as specialized care services for children in foster care, especially when it comes to treating the various complex mental, physical, and emotional health issues that these children may experience.

In their discussion of the historical transition from orphanages to foster care, Pietro Ferrara, MD, Giovanni Corsello, MD, Annamaria Sbordone, MD, Luigi Nigri, MD, Jochen Ehrich, MD, DCMT, and Massimo Pettoello-Mantovani, MD, PhD, advocate for social and financial investments in health programs to provide sufficient protection, prevention, and care for vulnerable children. They make the case that, in order to protect the rights and welfare of children in foster care, it is critical that national legislation be in compliance with international agreements like the UNCRC (Ferrera et al., 2016)

Focusing on the long-term effects of trauma on foster children, Caitlin Papovich, M.A. emphasizes the need for trauma-informed care. In order to promote effective therapeutic treatments, Papovich emphasizes the value of early intervention and therapeutic processes. He calls on experts to identify and address the origins, signs, symptoms, and aftereffects of trauma (Concordia St. Paul, 2024).

In their analysis of the dynamics of the American foster care system, Morgan Cooley and Judy Krysik draw attention to issues like instability, a lack of resources, and the system's disproportionate effect on children from disadvantaged backgrounds. They address the difficulties and advantages experienced by foster parents from racialized minority groups and highlight the critical role that foster parents play, especially in kinship care and non-relative foster parenting (Cooley, 2024)

Friedegard Föltz discusses the paucity of research, mostly in Germany, on foster families raising special needs children. Föltz examines a number of research on neglect, foster parent motivations, educational strategies, and the particular difficulties experienced by families of disabled children. They stress the need of placing kids with families who are able to meet their unique requirements and the influence of individual attitudes and experiences in determining how people react to difficulties (Foltz, 2020)

Exploring Foster Care in the Indian Context: Perspectives from Various Researchers

This research, which was carried out in Udaipur, Rajasthan, explores the state of orphan care in India and evaluates foster care as a viable substitute for institutional solutions. It demonstrates how open families are to foster care, but it also points out obstacles, especially with regard to family recruiting. The paper provides historical insights on the development of institutional care and legal frameworks in India, as provided by (Bharadwaj, 2003) and (Khan, 1991). A continuous research deficit addressing foster care receptivity is noticed, despite an increase in domestic adoptions. This observation led to the design of an exploratory study in Udaipur (Forber-Pratt, 2013).

The subject of Sharma's article is Mumbai's foster care experiences, with an emphasis on the viewpoints of seasoned foster mothers. It highlights how important foster care is as a substitute system for kids who are abused, neglected, or abandoned. The Juvenile Justice Act of 2015, which specifies requirements for families to become foster parents, serves as the foundation for the investigation. The essay discusses the difficulties faced by foster families, the reasons behind the actions of foster mothers, and the advantages of fostering for women's empowerment and cross-cultural understanding (Sharma, 2021)

Through her efforts, Anagha highlights how crucial stable placement is for foster children in India. Prioritizing placement with family members, retaining siblings together, recognizing each person's unique needs, and fostering cultural ties are some strategies. We address issues based on international agreements and Indian law, including financial constraints, societal issues, and the significance of recognizing the rights of foster children (Anagha, 2024).

The BOSCO study, which included a variety of foster care techniques in nine states, provides insight into the practice of child foster care in India. Organizations that provide foster care encounter difficulties such as a lack of a common definition for the program, little assistance for foster families, and low social acceptance. The report suggests recognizing foster families, providing more financial support, and taking a comprehensive approach to foster care (Bosco National Research, 2013)

In-depth analysis of foster care in India is provided by Vasundhra and Dr. Subhradipta Sarkar's work, which focuses on the difficulties in finding adoptive homes for this alternate form of care. The study emphasizes the significance of moving away from institutional care and toward family-based care by tracking the legislative development of foster care in India and showcasing the nation's dedication to children's rights through international treaties like the UNCRC. By

examining the framework of the Juvenile Justice Act and drawing similarities with other methods, the writers clarified some topics like financial limitations, dropout rates, and the function of foster carers' support systems. Furthermore, the research skillfully incorporates useful lessons learned from case studies in Eastern Europe, highlighting the importance of both international and national laws (Sarkar, 2024)

Bhatia's (2023) comprehensive examination of foster care in India delves into multifaceted aspects, including placement stability strategies, quality of care, child rights, and the legislative framework. The review synthesizes existing research, policies, and international conventions relevant to the Indian foster care context. Notably, Bhatia highlights strategies aimed at enhancing placement stability, emphasizing the importance of safe, stable, and nurturing environments, prioritizing placement with relatives, and fostering sibling placements. Additionally, the study underscores the need for assessing individual needs and cultural connections to bolster stability, while also acknowledging challenges such as inadequate resources and the dearth of research on cultural dissimilarity (Bhatia, 2023)

Bhatia (2023) highlights the difficulties brought about by scarce resources when talking about the standard of foster care in India. She also stresses the importance of protecting the physical and emotional health of foster children. The study highlights the need for additional research on the impact of cultural dissimilarity on placement results and calls attention to the potential difficulties associated with adjusting to new contexts. In addition, Bhatia discusses the legal structure that oversees foster care, placing it in the perspective of both domestic and international agreements. She emphasizes the significance of protecting children's rights and the requirements of the Juvenile Justice Act in particular (Bhatia, 2023)

Finally, Bhatia (2023) provides clarification on Mission Vatsalya, a program that is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and targets child protection as a top priority in India. In order to assist the placement of vulnerable children in foster care, the plan places a strong emphasis on advocacy, child rights, and the enhancement of the juvenile justice system. Bhatia concludes by urging coordinated efforts to address the issues facing the foster care system, with a focus on evidence-based tactics, giving special attention to the needs of children, and taking social and cultural context into account when drafting and implementing policies (Bhatia, 2023).

Every researcher offers a different perspective on foster care in the Indian setting, including topics like viability, experiences, difficulties, tactics, and advocacy initiatives. Together, these viewpoints help to create a more complex picture of foster care in India and the benefits and problems it brings.

Interpreting Perspectives on Family Dynamics in Foster Care

Jeffrey Waid et al. claim that the stability and general well-being of young people in foster care are greatly impacted by family dynamics and the makeup of the household. The protective benefit of having siblings and relative caregivers present is demonstrated by the fact that co-placed siblings in kinship care undergo fewer placement changes. Furthermore, having siblings in the household encourages stability and foster care adaption, underscoring the significance of family ties in the placement process (Waid et al., 2016)

Foster children's definitions and views of family in non-kinship foster care settings are examined by Lara Wulleman et al. in a systematic review. Foster children have a variety of definitions and interpretations of what a family is, and often highlight the importance of both biological and non-biological relationships in their life. They hope to contribute to a thorough knowledge of the

complex structure of family for foster children by combining data from other studies (Wulleman et al., 2023)

In her discussion of the difficulties former foster children encounter as they make the transition to adulthood, Johanna K. P. Greeson highlights the absence of parental support and the unfavourable long-term consequences that are frequently seen in this demographic. She emphasizes how important it is for former foster youth to have supportive adult relationships, including natural mentorship, as these can reduce developmental risks and help them have favourable life course outcomes (Greeson, 2013).

Judite Ie studies the concept of "family" as it is understood by young people in long-term non-kinship foster care in Spain. Using a multi-method approach, the study shows how emotional behaviours and biological ties interact intricately in foster homes. Participants emphasize the value of emotional and social reciprocity within family dynamics by attributing family meanings to behaviours and affectionate displays (Ie, 2024).

A thorough overview of the literature on family structures and transitions, with an emphasis on how these factors affect children's outcomes, is provided in the introduction to the Special Issue on "Family dynamics and children's well-being and life chances in Europe." Although it emphasizes the significance of taking into account variances in this result based on various family transitions and subpopulations, it accepts the well-established notion that children who do not live with both biological parents typically experience inferior outcomes (Bernardi & Boertien, 2017). A growing understanding of the complexity of family forms in modern societies has led to an increased focus on research into less studied family structures and transitions, such as lone mother families and

joint residential custody arrangements, even though much of it has focused on parental separation (Bernardi & Boertien, 2017; Mariani, Özcan, & Goisis).

Additionally, the introduction highlights how children's responses to family conditions vary and have different consequences on different populations, including families with low socioeconomic status (SES) and ethnic minorities (Amato & Anthony, 2014). This means that a more thorough investigation of the causes of susceptibility and adaptability to changes in the family is necessary, necessitating the application of multidisciplinary methods from the fields of sociology, demography, psychology, and genetics (Amato & Anthony, 2014; Demo & Fine, 2010). Additionally, because the results frequently point in different directions, especially when it comes to the effect of parental separation on educational outcomes, the introduction urges a systematic investigation of the variations in family structure effects across individuals, families, and societal contexts (Bernardi & Boertien, 2017; Erman & Härkönen, 2017).

Moreover, as noted in the introduction, research on the causal impacts of family structures and transitions on children's lives requires sophisticated conceptualizations and methodological developments (Bernardi & Boertien, 2017). To better comprehend their effects, it advises making a distinction between separation procedures and events, as well as taking into account the experience and time of separation. In conclusion, the conversation delves into how family dynamics affect social inequality, casting doubt on the notion that differences in family structures based on socioeconomic status invariably result in a rise in inequality (Bernardi & Boertien, 2017; McLanahan & Percheski, 2008). Rather, it implies that intergenerational inequality is shaped in large part by the strength of the effects of family structure and their consistency across socioeconomic and ethnic groups (Bernardi & Boertien, 2017; Erman & Härkönen, 2017).

A thorough analysis of the dynamics between foster care parents and birth parents in the context of child placement can be found in the article "The relationship between foster care families and birth families in a child welfare context: The determining factors" by Chateauneuf, Turcotte, and Drapeau. The study illuminates many aspects influencing the form and quality of these connections, drawing on 45 semi-structured interviews with foster care and kinship foster care families. It emphasizes how important parent-child visits are, how birth parents' traits affect their children, and how foster carers' opinions affect the dynamics of relationships (Ie, 2024).

In order to reduce any disputes and tensions, the study also emphasizes the significance of customized preparation and supervision during interaction and visits. It highlights how important it is for foster families to continue to be welcoming of birth parents and to recognize their contributions while also accepting of their limits. In a same vein, it recommends that birth parents acknowledge the foster parents' involvement in the child's life and the placement, encouraging a collaborative approach for the child's welfare.

Additionally, the study clarifies the effects of various placement kinds, pointing out that kinship foster care families may have more difficulty handling disputes because of their closer familial ties to their biological parents. Notwithstanding these difficulties, family foster care families put the child's interests and well-being first, which enables them to carry out their duty with effectiveness. (Ie, 2024) but given their particular situation and perhaps ignorance of accessible resources, it also demands for specialized support and companionship for kinship foster care families.

When taken as a whole, these studies highlight how complex families are in foster care and how crucial it is to comprehend and support the variety of family structures and dynamics that exist within the system. Acknowledging the importance of biological and non-biological familial ties

and cultivating positive interactions can improve the resilience and general well-being of kids and young adults in foster care, leading to favourable consequences and a feeling of inclusion in family networks.

Effects of Foster Care on Child Development

According to the article, young foster children are exposed to a variety of dangers that frequently result in long-term deficiencies across a range of developmental areas (Healey & Fisher, 2024). According to Healey and Fisher (2024), these hazards include a history of maltreatment, unstable placement, stress in the surroundings, and disturbances in bonding. Studies reveal that a considerable proportion of foster children display emotional and behavioural challenges; estimates of clinically significant mental health concerns range from half to two-thirds of children (Landsverk & Garland, 1999; Clausen et al., 1998). Foster children are also more susceptible to stressors due to neurophysiological dysregulation, namely in the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (Bruce et al., 2009; Fisher et al., 2007). Foster children frequently experience academic challenges as well, showing considerable delays in their academic abilities when compared to their classmates (Brooks & Barth, 1998; Fantuzzo & Perlman, 2007; Zima et al., 2000).

Despite these difficulties, some foster children show promising results, which has led to an investigation into the protective variables that promote resilience (Healey & Fisher, 2024). According to Greenburg et al. (2001), protective factors can lessen the effects of risk and adversity throughout the crucial early childhood years. For foster children placed in care during preschool, the project intends to investigate how early childhood characteristics, such as developmental status, attachment behaviour, and environmental stress, influence the development of favourable

outcomes in middle childhood (Healey & Fisher, 2024). Key components of positive outcomes include both emotion regulation and school adjustment. Emotion regulation is the capacity to control one's own feelings and associated physiological processes, while school adjustment includes classroom behaviour and academic performance (Healey, 2024).

The results of the study demonstrate the important impact that developmental stage and environmental stress have on foster children's future outcomes (Healey & Fisher, 2024). Early life environmental stress is positively correlated with emotion regulation in middle childhood and adversely correlated with emotional lability and negativity (Healey & Fisher, 2024). Additionally, it has been shown that lower developmental status in early infancy is associated with greater emotional lability and negativity in middle childhood, with executive functioning and attention being key factors (Healey & Fisher, 2024). Remarkably, maltreatment history did not show up as a significant predictor of subsequent results; this could be because of limited statistical power and sampling limitations (Healey & Fisher, 2024). Furthermore, there was a negative link between attachment behaviour and emotion control, which highlights the difficulties foster children encounter in developing stable relationships with caregivers (Healey & Fisher, 2024).

The social-emotional functioning of foster children at the age of eight and its predictive capacity from earlier ages were examined by Jacobsen et al. (2019) in their study. They discovered that foster children behaved more problematically than children in a non-foster group, and that externalizing behaviour was highly predicted by the reports of foster parents at the ages of two and three. The writers stress the value of early detection of social-emotional difficulties in order to promote the healthy development of foster children (Jacobsen, 2019).

The results are consistent with earlier studies showing that foster children are more likely than their peers in the general community to experience mental health problems and externalizing behaviour (Havnen et al., 2014), (Oswald et al., 2010). Furthermore, externalizing conduct in early childhood—as opposed to internalizing behaviour—tends to anticipate comparable problems later in life, as noted by Jacobsen et al. (2019). This emphasizes the clinical necessity of addressing these issues early on.

Furthermore, Jacobsen et al. (2019) draw attention to the connection between placement disturbances and the social-emotional difficulties that foster children have, implying that these actions may impede the development of secure caregiver relationships. This is consistent with earlier research (Konijn et al., 2019; Oosterman et al., 2007) showing that externalizing behaviour is a significant predictor of placement breakdown.

