

Family Preservation in Udaipur, Rajasthan India: Rapid assessment of 366 Palanhar Yojana families.

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Abstract:

Foster Care India (FCI) provides services for Non-Institutional Alternative Care (NIAC) across a continuum of care that includes family preservation, kinship foster care, non-kinship foster care, aftercare and referral to adoption services.¹ In January and February of 2015, in order to create an evidence-based foundation on which to design community-oriented family preservation services, FCI conducted a rapid assessment survey of 366 Palanhar² Yojana³ beneficiary families in the city of Udaipur, Rajasthan, India.

Using a Rapid Assessment Tool developed internally, the objective of the assessment was to make initial contact with, and gather preliminary information on families currently registered for the Palanhar Yojana.

Of the 9 categories⁴ of the Palanhar Yojana, the widow category was the most represented with 80% of respondents belonging to this category. 5%, 6% and 7% belong to the HIV/ AIDS effected families, divorcee and orphan categories, respectively.

1. Introduction

The Government of India and State Government of Rajasthan have devised several social pension schemes with the objective of alleviating chronic poverty. These schemes help a variety of populations – the elderly, widows, families, children and disabled people - who have no regular means of income. The Palanhar Yojana scheme, introduced in 2005 was developed to secure food, clothing, education and other benefits for children living in a family environment. Therefore, the Palanhar Yojana can be said to be an instrument for family preservation.

The intent of this assessment was to map existing Palanhar Yojana beneficiaries and assess the quality of service (e.g. Are payments regular? Is the assistance sufficient? Are all eligible individuals and families who qualify receiving support from this scheme?) In addition to mapping beneficiaries, this survey assessed the need for NIAC (non-institutional alternative care)

¹ Foster Care India believes in a clear and concentrated effort to strengthen the continuum of family-based care throughout India. For more information please see <http://fostercareindia.org/lp/2015-manifesto/>

² Person who is caring for children i.e. the caregiver

³ Palanhar Yojana is a government sponsorship scheme for the care education of children in vulnerable families.

⁴ Children without biological parents, widows (max three children), divorcees (all children), HIV/AIDS and leprosy affected parent(s), handicapped parent(s), children of prisoner(s) (those given a death sentence or life sentence) and women who are involved in the tribal practice of Nata are eligible under the Palanhar Yojana scheme to receive regular cash transfers.

services of Palanhar Yojana respondents.

The long-term goal of the rapid assessment is to create a mapping tool that others throughout India can adapt to their locality in order to assess the “needs” of their community in regard to NIAC. Following this rapid assessment is a baseline format that creates a measuring tool for case management that can be repeated at mid-line and end-line as required.

2. Methodology

Foster Care India was provided a list by the District Child Protection Unit of Udaipur (a branch of government governed by the State Level Department of Child Rights). The list included Palanhar Yojana beneficiaries and their basic demographic information (e.g. name, address and phone number). A total of 533 families were listed. Duplicates were identified by staff and removed; the final number of families identified was 429 and the list was organised according to geographic wards (Udaipur city has a total of 55 wards). Contact information for 63 of the 429 families was not correct or unavailable and thus, 366 families participated in the Rapid Assessment. A total of 728 children were accounted for in the families interviewed.

A Rapid Assessment Tool (RAT) was then developed and pilot tested for reliability and validity. The objective of the tool was to gather basic demographic information of families, information about the Palanhar Yojana scheme (how many children are connected, how many children are eligible but not connected, ease of application, financial standing of these beneficiary families etc.) and understand what, if any Non Institutional Alternative Care (NIAC) services are needed by these families. NIAC services might include family preservation, counselling, sponsorship (through government schemes), training and aftercare support for youth between the ages of 15 to 21.

