

Performance Audit Report on Activities of
the Relevant Government
Institutions for the Benefit of Children
and Child Mothers in the Childcare
Development Centers in the Western
Province. - 2011

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Performance and Environment Audit Unit
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Auditor General's Department



1. Executive Summary

The Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs is the main institution in charge of children's affairs in Sri Lanka. Statutory Organizations have been established under the Ministry for perform functions for the benefit of the institutionalized children and generally for all children. The objective of this audit is to examine the activities of relevant Government Institutions for the welfare of children who are orphaned, destitute, deserted and for ascertaining whether the programs implemented by the organizations have been successful in providing the necessary facilities to the children and making them good citizens of the country. The scope of our Performance Audit is limited to the institutions of the Department of Probation Child Care Services in the Western Province due to the limitation of staff, other resources and time allocated to the audit. We have observed during the course of the audit in sample base that the welfare measures taken for promoting the health conditions of children in the Government and the Voluntary CDCs are satisfactory while the provision of balance meals, medical facilities, clinical services and vaccinations to the infants in the CDCs except in a few cases, are also satisfactory.

Education of the children directed by Court Orders is provided by the two Certified Schools. However, the educational facilities provided by CDCs and the participation of children are not at a satisfactory level and the vocational education also are not up to the standards.

Most of the destitute children who need protection and safety are referred to Remand Homes instead of referring to suitable CDCs. Probation Officers had not visited these institutions in satisfactory level though they are required to visit regularly. Due to lack of adequate staff and proper security arrangements and motivation, a proper atmosphere conducive to providing good care to the children had not been created. Though there is a heavy demand for the adoption of the institutionalized children, large numbers of infants remain in the homes for long period due to delays in the process of adoption.

The authorities should pay more attention to providing better schooling facilities and vocational and training to the children as well as better and effective socialization programs aimed at weaning them off their unfortunate circumstances. And if action is taken to maintain the physical resources of these institutions with the objective of providing the children a better and effective socialization programmes by the creation of a favorable environment, it could result in developing them becoming active members of the future generation of the country.

2. Introduction

2.1 Structure of the Institutions

The Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment was established at the end of year 2005 and with the Cabinet reshuffle of 2010, it was later transformed into the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs. The main scope of the Ministry is categorized into two major sections as child development and women's development. National Child Protection Authority, Children's Secretariat and Department of Probation and Child Care Services are responsible for child development. Necessary provision has been made for the Ministry for the implementation a number of programs for ensuring the rights of women and children, development of skills at provincial level and infrastructure programs through institutions such as the Department of Probation and Child Care Services.

2.2 Background

DPCCS is the government institution providing Island-wide probation and Child Care Services. It makes necessary arrangement to admit orphaned, abandoned, destitute, and abused children and juvenile offenders to the Government and voluntary centers on the recommendation of the Probation Officers. According to 2009 Statistical Report, 14,842 children were admitted to 354 Children's Homes. Government has provided facilities to the 27 State Homes. Balance 327 VCDCs are under supervision of Government Probation Officers.

The objectives of the Department of Probation and Child Care Services are as follows.

- To socialize minors, youth and adult offenders through the process of rehabilitation.
- Take actions to ensure rights of the orphaned, abandoned and destitute children
- To ensure rights of children who are subjected to legal issues.
- Taking steps to promote children's rights.

2.3 Main Activities

The main activities of the Department are as follows.

- a. Probation Activities
- b. Child Care Activities

Under the probation activities children determined by the Courts as offenders are rehabilitated and under the child care activities a number of special programs are conducted to ensure that the children's rights are protected according to the Children's Charter.

The probationary system was introduced to Judicial Sector of Sri Lanka in 1930 as an experimental methodology with a view to rehabilitating the offenders. This system was established through the Probation Ordinance No.22 passed in 1944.

While existing probation services were expanded to cover all Judicial Zones and the Children's Court was established in the year 1944 with the implementation of Children and Youth Ordinance. DPCCS was established in the year 1956 as the Department in charge of this subject.

The probation service was brought under the Provincial Councils with the enactment of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution in the year 1987. Under this, Provincial Probation and Child Care services Commissioners were appointed. There are 09 Provincial Departments at Judicial Zonal level and 60 Probation Offices have been established.

The Provincial Department of the Probation and Child Care Services in the Western Province has 05 State Homes and 93 VCDs. Further there are two Remand Homes and two Certified Schools at Rammuthugala and Makola for girls and boys respectively and Prajapathi Receiving Home at Panadura. The number of Children admitted to State Homes and the VCDs in the year 2009 had been 249 and 3,689 respectively. Existence of 27 unregistered homes in the three districts of Western Province is a noticeable feature.

2.4 Authority for the Audit

The audit was carried out under my direction in pursuance of provisions in Article 154 of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

2.5 Need for the Audit and Reason for Selection of Topic.

Child abuses and desertion of children have become a main national issue relating to children in Sri Lanka today. Very often cases of child abuse are reported in both print and electronic media causing shock and concern among the general public. Instances where children are not well protected and cared for by the society prevail. In such circumstances they are often prone to become juvenile offenders. Government has taken several steps to protect such children and save them from the unfortunate conditions and to make them better citizens of the future.

2.6 Audit Objective

Purpose of Performance Audit is to examine the activities of relevant Government Institutions for the welfare of children who are orphaned, destitute, deserted and for ascertaining whether the programs implemented by the organizations have been successful in providing the necessary facilities to the children and making them good citizens of the country.

2.7 Scope of Audit

Performance Audit was conducted under my direction in pursuance of the provisions Article 154 of the Constitution of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and included such tests as we considered necessary. We obtained an understanding of the DPCC's operations and internal control systems (to the extent necessary as a basis to determine their impact on the objectives) and conclude on the findings and recommendation of our Performance Audit.

In that connection, attention was paid to the following matters.