Although foster children's scores fell below predicted norms overall, according to Jacobsen et al. (Year), a significant percentage were found to display clinical or borderline levels of problem behaviour. This lends credence to the idea that foster children are more likely than their classmates to experience social-emotional problems (Jacobsen et al., Year; Lehmann et al., 2013; Lehmann & Kayed, 2018).

Additionally, the research by Jacobsen et al. (2019) calls into doubt the usefulness of comparison groups, especially when it comes to comprehending the particular difficulties that foster children confront. Foster children showed worse social-emotional functioning even when compared to a low-risk comparison group, highlighting the need for focused treatments and support services within the foster care system (Jacobsen, 2019).

The impact of foster care on child development was examined by Lawrence, Carlson, and Egeland (2006) in their study titled "The Impact of Foster Care on Development." The study explores the complex dynamics of foster care, taking into account how it affects the behaviour and mental health of children. By means of longitudinal data analysis involving 189 participants, the research examines the developmental path of children put in foster care in contrast to those who continued to live in homes at risk.

The study highlights foster care as a protective measure for kids encountering difficulty in their familial contexts and places its investigation within the larger framework of child welfare interventions. The research elucidates the complex effects of various caregiving contexts on child development by drawing comparisons between the outcomes of children in foster care, those who suffered abuse but remained in their homes, and those who were not affected by either foster care or maltreatment despite sharing similar demographic vulnerabilities (Jacobsen, 2019).

The intricacy of foster care outcomes is highlighted by Lawrence et al. (2006), who find that children placed in out-of-home care had significantly more behavioural issues than their peers who had access to sufficient parental care. Additionally, the study clarifies the ongoing difficulties that foster care alumni encounter, showing that high levels of behavioral issues persist even after they leave the system. These results highlight the need for a comprehensive knowledge of the long-term effects of foster care on the wellbeing of children.

Additionally, the study highlights the differences in behavioral issues according to the type of caregiving environment and clarifies the differing impacts of known and unknown foster care experiences. Remarkably, kids leaving new foster homes showed higher degrees of internalizing

issues, indicating the complex relationship between caregiver familiarity and kids' adjustment. All things considered, study offers insightful information about the complex effects of foster care on child development and encourages practitioners and policymakers to take into account the subtleties of caregiving environments in influencing children's outcomes (Lawrence et al., 2006)

Foster care awareness: an analysis

McTavish, McKee, and MacMillan's meta-synthesis provide a thorough summary of foster children's viewpoints regarding their involvement in child welfare procedures. The study explores the complex experiences of children in non-kinship foster care, offering insight on their perspectives on removal from home, foster family procedures, and placement breakdown through a thorough assessment of qualitative data from several high-income nations. The synthesis, which includes 25 pieces that summarize the perspectives of 376 children, highlights the variability in children's demands for participation in decision-making processes and captures a wide range of experiences (McTavish, 2016).

The results highlight how crucial positive relationships are to supporting kids' sense of agency and wellbeing while they're in the child protection system. There are many different ways in which children can participate, from answering questions about their preferences to actively making decisions that affect their life. While some kids choose to play passive roles, others want to be more involved, which highlights the necessity for individualized methods that take into account each child's preferences. The study also shows that there are major gaps in the knowledge and readiness of children for the foster care system; many of them describe having had painful experiences when they were left in the dark about important details of their case, like why they were taken from their family (McTavish, 2016).

Unlike earlier assessments that might have ignored these viewpoints, the meta-synthesis concentrates on children's voices and their understanding of involvement, offering fresh insights. Despite this narrow emphasis, the study is consistent with previous research in highlighting the importance of solid relationships and the possible trauma connected to contacts with child welfare services. The findings have led to a call for action from policy makers and practitioners. The recommendations range from micro-level interventions that put an emphasis on relational dynamics and skill-building among caregivers and social workers to macro-level considerations like aligning practices with children's rights to know, be involved, and be prepared (McTavish, 2016).

All things considered, the meta-synthesis sheds light on the complexity of kids' involvement in foster care systems and emphasizes the need for structural changes that put kids' voices, rights, and wellbeing first. Policymakers and practitioners should strive toward more inclusive, child-centred methods that better fulfill the different needs of children in foster care by removing obstacles and utilizing facilitators that have been identified by foster children themselves (McTavish, 2016).

Taylor Hirte examines the value of offering educational materials to foster parents in order to improve their knowledge and skills in raising foster children in this essay. The focus is on the role that occupational therapy plays in this process. The evaluated literature emphasizes the obstacles that foster children must overcome, such as behavioral problems, mental health disorders, and difficulties in school. Foster parents, who play a crucial role in the child welfare system, frequently feel unprepared because of perceived gaps in their training. This can exacerbate the burden on the welfare system by causing fatigue and the termination of fostering (Hirte, 2023).

As a remedy, Hirte's study suggests an instructional toolkit with the goal of supplying foster parents with information and techniques to promote the welfare of foster children. Although the experiment

found that verbal feedback was encouraging, it admits that quantitative data gathering has limits that can be partially ascribed to issues with participation and time restrictions. By providing a practical approach to solve the identified gaps in foster parent care, the study adds to the body of existing literature. Future research ideas include enhancing engagement tactics with foster parent groups and taking into account alternate data collection techniques (Hirte, 2023).

Challenges in Foster care services

Sandra Stukes Chipungu and Tricia B. Bent-Goodley give a thorough assessment of the foster care system's current situation in their paper "Meeting the Challenges of Contemporary Foster Care," outlining a number of significant problems. One of the main issues raised is the challenge organizations have in offering the families in their care appropriate and easily accessible services (Chipungu & Bent-Goodley, 2019). This problem highlights the structural impediments that prevent the foster care system from providing adequate help to people in need. Furthermore, the overrepresentation of children of color—especially African American children—raises serious concerns about the equity and fairness of the foster care system and may impede these kids' ability to develop normally (Chipungu & Bent-Goodley, 2019).

The writers also discussed the difficult and stressful experience that many foster families go through, which frequently results in early foster parent termination (Chipungu & Bent-Goodley, 2019). This research emphasizes how much more assistance and resources foster families require in order to maintain their involvement with and dedication to the kids entrusted to their care. Moreover, there are several organizational barriers that make it difficult to properly serve and supervise families in the foster care system, including heavy caseloads, high staff turnover, and data constraints (Chipungu & Bent-Goodley, 2019). These structural problems show that in order

to address the underlying causes of these difficulties, systemic reforms and policy adjustments are required.

Chipungu and Bent-Goodley conclude by providing a positive outlook for the foster care system's future. They stress the significance of putting promising policies and practices into place that support case workers, strengthen families, provide timely and sufficient data, and encourage cultural competency throughout the system (Chipungu & Bent-Goodley, 2019). Stakeholders may collaborate to overcome the many obstacles that modern foster care faces and, in the end, enhance outcomes for the children and families it serves by focusing on five important areas.

Using the viewpoints of educators, foster parents, and former foster adolescents, Moyer and Goldberg's study illuminate the obstacles to education and systems of support faced by foster youth. The researchers examined the relationship between foster adolescents and their schools using an ecological framework (Moyer & Goldberg, 2019). This approach is consistent with earlier research (Blome, 1997; Castrechini, 2009; Smithgall et al., 2004; Zetlin et al., 2010) that highlights the need of comprehending the many supports and barriers that foster adolescents confront in the educational setting. The study emphasizes how vital it is to investigate these processes because foster adolescents are more likely to struggle academically and have unfavorable long-term consequences as a result.

The relationship between foster kids and their instructors plays a crucial role in the findings, which are consistent with other research showing how important teacher support is for foster students' academic outcomes (Clemens et al., 2017; Dann, 2011; Rios & Rocco, 2013). Participants in the study expressed worries about the attitudes of teachers, pointing out that some teachers appeared

to have low expectations for foster kids' academic performance, which could prolong a cycle of underachievement (Moyer & Goldberg, 2019). Additionally, the study clarifies how difficult life situations for foster students—such as past abuse and family separation—pose serious obstacles to their success and participation in the classroom (Hedin et al., 2011; Hudson, 2013).

The study's examination of trauma-sensitive teaching methods in educational settings is another important addition. Participants emphasized how foster children's capacity to deal with past trauma and disruptive behaviour in the classroom is hampered by schools' and instructors' lack of trauma-informed methods (Moyer & Goldberg, 2019). This is consistent with earlier studies showing that educators must identify and address the underlying trauma that foster adolescents face (Dann, 2011). The study emphasizes how crucial it is to teach teachers trauma-sensitive practices in order to create a welcoming classroom atmosphere for this susceptible group.

To sum up, Moyer and Goldberg's (2019) study provides insightful information about the obstacles to and resources for education faced by foster adolescents, highlighting the necessity of all-encompassing interventions at the individual and systemic levels. Through the integration of the viewpoints of educators, foster parents, and former foster adolescents, the research offers a comprehensive comprehension of the challenges encountered by foster students and pinpoints possible directions for augmenting academic assistance. By adding to the body of knowledge on foster youth education, this study supports efforts in practice and policy that attempt to improve the educational prospects of this underprivileged group (Moyer, 2019).

Ferrara et al. highlight the vulnerability of children in foster care and the myriad emotional, mental, and physical health issues they encounter in their thorough analysis of foster care. The authors

emphasize the shortcomings of traditional pediatric care and push for specialized interdisciplinary care services catered to this population's particular needs (Ferrera et al., 2016).

Ferrara et al. also make the case for more financial and social support of health initiatives that shield and care for children who are abused, abandoned, orphaned, or neglected. They argue that even while providing comprehensive care can be expensive and have long-term advantages, these investments are necessary to guarantee the wellbeing of these vulnerable youngsters.

The writers follow the development of child welfare systems across time, emphasizing the shift from conventional orphanages to foster care initiatives. Citing evidence of their inadequacies and the harmful consequences they can have on children, they oppose the continuation of orphanages in various European countries (Ferrera et al., 2016).

According to Ferrara et al., foster care is a vital type of social protection for kids who don't have biological family. They go over the several causes of placement in foster care, such as family dissolution, poverty, abuse, and neglect, and they talk about how important it is to be reunited with birth parents whenever feasible (Ferrera et al., 2016).

The authors highlight the disparities in approaches and results between the foster care systems in Europe and the United States. They draw attention to the difficulties and flaws in the European foster care systems, such as poor funding, inconsistent regulations, and poor management.

Ferrara et al conclude by highlighting the critical need for more financial support and public attention to foster care programs. Their analysis highlights the significance of providing vulnerable

children with individualized, multidisciplinary care services and urges coordinated global efforts to raise the caliber and efficacy of foster care systems (Ferrera et al., 2016).

The literature review concludes by offering a comprehensive and perceptive overview of studies on foster care, highlighting important local and international viewpoints on the needs and experiences of foster children. The evaluated research stressed the value of sibling and related caregiver placements, the need for stable placements and high-quality care, and the significance of early detection and intervention for social-emotional functioning. It highlights the particular difficulties encountered in various situations, such as the cultural disparities and resource constraints in India, as well as the structural problems in foster care that call for focused assistance and changes. The review also emphasizes how crucial it is to overcome structural impediments in the foster care system, give foster parents educational resources, and involve foster children in decision-making processes. In general, it necessitates concerted efforts, increased financial and social support, and culturally relevant policies to enhance the well-being and development of foster children globally.

CHAPTER-3

RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to investigate Kerala families' knowledge, views, and sentiments on foster care—a vital yet frequently disregarded component of child welfare. Foster care depends significantly on the laws and policies that govern it as a type of interim guardianship for children in need. It is essential to comprehend Kerala's present foster care laws and policies in order to evaluate the system's efficacy and pinpoint areas in need of development. Furthermore, investigating Kerala families' understanding, opinions, and attitudes toward foster care programs would shed light on the effectiveness and societal acceptability of these services in the region.

A dual approach combining quantitative and desk research methodologies will be used to accomplish these goals. This strategy will make it possible to thoroughly investigate the complex relationship between foster care awareness, perceptions and attitudes among Kerala families. This research attempts to provide a comprehensive understanding of foster care within the Kerala setting through surveys and document analysis, ultimately leading to the establishment of state-specific foster care programs that are suited to Kerala families' needs and preferences.

Statement of the Problem:

Foster care facilities for underprivileged children are severely lacking in Kerala, a state renowned for its social welfare programs and rich cultural legacy. Although there is a legal structure in place for foster care, families still don't fully comprehend the rules and regulations pertaining to placements in foster care. Furthermore, not many Keralan families are aware that foster care is an effective substitute for placing children in temporary or permanent care. Foster care services are misunderstood and negatively viewed due to this lack of knowledge and comprehension, which

makes it more difficult to use foster care as a way to give vulnerable children safe and supportive surroundings.

Additionally, it is imperative to investigate Kerala families' opinions regarding foster care, since these beliefs have a significant impact on how the community accepts and uses foster care services. Foster care positions may not be considered by families due to negative attitudes and biases, which reduces the options accessible for children in need of alternative care arrangements. Comprehending the prevalent perspectives regarding foster care is imperative in order to devise focused treatments that endeavour to rectify misunderstandings and cultivate a nurturing atmosphere for foster care in Kerala communities.

Furthermore, the lack of thorough information about Kerala families' knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of foster care makes it difficult to create and administer state-specific foster care programs. It is difficult to create efficient policies and interventions that are suited to the particular requirements and difficulties faced by Kerala's diverse population when there is a lack of baseline data. Thus, there is a pressing need for research that looks at Kerala's current foster care laws and policies, evaluates Kerala families' awareness, attitudes, and perceptions of foster care, and provides baseline data to guide the creation of state-specific foster care services. Research of this kind is essential to enhancing the general welfare and results of children in Kerala who require alternative care settings.

Significance of the Study:

Kerala, a state well known for its social welfare programs, has an urgent need to address the welfare of children who are in need, particularly those who do not have parental care or who are in danger of losing it. There is still a knowledge vacuum on Kerala families' awareness, beliefs, and attitudes regarding fostering, despite the existence of policy frameworks for foster care. By looking at Kerala's current foster care laws and policies, gauging the knowledge, opinions, and attitudes of Kerala families toward these services, and supplying baseline data to guide the creation of state-specific foster care programs, this study seeks to close this disparity.