A total of 4 focus groups were held to begin the development of a Rapid Assessment Tool. 3 focus groups were held with FCI’s field social workers (FSWs) and 1 with Palanhar Yojana beneficiaries (the latter consisted of 10 women who are engaged in weekly community meetings at Foster Care India’s family connection centre). The first focus group with FSWs deliberated the format of the RAT and the development of questions – whether FSWs would be comfortable asking stated questions, whether the questions were culturally appropriate, and how to ask the questions to get the information desired, were all considered. The second and third focus groups conducted with FSW occurred after pilot testing of the RAT, allowing FSWs an opportunity to provide direct input and feedback based on direct practice. According to their initial experiences in the field, the tool was revised (e.g. format changes, excluding questions for brevity, and recognizing that some questions needed to be excluded as families and individuals were not willing to share that information). The focus group conducted with the 10 women who are receiving support from the Palanhar Yojana identified concerns and issues they faced with the scheme. The purpose of this was to ensure that the questions in the RAT highlighted the limitations of the scheme and the needs of Palanhar Yojana beneficiaries.

The RAT was drafted in English, but was administered in Hindi by the 4 FSWs who were conducting the Rapid Assessment in Udaipur. A training session was also conducted with these individuals – training focused on how to complete the RAT, what the questions were asking and the purpose behind asking each question listed. Training also included communication techniques, situation assessment, data collection techniques, case management and safety precautions. FSWs were also guided on how to sensitively engage the families they would come into contact with.

The 55 wards of Udaipur were divided among the 4 FSWs – protocol dictated that each FSW would call the family ahead of time to try and make initial contact. After initial contact by phone, FSWs would individually visit each family that was listed as receiving benefits of the Palanhar

scheme. Simultaneously, new cases, or cases where eligible children were not yet connected to Palanhar were referred to FCI's community centre, PJK (Parivar Judao Kendra), for enrolment for NIAC services.

Data collected from the RAT was entered into Excel on a weekly basis by all 4 FSWs and weekly reports were compiled. Data was backed up on a main computer. Efforts were made to identify Palanhar respondents whose addresses were not listed on the original government document or were incomplete. Local banks and community leaders were engaged in the search for missing addresses.

3. Results

Ward numbers 2, 6, 7, 8, 16, 19, 20, 33, 35, 38 had the highest number of Palanhar respondents, with the highest being 22 out of 366 (6%) in ward number 16. Each ward varies in economic, social and religious composition. The intent of the full Palanhar Yojana survey was to secure a representative sample.

Basic Demographic Information

Only 7% of the respondents were male; 93% were female. The distribution across the castes was roughly equal with 23% falling under general, 23% under scheduled caste, 26% under other backward castes and 21% belonging to a minority. Scheduled tribes represented only 7% of respondents. 84% of respondents were Hindu; the remaining 16% were Muslim. No other religion was represented. The majority of respondents (82%) were widows, while 11% of respondents were identified as married, 3% as divorced, 3% as separated and 1% as remarried.

The age distribution of respondents was: 45% between 21 and 35 years old, 42% between 36 and 45 years old, and 9% between 46 and 55 years old. 2% of respondents fall in the age range of 56 and 65 years old, and another 2% are above 65.

