

Assessing the knowledge of alternative care among India's child protection stakeholders

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1. Abstract

The purpose of this survey was to assess the knowledge of child protection stakeholders throughout India on the topic of alternative care for children. The sample was selected based on an online database of governmental and nongovernmental child protection stakeholders. The survey measured the respondent's level of understanding of the concept of alternative care, their direct level of involvement in types of alternative care, and their knowledge of the legal framework at national and state levels that dictate the processes of alternative care. We received 91 respondents across 14 states/ Union Territories.

The survey results were overall positive in that awareness of alternative care does exist in India, however it is evident in the results that there is much progress to be made. Possible entry points to the expansion of alternative care in India were identified by the survey including the need for implementation tool kits, a focus on convergence of systems, legislation on alternative care (both at state and national level), awareness about the concept itself, and monitoring and evaluation systems.

2. Methods

The survey was sent to 1,839 stakeholders across 25 States/ Union Territories. Stakeholders from 14 States / Union Territory responded including Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Orissa, Delhi, Maharashtra, Bihar and Haryana.

The stakeholders included professionals serving at in child welfare committees

(CWC), district administration, district child protection units (DCPU), Department of Women and Child Development, government run homes, juvenile justice boards (JJB), Labor Department, Legal Services Authority, NGOs, NGO run children's homes, police, special juvenile police units, railway police, shelter homes, and working women's hostels all across India. We obtained the emails using information provided on www.childprotectioninfo.in, a website created by IMPACT partners in social development, Terre des Hommes, Lausanne, and HELP.

The survey was first sent out on the 9th and 10th of June 2016. We sent reminder emails on the 14th and on the 21st. The survey was closed on the 22nd of June 2016.

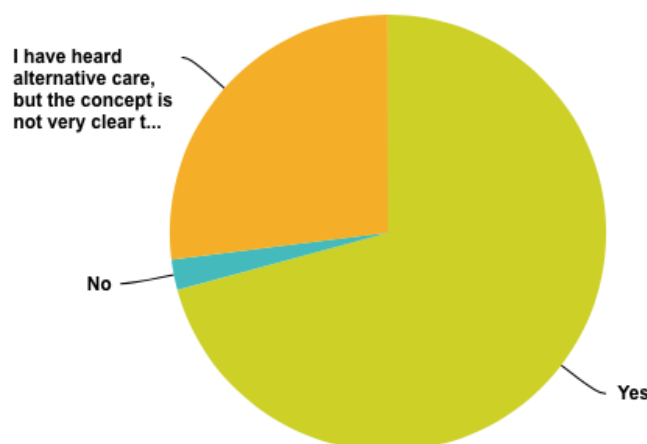
The survey was a mixed methods survey instrument with 25 questions. We received 91 responses in total, giving us a response rate of 11.04%. According to Survey Gizmo, a typical external survey has a response rate between 10 and 15%. We were pleased with the quantity received.

3. Results

93% of the respondents worked in the field of child protection. The majority were nongovernmental workers (71%), but there was a sizable representation from the governmental sector (29%). 70% of the respondents worked at the district level, 38% at the state level, 22% at the national level, and 8% at the international level. We received the most responses from those working in direct practice (77%). Out of the total respondents, 71% reported knowing what alternative care is, while 27% reported that they had heard of it, but the concept was unclear to them. Two percent did not know what alternative care was.

Do you know what alternative care is?