- a) We expected to obtain appropriate audit evidence as we considered sufficient to enable us to draw reasonable conclusions thereon. The nature and extent of our procedures could vary according to our assessment of the risk and related activities which prevent DPCCS achieving the objectives. Our procedures also included examination, of evidence supporting the finding and recommendations.
- b) Our audit scope was limited only to the Western Province and planned in advance and incorporated into an audit plan. This have been be varied on the basis of our finding during the course of the performance audit. Accordingly, we modified our audit scope and propose matters of special emphasis, as the circumstances dictated.
- c) There were 02 Certified Schools, 02 Remand Homes, 01 Receiving Home and 93 registered and 27 unregistered Child Development centers in the Western Province in year 2010. Our performance audit covered 02 Certified Schools, 02 Remand Homes, 01 Receiving Home and 11 registered and 01 unregistered Child Development centers in the Western Province.

2.8 Limitations, Rare Departures and Remediation

Extent of limitation of the Performance Audit to sampling was due to the limitation of human resources and time available for the Performance Audit. It was not possible for the audit to obtain accurate information from the children interviewed by us.

3. Audit Findings, Recommendations and Agency Response

3.1 Health Facilities

Following observations were made regarding the health facilities provided to the institutionalized children.

- a) We have found that 6 out of 15 children in the age range of 0-5 years in a CDC at Nugegoda had not been vaccinated in time for protection against dangerous diseases. Weight and height of 8 children in that CDC had not been checked regularly by midwives in the area at least once a month.
- b) According to the Government vaccination policy, children should be given vaccination for Rubella. But evidence in support of Rubella Vaccination administered to 93 children in a CDC at Nugegoda and 38 children in a CDC at Borella in our sample was not available. Further, evidence of administering Rubella Vaccination to 19 out of 48 children in a CDC at Narahenpita was not available. Though all the children above 10 years should be vaccinated with Adult Tetanus and Diphtheria, antitoxin, there was no evidence of administering of those vaccinations to 35 out of 38 children in the above CDC at Borella.
- c) According to the minutes in the personal files, most of the children in RCS, MCS and VCDCs needed counseling treatment due to the following reasons.
 - (i) Lack of love and care
 - (ii) Most of the children not having parents or close relations
 - (iii) Lack of visits by close relations
 - (iv) Poor social status of parents (Most of the parents of these children had been either separated, or jailed for offences such as drug peddling, robbery or murder)
 - (v) Attempted suicide by certain children by consuming harmful detergents or attempted escape from CDCs.
 - (vi) All children in CSs being juvenile offenders (for unlawful acts such as stealing, assault, sexual harassment, escape from CDSs, etc.)

Even though the situation is severe, permanent counselors have not been recruited or engaged to provide effective counseling to the needy children to rehabilitate them in the early stages.

- d) Certain children in the Makola Remand Home, Makola Certified School and Ranmutugala Remand Home could not manage their own affairs due to mental and physical disabilities and special attention and treatment had not been provided to them. It was observed that one child in each of these institutions has been affected by such disabilities.
- e) The cleanliness of the Ranmutugala Certified School was in a deplorable condition and an odious smell was emanating from the overflowing toilet pits on 25 October 2011, the date of audit. This is a serious threat to the health of the children. The condition of the kitchen was not better. This was observed as a result of lack of regular and effective supervision by the DPCCS.

Implications

- (i) Possibility of further deterioration of mental and physical health of children.
- (ii) Inability to release children after rehabilitation as mentally and physically healthy individually to the society.
- (iii) Inability to obtain appropriate information on the proper growth of infants due to lack of regular checkups.
- (iv) Non -conducting of proper counseling programs associated with CDC resulting in escapes, aggressive behavior among children and being addicted to sexual misconduct.
- (v) Risk of being exposed to various diseases.
- (vi) The possibility of worsening the anti-social behavior of children in the future.

Recommendations

- (i) The relevant authority of the CDCs should be informed the importance of giving vaccinations at correct time.
- (ii) Children should be taught about the importance of good health practices.
- (iii) Counseling programs should be organized so that individual attention can be given for each child.
- (iv) Premises including buildings should be maintained properly and cleaned regularly.
- (v) Action should be taken to recruit and adequate number of staff for the Homes

Agency Response

- The defects mentioned in this report are being gradually rectified and further measures will be taken to uplift the quality and standards of relevant Institutions.

3.2 Education

3.2.1 School Education

The following matters were revealed in this connection

- a) The sample check carried out during the period from 3rd November- 16th November 2011 revealed that 50 percent of the children did not attend the school or followed vocational education according to the Daily work Allocation Register. Some of them were deployed in the kitchen while the others were either watching television or idling.
- b) A perusal of the results of Ordinary and Advanced Level Examinations record books and workbooks of children revealed that other than the children of one of the VCDCs, almost all the children of other CDCs had not achieved a satisfactory level of education though they had been provided with adequate facilities such as food, extra class books, uniforms, bags, etc.

- c) A perusal of the books and records of Literacy Units of the RCS and the MCS revealed that the attendance of children had not been regular and punctual. Further, we observed that when the children were allowed to go for lunch or tea, most of them had not come back on time or did not return to the classes at all.
- d) There were two illiterate children in a VCDC at Panadura and a VCDC in Nugegoda area. But there was no program to provide the ability to read the alphabet to such children.
- e) There were 16 and 9 pupils in Literacy Units of the RCS and the MCS respectively as at the dates of audit on 17 November 2011 and 14 December 2011. The age and knowledge level of these children were different and individual attention had not been given for those children.
- f) One teacher of these two Certified Schools is a holder of a Diploma in Social Service and another teacher is a graduate. Although they have sufficient qualifications in this field, they have not been trained to teach the illiterate or semi-literate children.
- g) The contents or subject matters in syllabuses of semi-literate classes had been formulated by the teachers themselves who had not been trained for teaching of illiterate children.
- h) Out of total number of Children, 12 and 21 children who resided in MCS and RCS and 19 children in 4 VCDCs are not schooling because they have not reached the education level according to their age.