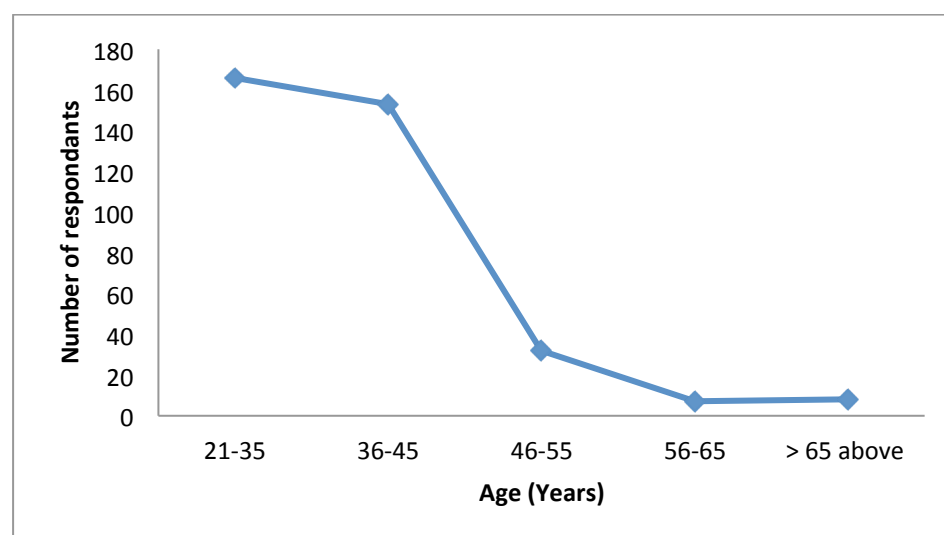


Figure 1. Age of Caregiver

Livelihood

25% of respondents fell in the unemployed category, while 41% were engaged in unskilled jobs. The remaining 34% had skilled jobs.

Family Structure

71% of respondents reported that they themselves were the 'head of the household' while 29% reported that they were not 'head of the household.' For those whom reported that they were not 'head of the household,' this does not necessarily mean that they are financially dependent on other members of the family. Traditionally, if there is an elder member (such as father or father-in-law), whether earning or not, is generally considered 'head of the household'. Of the 29% who reported they were not 'head of the household,' 35% of respondents identified their parents as 'head of the household' while in-laws were identified as 'head of household' by 40% of the respondents. 60% of members reported as 'head of household' were unemployed

Of all the families surveyed combined, 73% of family members were female. The sex distribution was more equal when considering family members below 18; 51% were female to 49% males.

72% of families were nuclear, leaving 28% in the joint family category. 294 (69%) of the 426 earning adults in 366 families were female. 79% of the families do not possess a BPL card.

Education

40% of respondents were educated to the primary school level, while 19% were illiterate, and 16% were educated to the secondary school level and 12% were educated up to senior secondary. Only 13% of all respondents were educated beyond 12th class.

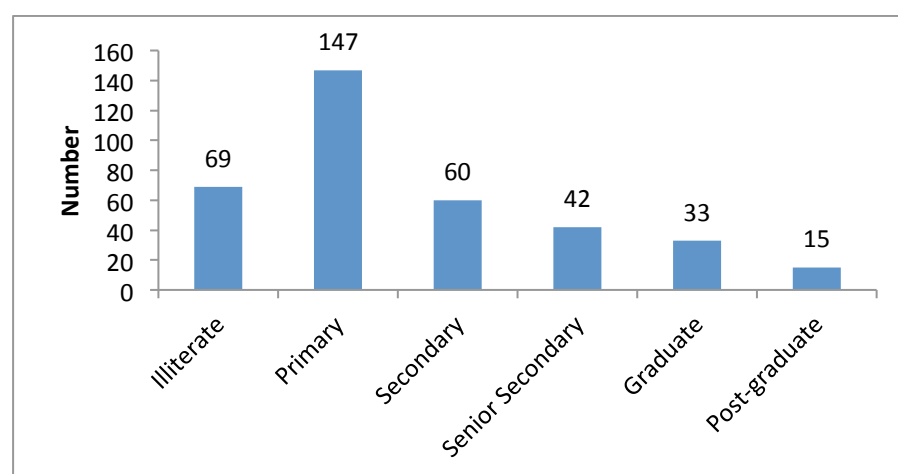


Figure 2. Level of Education of Caregiver

Financial Information

79% of respondents do not have a Below Poverty Line (BPL) card. 43% of respondents reported a family income between Rs. 2,600 (USD \$42) and 5,000 (USD \$81) per month.