This study's possibility to influence practice and policy in Kerala's child welfare system makes it significant. This research can identify gaps or areas for improvement in the current policy and legislative framework for foster care, making it easier to design more comprehensive and efficient foster care services that are suited to the requirements of Kerala's families and children. Additionally, this study can identify potential obstacles or enablers to fostering by evaluating Keralan families' awareness, beliefs, and attitudes toward foster care. This information can then be used to influence strategies aimed at increasing the recruitment and support of foster families.

Moreover, this research is important within the larger framework of social work and child welfare studies. This study's focus on Kerala, a location renowned for its progressive social policies, can provide insightful analysis and important takeaways for other areas facing comparable difficulties in the foster care system. Furthermore, by offering baseline data on foster care in Kerala, this study can add to the expanding corpus of research on foster care outcomes and practices, enhancing our knowledge of successful child welfare interventions and best practices.

Aim of the study

Considering an emphasis on fostering futures for underprivileged children, the goal of this research is to thoroughly examine Kerala, India's foster care system within its sociocultural context. Even though Kerala is well-known for its social development indicators, meeting the needs of vulnerable children—including those who are not cared for by their parents—remains a difficulty. In light of this, the study aims to clarify Kerala's present foster care policies and legislative frameworks by assessing their suitability and effectiveness in defending children's rights and welfare.

Additionally, this study intends to explore Keralan families' knowledge, views, and attitudes about foster care services. Through an examination of the dominant attitudes and perspectives in the community, the research aims to pinpoint possible obstacles or enablers to the adoption of foster care as a feasible alternative for providing care. In the end, this study aims to produce a baseline dataset that can guide the creation of foster care services that are state-specific and catered to the particular requirements and cultural quirks of Kerala. This will help to improve child welfare procedures and promote fostering as an effective option for providing care for children in the state.

Research Objectives

General Objective

To examine the awareness, perceptions, and attitudes of families towards foster care in the state of Kerala."

Specific objectives

1. To Study the socio-demographic profile of the respondents
2. To examine the current policy and legal framework for foster care in Kerala

3. To assess the awareness on foster care among the families of Kerala
4. To understand the perceptions about foster care services among the families of Kerala
5. To understand the attitude towards foster care among the families of Kerala
6. To provide a baseline data to frame state specific foster care services in Kerala

Definition of concepts

Awareness:

Conceptual Definition: Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Knowledge and understanding that something is happening or exists. promoting a heightened awareness of the problem. seemed to have only a slight awareness of what was going on. an acute awareness of subtle differences (Merriam-Webster, 2024)

Operational Definition: In this study, awareness will be measured by assessing respondents' knowledge about the availability, purpose, and procedures of foster care services in Kerala through structured survey questions or interviews.

Perceptions:

Conceptual Definition: The term "perceptions" refers to the arbitrary ideas, judgments, and interpretations that people or organizations have regarding particular aspects, including their advantages, disadvantages, and social consequences (Quora, 2024)

Operational Definition: Perceptions are respondent's beliefs, and opinions towards foster care services through survey items designed to capture their subjective viewpoints.

Attitudes:

Conceptual Definition: The predispositions or assessments that people or groups have regarding particular facts are referred to as attitudes. These assessments might include sentiments of acceptance, rejection, approval, or disapproval based on the underlying assumptions and perceptions of the individual or group (Dictionary.com, 2024).

Operational Definition: Attitude is the level of acceptance of people towards foster care.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis used in the study were Null hypothesis (H₀) and Alternative Hypothesis (H₁)

Hypothesis 1:

H₁ - There is a significant difference in attitudes towards foster care between male and female members of Kerala families.

H₀ - There is no significant difference in attitudes towards foster care between male and female members of Kerala families.

Hypothesis 2:

H₁- There is a significant difference in attitudes towards foster care between male and female members of Kerala families.

H₀- There is no significant difference in attitudes towards foster care between male and female members of Kerala families.

Hypothesis 3:

H₁: There is a relationship between awareness of foster care laws among Kerala families and their attitude towards fostering.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between awareness of foster care laws among Kerala families and their attitude towards fostering

Research Design

This study utilised a quantitative approach with a descriptive research design. The researcher has attempted to describe the variables under study using quantitative methodology. To meet the second objective, study followed the method of desk research.

Universe

The universe of this study encompasses individuals irrespective of their sex, gender and socio-economic status, who fall in the age group of 18 – 70 and those who reside in the state of Kerala.

Sampling

The researcher has selected 3 districts from the 14 districts in the state of Kerala through judgement sampling. These districts are Trivandrum, Alappuzha and Ernakulam. Judgement sampling is employed to select the districts because the researcher has certain judgement criteria for these districts to be included in the study to analyse the urban, semi urban and rural perceptions under study. As the capital of the state, Trivandrum offers a varied mix of semi-urban and urban inhabitants, offering insights into the dynamics of suburban and urban families. Foster care in less urbanized locations faces special opportunities and problems, as demonstrated by Alappuzha, a community renowned for its strong community ties and rural settings. With its highly urbanized

surroundings and substantial economic activity, Ernakulam, the commercial centre of Kerala, provides views from a contemporary urban population

From the districts, those who are willing to participate in the study is purposefully selected as respondents.

Inclusion criteria

The study included the respondents belonging to the families residing in Kerala belonging to the age group between 18-70, irrespective of the gender and socio- economic background.

Exclusion criteria

Residents outside Kerala, individuals living outside family structures and individuals younger than 18 years are excluded.

Tool of Data collection

Questionnaire is used to collect the data.

Method of data collection

Document analysis and Questionnaire method is used for data collection.

Out of the six objectives under study, the second objective - to examine the current policy and legal framework for foster care in Kerala is studied using document analysis and the other objectives are met through primary data collection using Questionnaire method.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23, 2015 software is used for the analysis and interpretation of the collected data. Inferential and descriptive statistics is utilized in the study.

The analysis is presented using frequency tables, which provide a clear and concise description of the data. To test the hypotheses, an independent sample t-test is employed, while the correlation between variables is examined using Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation. Each research question is explored in detail, aligning the analysis with the specific objectives of the study.

Limitations

The research "Fostering Futures: Awareness, Perceptions, and Attitudes of Kerala Families Towards Foster Care" has a number of shortcomings that could affect how thorough and applicable its conclusions are. First off, gathering data from respondents who range in age from 18 to 70 years old can be difficult, especially from older people who might not be as accessible or ready to take part in questionnaires or interviews. Furthermore, there can be a bias in the selection process since study participation might be more likely among individuals who are more aware of or have a positive attitude toward foster care. Foster care in Kerala is stigmatized on a cultural and social level, which may cause underreporting or socially acceptable answers that distort the statistics. Moreover, the study's scope is restricted to Kerala's sociodemographic profiles, awareness, views, and attitudes; as a result, it might not represent wider patterns or insights that apply to other areas. One short coming is that, there is no equal representation of samples, we can't generalise the findings. Lastly, the study's conclusions may quickly become out of date due to Kerala's quickly evolving foster care laws and policies; hence, further research will be needed to maintain the data's applicability for policymaking.

Chapterisation

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Chapter 2 – Review of Literature

Chapter 3 – Research methodology

Chapter 4 – Analysis and Interpretation

Chapter 5 – Findings, Recommendations, Implications for professional social work practice

Ethical considerations of Research

To guarantee the integrity and ethical soundness of the research, a number of important ethical issues were carefully taken into account. First and foremost, strict measures were taken to ensure the confidentiality of each response. Prior to the study's start, all participants gave their informed consent after receiving thorough information about the study's goals, methods, possible risks, and advantages. The survey did not contain any questions that could be interpreted as offensive or inappropriate; instead, the questions were crafted with consideration for the experiences and backgrounds of the participants, both in terms of language and form. The researcher committed to genuine data reporting, refraining from any fabrication, falsification, or selective omission of results, and placing a high priority on data correctness and integrity. These thorough ethical considerations highlight the dedication to carrying out research that upholds the highest ethical standards, ensuring respect, integrity and protection for all participants involved.

CHAPTER – 4

ANALYSIS

AND

INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the data collected for the study on "Fostering Futures: Awareness, Perceptions, and Attitudes of Kerala Families on Foster Care." Utilizing both inferential and descriptive statistics, the chapter systematically examines the data to address the research objectives. The analysis begins with the presentation of frequency tables, which provide a clear and concise description of the data. To test the hypotheses, an independent sample t-test is employed, while the correlation between variables is examined using Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation. Each research question is explored in detail, aligning the analysis with the specific objectives of the study. This structured approach ensures a thorough understanding of the patterns, relationships, and insights derived from the data, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of foster care dynamics in Kerala.

1. To Study the socio demographic profile of the respondents

The researcher in the first of the analysis has attempted to depict socio demographic profile of the respondents

1. Table showing age of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent
20	1	1.0
21	5	4.9
22	5	4.9
23	12	11.8
24	6	5.9
25	5	4.9
26	2	2.0
27	2	2.0
28	2	2.0
29	1	1.0
31	3	2.9
32	2	2.0
33	1	1.0
34	2	2.0
35	1	1.0

37	3	2.9
38	1	1.0
39	2	2.0
40	5	4.9
42	2	2.0
43	2	2.0
44	3	2.9
45	2	2.0
47	1	1.0
48	4	3.9
49	1	1.0
50	1	1.0
51	5	4.9
52	1	1.0
53	4	3.9
54	1	1.0
56	3	2.9
58	1	1.0
59	2	2.0
61	2	2.0
62	1	1.0
63	1	1.0
64	2	2.0
70	1	1.0
Total	102	100.0

With 102 responses in all, the data shows the ages of the people surveyed. The range of ages represented in the distribution is 19–70. The majority of responders are between the ages of 23 and 24, with the majority being in their early to mid-thirties. The late thirties and forties see a minor decline in frequency. There are also comparatively high frequencies at ages 21 and 51. A small percentage of responses are older than fifty, with some even in their sixties and seventies.

The data indicates a youthful demographic bias in the sample, with people in their early to mid-thirties making up the majority of the population. This implies that the study's conclusions might be more accurate in capturing the viewpoints, habits, and preferences of this age group.

Although the bulk are in the younger age groups, there is also a noteworthy representation of those in their forties and fifties. This suggests that the sample's age distribution is varied, which may provide insights into a wider range of experiences and perspectives. The existence of responders in their sixties and seventies, despite being less common, indicates that older age groups participated. Despite their relatively small numbers, their inclusion broadens the range of viewpoints that the study has managed to collect.

2. Table 2 shows the area residence of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Urban	37	36.3
suburban	17	16.7
rural	48	47.1
Total	102	100.0

The table lists participant residence locations in three categories: urban, suburban, and rural. Of the 102 participants in total, 47.1 percent live in rural areas, 36.3 percent in urban areas, and 16.7 percent in suburban areas.

The distribution of participant residence locations in urban, suburban, and rural areas is shown in the table. Significantly, the data indicates that over half (47.1%) of the participants live in rural areas, indicating a substantial majority of rural residency among them. This implies that the study's sample is mostly representative of rural communities, which may have an impact on the study's objectives or conclusions. Compared to urban and suburban environments, rural locations

frequently have different socioeconomic, cultural, and infrastructure features, which could affect the study's findings or generalizability.

On the other hand, a sizable fraction of the sample—36.3% of participants—are urban dwellers. This suggests that there is a significant urban component to the study population, which is consistent with the varied demographic composition of research samples. In comparison to rural and suburban areas, urban areas usually have higher population densities, more diverse cultures, and more sophisticated infrastructure.

In contrast, with 16.7% of participants, suburban dwellers make up the smallest percentage of the sample. Despite the fact that suburban areas sometimes combine elements of the city and the countryside, their smaller percentage in the study population points to a lack of attention paid to this particular demographic. Suburban populations may nevertheless, however, be able to provide insightful information, particularly on matters like trends in suburbanization, socioeconomic dynamics, and elements affecting quality of life. In general, the examination of the participant distribution among urban, suburban, and rural areas offers significant context for comprehending the research outcomes and their wider consequences for varied community environments.

3. Table 3 shows the gender of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent
male	38	37.3
female	64	62.7
Total	102	100.0

Amongst the 102 individuals, 64 (62.7%) are female and 38 (37.3%) are male. This suggests that there is a big gender gap in the participant pool, with women making up a notably higher fraction than men.

Men made up only 37.3% of the research participants, a comparatively small share of the sample. This result raises the possibility that male viewpoints and experiences were underrepresented in the research. When evaluating the data, researchers should take this gender gap into account to make sure that the conclusions reached are inclusive and reflect a range of perspectives. On the other hand, women make up 62.7% of the sample overall, indicating a significantly greater involvement rate in the research study. The disproportionate number of female participants suggests that women are very open to discussing the research topic or methods. Scholars must to recognize this disparity and investigate plausible causes for the elevated percentage of female involvement, like the type of study being conducted or the methods of recruiting utilized.

4. Table 4 shows the education level of the respondents.

	Frequency	Percent
Primary school	2	2.0
Secondary school	19	18.6
Bachelor's degree	44	43.1
Master's degree or higher	37	36.3
Total	102	100.0

The information displays the study participants' degrees of educational attainment. Of those surveyed, the majority (43.1%) said they had completed their bachelor's studies, meaning a sizable fraction of people had this level of education. This indicates that the sample had a comparatively high level of academic accomplishment, which could be the result of a study that specifically targets people with a certain educational background or a population that is well-educated.

After holders of a bachelor's degree, 36.3% of respondents had a master's degree or above, showing that a sizable fraction of the sample had completed advanced postgraduate coursework. This conclusion emphasizes the existence of a highly educated subgroup in the community being studied, which may indicate a focus on professionals or subject matter specialists. The fact that a smaller proportion of respondents reported having attended primary school (2%) or secondary school (18.6%) further suggests that the sample is primarily made up of people with higher levels of education, underscoring the significance of taking educational background into account when conducting research.