Implications

- (i) It will be difficult to find employment when they are integrated to the society.
- (ii) Creation of a generation of semi- literate children.
- (iii) It will make an extra burden to the Government in future.
- (iv) Release of mentally deficient children to the society.
- (v) When they are released to the society, they would not be able to move with the normal children in the society.
- (vi) Non – achievement of the objective of creating good citizens.

- (vii) There is no sufficient outcome from the funds allocated to maintain these institutions by the Government.

Recommendations

- (i) Proper educational programs should be introduced and implemented for the improvement of education of the schooling children in the State Homes and the VCDCs.
- (ii) The places of accommodation of schooling children of the MCS and the RCS should be separated from the other children to help them to pursue educational activities at leisure without interruption.
- (iii) Providing a formal and regular supervision over children other than facilities for education for the success of education of the children in State Homes and VCDCs.
- (iv) A formal training program should be implemented for the teachers in the Literacy Units of the MCS and the RCS, so that they can perform their duties more effectively, as the children in those units are of different knowledge levels and different ages.
- (v) The Commissioner and Probation Officers should co-operate to get admission to Government schools through official channels.

Agency Response

- The defects mentioned in this report are being gradually rectified and further measures will be taken to uplift the quality and standards of relevant Institutions.

3.2.2 Vocational Education

a) Makola Certified School

A perusal of the Vocational Training Courses arranged by the DPCCS for the children in the CSs revealed that opportunities had been made available for following courses such as Metal Works, Sewing, Electrical, Carpentry, Agriculture, Computer and Masonry.

Courses such as Welding, Metal Works, Painting and Lathe machine are not currently conducted due to non-recruitment of teachers.

The following observations are made on Masonry Section of this school.

- (i) Although there were two teachers recruited for the MCS for conducting masonry course only one teacher was properly conducting the course.
- (ii) In view of the poor attendance of children at the Masonry Section the teacher is unable to conduct the class in proper way and that leads to wastage of public money.
- (iii) We observed that rain water leaks from the roofs to the Masonry Section and the Electrical Section of this school .As such the basic facilities for the conduct of courses were not available.



Damaged roof in Masonry Section at the MCS



Untidy area in the MCS

An examination of the resources of the Electrical Section of this School revealed the following matters.

Even though the courses of the Electrical Section of this School are conducted successfully with the active participation of the teacher and the students, quality materials required for the courses are not provided on time. Rain water leaking from the roof of the section during rainy season was observed.



Electrical Section of the MCS

b) Ranmutugala Certified School

The details are as follows.

- (i) The cookery course of the RCS was conducted with the active participation of the teacher and the children, even though some necessary items of equipment were not available.
- (ii) Children are allocated to the classes in two sessions as morning and evening. At the same time some children were grouped into several training courses and the lack of supervision leads to poor attendance of the children. If the children are allocated properly and if they are encouraged to participate in the courses regularly, a thorough knowledge can be gained from the courses conducted.
- (iii) Children who are institutionalized at Government Centers and who do not receive school education are being provided vocational education and training. Vocational Education Programmes conducted in the Ranmuthugala Certified School had not been properly planned. For example; Juki and agriculture courses are conducted on every day on full – time basis. Some children, who are selected to full-time courses, are selected to other part-time courses such as beauty culture, computer courses etc. As such neither the full- time courses nor part-time courses have been properly completed by any of the children in the Ranmuthugala Certified School. In view of this situation certificates awarded after the completion of the courses had not been awarded.
- (iv) Items/ materials needed for the conduct of the courses of Juki, Hair dressing, Beauty culture, Home science requested by the Instructors of the Ranmuthugala Certified School had not been supplied by DPCCS up to the date of the audit on 17 November 2011 to enable the conduct of courses without interruption.

The following observations are made regarding the Agriculture Section of the RCS.

- (i) According to the Instructor, the syllabus is very vast and beyond the knowledge level of the children. As such it had not been possible to conduct it successfully.
- (ii) The syllabus has been changed to suit the standard of the children. At the time of visiting the institution for inspection on 17 November 2011, children were cleaning the garden or digging the pits for planting coconut seedlings and some coconut seedlings were destroyed by the children. Though extra seedlings were available at the time of audit on 17 November 2011, those had not been used for replacing the damaged seedlings. Fertilizer had not been supplied for over 05 years. As such the efforts of the children had not been successful.
- (iii) Even though instructresses had been in service in the school for 13 years the preliminary activities such as landscaping, crop cultivation, etc. had not been done satisfactorily.
- (iv) Even though raw materials valued at Rs. 58, 592 had been provided to construct an agricultural cabin and a ladder those had been idling without being used for the purpose. It was observed that the materials purchased were not suitable for the intended purpose.

c) Voluntary Child Care Development Centre's

We observed that a VCDC at Narahenpita had conducted a good cookery and sewing course for adult children who sat the Ordinary Level and the Advanced Level Examinations and awaiting results. This is a commendable effort of that CDC taken for the benefit of the children.

A VCDC at Nugegoda was conducting a sewing and knitting course for schooling and non- schooling children. Although this CDC had registered as a VT Institute in addition to CDC, sewing and painting courses conduct by this Institute are not properly organized and controlled due to the following reasons.

- (i) Poor attendance of children.
(Most of the time the children were idling in the premises of the CDC)
- (ii) Lack of materials for the course.
(Thread, Textiles, etc.)
- (iii) Lack of proper supervision.
- (iv) Lack of a curriculum for the course
- (v) Non-issue of certificates to children who complete the courses successfully.
- (vi) Unavailability of a proper management and evaluation system for the courses to assess the level of training acquired by the children.