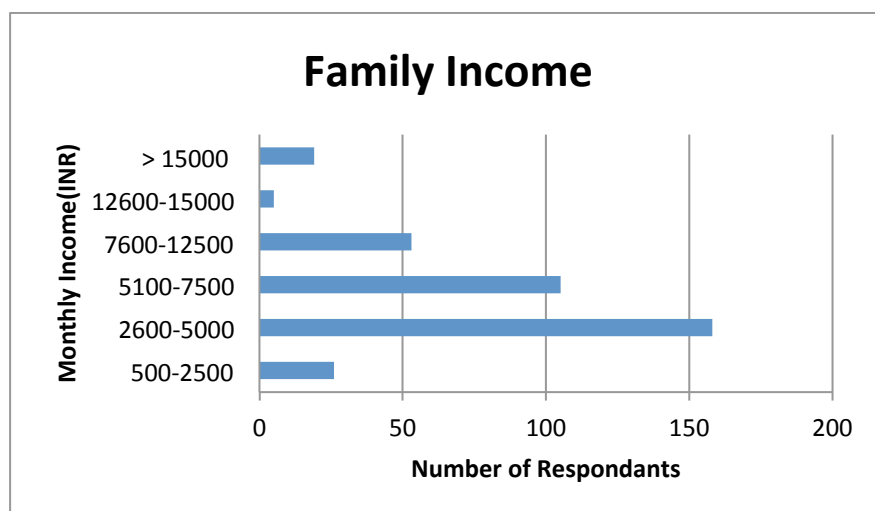


Figure 3. Monthly Income of Palanhar Yojana Beneficiary Families

44% of respondents reported receiving support in the form of sponsorship (cash, in-kind, or both) from a family member, charity, etc.

Out of the 366 families surveyed, 89% were connected to additional government social benefit schemes. 289 (79%) were connected to the widow pension scheme, 11 (3%) to the old age pension scheme, 5 (1%) to the disability pension scheme and 10 (3%) to the divorce/separated pension scheme. 11 families (3%) were connected to more than one other social benefit scheme other than Palanhar Yojana. There were 40 families (11%) who reported that they were not connected to an additional scheme other than Palanhar Yojana.

16% of respondents claimed that they knew another vulnerable family who would benefit from financial assistance.

Awareness

When asked if they were aware of the Palanhar Yojana scheme, 94 out of 366 (26%) of the respondents stated that they were not. This could imply that someone else had helped them register for the scheme. 72% said that someone other than himself or herself had filled out the Palanhar Yojana application form (22% by a relative, 5% by a school teacher, 7% by their ward Parshad, etc.). Nevertheless, 52% of respondents reported that they submitted the form themselves. Of the respondents who were aware of the scheme, 49% said they learned about it from ‘other’ sources (which may include NGOs, camps, etc.), relatives, neighbours and ward Parshads were reported to be the source by 21%, 11% and 11%, respectively. 81% of respondents identified the aim of the Palanhar Yojana as ‘financial support from the government for orphan children’. 18% stated the scheme was to provide for education, while 1% answered that it was for financial assistance of widows.

Palanhar Registration & Payment

Data collected reflects that enrolment of individuals has increased since the scheme was initiated in 2005; the highest year of enrolment being 2012 with 146 children connected to Palanhar Yojana.