5. Table 5 shows the occupation level of the respondents.

	Frequency	Percent
employed	14	13.7
Self-employed	56	54.9
unemployed	6	5.9
Student	26	25.5
Total	102	100.0

The table displays employment status information for 102 participants in the sample, as well as the percentage of students in the group. 13.7% of the sample has a job, which means that just a small percentage of people are actively working in traditional jobs. Remarkably, a sizable majority—54.9% of the sample—work for themselves. This indicates that there may be a discernible tendency among the population questioned towards freelance work or starting their own businesses. The frequency of self-employment may be a sign of a number of things, including the desire for flexibility and autonomy or the presence of opportunities in particular sectors or industries. Empirical data corroborates this idea, showing an increase in self-employment worldwide, ascribed to elements like the growth of the gig economy and technology breakthroughs that facilitate remote work.

In addition, the chart shows that 5.9% of the sample is jobless, suggesting that there may be obstacles to employment in the labour market or personal situations. Numerous factors, such as regional differences, educational attainment, and economic situations, might have an impact on unemployment rates. Studies frequently discover correlations between unemployment rates and more general economic metrics like GDP growth, inflation rates, and governmental policies.

Interestingly, the data also reveals that a significant proportion, accounting for 25.5% of the sample, are students.

6. Table 6 shows the strength of household of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent
1	1	1.0
2	2	2.0
3	18	17.6
4	39	38.2
5	28	27.5
6	10	9.8
7	3	2.9
8	1	1.0
Total	102	100.0

The information explores Kerala households' strengths with regard to attitudes and perceptions about foster care. The given data provides insightful information about how respondents in the studied population distributed their answers about the strength of their households.

It is clear from the statistics that homes with a strength rating of 4 (38.2%) are the most common, and that the next most common rating is 5 (27.5%). This implies that a sizable percentage of families consider themselves to be fairly strong. Additionally, a sizable portion of households (17.6%) gave their strength a rating of 3, suggesting a little weaker perception of strength. Conversely, a lower percentage of the sample consists of homes with strength ratings of 1, 2, 6, and 7. These households are less prevalent. This distribution explains how different people in the society view household strength.

Moreover, the results indicate a significant lack of extreme views regarding household strength, as indicated by the low representation of ratings 1, 2, 7, and 8. This implies that most households don't think of themselves as particularly powerful or weak. A balanced distribution like this suggests that respondents have a complex understanding of household dynamics, which could have an impact on how they feel about foster care and family support networks.

2. The researcher in the second of the analysis, has attempted to assess the awareness on foster care among the families of Kerala

7. Table 7 shows the awareness on JJ act of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	51	50.0
No	26	25.5
Not sure	25	24.5
Total	102	100.0

As part of the study "Fostering Futures: Awareness, Perceptions, and Attitude of Kerala Families Towards Foster Care," the data provides insights into the awareness levels of the Juvenile Justice (JJ) Act among Keralan families. Fifty percent of those who responded to the study said they were aware of the JJ Act. This indicates that a considerable segment of the populace has a modest acquaintance with the legal framework that oversees juvenile justice in the state. Nonetheless, a significant fraction of the sample—25.5%—stated that they were not aware of the JJ Act, and another 24.5% said they were unsure of their awareness level. These numbers demonstrate a significant information vacuum about juvenile justice laws in Keralan families.

The results highlight the need to rectify the discrepancy in the degree of knowledge that Kerala families possess about the JJ Act. There is an obvious need for focused educational interventions or informational campaigns aimed at improving knowledge and dissemination of information regarding juvenile justice laws, as only half of the respondent claimed awareness. Closing this information gap may enable families to more effectively promote the rights and welfare of children who are at risk, creating an environment that is more supportive of their wellbeing. Furthermore,

eradicating misunderstandings and doubts about the JJ Act may help to create a more knowledgeable, accepting community that places a higher priority on the upbringing and safety of its young people.

The information demonstrates that families in Kerala are both aware of the Juvenile Justice Act and that there is a sizable knowledge gap about it. Even though a sizable fraction of respondents showed awareness, a sizable portion continued to be either uninformed or unsure about their acquaintance with the law. In order to promote juvenile justice and child welfare and to create a more knowledgeable and caring environment for the state's most vulnerable children, it is imperative that this gap be filled through focused educational activities.

8. Table 8 shows the rate of accessed information about foster care system through government websites or official documents

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	20	19.6
No	74	72.5
Not applicable	8	7.8
Total	102	100.0

Among the 102 participants surveyed, 19.6% responded affirmatively, indicating that they are aware of foster care. On the contrary, the majority of participants, comprising 72.5%, answered negatively, signifying that they are not aware of foster care practices. Additionally, a smaller portion, accounting for 7.8% of respondents, indicated that the question was not applicable to them.

This suggests that there is a significant portion of the population that lacks awareness or knowledge about foster care within Kerala families.

In the context of the research titled "Fostering Futures: Awareness, Perceptions, and Attitude of Kerala Families on Foster Care," the findings regarding the awareness of foster care among Kerala families are crucial. The data reveals a concerning gap in awareness, with only a minority of participants indicating familiarity with foster care practices. This underscores the importance of initiatives aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of foster care within the community. By addressing this lack of awareness, policymakers, social workers, and advocates can work towards promoting foster care as a viable option for children in need of alternative care arrangements in Kerala.

In conclusion, the data highlights the need for targeted efforts to enhance awareness of foster care among Kerala families. Increasing awareness is essential for fostering a supportive environment for foster care initiatives and ensuring that vulnerable children receive the care and support they require. Future research and interventions should focus on addressing misconceptions, providing education, and engaging with communities to promote a better understanding of foster care and its potential benefits.

9. Table 9 shows the rate of accessibility of information of foster care policies and procedures in Kerala

	Frequency	Percent
Very accessible	6	5.9
Somewhat accessible	48	47.1
Not accessible	8	7.8
Not sure	40	39.2
Total	102	100.0

It's clear from the data that there are differences in Kerala's foster care regulations and practices when it comes to information accessibility. Significantly more than half of the respondents—roughly 47.1%—think the material is at least somewhat accessible, suggesting that the community is aware of it to some extent. Nevertheless, a noteworthy 39.2% are unclear about the accessibility, indicating a lack of understanding or familiarity with the locations of such data.

Additionally, 5.9% of respondents say the material is extremely accessible, suggesting that while resources are available, they may not be widely or easily accessible to everybody. On the other hand, 7.8% of respondents believe that the information is not easily available, suggesting that there may be gaps or obstacles in the knowledge that Kerala has regarding foster care policies and practices. To guarantee that families are well-informed about foster care opportunities and processes, our findings indicate the need for enhanced distribution tactics and greater awareness campaigns. our findings represent a multifaceted landscape of knowledge and access to information.

Keralan families are somewhat aware of foster care, but there are also significant informational gaps and ambiguities about the availability of regulations and processes related to foster care. These results highlight the need of focused initiatives to raise awareness and increase accessibility, making sure that families have the knowledge and resources they need to think about foster care as a feasible choice. This study clarifies the state of public knowledge regarding foster care in Kerala and offers stakeholders and policymakers insightful information to improve informational campaigns and support systems.

10. Table 10 shows the need for improvements or amendments in the current foster care policies in Kerala.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	49	48.0
No	5	4.9
Not sure	48	47.1
Total	102	100.0

The data presented suggests that Kerala's current foster care regulations require significant revisions or adjustments, as indicated by the affirmative responses of 48% of respondents. This implies that almost 50% of the respondents identify shortcomings or potential improvements in the current foster care system. On the other hand, just 4.9% of respondents categorically disagreed with the idea that changes are required, suggesting that the majority of respondents at least somewhat agree that changes are required. Furthermore, a significant proportion of 47.1% indicated confusion, suggesting a possible deficiency in comprehension or clarity of the nuances of foster care regulations. This doubt may result from a number of things, such as incomplete or non-existent information sharing, unclear policy language, or a general lack of knowledge regarding foster care policies in Kerala.

These results provide insight into the awareness, attitudes, and perspectives of Keralan families regarding foster care. The noteworthy percentage of participants who expressed the need for enhancements implies an awareness of deficiencies in the existing framework. In order to create a more encouraging atmosphere for foster care efforts, legislators and other stakeholders need to be aware of these observations. By addressing the issues brought up by families, policies and procedures that better meet the needs of foster children as well as the families involved can be

developed. Additionally, initiatives to raise knowledge and comprehension of foster care can aid in clearing up misunderstandings and concerns, creating a more knowledgeable and encouraging community for at-risk kids in need of care and protection.

11. Table 11 shows the awareness of recent changes or updates in foster care laws in Kerala

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	13	12.7
No	60	58.8
Not sure	29	28.4
Total	102	100.0

The data shows that only 12.7% of the respondents said they were aware of the most recent updates or changes to the state's foster care laws. This indicates that the Keralan families surveyed had a comparatively low level of awareness regarding foster care rules. On the other hand, the majority of participants, or 58.8%, stated that they were not aware of any recent modifications or improvements to foster care legislation. Furthermore, 28.4% of the respondents expressed uncertainty, indicating that a sizable fraction of the population is unclear or ignorant about this particular component of foster care policy.

These results highlight the necessity of stepping up efforts to educate Keralan families about foster care rules and procedures. In order to close this knowledge gap, raising awareness through focused educational campaigns, community outreach initiatives, and cooperation with pertinent stakeholders may be essential. Legislators and social workers may better support and encourage involvement in the foster care system by arming families with proper information about the rules

governing it. This will eventually improve results for children who require alternative care arrangements.

The study concludes by emphasizing how critical it is to raise Kerala families' low levels of foster care legislation awareness. Policymakers and activists can better focus their efforts to educate the public about foster care regulations by recognizing this knowledge gap, which will ultimately result in a more supportive environment for vulnerable children and families in the state.

12. Table 12 shows the rate of interest in attending workshops or sessions to learn more about foster care policies in Kerala

	Frequency	Percent
0	42	41.2
1	12	11.8
2	48	47.1
Total	102	100.0

Based on the statistics presented, it is apparent that families in Kerala have a significant desire to learn more about foster care policies by attending workshops or sessions. Of those surveyed, 11.8% expressed minimal interest (ranked as 1) and 41.2% took a neutral approach (rated as 0). Nonetheless, the vast majority of participants, or 47.1%, indicated a strong level of interest (scored as 2) in going to these seminars or sessions. This distribution implies that a sizable section of the populace is interested in finding out more about foster care laws, suggesting that efforts to raise knowledge and comprehension of these regulations may find favour with them.

Within the framework of the study "Fostering Futures: Awareness, Perceptions, and Attitudes of Kerala Families on Foster Care," this information highlights the significance and pertinence of the third goal of the research, which is to evaluate Kerala families' awareness of foster care.

The results point to a favourable setting for outreach and educational initiatives that try to increase public awareness of and participation in foster care laws. Stakeholders engaged in foster care advocacy and policymaking can use workshops and sessions as useful tools for knowledge dissemination and building a supportive community around foster care initiatives by capitalizing on their enthusiasm and readiness to learn.

The data indicates that families in Kerala have a generally good tendency towards knowing more about foster care policies. This highlights the possibility of promoting a better knowledge and comprehension of foster care in the community. Since many of the respondents indicated that they would be interested in attending workshops or sessions, there is a good chance to interact with families, clear up any misunderstandings, and encourage a foster care culture in Kerala.

13. Table 13 shows the awareness of people on what foster care means according to Juvenile Justice Act

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	42	41.2
No	22	21.6
Not sure	38	37.3
Total	102	100.0

The information presented here is based on replies from 102 participants about their knowledge about foster care as defined by the Juvenile Justice Act. Of the participants, 42 people, or 41.2% of the total, gave a yes response, meaning they are aware of foster care. Conversely, 22 individuals, or 21.6%, gave negative answers, demonstrating a lack of knowledge about foster care. It's interesting to note that 38 people (37.3%), a sizable number of the participants, voiced uncertainty

with the idea of foster care. Based on the Juvenile Justice Act's provisions, the data indicates that respondents' awareness of foster care is not uniform.

When analyzing these results for the study "Fostering Futures: Awareness, Perceptions, and Attitudes of Kerala Families on Foster Care," it becomes clear that the people polled had a significant lack of knowledge about foster care. Even though many of the respondents said they were aware of foster care, a sizeable minority still don't know anything about it or don't comprehend it. This emphasizes how important it is to launch educational programs and public awareness efforts to clarify the meaning of foster care in Kerala communities.

The study's conclusions highlight how critical it is to bridge knowledge gaps on foster care among Kerala families. It suggests that focused interventions are urgently needed to improve awareness and information sharing about foster care procedures, especially in compliance with the Juvenile Justice Act's mandates. Activities like instructional materials, outreach campaigns, and community workshops could help close this awareness gap and create a more knowledgeable and encouraging climate for fostering in Kerala communities.

14. Tabe 14 shows the rate of participation in awareness programs or campaigns related to foster care

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	13	12.7
no	81	79.4
Not applicable	8	7.8
Total	102	100.0

This data concerns the adoption rate of foster care awareness programs or campaigns among Keralan families as part of the study "Fostering Futures: Awareness, Perceptions, and Attitude of Kerala Families on Foster Care." Based on the data, it is clear that 13. or 12.7% of the 102 respondents overall had taken part in these kinds of initiatives or campaigns. The majority, or 81 people, or 79.4%, have not participated, showing a substantial void in awareness-raising efforts. Furthermore, eight people, or 7.8% of the total, stated that the question did not apply to them.

This data indicates that foster families in Kerala are not participating in activities to raise awareness about foster care, which is alarming. It seems that there is little information sharing on foster care in the community, as only a tiny percentage of respondents had taken part in such programs. This result emphasizes the necessity of focused initiatives to raise foster care knowledge and comprehension among Keralan families. Insufficient knowledge could prevent families from properly appreciating the advantages and chances that come with foster care, which could impede its adoption and efficacy as a safety net for at-risk kids in the area.

The study's conclusions make it abundantly evident that foster families in Kerala need to be better informed about foster care. The implementation of tactics like media campaigns, educational seminars, and community outreach programs may be vital in closing the knowledge gap and promoting favourable perceptions of foster care. These activities can help create a more supportive environment for fostering initiatives by arming families with accurate information and clearing up misconceptions, which will eventually improve the wellbeing of children who require alternative care arrangements.

15. Table 14 shows the rate of knowledge about the procedures to become a foster family in Kerala

	Frequency	Percent
Very knowledgeable	3	2.9
Somewhat knowledgeable	57	55.9
Not knowledgeable	42	41.2
Total	102	100.0

The information displayed sheds light on Kerala families' awareness of the requirements to become foster parents. 2.9% of the respondents said they knew a great deal about these procedures, indicating that a small but significant percentage of families know a great deal about the requirements for foster care. The majority of respondents, or 55.9%, did, however, indicate having some understanding, suggesting that a sizable amount of families may be aware of the nuances of becoming foster parents but may not completely understand them. On the other hand, 41.2% of respondents said they didn't know about the processes, which indicates a significant awareness gap in the community.