Implication

- (i) Inability to conduct the training successfully due to the delay in the supply of materials needed for practical training and other requirements of courses.
- (ii) Informal preparation of training programmes resulting in the inability to achieve objectives.
- (iii) Children cannot complete any courses as training is not done effectively due to improper programming and inefficient management.
- (iv) The expenditure on the agricultural cabin had become fruitless as the need for that and the benefits accruing therefrom had not been assessed in advance.
- (v) Children who had not gone to school cannot attend school as their ability to read and write was below the standard for the class/ grade according to the age. As such they are not admitted to the particular grades by the Principals.

Recommendation

- (i) Principal of the Certified School should prepare timetables in the manner in which every child gets the opportunity to take part in the vocational training.
- (ii) Materials required for the informal education provided to the children by the Centers should be supplied in full and on time.
- (iii) Procurement of materials for works or projects should be made only after assessing the need for such works or projects and the quality, quantity and type of materials should be determined by a competent person. Compliance with procurement procedure in the supply of resources is needed.
- (iv) Children should be properly allocated to the two sessions as morning or evening according to a schedule.
- (v) Proper supervision to be maintained to ensure the attendance of the children.
- (vi) Proper evaluation system for all the courses should be introduced and certificates should be issued to those who complete the courses successfully.
- (vii) Masonry and the Electrical Sections of the MCS should be repaired as soon as possible to do their work safely.
- (viii) A daily record keeping system should be introduced for the teachers record the contents of the teaching done daily.
- (ix) Each and every child should be given an opportunity to take part in vocational training activities so that they will be able to continue their lives without depending on others and that will make them good citizen to the society.
- (x) Informal education should be arranged in the voluntary CDC. If the children are given formal or informal education during the resident period, they will be able to improve their education.

Agency Response

- The defects mentioned in this report are being gradually rectified and further measures will be taken to uplift the quality and standards of relevant Institutions.

3.3 Protection and Care

The following matters were observed in this connection

- a) There was no central data base system in the DPCCS regarding the children in the Government CSs, the RHs and the VCDCs which may leads to the following problematic situations.
 - (i) Lack of information to identify the place of residence of children of CDCs promptly as and when a need arises.
 - (ii) Inability to ascertain the number of children residing in CDCs under the custody, care and supervision of DPCCS.
 - (iii) A perusal of the Admission and Discharge Registers and the Attendance Registers of the RCS and the MCS, revealed that, there is no notice or a minutes regarding 06 children of RCS in 2011 and 10 children of MCS in 2010 taken out for Court appearances by the Department of Prisons. This has happened due to the lack of proper communications system between the Department of Prisons and the DPCCS.
 - (iv) A perusal of the Admission and Discharge Register of one of the registered VCDC which takes care the Children around 01 month – 5 years revealed that adequate information of the institutions to which 7 children had been transferred from the relevant home during the years 2009, 2010 and 2011 was not available.

- b) Most of the children in CDC have come for protection from poor families with one of the parents abroad or jailed or had a second marriage/ or separated parents. Abused children are also referred to the same CDC. As these two categories of children belong to different backgrounds, there were opportunities for children to corrupt the other children by relating their unfortunate experiences. Children become juvenile delinquents by carrying on illicit affairs with the opposite sex before they reach an adult age of 18 years. The particulars of the mix of abused and abandoned children are given below.

<u>Name of CDC</u>	<u>Number of Children in the CDCs.</u>	<u>Number of Children Destitute</u>	
		<u>Abused</u>	<u>Abandoned</u>
A CDC at Narahenpita	34	01	33
A CDC at Kelaniya	24	01	23
A CDC at Maharagama	72	02	70
A CDC at Panadura	28	03	25
A CDC at Kalutara	48	07	41
A CDC at Nugegoda	150	07	143

- c) Juvenile delinquents of 43, 41 and 58 referred to the MRH, the MCS and the RCS in the years of 2009, 2010 and 2011 have escaped from the homes due to the lack of security measures and later they were found in their parent/ relative's places.
- d) According to the guidelines issued by the Department of Probation and Child Care Services, there should be one House Mother/ Overseer for each group of five children, who are under the age of 2 years, and the children aged between 02-06 year, and 25 children aged over 06 years. It was observed that the number of House Mothers Overseers in every Government and voluntary CDC is inadequate according to the work roster as compared with the number residing in each CDC.
- e) Probation Officers had given letters of permission to take out children from the voluntary CDC without proper identification of parent/ guardian.
- f) At the time of conducting physical examinations in the RRH, the MRH the MCS, the RCS and the VCDCs regarding the security arrangements made for the children, the following instances that may harm to the lives of the children were observed.

(i) **RRH.**

The electricity system and some places of the buildings of this home were very unsecured.



Unsecured Electricity System at the RRH



Unsecured food store at the RRH

(ii) **RCS**

The following matters were observed

- Although the number of children at the RCS was always more than 50 most of the time children have to stay with one House Mother even in the absence of a watcher.
- Two girls had climbed onto the slab of the water tank which was around 50 feet above ground level.
- A heap of discarded broken beds, chairs and cupboards were gathered in and around an old building of the RCS and it could be a breeding ground for harmful creatures.



Broken furniture at the RCS



Broken furniture at the RCS

(iii) MCS

The following matters were observed

- At the date of audit on 02 November 2011 we observed that, a boy who was in the kitchen was boiling water for tea in a large boiler without a Plug Top and with the uncovered ends of the electrical wire



Unsecured Electricity System at Makola Certified School



Unprotected Toilet Pit at Makola Certified School

(iv) VCDCs

The following matters were observed

- A VCDC in Panadura area, which always maintains 40 children in the age range of 6-17 years has an unprotected well in its garden.
- The Matron of that home stated that the boys get down to the well when they play and wash their clothes. The well is fairly deep and the possibility of accident if not protected, cannot be ruled out. It had been difficult to control the children.
- A heap of discarded old fiber mattresses stored in the same CDC. This could be a fire hazard if not disposed of promptly.
- Except 02 CDC at Pepiliyana and another CDC at Moratuwa there were no security officers in other CDCs although more than 40 girls resided in the CDC at the time of audit.
- All the CDCs other than two CDCs had installed fire extinguishers in their premises for the safety of the children.