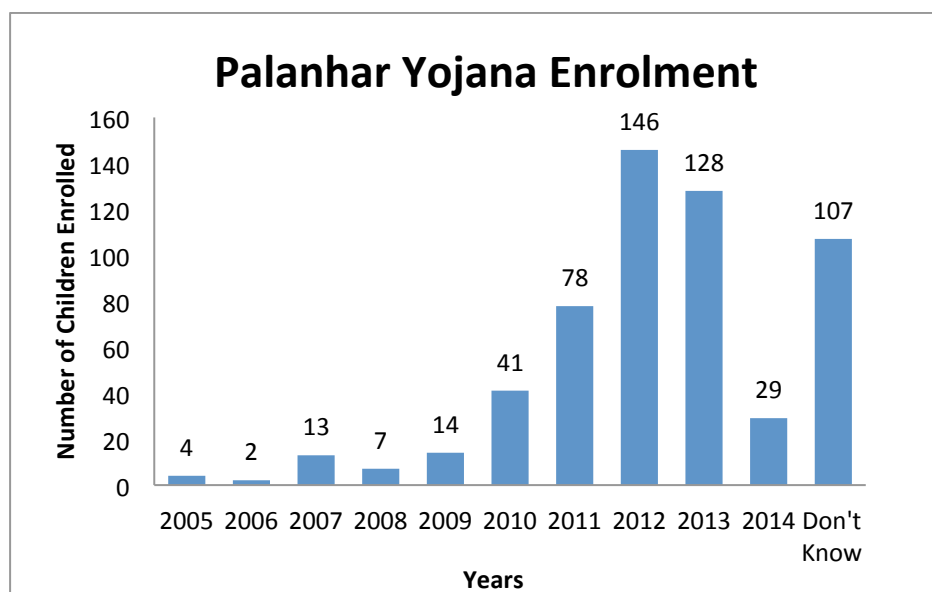


Figure 4. Enrolment of Children in Palanhar Yojana from 2005 - 2014

Caregivers of 216 children (out of 569) who are receiving the Palanhar Yojana benefit stated that they were unaware of when they received their last payment.

Children of Palanhar Yojana

51 out of 366 families reported that one or more of their children were not attending school. The majority, 39%, of these children were out of school in order to help financially support their family. Of the children attending school, 64% study in private schools, whereas 36% are studying in government run schools. Only 9 children were reported to be earning; 6 (67%) out of these were male.

None of the 366 respondents reported to having adopted a child through the legal process. 23 out of 366 families were caring for children who were non-biological. A total of 50 children were cared for by relatives.

4. Discussion

The Rapid Assessment Tool was used to carry out a preliminary survey of the currently registered beneficiaries of the Palanhar Yojana. The survey proved to be an effective method of initiating contact with the families and verifying addresses, contact information, etc.⁵

Basic Demographic Information

Of 366 total beneficiaries who were identified as receiving the Palanhar Yojana benefit, 45% were between the ages of 21-35 and 42% were between the ages of 36-45. 93% of respondents were women, with 82% identified as being widows. In addition, 80% (n=366) of respondents receive the 'widowed Palanhar Yojana' category (the remaining widows may be receiving

⁵ Some of the following hypothesis and recommendations are based on Foster Care India's experience in the field and at advocacy and policy levels. We conducted a literature review of existing and current information to support the recommendations and hypothesis and found that current comparative data does not exist on these topics. The lack of data speaks to a glaring gap in evidence-based information that can support the design and implementation of interventions to support the Palanhar Yojana and other vulnerable populations in need of NIAC services.

Palanhar Yojana under a different category). This indicates that young females are the main caretakers of vulnerable children in Udaipur.

Livelihood

Of the 366 respondents interviewed, 41% of respondents reported working as unskilled labourers while 25% reported as not working. It is important to note that being skilled or unskilled does not necessarily correlate to being educated. The term “skilled” refers to a learned technique that the individual can bring in an income (e.g. pottery, sewing) and does not necessarily refer to skills that required formal education to obtain.

Family Structure

71% of respondents were reported to be ‘head of the household’. Of the 107 (29%) who reported not being the head of household themselves, 40% are living with in-laws. 72% of respondents reported living in a nuclear family model. This high percentage supports the theory that joint families are breaking down and that nuclear families (a family of 2 or 3 people, usually consisting of parent(s) and child) are on the rise. Traditionally, India has predominantly seen the joint family model - families consisting of children, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins - who are often able to offer psychological, financial and other support to a child and their parents in times of need. Prior to this shift (from joint to nuclear) in the family structure, problems and needs within the family unit were often sorted internally. With this change it is important (for governments) to recognize that nuclear families may not be receiving the internal family support that joint-families often offer, leaving them more vulnerable to hardship.

Education

40% of respondents were educated to the primary school level, while 19% were illiterate, and 16% were educated to the secondary school level and 12% were educated up to senior secondary. Only 13% of all respondents were educated beyond 12th class. In the 2011 census conducted, the average literacy rate of Udaipur was 62%; the literacy rate among the male population was 74.74, while it was 48.45 among females. This data may correlate to the high number of respondents (72%) requiring support in filling the Palanhar Yojana form.

Financial Information

43% of respondents reported a family income between Rs. 2,600 (USD \$42) and 5,000 (USD \$81) per month. The average income of Udaipur was not available for comparison for this report.