These results highlight the necessity of focused educational programs and public awareness efforts meant to increase foster families' comprehension and information sharing about foster care procedures. Potential foster families will be better able to navigate the application process and decide whether or not to participate in foster care programs if this knowledge gap is filled. Furthermore, raising awareness can help promote and support foster care programs in the community as a whole, which will ultimately result in higher involvement and better outcomes for kids in need of foster care placements.

In result, the data indicates that there is space for growth even if Keralan families are somewhat aware of the steps involved in becoming foster parents. In order to provide a supportive atmosphere for foster care and make sure that families are knowledgeable and equipped to participate in the process, efforts to raise awareness through educational programs and community outreach projects are crucial.

16. Table 16 shows the rate of discussion of foster care with family or friends

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	33	32.4
No	62	60.8
Not applicable	7	6.9
Total	102	100.0

According to the statistics presented, a sizable majority (60.8%) of the sample group surveyed for the research on fostering futures stated that they had not discussed foster care with their family or friends. This research implies that there may not be an open discussion or understanding of foster care in these social circles. Furthermore, a significant percentage (32.4%) said they do had conversations regarding foster care, suggesting that they are aware of or interested in the subject. It is noteworthy, although, that 6.9% of respondents said the topic was irrelevant, which may indicate a lack of awareness or comprehension of foster care in relation to their social environment. All things considered, these results point to a possible lack of knowledge and conversation about foster care among Kerala families.

The research results derived from this data indicate that foster care should be better understood and taught to Keralan families. The majority's silence on the subject suggests that they may not be familiar with or understand the idea of foster care. Thus, initiatives to encourage dialogue and disseminate knowledge regarding foster care may be able to assist in closing this gap. In Kerala, community awareness and comprehension of foster care could be raised by tactics like informational campaigns, community workshops, and collaborations with neighbourhood organizations. The stigma associated with foster care may be lessened by creating an environment that is more educated and encouraging, which would eventually result in more favourable attitudes and perceptions of fostering in Kerala.

17. Table 17 shows the rate of belief whether foster care can provide a positive environment for children in need

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	72	70.6
No	7	6.9
Not sure	23	22.5
Total	102	100.0

According to the statistics presented, a reasonably strong belief exists among Keralan families surveyed about the ability of foster care to offer underprivileged children a positive environment. More specifically, 70.6% of participants said they believed foster care had a beneficial effect, while only 6.9% categorically disagreed. Twenty-two percent of those surveyed were still uncertain as to whether foster care might provide a good environment for kids. These results indicate that while a significant section of the Keralan community polled expressed optimism toward foster care, there was also some ambiguity or lack of understanding.

The study's conclusions throw light on Kerala families' views and perceptions of foster care, showing a largely favourable view of the program's ability to give needy kids a loving home. This points to a possible shift in the community's perception of foster care as a good choice for helping children in need by suggesting that foster care is becoming more widely known and accepted. To overcome misconceptions and improve public comprehension, more education and awareness initiatives are necessary, as seen by the sizeable percentage of respondents who are dubious about the effectiveness of foster care.

The study's overall conclusions highlight the significance of continual efforts to raise awareness and understanding of foster care in Kerala communities. Although there is a notable degree of belief in the benefits of foster care, clearing up doubts and dispelling myths can help to increase support for this alternative form of childrearing. By raising awareness and understanding, advocates and legislators can endeavour to create a more supportive environment for children who are in need of foster care placements, ultimately promoting their well-being and positive outcomes.

18. Table 18 shows the rate of interest in receiving more information about foster care opportunities in Kerala

	Frequency	Percent
yes	52	51.0
No	12	11.8
Maybe	38	37.3
Total	102	100.0

The information displayed is based on responses from 102 people who were asked if they would be interested in learning more about foster care options in Kerala. 51 per cent of those surveyed said they would definitely ("yes") like to know more about foster care. This implies a significant degree of interest in the community and shows that people may be open to supporting projects. Conversely, 11.8% of respondents said they had no interest ("no"), suggesting that there is a minority that is disinterested or that they may already be aware of foster care that suits their needs. A significant proportion of participants, precisely 37.3%, were classified as "maybe" answers, suggesting a degree of hesitancy or doubt regarding their need for additional details.

The results shed light on Kerala families' awareness of and attitudes concerning foster care. The noteworthy percentage of participants who conveyed a want for additional details highlights a possible avenue for educational and outreach initiatives focused on augmenting cognizance and comprehension regarding foster care. The "maybe" replies point to a demographic subset that could need more specialized assistance or knowledge to address particular worries or questions. All things considered, these results emphasize how critical it is to raise community awareness and understanding of foster care in order to promote involvement and support for fostering programs.

In the end, the data shows that a majority of Keralan families expressed an openness to getting additional information, indicating a good degree of interest in knowing more about foster care. This emphasizes how crucial it is to keep up efforts to spread knowledge and clear up any misunderstandings or doubts that might exist within the community. The lives of children in need of other care arrangements might be positively impacted, and Kerala's fostering system could be strengthened, by encouraging increased knowledge and support for foster care.

4. The researcher in the third of the analysis, has attempted to assess the perceptions about foster care services among the families of Kerala

19. Table 19 shows the rate of perceptions of the role of foster care in providing stability to children in difficult circumstances.

	Frequency	Percent
Very Important	62	60.8
Somewhat Important	38	37.3
Not Important	2	2.0
Total	102	100.0

According to the findings, the majority of respondents, or 60.8%, believe that foster care is crucial for giving children in challenging situations stability. This suggests that a broad recognition exists among participants regarding the critical function foster care fulfils in providing a secure setting for children who are at risk. Furthermore, a noteworthy proportion of respondents—37.3%—see foster care as somewhat important, corroborating the idea that the public under study recognizes the significance of foster care. Interestingly, only 2.0% of the families polled in Kerala believe foster care is not significant, indicating that foster care is widely understood to be valuable.

These results highlight a notable degree of foster care awareness among Kerala families in the context of the research on fostering futures. The study's goal of determining public knowledge of foster care is in line with the significant proportion of respondents who viewed it as extremely important. The fact that most respondents acknowledge the value of foster care in giving children who are facing hardship stability implies that attempts to raise awareness of foster care in Kerala communities have been partly successful. These results suggest that Keralan families may be open

to the idea of fostering, which provides a solid basis for further research and advocacy of foster care programs in the area.

20. Table 20 shows the rate of belief that foster care can contribute to the overall well-being and development of children

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	67	65.7
No	4	3.9
Not sure	31	30.4
Total	102	100.0

The information presented comes from a study called "Fostering Futures: Awareness, Perceptions, and Attitudes of Kerala Families on Foster Care." The study's goal is to determine how much Keralan families know about foster care. The information displays opinions on whether foster care can improve children's general development and well-being. Of the 102 respondents, 65.7% (67 people) said "Yes," suggesting that foster care has a favourable effect on society as a whole. However, just 4.9% of respondents said "No," indicating that a tiny minority has a bad opinion. Remarkably, thirty-four percent (31 people) said they were "not sure," indicating that a sizable percentage of respondents would need further information or clarity on the subject.

When these results are interpreted, it becomes clear that a sizable majority of Kerala respondents have a favourable opinion of foster care, which is consistent with the theory that foster care can benefit children's general development and well-being. This tendency to think that foster care is beneficial points to a possible willingness to foster in the community. To remove misconceptions

and improve understanding regarding foster care, specific awareness efforts and educational initiatives are necessary, as seen by the noteworthy number of respondents who expressed confusion.

Policymakers, social workers, and advocacy groups that support foster care in Kerala can benefit greatly from these findings. Stakeholders may create a more supportive foster care environment by utilizing the current favourable attitude about fostering and addressing uncertainty through focused interventions. This will eventually help vulnerable children who require secure and nurturing families.

21. Table 21 shows the rate of perception of the support systems available for foster families

	Frequency	Percent
Sufficient	16	15.7
Insufficient	30	29.4
Not sure	56	54.9
Total	102	100.0

The information provided shows how foster families view the support networks at their disposal. Of the 102 respondents in the sample, 15.7% believe the support systems to be "sufficient," while a sizable minority, 29.4%, believe them to be "insufficient." Still, most of them—54.9%—state that they are unsure about how good the support systems are. Based on this distribution, it appears that foster families have differing opinions on how much help they receive from the current systems.

It is clear from evaluating these results in light of the study's goal of determining Kerala families' understanding of foster care that there is a great deal of ambiguity around the support networks in

the area for foster families. A considerable proportion of respondents consider the support to be inadequate, although the majority are unclear, suggesting a lack of understanding or familiarity with the current support networks. This raises the possibility of a gap in the availability of support services or the distribution of information, which may have an influence on the general efficacy and happiness of foster families in Kerala.

These results highlight the need of improving foster care support systems' knowledge and comprehension among Keralan families. It is crucial to make an effort to close the gap between perception and reality by enhancing access to support services and disseminating accurate information. Fostering a more encouraging atmosphere for foster families in Kerala could benefit the wellbeing of the children in foster care as well as the families who are providing care by addressing the worries of those who feel the support is insufficient and reassuring those who are unsure.

22. Table 22 shows the rate of perception whether foster care is adequately promoted and supported by the government and community organizations in Kerala.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	18	17.6
No	22	21.6
Not sure	62	60.8
Total	102	100.0

The information offered sheds light on how the government and community organizations in Kerala are perceived to support and promote foster care, as part of the research study "Fostering Futures: Awareness, Perceptions, and Attitudes of Kerala Families on Foster Care." According to the poll results, 17.6% of the 102 participants answered "yes" when asked if they thought foster

care was sufficiently supported and promoted. Conversely, 21.6% of respondents gave a negative response ("No"), indicating a lack of trust in the initiatives taken in this area by the government and neighbourhood associations. It's interesting to note that 60.8% of respondents were unsure (or "Not sure") about how well foster care is supported and promoted. This ambiguity emphasizes the necessity of additional research on the awareness and perceptions of foster care within the Kerala community.

The analysis of this data points to a conflicting view among Keralan families about the encouragement and backing of foster care. Even while a sizeable fraction accepts some degree of encouragement and backing, a sizeable majority still has doubts or misgivings regarding the actions made by local and governmental groups. These results highlight the significance of raising community awareness and comprehension of foster care activities, addressing concerns, and dispelling doubts with clear and understandable information. The statistics also suggest that outreach and communication methods for foster care services may be lacking, underscoring the need for more focused and extensive awareness initiatives.

In short, the study's conclusions provide insight into the nuances underlying attitudes about foster care support and promotion in Kerala. Even though there were some encouraging comments, a sizable segment of respondents are still dubious or unsatisfied with the work done by local and governmental groups. These revelations underscore the necessity of continued investigation and preventive actions to cultivate more knowledge, confidence, and endorsement of foster care programs within Keralan households and the wider society.

23. Table 23 shows the rate of perceptions about the process of integrating foster children into a family environment

	Frequency	Percentage
Smooth and seamless	7	6.9
Challenging but Rewarding	74	72.5
Not sure	21	20.6
Total	102	100.0

The information displayed reveals participants' opinions about the process of reintegrating foster children into families in the research study "Fostering Futures: Awareness, Perceptions, and Attitudes of Kerala Families on Foster Care." 6.9% of respondents thought the integration process was "smooth and seamless," which is a minority opinion implying there were few difficulties. Nonetheless, a sizable majority of respondents—72.5%—thought the procedure was "challenging but rewarding." This implies that although reunification with biological children poses challenges, including adjustment problems or emotional intricacies, the process is considered rewarding and valuable in the end.

Additionally, 20.6% of respondents expressed doubt about their perceptions, indicating a portion of participants who might be unsure of themselves or feel conflicted about the integration process. There are several possible causes of this confusion, including a lack of exposure to foster care, cultural norms, or individual experiences. These results provide insight into the wide range of viewpoints Kerala families have toward the integration of foster care.

All things considered, these results highlight the varied perspectives and degrees of knowledge Keralan families have about foster care. Although many agree that there are difficulties in raising children, the general consensus is that there are benefits to raising children. This can mean that communities in Kerala are open to the idea of fostering, if they are aware of the challenges. Initiatives meant to raise awareness and support for foster care in the area would benefit from more research on these attitudes and beliefs.

24. Table 24 shows the rate of perception of societal acceptance of foster care in Kerala

	Frequency	Percent
Widely accepted	10	9.8
Partially accepted	80	78.4
Not accepted	12	11.8
Total	102	100.0

The information provided here represents respondents' opinions of Keralan society's acceptance of foster care as reported in the research study "Fostering Futures: Awareness, Perceptions, and Attitudes of Kerala Families on Foster Care." The results show that the majority of respondents, or 78.4%, believe that foster care is somewhat accepted in Keralan society. This raises the possibility that there are still unanswered questions or concerns about foster care, even though it is acknowledged to some extent. In addition, just 9.8% of respondents said that foster care was generally accepted, showing a lower percentage of people who thought that society as a whole supported and embraced foster care. On the other hand, 11.8% of participants said that foster care

is not acceptable, indicating a minority viewpoint that suggests significant resistance or lack of acceptance towards the concept.

These results provide insight into the state of foster care understanding and perceptions in Kerala today. There are still glaring gaps in full societal acceptability of foster care, even though a sizable portion of respondents believe that it is partially acceptable, suggesting some familiarity and awareness. The number of respondents who believe that foster care is not acceptable highlights the need for additional advocacy work and awareness-raising campaigns to dispel common myths and obstacles related to foster care in Kerala. This emphasizes the significance of programs designed to create a more understanding and caring foster care environment, which will ultimately help children in need of other care arrangements achieve greater results.

The research study's overall conclusions highlight Kerala's nuanced opinions and perceptions regarding foster care. Although there is a noticeable level of partial acceptance, there are also sizable areas of scepticism or resistance that require attention. Future efforts to dispel misconceptions, increase understanding, and improve knowledge of foster care will be essential to creating a more welcoming and encouraging atmosphere for kids in Kerala society who require alternative care arrangements.