- g) Twenty four VDCs situated in Western Province have not been registered under the Child Development Centres Statute No. 01 of 2008 up to the date of audit on 02 November 2011.
- h) Out of above CDCs certain CDCs have been in operation for over 10 years, but due to non-fulfillment of conditions of DPCCS, it was not possible to register these CDCs with the DPCCS. However, we observed that, a regular supervision had not been done by the DPCCS over these CDCs during past several years. In our physical observations carried out in an URCDC situated in Wellawatta area, we observed that, a PO had not visited within past 3 years. According to the information in the media, many instances of ill-treatment of children and using children for various malpractices by the managements of these UVCDCs had been reported. Two such instances are given below.
 - (i) Death of a boy due to fire in a UVCDC in Gampaha District.
 - (ii) Abuse of two girls by the Pastor of the relevant CDC in Ja-Ela area.

Implication

- (i). Most of the children referred by the Courts remain in the Remand Homes without proper supervision due to insufficient staff. There is no sufficient security staff for deployment on duty shifts on 24 hours a day. It shows the lack of concern of the management to ensure the safety of the children under their custody.
- (ii) Children who are in need of care, protection and education have not been provided such facilities needed for their ages. It hinders the development of mental and health conditions and the possibility of becoming problem children cannot be ruled out.
- (iii) Most of the children are abandoned and destitute and they live with abused children in the same CDC. According to some wardens illicit sexual relationships are formed due to lack of proper supervision resulting from the lack of adequate staff.

- (iv) The girl offenders referred by the Courts are not being kept under proper supervision due to insufficient staff to ensure regular and effective supervision by CDCs/ Schools.
- (v) As the Probation Officers do not follow a proper identity check before the issue of letters of permission, Wardens are faced with the problem of releasing children referred by the Courts.
- (vi) Children are to be looked after for 24 hours of a day and the staff working on shift basis are unable to look after the children properly due to insufficient staff. This is so acute in the case of Prajapathi CDC where infants under one year are kept. If a child falls ill or hospitalized one House Mother should look after the particular infant. Some infants have to be taken for regular clinics on the same day under this inconvenient situation. So, the infant in of this home do not receive adequate amount security love and care.
- (vii) Action taken by the authorities to fill vacancies had been at a weak level.
- (viii) Both in the MCS and the RCS the children are deployed to do gate duty and that included girls as well. Such practices are very risky.

Recommendations

- (i) Sufficient staff should be recruited for all institutions in accordance with the guidelines issued by DPCCS to carry out the duties without any hindrance.
- (ii) Children who are in need of protection and safety should be referred to the voluntary CDC without retaining in the Remand Homes. It is suggested that Probation Officers should report to the Court about children who are not offenders.
- (iii) Abused children should be kept separately from the other children and they should be retained in a separate CDC.
- (iv) There should be an effective duty programmer with sufficient staff for the Certified Schools.
- (v) Probation Officers should maintain the records of persons who are allowed to take out children from any CDC before the issue letters of permission. A letter of

permission should contain the name of the person, ID number and address, contact number, etc.

- (vi) Ladder area of the water tank of the RCS should be covered to prevent the children from reaching it.
- (vii) Children should not be engaged for gate duty both in State Homes and VCDCs.
- (viii) VCDCs should be instructed to recruit security officers according to the nature of the center. (Male security officers for boy's homes and female security officers for girl homes)
- (ix) Dangerous areas such as unprotected wells, exposed electrical wiring should be promptly covered/ repaired.
- (x) Installation of fire extinguishers in all institutions should be made compulsory.

Agency Response

- i) The defects mentioned in this report are being gradually rectified and further measures will be taken to uplift the quality and standards of relevant Institutions.

3.4 Quality Standards

Minimum quality standard introduced by the DPCCS for child development centers are not being carried out. The observations are as follows.

- a) The kitchens of Ranmutugala and Makola Remand Homes and the kitchen of Prajapathi Receiving Home were in clean condition on the dates of audit but, the kitchens of Ranmuthugala and Makola Certified Schools were very untidy (waste water and particles of food were scattered on the floor and house-flies were rampant) Drains had not been cleaned and windows were broken.



Untidy Kitchen at the MCS



Untidy Kitchen at the MCS



Untidy Kitchen at the RCS



Untidy Kitchen at the RCS

- b) Mostly the clothes worn by the children at the RCS were very dirty
- c) Bad odor was emanating from the second floor of the three storied building due to improper use and latrine pits were overflowing.

Implication

- (i) The sense of cleanliness of children is at a very low level.
- (ii) The possibility of children falling sick due to unclean toilets exists.
- (iii) Supervision by the Department of the children in VCDCs is inadequate.

Recommendations

- (i) The staff attached to the kitchens of the MCS and the RCS should be instructed to maintain the cleanliness of the kitchens at all times.
- (ii) Children with mental and physical disabilities should be transferred to suitable institutions maintained by the Department of Social Services.
- (iii) Probation Officers should regularly visit and supervise all registered and unregistered institutions in these areas.
- (iv) All unregistered institutions should be given a specified period to fulfill the requirements for registration.
- (v) Management of VCDCs should include only socially recognized persons or who possess an understanding of child care.

Agency Response

- The defects mentioned in this report are being gradually rectified and further measures will be taken to uplift the quality and standards of relevant Institutions.