56% of respondents reported that they have never received any type of sponsorship support for their family. 12% reported to have received sponsorship in the form of money, 23% reported having received sponsorships in the form of in-kind donations and 9% reported to have received a combination of the two.

From the Rapid Assessment survey of Palanhar Yojana beneficiaries, it may be inferred that financial instability resulting from the death of their father is the major cause of vulnerability of children in Udaipur.

Awareness

26% of respondents were not aware of their status as Palanhar Yojana respondents with the remaining 272 (n=366 / 74%) of individuals reporting that they are aware of the Palanhar Yojana. Out of the 74% who are aware of their status as respondents, 81% stated that they believe it is financial support from the government for the care of an orphan, 18% believed that they received the support for education and 1% noted that they believe the Palanhar Yojana is given as support for widows. 21% (of the 272) reported that they received the information they know about Palanhar from relatives. The discrepancy between recipient’s understanding of

what the objectives of the Palanhar Yojana are speak to a need for respondents to be given a clear and detailed description of their status as respondents and of the objectives of the scheme. This lack of clear communication is further supported by the 87% (n=366) of respondents noting that they have never been contacted by the government in regards to their status as Palanhar Yojana beneficiaries.

28% of respondents reported that they completed the Palanhar Yojana eligibility form themselves, 22% had support from a relative and the remaining 50% had someone else complete the form for them. While it is clearly a smaller percentage of individuals who were able to complete the form themselves, 52% reported that with support, they themselves were able to submit the necessary documentation to apply for the Palanhar benefit. This data implies that there is a clear need from a majority of individuals for support in completing and submitting the necessary documentation to receive the Palanhar Yojana benefit.

Children of Palanhar Yojana

Out of 366 families surveyed, 728 total children were reported. This means that in an average household of surveyed families there were 2 children per family. Of the 728 children reported, 569 are registered Palanhar Yojana beneficiaries. This leaves 159 children who are not registered beneficiaries (22% of all children), of whom 132 (83%) are currently eligible for the Palanhar Yojana scheme. The remaining 27 children are non-eligible for the following reasons: they are over 18 years of age, they are the 4th child in their family or they are not attending school.

Of the 366 families surveyed, the number of children cared for per family varied from 1 to 7 (the maximum number of children cared for in a family was 7). 123 (34%) reported caring for 1 child, 157 (43%) reported caring for 2 children, 61 (17%) reported caring for 3 children, 20 (5%) reported caring for 4 children and the remaining 5 families (1%), reported caring for 5 or more children.

In families caring for more than one child, 202 (out of the 366) families surveyed (55%) reported receiving the Palanhar benefit for only 1 child, 119 (33%) reported receiving the benefit for 2 children, 38 families (10%) reported receiving the benefit for 3 children and the remaining 2% reported receiving the benefit for more than 3 children.

While 84% of respondents reported that they were not aware of any vulnerable children who could be receiving the Palanhar benefit but are not, 16% reported that they are aware of at least one vulnerable child who is eligible, and is not receiving the benefit.

64% of respondents (n=366) reported that the children in their care attend private schools with the remaining 36% attending government run schools. Of the total 728 children being cared for by the 366 families, 39% stated that they were not attending school because they were contributing financially to their family's income. Other reasons for school absence were that the child was not interested (27%), that they are unable to attend to due to a disability (8%), or that the family's poor financial condition (25%) took priority over education.

Our data reflects that 0% of respondents had completed the legal process of adoption. However, out of the 728 children identified, 50 are non-biological to their primary caretaker. The 50 children who were being cared for by non-biological caretakers were living in 23 (6%) of the 366 Palanhar Yojana families. Amongst the 23 families 31% were in the care of a maternal grandmother, 26% were in the care of a paternal grandmother, 17% were living with their paternal grandfather and 9% were cared for by either a paternal or maternal aunt.