5. Researcher in the fourth of analysis attempted to assess the attitude towards foster care among the families of Kerala

25. Table 25 shows the rate of consideration in opening your home to foster children

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	16	15.7
No	26	25.5
Maybe	60	58.8
Total	102	100.0

As part of the research on fostering futures: Awareness, views, and attitudes of Kerala families on foster care, the data supplied shows the rate of consideration among Keralan families regarding opening their homes to foster children. Of the 102 participants, 16.7% indicated that they would be willing to accept foster children into their homes by answering "yes" when asked about the concept. However, 25.5% (26 people) replied emphatically that they would not entertain the idea. It's interesting to note that most, or 58.8% of the total, or 60 people, were "maybe" respondents, meaning they were unsure or conflicted about fostering.

Based on the data, it appears Keralan families have differing opinions about foster care. Even if a sizeable percentage indicates that they are willing to participate in fostering, a sizeable chunk are either unsure or reluctant. This ambivalence may result from a number of things, including ignorance, worries about the difficulties of fostering, or societal perceptions about non-biological caregiving. It draws attention to the necessity of focused awareness efforts and support networks to dispel myths and disseminate knowledge about the advantages and workings of foster care.

Additional examination of the "maybe" group may provide important information about the particular elements affecting their uncertainty and assist in customizing actions to allay their worries. Dispelling stereotypes, raising awareness, and offering practical help are all strategies that may raise the number of Kerala families considering and engaging in foster care, improving the future chances and general well-being of the region's most vulnerable children.

26. Table 26 shows the rate of perception of the impact of foster care on your family dynamics and routines

	Frequency	Percent
Positive	20	19.6
Negative	15	14.7
Neutral	67	65.7
Total	102	100.0

The information presented demonstrates how Kerala families view how foster care has affected their daily routines and family relations. 19.6% of respondents had favourable opinions, suggesting that some families see foster care as a way to improve their routines and family dynamics. On the other hand, unfavourable impressions were voiced by 14.7% of respondents, indicating that some families believe foster care negatively impacts their routines and family dynamics. The majority of respondents, or 65.7%, expressed a neutral opinion, seeing no discernible good or bad effects from foster care on their family's routines or relationships.

This information sheds light on Kerala families' attitudes and level of awareness regarding foster care. The comparatively high proportion of respondents who expressed a neutral opinion point to a significant degree of ignorance or confusion about foster care in the community. This emphasizes how crucial it is for Kerala families to become more knowledgeable about foster care. In the

community, efforts to dispel myths and promote more informed views of fostering could be aided by efforts to educate and inform people about foster care.

All things considered, our results emphasize the necessity of focused initiatives meant to increase knowledge and cultivate favourable attitudes toward foster care among Keralan families. Initiatives can help foster families become more supportive of one another and the children in need of care by dispelling myths and promoting a better understanding of the foster system. This will likely increase the number of families that are willing to foster and help the children in need.

27. Table 27 shows the rate of concern about the potential challenges of a fostering a child, such as behavioral issues or attachment difficulties.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	47	46.1
No	7	6.9
Not sure	48	47.1
Total	102	100.0

The data presents the responses of 102 participants from Kerala regarding their concerns about the potential challenges of fostering a child, specifically behavioral issues or attachment difficulties. Among the respondents, 46.1% (47 participants) expressed concern about these challenges. This indicates a significant portion of the sample population is apprehensive about the difficulties that might arise in fostering a child. Such concerns can potentially impact their willingness to engage in foster care.

A small minority, accounting for 6.9% (7 participants), reported no concerns regarding potential challenges associated with fostering. This suggests that a very small fraction of the population feels

confident or optimistic about managing the behavioral and attachment issues that may come with fostering children. Their lack of concern could be due to prior experience, specific training, or a strong support system that makes them feel equipped to handle such challenges.

The largest group, 47.1% (48 participants), indicated that they are not sure about their concerns. This considerable percentage points to a significant level of uncertainty or lack of awareness about the specific challenges involved in foster care. This uncertainty might stem from insufficient information or exposure to foster care systems, highlighting a potential area for intervention through education and awareness programs.

28. Table 28 shows rate of willingness to undergo necessary training and assessments to become a foster family

	Frequency	Percent
Very willing	20	19.6
Somewh at willing	61	59.8
Not willing	21	20.6
Total	102	100.0

The information provided demonstrates the distribution of Keralan families' readiness to go through the required evaluations and training in order to become foster families. A majority, or 59.8%, of the 102 families polled said they would be "somewhat willing" to participate in the necessary training and evaluations. This suggests that while there is interest, there may be some doubts or uncertainties that hinder full commitment. It also indicates a moderate level of openness among the families towards meeting the requirements for fostering.

19.6% of respondents, a smaller but still considerable percentage, said they would be "very willing" to take the required actions to become a foster family. This group reflects a more fervent and dedicated segment of the populace that is probably going to participate actively in the nurturing process. Their eagerness to put in the required work and their strong positive attitude toward foster care are evident in their willingness.

On the other hand, 20.6% of the families polled stated that they are "not willing" to participate in the necessary testing and training. This suggests that 5% of the respondents exhibited a noteworthy degree of reluctance or resistance, which might be attributed to a number of things, including ignorance, perceived difficulties, or private motives. This section identifies areas where awareness campaigns and support systems might need to be reinforced and poses a serious obstacle to Kerala's goal of adding more foster families.

29. Table 29 shows the rate of belief that fostering a child can enrich family life and bring a sense of fulfilment

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	31	30.4
No	9	8.8
Not sure	62	60.8
Total	102	100.0

The information provided sheds light on how Kerala families view the fulfilment and enrichment that adopting a child can provide for their family. Just 30.4% of the 102 respondents said they thought that raising a kid could improve family dynamics and provide a sense of fulfillment. This suggests that fewer than one-third of those polled are aware of the possible advantages of fostering for interpersonal fulfilment and family relations.

However, 8.8% of respondents, a lesser percentage, expressly reject that fostering can improve family life. This implies that a minority has a different opinion, which may be shaped by perceived difficulties or bad fostering-related experiences. Their opinion may be influenced by doubts about the advantages of foster care or worries about its requirements.

60.8% of respondents, or most of them, are doubtful if fostering may improve and satisfy family life. This noteworthy proportion reveals a high degree of ambiguity or ignorance among the households questioned. It highlights a potential knowledge or comprehension gap about the foster care system and its potential benefits, which may be filled with focused educational initiatives or awareness campaigns.

30. Table 30 shows the rate of awareness about how important it is for the families to support each other in fostering children.

	Frequency	Percent
Very Important	61	59.8
Somewhat Important	33	32.4
Not Important	8	7.8
Total	102	100.0

The information provided shows how much Keralan families understand about the value of family support in foster care. Three categories of significance are applied to the responses: Very Important, Somewhat Important, and Not Important.

The statistics show that a sizable majority of respondents (59.8%) believe that family support

plays a crucial role in developing. This high proportion indicates that Keralan families are well aware of and acknowledge the critical role that a nurturing home environment plays in the success of foster care.

Furthermore, according to 32.4% of respondents, family support is somewhat significant. This suggests an intermediate level of awareness, where these families may be aware of the significance but may not completely appreciate its impact or may have misgivings for other reasons.

About 7.8% of respondents say that family support is unimportant. This minority suggests a lack of knowledge or varying perspectives regarding the function of family support in foster care, potentially as a result of cultural, societal, or individual ideas that downplay the deemed importance of such assistance in fostering circumstances.

31. Table 31 shows rate of awareness of the existing foster care services provided by the government or NGOs in Kerala

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	13	12.7
No	61	59.8
Not sure	28	27.5
Total	102	100.0

The information shows how much Kerala families know about the foster care services that are now offered by the government or non-governmental organizations. Just 13. out of the 102 respondents (12.7%) said they were aware of these programs. A sizable majority—59.8%, or 61 people—said they were unaware of the availability of foster care services. Furthermore, 27.5% (28 people) did not know if they were aware of these services.

This distribution draws attention to a significant void in Kerala's foster care services' marketing and outreach. It appears that a sizable percentage of the public is not being adequately informed about foster care, as evidenced by the fact that over 25% of respondents were unsure and close to 60% of respondents were oblivious. This ignorance may make it more difficult to place children in need in loving homes and may prevent people from using foster care services.

The results highlight the need for increased outreach and education initiatives by non-governmental and governmental groups. Stronger public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives are obviously needed to inform families about the availability and advantages of foster care. These groups can improve outcomes for children in need of foster care services by raising awareness and encouraging increased community involvement and support for the foster care system.

32. Table 32 shows the rate of people considered applying to be a foster family in Kerala

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	9	8.8
No	58	56.9
Not applicable	35	34.3
Total	102	100.0

The replies of 102 Kerala participants who were asked if they would consider applying to be foster parents are shown in the table. Three categories are used to group the responses: "Yes," "No," and "Not applicable." According to the research, nine (8.8%) of the respondents have thought about applying to be a foster family. 56.9% of the 58 responders, or the majority, have not given this idea

any thought. On the other hand, 35 respondents (34.3%) answered "Not applicable," indicating that a sizeable proportion of the sample does not believe this issue to be pertinent to their circumstances.

This information makes it evident that the majority of the families polled do not give foster care much thought. There is comparatively little involvement or interest in foster care, as evidenced by the 8.8% who have considered starting a foster home. This could be due to a number of things, like as ignorance, cultural beliefs, or the difficulties people believe come with parenting.

The substantial number of respondents (56.9%) who have not thought about fostering raises the possibility that there are major obstacles or misunderstandings keeping families from considering this option. Moreover, a sizable portion of participants may not be in a position to explore fostering for social, personal, or financial reasons, as indicated by the 34.3% of "Not applicable" responses. This classification emphasizes how important it is to launch focused awareness initiatives in order to remove these obstacles and false beliefs.

33. Table 33 shows the rate of the availability of support services for foster families in Kerala

	Frequency	Percent
Very available	2	2.0
Somewhat available	42	41.2
Not available	9	8.8
Not sure	49	48.0
Total	102	100.0

The availability of support services for foster families in Kerala, as reported by the respondents, is displayed in the table. Only 2.0% of those surveyed said that support services are "Very available." This implies that a small percentage of foster families believe they are receiving enough support from the current system. The low percentage suggests that there may be a gap in the availability or knowledge of these services.

41.2% of the respondents, a sizable fraction, assessed the support services as "Somewhat available." This suggests that even while a sizable portion of families acknowledge receiving support, it is not thought to be entirely adequate or all-inclusive. This impression may be a result of variations in the services offered to foster families in terms of availability, caliber, or accessibility.

Remarkably, 48.0% of respondents said they were "Not sure" about the availability of support services, indicating that families are largely unaware of the support networks that are in existence. Furthermore, 8.8% of respondents said that support services are "Not available," which emphasizes the necessity of improved communication and possibly stronger support networks for Kerala's foster families.

34. Table 34 shows the need for more specialized foster care programs for children with specific needs in Kerala

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	69	67.6
No	4	3.9
Not sure	29	28.4
Total	102	100.0

The information displayed displays the opinions of 102 participants in Kerala who were asked about the necessity of more specialized foster care programs for kids with certain needs. According to the findings, a sizable majority of respondents—67.6%—think that more specialized foster care services are necessary. This large majority points to a perceived vacuum in the current system that could benefit from more specialized programs, indicating a general understanding of the significance of addressing the unique needs of children in foster care.

Just 3.9% of those surveyed disagree that additional specialized foster care programs are necessary. This little opposition suggests that the current foster care system may not be seen by this group as sufficiently satisfying the unique requirements of children, or they may think that other options would be more appropriate or that the current system is sufficient.

Furthermore, when it comes to the necessity of additional specialized foster care programs, 28.4% of respondents are unclear. This high percentage of doubt suggests that a sizable segment of the population lacks knowledge or adequate information. This points to a topic that would benefit from further education and information sharing to educate the public about the unique requirements of foster children and the possible advantages of specialized programs

35. Table 35 shows the rate of importance of Kerala to ensure the well-being of children who require temporary care, even if you are not familiar with foster care

	Frequency	Percent
Very Important	61	59.8
Somewhat Important	25	24.5
Not Important	4	3.9
Not sure	12	11.8
Total	102	100.0

The information shows the opinions of 102 participants on how crucial it is to protect Keralan youngsters in need of foster care. An assessment of this was conducted in connection with a study named "Fostering Futures: Awareness, Perceptions, and Attitude of Kerala Families on Foster Care." This section of the survey set out to evaluate Keralan families' perceptions of the value and awareness of foster care.

To begin with, 59.8% of respondents, or 61 out of 102, think it is crucial to protect the welfare of kids in need of short-term care. This suggests that a sizable segment of the public is very conscious of and concerned about the needs of foster children. Given the large percentage, it appears that most families understand how important it is to support children who are at risk in temporary care settings.

Second, of the participants, 25 out of 102, or 24.5%, thought the topic was somewhat important. This group recognizes the value of foster care, but maybe they don't feel as strongly about it as the first group did. When combined with the first group, this indicates that 84.3% of respondents believe that the welfare of children in foster care is significant to some extent, demonstrating a generally favourable view of the need for foster care in the community.

Thirdly, fewer respondents—4.9% (4 out of 102)—believe it is not necessary, and 11.8% (12 out of 102) are unclear about the significance of making sure children in temporary care are safe. These results imply that a small percentage of people may be unaware of or have misgivings about the foster care system. To make sure that all facets of society are aware of the importance of foster care, this group serves as a potential target for awareness-raising efforts.

36. Table 36 shows the rate of overall awareness and understanding of foster care rate the in Kerala

	Frequency	Percent
High	8	7.8
Moderate	50	49.0
Low	44	43.1
Total	102	100.0

The information displayed shows the general knowledge and comprehension of foster care among Keralan households. Three levels make up the categorization: High, Moderate, and Low. Just 8 people (7.8%) out of the 102 respondents indicated they had a thorough awareness and comprehension of foster care. This implies that a very tiny percentage of the people who were polled knew everything there is to know about the foster care system. 50 people, or 49.0% of the respondents, reported having a moderate level of awareness. This suggests that although not all members of the examined population are well-informed about foster care, over half of them do. This moderate awareness may include rudimentary information of foster care, without delving further into its requirements, advantages, or workings. In the meantime, 44 respondents (43.1%) said they knew very little about foster care. This substantial amount suggests that a sizable portion of the populace either doesn't understand the idea of foster care or doesn't know enough about it. This crucial finding—that there is a dearth of awareness—highlights the necessity of focused educational and awareness campaigns to increase knowledge of and involvement in foster care programs.