3.5 Socialization

Children can be retained at a CDC for a maximum period of two to three years. Probation Officers should make an effort to handover the children to their parents, relatives etc. within this period.

The following observations are made in this connection.

- a) The officers have not taken any action to comply with the requirement, or to extend the retention period of the child in the CDC with the approval of the Commissioner of DPCCS.
- b) It was observed that some children were not given for adoption or there were delays in the adoption process due to the following reasons.
 - (i) As at the date of audit on 28 September 2011 the adoption process of 22 children who were in the institution for periods ranging from 4 months to 12 years, had been delayed due to the delay in the issue of the Probation Officers' report. Following matters were caused for that.
 - Delay in children's report (parents details – preforma)
 - Delay in registration of parents due to the delay in Probation Officer's report. (Before registration Probation Officer should submit a report about their background)
 - (ii) At the date of audit of 15 November 2011, 51 parents who wished to adopt children could not be registered at DPCCS due to the delay the in Probation Officer's report.
 - (iii) Inability of the underage mothers to take decisions.

At the date of audit of 26 September 2011, there were 6 infants (whose mothers were under the age 15 years) who had not been given for adoption due to the underage of their mothers.

- c) One of the main objectives of the DPCCS is to socialize minors, youth and adult offenders through the process of rehabilitation. We collected the data from 42 CDCs by post and the observations thereon are as follows.
- (i) There were 05 courses of action taken by the respective centers for the socialization of children. Information thereon was as follows.

**Number of
children socialized.**

<u>Method of Socialization</u>	<u>Year</u>		
	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Children handed over to the parents or relations.	133	181	154
Children referred for jobs.	27	23	18
Children whose marriages were registered.	01	03	06
Adoptions finalized	08	13	24
Children referred for Foster Parents	03	14	03

- (ii) Probation Officer should forward the report about the family background of a child immediately after admission to the institution. Though a longer period had passed after admission, Probation Officers had not submitted this report regarding 4 children in the RCS and 15 children in the MCS. This is one of main barriers in socializing and taking welfare measures for these children.
- d) According to the Child Development Centres statute No.01 of 2008, one Placement Committee meeting should be held for a month. The result observed regarding this is as follows.
- (i) State Homes
Examination of the progress of holding Placement Committee meetings revealed that the Prajapati Receiving Home held only 10, 01 and 03 meetings for the years 2009, 2010 and 2011 respectively while the RCS held only 04 and 03 meeting for the years 2009 and 2010 respectively was not satisfactory.

(ii) Voluntary Child Care Development Centres

The minimum number of meetings that should be held within a year had not been held in 9 VCDCs during the 3 years under review and none of the meeting had been held in another 4 VCDCs.

- e) Probation Reports for each child were not available in the CDCs and as such it had not been possible to perform the necessary formalities regarding the children without proper information.

<u>Name of the CDC</u>	<u>Number of Children</u>	<u>Number of Children without proforma</u>
A CDC at Narahenpita	48	17
A CDC at Panadura	13	04
Makola CS	74	16
A CDC at Borella	38	06
A CDC at Nugegoda	108	21

- f) There are infants who are retained in the Prajapathi CDC for a long period without giving for adoption due to the absence of birth certificates or probable age certificates, time of birth, absence of the father's name in birth certificate etc.

Implication

- (i) Expected number of children could not be released to the society as good citizens.
- (ii) Due to the inefficiency of the officers responsible for socialization the opportunities for children who are willing to live with their parents/ relatives have been lost due to referring them and retaining in the CDCs. There is a possibility of the children becoming cruel and creating problems to other children.
- (iii) When the children grow up, without proper schooling they become unemployable very often. It is difficult to give for adoption as grown up children. Foster parents prefer to takeover in the infant age as it is easy for the children to accept the foster parents as their own parents.

- (iv) Wardens cannot administer the CDC properly due to the heavy workload such as attending Courts, meetings with Grama Niladari, Divisional Secretary, and officers in the Ministry of Education and School Principals to obtain school admissions.
- (v) The children in unregistered CDCs not supervised by government officers faced several harmful problems due to deficiencies in the issue of the investigation reports of the Probation Officers.
- (vi) Adoption procedure had not been implemented properly.

Recommendation

- (i) Up to date procedures should be introduced to handover the children for adoption at the infant stage itself.
- (ii) Parents are the persons who are responsible for the future of the child. As such awareness programs should be organized for the parents of the children who are in the CCDCs to introduce the concepts such as the value of the children, giving love, care and attention as well as protection and guidance to become good citizens.
- (iii) Specific instructions should be given to Probation Officers to follow circulars instructions issued by the Department in this connection.
- (iv) Relevant officers should pay particular attention to obtain the birth certificates/ probable age certificates and other information from the mother or doctor when the infant is handed over to the home.
- (v) Warden and other staff in CDCs should have to look after and treat the children with maximum level of love and care.
- (vi) Every unregistered CDCs. should be registered under the respective Statute and children who are living in the CDCs should be under supervision of the respective Officers.
- (vii) Probation officers should be instructed to issue the reports on children without undue delay.
- (viii) As legal provision relating to the underage mothers and their children admitted to the Centre's are not available at present. Special arrangements should be made in

this connection and at the same time early action should be taken to amend the existing laws to cover this area.

Agency Response

- The defects mentioned in this report are being gradually rectified and further measures will be taken to uplift the quality and standards of relevant Institution.

3.6 Ad-hoc Subsidies and Maintenance Fees

The following observations were made in this connection

- a) DPCCS grants Rs.20 as maintenance aid per day for every residential child in registered Child Development Centre's. We have observed that most of the CDCs had received such grants during succeeding year with delays in certain months instead of paying such aid during the particular year itself. Department has not taken any action to expedite this process in order to strengthen of welfare facilities of children. Details are as follows.