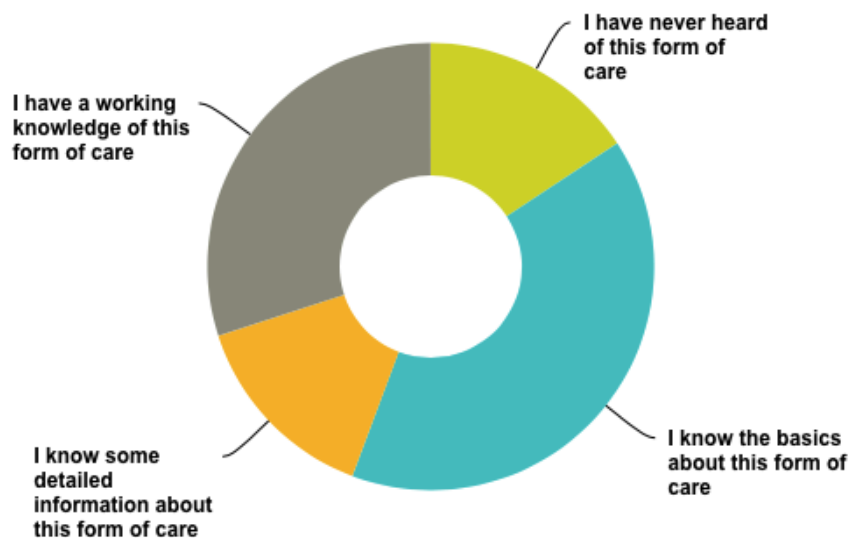
Answered: 89 Skipped: 2



The 25 questions were designed to progress from broad questions about the concept of alternative care followed by the specific services and systematic environment in India. 74% of respondents reported that data does not currently exist or that they are unsure if it exists in the field of alternative care in India. Along with reporting of the current environment of alternative care, the respondents were asked about what they perceived to be the gaps in knowledge/understanding of alternative care. Respondents were able to give multiple answers. Forty-seven (73%) commented that a barrier was implementation of alternative care, 45 (70%) reported convergence of systems, 35 (55%) commented monitoring and supervision, 35 (55%) commented the awareness of the concept of alternative care itself, and 34 (53%) stated the legal aspects of alternative care.

What would you say is your level of knowledge of kinship care?

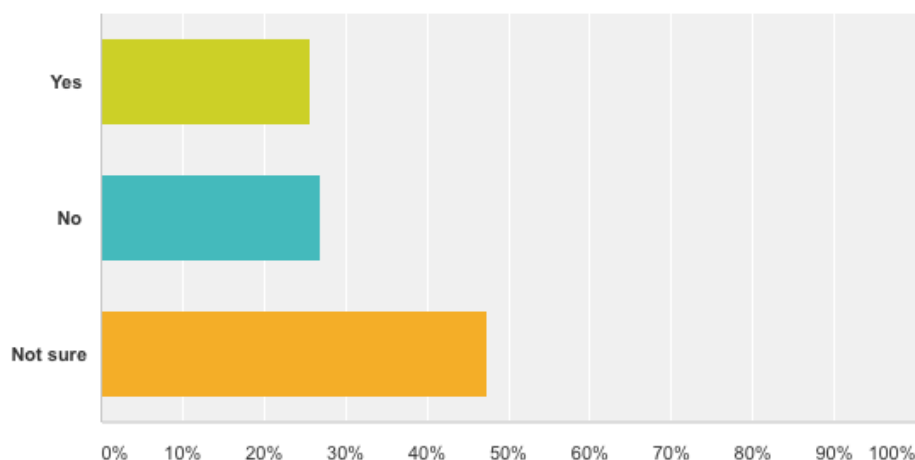
Answered: 70 Skipped: 21



Respondents were asked about their level of knowledge on parts of alternative care. 46% reported to have a working knowledge on family preservation/family strengthening, 37% a working knowledge of sponsorship, 30% a working knowledge of kinship care, 48% a working knowledge of foster care, 44% a working knowledge of adoption, 36% a working knowledge of aftercare, and 57% a working knowledge of institutional care. These responses show that respondents practice a wide variety of alternative care services, but that their knowledge is often not specialized.

Does data currently exist in the field of alternative care in India? (i.e. data on the number of children in alternative care, data on the need of children for alternative care, etc.)

Answered: 74 Skipped: 17



The field was split when asked about state and national legislation pertaining to alternative care of children. 51% of respondents were aware of state legislation pertaining to alternative care, and 47% were aware of national legislation.

4. Conclusion

This survey is a small step of many to the strengthening and expansion of alternative care in India. It serves as a first glance into the perceptions of alternative care in the field of social work and child protection in India. Limited in nature this survey is only offered as information and guidance to inform design of further studies.

We are happy to dialogue with you about working together for safer and stronger families in India; please contact us info@alternativecareindia.org or through our website at www.alternativecareindia.org.