HYPOTHESIS

Perception and Education

Hypothesis 1: To Assess the relationship between the education levels and perceptions towards foster care

Inorder to test hypothesis, the researcher conducted Independent Sample T-test. The results of the study are computed below.

Table 37 shows Mean and Standard Deviation

Group Statistics					
	Education	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Perception about the role of foster care in providing stability to children in difficult circumstances	secondary school	19	.63	.597	.137
	bachelor's degree	44	.39	.538	.081

Table 38 shows the Independent Sample t-test of Perception and Education.

		t-test for Equality of Means						
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Perception about the role of foster care in providing stability to children in difficult circumstances	Equal variances assumed	1.607	61	.113	.245	.153	-.060	.550
	Equal variances not assumed	1.540	31.204	.134	.245	.159	-.079	.570

The conducted independent samples t-test aimed to investigate whether there is a significant difference in perceptions towards foster care services among Kerala families based on their levels of education. The hypothesis posited that Kerala families with higher levels of education, specifically bachelor's degrees, would exhibit more positive perceptions towards foster care services compared to those with secondary school education. However, the results of the analysis did not provide sufficient evidence to support this hypothesis.

Upon examining the descriptive statistics, it was found that the mean perception score for Kerala families with secondary school education was 0.63, with a standard deviation of 0.597, while for those with bachelor's degrees, the mean perception score was 0.39, with a standard deviation of 0.538. These statistics offer an initial glimpse into the perceptions held by each group, but the crucial test of significance was conducted through the t-test.

The t-test, assuming equal variances, yielded a t-value of 1.607 with 61 degrees of freedom, resulting in a p-value of 0.113. Likewise, when assuming unequal variances, the t-value was 1.540 with degrees of freedom approximately 31.204, and a p-value of 0.134. In both cases, the p-values exceeded the conventional significance level of 0.05, indicating a lack of statistically significant difference in perceptions towards foster care services between the two education groups.

Consequently, the null hypothesis, suggesting no difference in perceptions based on education levels, is retained. These findings imply that contrary to the initial hypothesis, education levels, specifically attainment of bachelor's degrees, may not play a significant role in shaping perceptions towards foster care services among Kerala families.

Attitude and Gender

Hypothesis 2: To assess the relationship between gender and attitude towards foster care

In order to test hypothesis, the researcher conducted Independent Sample T-test. The results of the study are computed below.

Table 39 shows the Mean and Standard Deviation

Group Statistics

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Consideration in opening home to foster children in need	male	38	1.45	.760	.123
	female	64	1.42	.752	.094

Table 40 shows the Independent Sample t-test of gender and attitude

		t-test for Equality of Means						
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	(2-Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Consideration in opening home to foster children in need	Equal variances assumed	.165	100	.869	.025	.155	-.281	.332
	Equal variances not assumed	.164	77.150	.870	.025	.155	-.283	.334

The independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether there is a significant difference in attitudes towards foster care between male and female members of Kerala families. The hypothesis posited that there would be a significant difference in attitudes based on gender, while the null hypothesis suggested that no such difference exists.

In terms of descriptive statistics, the mean score for interest in opening homes to foster children among male participants was 1.45, with a standard deviation of 0.760, and a standard error of the mean of 0.123. For female participants, the mean score was 1.42, with a standard deviation of 0.752, and a standard error of the mean of 0.094. These initial figures indicate very similar levels of interest between male and female participants.

The results of the t-test for equality of means, assuming equal variances, yielded a t-value of 0.165 with 100 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.869. When assuming unequal variances, the t-value was 0.164 with approximately 77.150 degrees of freedom, and a p-value of 0.870. In both scenarios, the p-values are significantly higher than the conventional significance level of 0.05, indicating that the observed differences in mean scores are not statistically significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference in attitudes towards foster care between male and female members of Kerala families, is retained. This finding suggests that gender does not play a significant role in influencing the willingness of Kerala families to open their homes to foster children.

Awareness and Attitude

Hypothesis 3: To assess the correlation between awareness of foster care laws and attitude towards fostering

In order to test hypothesis, the researcher tested correlation using Karl Pearson coefficient of correlation. The results of the study are computed below.

Table 41 shows correlation between Awareness and Attitude.

Correlations			
		Consideration in opening home to foster children in need	Awareness of any recent changes or updates in the foster care laws in Kerala
Consideration in opening home to foster children in need	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 102	.318** .001 102
Awareness of any recent changes or updates in the foster care laws in Kerala	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.318** .001 102	1 102

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation analysis using the Karl Pearson test revealed a moderate positive relationship between two variables: the willingness of Kerala families to open their homes to foster children in need and their awareness of recent changes or updates in foster care laws. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between these variables was found to be 0.318. This positive correlation suggests that as awareness of foster care laws among Kerala families increases, their willingness to provide foster care also tends to increase.

Moreover, the statistical significance of this relationship was determined by the p-value, which was found to be 0.001. Since this p-value is less than the significance level of 0.01, the correlation is

considered statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Therefore, we can reject the null hypothesis (H₀) that there is no significant relationship between awareness of foster care laws among Kerala families and their attitude towards fostering.

In essence, the results support the research hypothesis (H₁) that there is indeed a positive and significant relationship between awareness of foster care laws and the attitude towards fostering among Kerala families. This implies that increased awareness of foster care laws is associated with a greater willingness among Kerala families to open their homes to foster children in need.

FOSTER CARE POLICIES AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS IN KERALA

Foster care is a type of alternative care that has acquired international reputation for giving children in need of protection a loving home away from their birth families. The foster care system in Kerala, India, has changed over time to accommodate modifications in governmental policies, legal frameworks, and social conventions.

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

A pillar of India's legal system for child welfare and protection is the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 was superseded by this act, which also included a number of important new provisions meant to fortify the juvenile justice system and guarantee the welfare of children who required care and protection. (Juvenile Justice Act, 2015)

Section 56 of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 states that certain rules apply to foster care arrangements for kids who don't have parents. This section describes the steps involved in placing

a kid in foster care and highlights how important it is to look out for the child's best interests. In order to maintain the child's safety and wellbeing, it requires that potential foster parents undergo any evaluations and that foster care arrangements be reviewed on a regular basis. The Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, is important because it promotes the non-discrimination and best interests of the child principles in all decisions pertaining to foster care placements, as Shrivastava and Shrivastava (2017) point out. This act provides criteria for monitoring, caregiver assessment, and child placement, thereby serving as a legal basis for promoting programs in Kerala. (Juvenile Justice Act, 2015)

Mission Valsalya

"Mission Valsalya" represents a significant endeavour in the field of foster care, representing a deep dedication to the well-being of children who are at risk. Mission Valsalya was founded in response to the increasing need for organized assistance and caring surroundings for children who have been left orphaned. It stands as a ray of light in a world that is frequently tainted by instability and neglect. By using a complete approach, Mission Valsalya hopes to ensure the overall development of every child under its care by offering not only short-term housing but also holistic care that includes emotional support, healthcare, and education (Author, Year). Mission Valsalya prioritizes the long-term prospects and well-being of these children, addressing both urgent issues and laying the groundwork for a better future by fostering a feeling of belonging and resilience in those who have faced adversity from an early age (Mission Valsalya Scheme, 2024).

Mission Valsalya also emphasizes the value of community involvement and cooperation in creating a caring environment for underprivileged kids. Mission Valsalya cultivates a sense of community responsibility towards the welfare of vulnerable children through partnerships with governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, and local communities. The organization mobilizes

resources and skills to build sustainable solutions (Author, Year). In addition to changing the lives of individual children, Mission Valsalya advances the larger social objective of creating a just and compassionate society by encouraging a sense of inclusion and belonging. By accomplishing this, Mission Valsalya highlights the significance of coordinated efforts in tackling the intricate problems that face foster care systems around the world and stands as a testament to the transformational potential of group action (Mission Vatsalya Scheme, 2024).

The Kerala Juvenile Justice Act of 2006

Within India's complex legal, cultural, and social context, the Kerala Juvenile Justice Act of 2006 is a key piece of legislation, especially when it comes to child protection and care in the state of Kerala which was passed in accordance with the larger Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act of 2000, is a result of a deliberate attempt to meet the particular needs and challenges that children in Kerala face.

To oversee the implementation of child protection measures and ensure adherence to the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Kerala state government established specialized entities such as the District Child Protection Units (DCPU) and the Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) under the provisions of Juvenile Justice Act. In addition to fighting for children's rights to care, protection, and rehabilitation, these groups are essential in keeping an eye on and resolving cases involving child abuse, exploitation, and neglect (Kerala Juvenile Justice Act, 2006).

Furthermore, the act emphasizes the value of family-based care for children in need of protection, including pathways to adoption and foster care. The Act emphasizes the overall development and well-being of these children, acknowledging the significance of providing a secure and supportive environment for children unable to remain with their biological families due to circumstances such

as abuse, neglect, or abandonment. The Kerala Juvenile Justice Act, 2006) requires the creation of Child Care Institutions (CCIs) to provide their needs for either short-term or long-term care. (Kerala Juvenile Justice Act, 2006)

The act promotes community involvement and cooperation in addition to structured institutions and processes to further child care and protection initiatives. The Kerala Juvenile Justice Act (2006) endeavours to effectively identify and address the needs of vulnerable children by promoting a culture of shared responsibility among civil society organizations, local government agencies, and community volunteers (Kerala Juvenile Justice Act, 2006).

The act also emphasizes the value of alternatives to jail and diversionary tactics, especially when it comes to minors who are in legal trouble. With a focus on rehabilitation and reintegration, the Act gives priority to educational and skill-building initiatives in order to facilitate juvenile offenders' effective reintegration into society as contributing members. The Kerala Juvenile Justice Act of 2006 promotes the social inclusion and contribution of these children while acknowledging their developmental needs and vulnerabilities. (The Kerala Juvenile Justice Act, 2006)

The Integrated Child Protection Scheme

The Government of India operates the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), a centrally supported program, to assist children in challenging situations with their overall development and protection. States that want to expand their foster care services and improve their child protection systems can apply for financial support from ICPS (MWCD, 2018).

Kerala has set up a thorough framework for the defence, care, and rehabilitation of children who are at risk under the ICPS. Foster care services are one alternative form of care for kids who need to be taken care of and protected (MWCD, 2018).

In order to ensure the successful implementation of foster care programs, it highlight the role of ICPS in facilitating foster care placements in Kerala and stress the significance of a coordinated approach among various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and community-based organizations (MWCD, 2018).

This study examined Kerala's complex foster care policies and legal framework, providing insight into the complex system that oversees the safety and welfare of the state's most vulnerable children. A thorough grasp of the frameworks, rules, and procedures supporting foster care practices emerged from an examination of significant laws like the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, and the Kerala Juvenile Justice Act of 2006 as well as programs like the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS). The investigation showed that the Kerala government made a deliberate effort to put the best interests of the child first, placing a strong emphasis on family-based care, community involvement, and rehabilitation for kids who were in danger or had run afoul of the law. This research emphasizes the value of continuous assessment, cooperation, and advocacy to ensure the successful implementation and evolution of foster care policies in Kerala, ultimately aiming towards the holistic development and empowerment of every child in the state.

CHAPTER-5

FINDINGS,

RECOMMENDATIONS AND

IMPLICATIONS OF

SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

FINDINGS

This study conducts a thorough investigation into the knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes surrounding foster care among families in the area with a focus on fostering futures within Kerala. This research clarifies important insights about the existing state of awareness, common conceptions, and underlying attitudes towards foster care services using rigorous quantitative analysis made possible by SPSS software. By focusing on these particular goals, the research not only provides a more comprehensive picture of the current situation but also aims to provide baseline data that is vital for the development and execution of customized foster care services in the state of Kerala. According to the study, 50% of respondents aware of Kerala's Juvenile Justice Act. In the meantime, 24.5% were unsure about their awareness, and 25.5% were not aware of it. These results show that Kerala families have a serious knowledge about the state's juvenile justice laws.

- Only 19.6% of participants in the study were aware of foster care, according to research findings, which show how little knowledge Kerala families have of the practice. Notably, 72.5% of respondents said they were unaware of it, and 7.8% said the question was irrelevant. This draws attention to a significant knowledge vacuum in the community regarding foster care.
- Families in Kerala have differing levels of awareness regarding foster care, according to research. While 39.2% are unclear, 5.9% find it extremely accessible, 7.8% find it not accessible, and 47.1% find foster care information fairly accessible. Kerala's foster care laws clearly need to be improved, as indicated by the research, which found that 48% of respondents thought the current system was insufficient. There is widespread acknowledgment of the difficulties that already exist, as seen by the 4.9% who

disagreed. There may be a lack of clarity regarding foster care policies, as indicated by the significant level of confusion (47.1%) among respondents.

- According to the survey, families in Kerala are worryingly ignorant of the most recent changes to the foster care laws. Of the respondents, just 12.7% knew about these changes, 58.8% had no idea, and 28.4% weren't sure. In order to provide vulnerable children with a nurturing environment and guarantee that families have the knowledge they need to successfully navigate the foster care system, it is imperative that this issue be addressed.
- According to the research findings, there is a great receptiveness to awareness programs, as seen by the high interest shown by 47.1% of Keralan families in attending workshops on foster care policies. Furthermore, 41.2% of respondents expressed no opinion, indicating that they are receptive to learning more about foster care. But 11.8% show little curiosity, which emphasizes the necessity of focused engagement initiatives.
- According to the research findings, just 12.7% of Keralan families are involved in activities linked to foster care, indicating a major awareness gap. This emphasizes the necessity of focused efforts to increase acceptance and knowledge of foster care.
- According to the study, 41.2% of Kerala families are ignorant of foster care procedures, compared to 55.9% who have some understanding of them. This suggests that there is a huge knowledge vacuum in the community. Furthermore, 2.9% of respondents indicated that they knew much about the procedures, indicating a tiny minority with a high level of comprehension.
- According to the report, 70.6% of Keralan families think favourably of foster care's capacity to give needy kids a loving home. But 22.5% still doubt its efficacy, underscoring the necessity of awareness initiatives. Foster care is becoming more widely recognized as a

practical solution for assisting Kerala's most vulnerable children, notwithstanding various doubts.