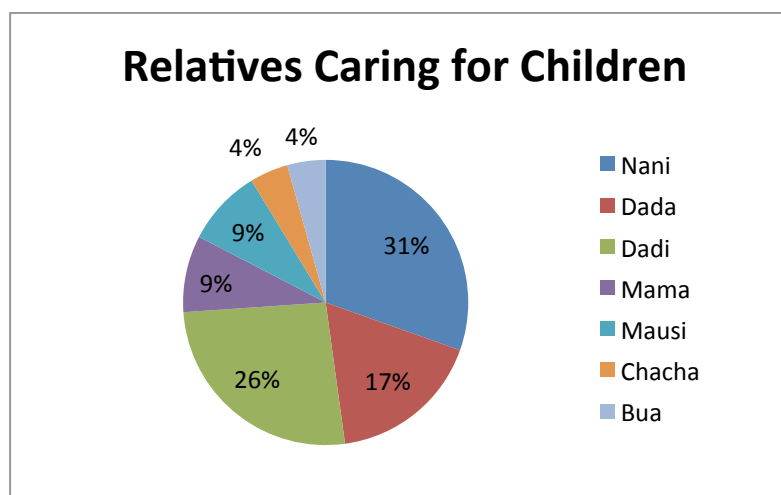


Figure 5. Relatives Caring for Non-Biological Children

This concludes that a female family member cared for a total of 79% of children. This fact, along with the high number of widows indicates that the majority of Palanhar Yojana caretakers are women.

5. Recommendations

The following recommendations have been put forward by Foster Care India as a result of the analysis conducted of the data collected from the Rapid Assessment:

- Interventions and support should be aimed at empowering women and in particular, widows.
- Awareness material on Palanhar Yojana should be created and distributed, keeping the education level of readers in mind; the majority of beneficiaries have a maximum of primary school level education.
- Information, education and communication material targeted to beneficiaries (existing and potential) should consider the religious and caste distribution.
- Palanhar Yojana should be revised to include a monitoring/ evaluation mechanism to ensure that eligibility criteria are continually met, to ensure that the intended benefits are achieved, to identify further needs of beneficiaries, etc.
- Services to reconnect children who have dropped out of school or have never gone to school should be developed.
- Provisions to facilitate the transition of beneficiary children to the Mukhyamantri Hunar Vikas Yojana, as well as other Aftercare services should be made.

6. Conclusions and Implications for Practice

The central aim of this research was to acquire data on which FCI could use to inform the range of NIAC services in Udaipur. While related to the Udaipur context, this report can be adapted to other geographic locations in India. While anecdotal information exists from FCI's field work, evidence-based and/or statistically sound data on Udaipur's demographics is limited. Because this data cannot be extrapolated outside of the context of Udaipur, additional data is needed to make larger generalized statements about family preservation services throughout India. In terms of groups interested in implementing family preservation services this data has immense practical value for social work practice. Campaigns, programmatic design, and targeting awareness campaigns to specific demographics for out-reach can all be informed by the results of this survey.

APPENDIX

Rapid Assessment Tool

Date:	
Field Social Worker Name:	
Form No.:	List No.:
Time of Interview: Start:	End:

A. Palanhar Information

1. Name			
2. Complete Address			
3. Ward No.		4. Contact Number	
5. Age			
6. Sex	[Male-01, Female-02]		
7. Caste	[General-01, SC-02, ST-03, OBC-04, Minority-05]		
8. Religion	[Hindu-01, Muslim-02, Christian-03, Sikh-04, Others-05]		
9. Marital Status	[Married-01, Unmarried-02, Widowed-03, Abandoned/Separated-04, Divorced-05, Nata-06, Remarried-07]		
10. Identification Documents	[Voter I Card-01, Ration Card-02, Bank Acct-03, Aadhar Card-04, Other-05]		
11. Highest Education	[Illiterate-01, Primary-02, Secondary-03, Senior Secondary-04, Graduate-05, Post-graduate-06]		
12. Occupation			
13. Category of Palanhar	[Widow-01, Separated/Divorcee-02, Prisoner-03, Nata-04, PLWHA-05, Leprosy-06, Remarried-07, Orphan-08, Disability-09]		
14. Head of Household	[Yes-01, No-02]		
15. Relationship to Head of Household			
16. Age of Head of Household			
17. Occupation of Head of Household			