<u>Year</u> <u>2009</u>	<u>Number</u> <u>of CDCs</u>	<u>Amount</u> <u>Paid Rs.</u>
02 to 05 Month	37	7,956,860
06 to 09 Month	19	3,831,206

- b) After 2006, Ad-hoc aid provided had not been paid to the CDCs due to the non-settlement of Bills. Four CDCs had been paid 90 per cent of Ad-hoc expenses on their requests and those were the last payments to the CDCs at the date of audit on 31 August 2011 action had not been taken to provide funds annually for the

renovation and modernization the buildings which remain below the standard as we observed.

- c) We have observed that the procedures that should be followed for providing ad hoc aid through the supervision of Probation Officer and the Probation Officer in charge of the homes, before 15th February. The details of delays of the CDCs and DPCCS are given below.

<u>Delay</u> <u>(Years 2009)</u>	<u>Number of</u> <u>CDC</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u> <u>Rs</u>
05 Month	06	776,605
6-7 Month	32	3,307,207

Implications

- (i) Some CDCs faced financial difficulties due to the weaknesses of the managements of CDCs and DPCCS.
- (ii) The buildings where children reside have not been color washed for a long period. It affects the health condition of the institutionalized children as well as the pleasant environment in these centers. This is due to the delays in submitting the recommendation reports to the Commissioner after completion of the work done / purchases made in advance.
- (iii) Building maintenance has not been done in every year and it affects the mental and physical health of the children.

Recommendation

- (i) The Managers of CDCs should complete the relevant forms in time. One copy of each form should be forwarded before January 31 of the following year by the Probation Officer in charge of the home in terms of paragraphs 4.7 and 5.4 of Circular No.01/2009 dated 01 February 2009 of DPCCS.
- (ii) Probation Officers in charge of the Homes should follow the paragraph 13.3 of the DPCCS Circular No. 02/2009 dated 01 February 2009 which requires that the bills related to purchase of items should be forwarded to the Commissioner with the recommendation of the Probation Officer in charge of the Home.
- (iii) Commissioner and the other staff should take action to pay ad hoc aid in time in accordance with the circular issued by DPCCS.

Agency Response

- The defects mentioned in this report are being gradually rectified and further measures will be taken to uplift the quality and standards of relevant Institutions.

3.7 Administration of Personnel

The following observations were made.

- a) Wardens who serve in Vocational CDCs do not have sufficient qualifications and training in their work. Under these circumstances they have been paid a very low salary and are unable to get promotions/ increments for long period of time in order to motivate them.
- b) A perusal of the files of children of the RRH and the MRH , we noted that there were 6 and 3 children at the RRH and the MRH respectively at the dates of audit (04 November 2011 and 17 November 2011) whose the retention period had not been specified by the Court (the maximum retention period is 2 weeks).
- c) We have observed that the Probation Officer had not visited to the relevant CDCs at least once during a year. Hence there was no communication between the Warden and the Probation Officers to discuss the problems regarding children.

- d) Disciplinary action had not been taken against an Assistant Male Warden who committed sexual harassment to a child at Kottawa Remand Home in the year 2006 and his service had been extended despite the above offence to enable him to retire on the due date that is on 03 August 2008.
- e) Confirmation of qualifications of most of the staff of five State Homes had not been obtained from the relevant parties.
- f) Duty lists of most of the officers were not available in the relevant files.
- g) A Minor Staff Officer who was remanded for committing sexual harassment to two children while she was working at the RCS as a Temporary House Mother had been later promoted as a House Mother without conducting a disciplinary inquiry against her.
- h) Action had not been taken to fill 71 vacancies in different posts of DPCCS which had been vacant from year 2002 at different times up to the date of audit (16 November 2011).
- i) The salary revision offered by the Circular No. 28/2010 dated 31 December 2010 which was to be effective from July 2011 had not been prepared for the 07 officers on the due dates.
- j) It was observed that the following situations had arisen due to above reasons.
 - i. Employees dissatisfaction.
 - ii. Employees engaging in other work rather than their normal work.
 - iii. Inability to pay full attention to children.
- k) It was observed that the staff who interact with the children had not been provided with training and guidance properly to handle their day to day work with the children effectively although they had made requests for training in their Appraisal Reports.

Implication

- (i) Due to the failure to fill the vacancies in staff of the centers, it had not been possible to obtain the maximum service from the overburdened existing staff.

- (ii) The lack of information of the children that should be obtained on admission to the centers had resulted in difficulties in arriving at decisions about the children and in the implementation of procedures.

Recommendation

- (i) Arrange and provide regular childcare and conflict management training to the staff of CDCs.
- (ii) Wardens and House Mothers should be given training in order to handle children with care and affection.
- (iii) Personal information of the children should be updated as it will be helpful in the socialization of children.
- (iv) The Commissioner or a responsible officer should verify the work programs implemented by the Probation Officers.
- (v) Action should be taken to fill all the vacancies in the Department to enable the smooth functioning of the system.
- (vi) Take action to give salary increments and salary revisions of the staff on due date if there are no serious charges against them with the view to maintaining high satisfaction of staff and motivate them to render a better service.
- (vii) Disciplinary inquiries should be held and action should be taken against the employees of State Homes in cases of allegation of sexual harassments committed to children and disciplinary action should be regularized.

Agency Response

- The defects mentioned in this report are being gradually rectified and further measures will be taken to uplift the quality and standards of relevant Institutions.

3.8 Land, Buildings and Equipment

The following matters were observed

- a) It was observed that there were 5 buildings in the RCS and the MCS which had never been used from the date of completion of the construction up to the date of audit.