- According to the study, there is a considerable interest in fostering in Kerala, with more than half of the participants eager to find out more about the possibilities for foster care. This demonstrates a positive openness to fostering as a substitute form of child care. A lot of respondents, meanwhile, expressed uncertainty, which emphasizes the necessity of focused educational initiatives. By addressing these issues, we may be able to increase involvement and improve support for Kerala's most vulnerable children.
- According to the study, 60.8% of Keralan respondents think foster care is crucial for giving children in challenging situations stability. A sizable portion likewise considers it to be somewhat significant, suggesting a generally positive view of fostering. 65.7% of respondents to the study said they thought it had a beneficial effect on children's development and well-being. 30.4% of respondents, however, voiced doubt regarding these advantages, pointing to a large knowledge gap.
- According to the study, 72.5% of participants said it was difficult but worthwhile to integrate foster children into families. Just 6.9% of respondents think the process is easy and flawless, and 20.6% are unsure. These findings underscore the need for assistance measures in the area by highlighting the difficult yet gratifying nature of fostering as experienced by Kerala families.
- The study's conclusions frame a complex picture of Kerala society's acceptance of foster care, with the majority of respondents (78.4%) expressing a degree of acknowledgment combined with persistent misgivings. Interestingly, a lower percentage (9.8%) thinks foster care is generally accepted, while a minority (11.8%) thinks it is not.

- Many respondents to the survey on Kerala families' fostering futures were open to fostering, but the majority were unsure or reluctant. This indicates that respondents' opinions toward foster care are complicated. This suggests a lack of knowledge and comprehension regarding the dynamics of foster care.
- Families in Kerala have differing opinions on how foster care affects family dynamics; 19.6% have favourable opinions, 14.7% have negative opinions, and 65.7% have no opinion.
- Kerala families have serious misgivings about fostering because of possible behavioral and attachment problems; in fact, almost half of the respondents were not sure what their position was. This reveals a serious knowledge and comprehension gap on the difficulties associated with foster care.
- According to the survey, the majority of Kerala families are only somewhat receptive to foster care, underscoring the need for focused interventions. More information and assistance are needed to transform this group into foster family who are truly committed. A sizable portion of families refuse to take part, which calls for additional research regarding logistical, cultural, or informational obstacles.
- According to the report, just 30.4% of Keralan families positively view fostering, with the majority having doubts about it. A significant need for greater knowledge and education is shown by the large percentage of doubtful responders (60.8%). These results highlight the significance of deliberate efforts to enhance public attitude and perception of foster care. Foster care programs can be more widely accepted and more actively participated in if informational gaps are filled in and compelling evidence of the benefits of fostering is presented.

- According to the report, there is a significant amount of confusion (28.4%) and very little opposition (3.9%) regarding Kerala's specialized foster care programs, which have substantial support (67.6%). There is agreement that Kerala's foster care system has to be improved and specialized.

Based on the study "Fostering Futures: Awareness, Perceptions, and Attitudes of Kerala Families on Foster Care," the baseline data for developing state-specific foster care services in Kerala reveal several key insights. Awareness of Kerala's Juvenile Justice Act stands at 50%, but only 19.6% are aware of foster care, indicating significant knowledge gaps. Information on foster care is fairly accessible to 47.1% of families, yet nearly half of the respondents find the current foster care system insufficient. Awareness of recent legislative changes is low, with only 12.7% informed. There is strong interest (47.1%) in attending awareness programs, though actual involvement in foster care activities is just 12.7%. While 70.6% believe foster care can provide a loving home, and 65.7% see its positive impact on children's development, many (30.4%) still have doubts. Integrating foster children is viewed as challenging yet worthwhile by 72.5% of respondents. Despite mixed acceptance levels, with 78.4% acknowledging foster care but holding persistent misgivings, there is notable interest in fostering, though uncertainty remains. Opinions on the impact of foster care on family dynamics are varied, with only 19.6% viewing it positively. Concerns about behavioral and attachment issues reveal significant gaps in understanding, and while the majority are somewhat receptive to foster care, comprehensive interventions are needed to improve participation and perception. Support for specialized foster care programs is high at 67.6%, despite some confusion. These findings underscore the need for increased awareness, better information dissemination, and enhanced support systems to foster a more robust and effective foster care framework in Kerala.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Foster care is a vital part of child welfare services because it provides children who are unable to live with their original families with temporary homes and much-needed support. Despite its significance, foster care in Kerala confronts difficulties because of a lack of knowledge, differing views, and conflicting attitudes among families. Our study, "Fostering Futures: Awareness, Perceptions, and Attitudes of Kerala Families Towards Foster Care," employs a quantitative approach to investigate these concerns and identifies important areas that require further development. In order to improve the lives of children and families in Kerala, this chapter offers specific proposals that will increase public awareness, offer complete assistance to foster families and fortify the foster care system as a whole.

- Conduct statewide public awareness efforts about Kerala's foster care policies and juvenile justice laws. To reach a larger audience, make use of a variety of media outlets, such as social media, television, and local events.
- Plan frequent training sessions and workshops to give families comprehensive information on the foster care system, its advantages, and the laws that govern it. Make sure these seminars are easily available and designed to answer certain questions and worries.
- Provide easily navigable materials with clear, succinct information regarding foster care procedures, eligibility requirements, and benefits, such as pamphlets, websites, and mobile apps. Make sure these materials are accessible in the many languages that are spoken in Kerala.

- Provide foster families with strong support networks, such as peer support groups, counselling, and frequent social worker check-ins, to help them deal with behavioural and attachment problems involving foster children.
- Urge local groups, leaders in the community, and influencers to become involved in raising awareness and developing favourable perceptions about foster care. Within communities, this can foster a sense of acceptance and trust.
- Create educational initiatives that are especially targeted at filling in the important knowledge gaps the study found. The goals of these programs ought to be to demystify foster care, clarify the procedure, and emphasize how crucial it is for the welfare of children.
- To continuously enhance the foster care system, set up procedures for collecting feedback from foster families and children as well as for ongoing research. Make well-informed policy modifications and support service enhancements using the input provided here.
- Collaborate with social workers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to take advantage of their networks and experience in advancing foster care. Give social workers training so they can assist foster families more successfully and make sure they have the tools necessary to properly advocate for foster care.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Foster care is essential to provide children in need with secure and supportive settings. Nonetheless, the structures and support networks that are in place have a major impact on its efficacy. Improving service delivery, addressing community views, and comprehending the intricacies of foster care are critical to improving results in Kerala. With an emphasis on case studies, group work, community organization, social work research, social welfare administration, and social action, this study investigates the implications of social work practice in fostering futures.

1. Case Work

To effectively handle the special needs and difficulties of foster families, tailored support is essential. Social workers take on casework and carry out in-depth evaluations to comprehend the dynamics within every household. They offer specialized interventions, such as therapy sessions, support groups, and home visits, through continuing casework in order to improve family stability and foster favourable outcomes for children in care.

2. Group Work

Foster parents can exchange experiences, look for advice, and create networks of support by participating in support groups. Social workers provide families with useful skills and emotional resilience by facilitating conversations on subjects like behavioral control and attachment problems through group work therapies. These associations help foster parents feel less alone and more connected to one another, which improves everyone's general well-being.

3. Community Organization

Foster families require a supportive environment to be created, and this requires involving the larger community. Social workers mobilize resources and spread knowledge about foster care through working with schools, religious institutions, and community organizations. Foster families' resilience is strengthened by the community events, campaigns, and collaborations they organize, which encourage inclusivity and accessibility to resources.

4. Social Work Research

Research is essential to the development of evidence-based practice and foster care policy. In order to assess the success of interventions, spot new trends, and promote systemic changes, social workers do research. Through their research on the experiences of foster families and the results of their children, they provide important insights that direct the provision of services and encourage ongoing development.

5. Social Welfare Administration

Expertise and assistance are needed to navigate the intricate legal and administrative facets of foster care. Administrative social workers support foster families by making sure rules are followed and making resources more accessible. They also support legislative changes that improve the safety and assistance provided to foster families and children, fostering a more open and accommodating welfare system.

6. Social Action

Coordinated social action initiatives are necessary to promote favourable attitudes toward foster care. Advocacy campaigns are a common tool used by social workers to combat stigma, increase public awareness, and rally support for foster families. Through the use of media channels, planning community gatherings, and lobbying legislators, they promote laws and systemic reforms that give foster children's rights and needs top priority.

In conclusion, social workers may improve the standard and efficacy of foster care in Kerala by utilizing a comprehensive strategy that incorporates casework, group work, community organizing, research, administration, and social action programs. They assist stable foster families and good outcomes for children in care by providing individualized support, engaging the community, practicing with research decisions, and advocating on behalf of foster children.

CONCLUSION

The research paper "Fostering Futures: Awareness, Attitude, and Perception of Kerala Families Towards Foster Care" presents the state's complicated foster care knowledge and attitude landscape. According to the research, most families are only vaguely aware of the Juvenile Justice Act, but a sizable percentage don't know anything at all about the foster care system. This knowledge gap is especially noticeable in that many families are unaware of the ins and outs of foster care as well as its advantages and procedures. There is a great deal of misunderstanding and misinformation regarding Kerala's foster care system since information is not being disseminated effectively enough at the moment.

It is evident from the research that while information regarding foster care is somewhat available, there is a significant need for improved communication and more efficient means of distributing this information. Numerous participants conveyed uncertainty over the current regulations and their sufficiency, underscoring the necessity for more lucid and easily navigable materials. Nearly half of the respondents thought the current foster care system was insufficient, which is partly due to the complexity and lack of clarity surrounding it. This emphasizes how important it is to change laws and conduct more informative outreach in order to provide families confidence and knowledge about the foster care system.

Kerala families are very open to learning more about foster care, in spite of these obstacles. The strong desire to participate in and have a better understanding of foster care is indicated by the significant interest in attending awareness events and seminars. This supportive attitude toward educational programs suggests that, given the correct strategy, public perception and support for foster care might be greatly increased. But there is still mistrust regarding the effectiveness of foster

care and its effects on children's wellbeing, which needs to be dispelled by focused educational initiatives that develop confidence and offer strong justification for the advantages of fostering.

The report emphasizes how critical it is to raise public knowledge and comprehension of foster care in Kerala. The state may work toward a more strong and efficient foster care system by improving the clarity and accessibility of information, putting effective communication tactics into practice, and creating a supportive atmosphere for foster families. By addressing these issues, we can close the knowledge gap and create a community that is more aware of and supportive of children who are at risk. Better results for underprivileged children and a society that is more sympathetic and caring may result from this in turn.

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APPENDIX

Research – Questionnaire

1. What is your age?

2. Which area do you reside in?

Urban

Suburban

Rural

3. What is your gender?

Male

Female

Other/Prefer not to say

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Primary school or less

Secondary school

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree or higher

5. What is your primary occupation?

Employed

Self-employed

Unemployed

Retired

6. How many people are in your household, including yourself?

7. What is your position in family?

8. Are you aware of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act and its provisions regarding foster care?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not sure

9. Have you ever accessed information about the foster care system in Kerala through government websites or official documents?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not applicable

10. How would you rate the accessibility of information about foster care policies and procedures in Kerala?

- a) Very accessible

- b) Somewhat accessible
- c) Not accessible
- d) Not sure

11. Do you think there is a need for improvements or amendments in the current foster care policies in Kerala?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not sure

12. Are you aware of any recent changes or updates in the foster care laws in Kerala?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not sure

13. Would you be interested in attending workshops or sessions to learn more about the foster care policies in Kerala?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Maybe

14. Do you know what foster care means according to the Juvenile Justice Act?

- a) Yes
- b) No

c) Not sure

15. Have you ever participated in any awareness programs or campaigns related to foster care?

a) Yes

b) No

c) Not applicable

16. How would you rate your knowledge about the procedures to become a foster family in Kerala?

a) Very knowledgeable

b) Somewhat knowledgeable

c) Not knowledgeable

17. Have you ever discussed foster care with your family or friends?

a) Yes

b) No

c) Not applicable

18. Do you believe foster care can provide a positive environment for children in need?

a) Yes

b) No

c) Not sure

19. Would you be interested in receiving more information about foster care opportunities in Kerala?

a) Yes

b) No

c) Maybe

20. How do you perceive the role of foster care in providing stability to children in difficult circumstances?

a) Very important

b) Somewhat important

c) Not important

21. Do you believe foster care can contribute to the overall well-being and development of children?

a) Yes

b) No

c) Not sure

22. How do you perceive the support systems available for foster families in Kerala?

a) Sufficient

b) Insufficient

c) Not sure

23. Do you think foster care is adequately promoted and supported by the government and community organizations in Kerala?

a) Yes

b) No

c) Not sure

24. What are your perceptions about the process of integrating foster children into a family environment?

a) Smooth and seamless

b) Challenging but rewarding

c) Not sure

25. How do you perceive the societal acceptance of foster care in Kerala?

a) Widely accepted

b) Partially accepted

c) Not accepted

26. Would you consider opening your home to foster children in need?

a) Yes

b) No

c) Maybe

27. How do you perceive the impact of foster care on your family dynamics and routines?

a) Positive

b) Negative

c) Neutral

28. Are you concerned about the potential challenges of fostering a child, such as behavioral issues or attachment difficulties?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not sure

29. How willing are you to undergo the necessary training and assessments to become a foster family?

- a) Very willing
- b) Somewhat willing
- c) Not willing

30. Do you believe fostering a child can enrich your family's life and bring a sense of fulfilment?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not sure

31. How important do you think it is for families to support each other in fostering children?

- a) Very important
- b) Somewhat important
- c) Not important

32. Are you aware of any existing foster care services provided by the government or NGOs in Kerala?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not sure

33. Have you ever considered applying to be a foster family in Kerala?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not applicable

34. How would you rate the availability of support services for foster families in Kerala?

- a) Very available
- b) Somewhat available
- c) Not available
- d) Not sure

35. Do you think there is a need for more specialized foster care programs for children with specific needs in Kerala?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not sure

36. How important do you think it is for Kerala to ensure the well-being of children who require temporary care, even if you are not familiar with foster care?

- a) Very important
- b) Somewhat important
- c) Not important
- d) Not sure

37. How would you rate the overall awareness and understanding of foster care in Kerala?

a) High

b) Moderate

c) Low