B. Family Information

18. Condition of Family	[Joint-01, Nuclear-02]		
19. BPL Card	[Yes-01, No-02]		
20. Number of Adult Family Members (Above 18 years)	Male		
	Female		
	Total		
21. Number of Children in family (0-18 years)	Male		
	Female		
	Total		

C. Children of Palanhar (0-21 years of age)

Sr. No	Name	Age	Sex [Male-01, Female-02]	Regular School-going? [Yes-01, No-02]	Reason for not attending school	School [Govt-01, Private-02]	Contributing to household income? [Yes-01, No-02]	Palanhar beneficiary? [Yes-01, No-02]	Currently living in home [Yes-01, No-02]

D. Financial Information of Family

22. Number of earning adult members	Male	
	Female	
	Total	
23. Number of earning children	Male	
	Female	
	Total	
24. Monthly Household Income (Rs.)	Earnings	
	Schemes	
	Palanhar	
	Other	
	Total	
25.	Children's Education	
	Household	
	Medical	
	Food	
	Other	
	Total	

E. Social Benefits (other than Palanhar)

Sr. No.	Name	Amount	Scheme*

*Widow Pension-01, Old Age Pension-02, Disability-03, Divorce/Separated Pension-04

F. Palanhar Yojana Details

26. Do you know about Palanhar Yojana?	[Yes-01, No-02]	
27. If yes, how did you get this information?	[Ward Parshad-01, School Teacher-02, Anganwadi Worker-03, Neighbour-04, Relative-05, E-Mitra-06, Other-07]	
28. What do you know about Palanhar Yojana?		
29. Number of Children Registered	Male	
	Female	
	Total	
30. Who filled Palanhar Yojana form?	[Ward Parshad-01, School Teacher-02, Anganwadi Worker-03, Self-04, Relative-05, E-Mitra-06, Other-07]	
31. Who submitted your Palanhar Yojana form?	[Ward Parshad-01, School Teacher-02, Anganwadi Worker-03, Self-04, Relative-05, E-Mitra-06, Other-07]	
32. Do you know where your form was submitted?	[No-01, ICPS-02, Social Welfare Dept-03, E-Mitra-04]	
33. Have you been contacted by someone from the government department?	[Yes-01, No-02]	
34. Have you visited at concerned department (Palanhar)?	[Yes-01, No-02]	
35. Do you know any other vulnerable child/children/family?	[Yes-01, No-02]	
36. If yes, give details (name, address, contact number)		

G. Palanhar Beneficiary Details

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
Name				
Date of Birth				
Year Form Filled				
Year of First Payment				
Month of Last Payment				

H. Adoption

37. Have you adopted a child	[Yes-01, No-02]	
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FOSTER CARE INDIA

through legal process?		
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I. Foster Care (Kinship and/or Non-kinship)

38. Number of non-biological children (0-18 years)	Male	
	Female	
	Total	
39. Relation to children	[Nani-01, Nana-02, Dadi-03, Dada-04, Mama-05, Masi-06, Chacha-07, Bhua-08, Stepmother-09, Other-10]	
40. Are they currently staying with you?	[Yes-01, No-02]	
41. Duration of stay		
42. Reason they are staying with you	[Orphan-01, Financial-02, Education-03, Illness-04, Abandoned-05, Other-06]	
43. Location of biological parents	Mother	
	Father	
44. Date of Death	Mother	
	Father	
45. Reason for Death	Mother	
	Father	

J. Family Preservation

46. Have you received any support for your family?	[No-01, Sponsorship (Money)-02, Sponsorship (In kind)-03, Other-04]	
47. Details of support received (amount, donor, etc.)		

K. Aftercare (Only if child 15-21 years)

Name	
Occupation	
Age	
Sex	
Interest	

L. Field Social Worker Comments

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Signature