<u>Name of CS</u>	<u>Date of Audit</u>	<u>Name of Building</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Date of Completion</u>	<u>Value</u> <u>Rs.</u>
RCS	25.10.2011	Bachelor's Quarters	-	Not available	1,456,356
RCS	25.10.2011	Sick Room	-	05.10.2010	3,660,428
MCS	15.12.2011	Principal's Quarters	40' x 47'		*
MCS	15.12.2011	Sick Room	70'x25'	17.07.2011	4,259,516
RCS	25.10.2011	Guard Room	-	30.11.2007	248,585



Unused Guardroom



Unused Bachelors' Quarters



Unused Principal's Quarters

- b) It was observed that the windowpane of the Bachelor's Quarters of the RCS has been broken by someone and the surrounding area of the building was overgrown with grass.

- c) The sickroom of the RCS also had not been used from its completion as there was no separate staff to look after the sick children.



Unused Sickroom

- d) There were no records to show the value of buildings separately. Even though a request was made by letter No. AF/PF/2011/PA/Information dated 9 December 2011 to furnish the value of this building there was no response.
- e) The Principal's Quarters of the MCS had not been occupied from the date of its completion and was being used as a store as at the date of audit.



Unused furniture stored in Principal's Quarters



Unused furniture stored in Principal's Quarters



Unused Cupboard in Principal's Quarters



Unused Cupboard in Principal's Quarters

- f) A heap of broken computers, broken beds and racks were stored in two rooms of the Principal's quarters of the MCS and 3 new steel cupboards were stored without being used in the living area of the quarters.
- g) The surrounding area of the Principal's quarters was also overgrown with grass.



Unclaimed surrounding areas of Principal's Quarters Unclaimed surrounding areas of Principal's Quarters

- h) The sickroom of the MCS has been built in a lower section of the land and a flight of 25 steps has to be used to reach to the building which makes difficulties to move the sick children to the sickroom and in providing transport.



Flight of Steps to the Sickroom

Implication

- (i) Poor planning, acquisition, use and maintenance of assets like buildings had led to waste of Government funds.
- (ii) The children had not received the expected facilities.

Recommendation

- (i) Action should be taken to make use of idle assets.
- (ii) Attend to the short comings in the building.
- (iii) Selection of suitable sites and assets in the acquisition of assets.

3.9 Utilization of Other Fixed Assets and Inventory Items

The following observations were made.

- a) Identification numbers had not been stenciled on all assets in State Homes for identification purposes.
- b) Five sewing machines received by the Sewing Section of RCS on 04 March 2011 from the stores were found to be decayed.

- c) Two sewing machines, (DA 135932 and DA137254) which can be repaired and used had been kept aside in the Sewing Section as at the date of audit on 25 October 2011 without being repaired and used for the intended purpose.
- d) The zigzag machine (C604010156) which can be used after repairing its table had been kept aside in the Sewing Section without being repaired.
- e) The water filters (union UW 60299060603) received by the RCS and Prajapathi Receiving Home as a donations from a Non-Governmental Organization in March 2011 had not been used for the benefit to the children up to the date of audit on 28 October 2011.
- f) Fifteen new infant beds purchased by the Prajapathi Receiving Home for Rs.108.503 in the year 2008 remained without being used.

Implication

- (i) Non-use of assets could result in impairment of assets.
- (ii) Loss of benefits from the assets.
- (iii) Government expenditure not being economical and effective.

Recommendation

- (i) Inventory items should be code numbered and stenciled on the assets and the assets should be recorded in a methodical manner to enable verification with stock records, registers, inventory, etc. The following method can be adopted for the purpose.
- (ii) Special attention should be paid to the children's need for drinking water.
- (iii) Follow the stock verification system.
- (iv) Follow the procurement procedure properly.

Agency Response

- The defects mentioned in this report are being gradually rectified and further measures will be taken to uplift the quality and standards of relevant Institutions.

4. Conclusion

The orphaned, abandoned, destitute and abused children who are below 18 years of age are resident in 253 homes registered under the DPCC throughout the Island. Those are Voluntary Homes and State Homes administrated by the DPCC. Children detained in the State Homes are referred by the Courts. They are looked after by the Government by providing meals, education and other infrastructure facilities during rehabilitations and socialization. It was observed that the children are provided meals, lodging and health facilities at a satisfactory level. Most of children who are in the homes are provided with primary and secondary educations. But the results of the Advanced and Ordinary Level Examinations are very poor. Children's progress in school should be frequently checked and give additional education for subjects where they are weak. Vocational training conducted in certain Certified Schools are not at the satisfactory level due to ineffective timetables, unmarked participant attendance, not providing essential raw materials on time, etc. DPCC should take necessary action to overcome such weakness under proper supervision. The development process of Children should be properly designed to enable them to be useful citizens after release from the Homes.

The Protection, necessary safety measures and health facilities given to the children in the state and voluntary homes in those homes are insufficient due to the lack of capable and motivated staff. No proper information had been given to the house mothers when the children are returned after attending Court. DPCC and management should take necessary action to fulfill and ensure the protection of each and every child produced in the Courts or brought from the Courts. Even though the situation is critical, action had not been taken for the recruitment or the deployment of Permanent Counselors needed to provide the services at these stages to the children who need to be rehabilitated.

Further, certain assets in the Homes should be properly utilized for providing maximum benefit to the children. Taking all these matters in to consideration, facilities such as finance and other provisions needed for the proper performance of the duties of the Probation Officers in connection with the socialization process of the children should be

provided with a view to making the process meaningful. Registration and proper supervision of the Voluntary Child Development Centers maintained without being registered could maximize the injustices caused to the children under probation thereby integrating them to the society as good citizens.

Abbreviations

CS	- Certified School
CDC	- Child Development Centers
DPCCS	- Department of Probation and Child Care Services
INTOSAL	- International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions
MCS	- Makola Certified School
MRH	- Makola Remand Home
PO	- Probation Officer
RCS	- Rammuthugala Certified School
RHs	- Remand Homes
RRH	- Rammuthugala Remand Home
UVDCs	- Unregistered Voluntary Child Development Centers
VCDCs	- Voluntary Child Development Centers