Role And Performance of NGO's In Health, Education, And Drug Rehabilitation in Manipur: Evidence from IWCDC And IRCA

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***Abstract*—This paper will discuss the working, contributions, and shortcomings of rehabilitation and child welfare institutions in Manipur through a case study of SHINE IRCA (Integrated Rehabilitation Centre for Addicts) and Punya Children Home for Girls. Both these institutions are running under the Integrated Women and Children Development Centre (IWCDC), which is a non-governmental organization working in partnership with the government-supported welfare systems. These two institutions function under the general support of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Ministry of Women and Child Development, specifically through schemes such as Mission Vatsalya. The research relies on secondary data drawn from government documents, institutional reports, policy guidelines, and existing academic literature. It examines how SHINE IRCA addresses substance abuse through a structured process involving detoxification, counselling, rehabilitation, and reintegration.**

At the same time, Punya Children Home provides care, protection, and developmental support for vulnerable girls, including those with special needs. The findings suggest that both institutions play a meaningful role in addressing deeply rooted social issues such as addiction, neglect, and vulnerability among children. Their interventions contribute not only to individual well-being but also to broader community stability. However, the study also highlights persistent challenges, including limited financial resources, infrastructural constraints, social stigma, and disruptions caused by socio-political instability in the region. The study concludes that while these institutions are making a significant difference, there is a need for stronger institutional capacity, improved coordination, and sustained policy support to enhance their long-term effectiveness and impact.

***Index Terms*—NGOs, Rehabilitation, Drug Addiction, Child Welfare, Mission Vatsalya Scheme Manipur, SHINE, IRCA.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Non-governmental organisations have become indispensable participants in the contemporary development sector. Especially in regions where formal state institutions have limited or uneven coverage, over time they have advanced from supplementary service providers to active partners across multiple fields, with core competencies including deep local familiarity, rapid response capacity, and the ability to easily gain the trust of local communities. This makes them especially important in addressing complex and sensitive social issues that require sustained engagement and empathy.

In a very much isolated geographically and in a socio-political crossfire state like Manipur the role of NGOs is very great. The state's terrain which is that of hills and valleys, along with its border location and past of social political issues, puts forth great issues to the put through of public services. Although there are government policies and welfare programs, their implementation is very much hit by infrastructural issues, administrative gaps, and also in terms of stability which comes and goes. In this setting NGOs play the role of that great bridge between what is the intent of policy and what is the reality at the grass roots level which in turn see to it that basic services get to those that need them the most.

The issue of drug addiction in young people and the issue of which children are most at risk, in this case girls and those with special needs. In the state, it is observed that drug abuse is a result of many issues, which include unemployment, peer pressure, border-cross trafficking, and psychological distress. The results of this are far-reaching beyond the health of the individual to also include family structure, increase in crime rates and in turn the breaking down of community systems. Also, in this picture rehabilitation is not just a health care issue but a social issue which requires a full scale and continuous effort.

At the same time, it is observed that in many different settings, which are no less serious, vulnerable children face a different set of issues. Issues like poverty, family issues, neglect, and social exclusion put many children at large, in particular girls, at risk of exploitation, out of school, and emotional distress. Also, children with special needs face challenges accessing care, education, and social acceptance. What is required is a solution that goes beyond temporary relief; it is necessary to put in place structured, long-term support that is safety-based and respects, while also promoting, full development. In this wide context, it is to the fore that institutions like SHINE IRCA (Integrated Rehabilitation Center for Addicts) and Punya Children Home for Girls play a key role. Both these institutions are run by the Integrated Women and Children Development Center (IWCDC), an NGO dedicated to rehabilitation and child welfare. These institutions, which operate within the framework of government-supported schemes, include the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Ministry of Women and Child Development, which operates the Mission Vatsalya. This collaboration between state support and NGO implementation creates a model where policy direction and grassroots execution work together.

SHINE IRCA puts into practice a model which deals with substance abuse via a step-by-step rehab program that includes detox, counseling, behavioral therapy, and reintegration support. It is also observed that from a physical, psychological, and social point of view, what we see is a very much ongoing process. Also of note is Punya Children Home which has as its focus the care and protection of girls which are orphaned, abandoned, or in some other way without care. What they do is to provide a home-like setting which also includes education, health care, emotional support and also skill development which in turn we see as the steps towards these young women to live with confidence and dignity.

What makes these institutions more potent is not only the service, but the response to very human challenges. Rehabilitation and child care are areas that need patience, understanding, and a long-term commitment. People and children brought into these systems usually have experiences of trauma, neglect, or marginalisation. SHINE IRCA and Punya Children Home as institutions try to address these experiences not only through structured programs but also through supportive environments that build trust and resilience.

This study aims to scrutinise the functions and performance of these institutions in detail. It would help in understanding how non-governmental organisations work for the betterment of critical social issues in Manipur by focusing on their functioning, services, and challenges. The study also reflects on the broader implications of their work, particularly in terms of improving health outcomes, promoting education, and enhancing social well-being.

At a deeper level, the study is guided by the understanding that development is not only about economic growth but also about improving the quality of human life. Efforts to rehabilitate individuals struggling with addiction and to protect and nurture vulnerable children are central to this vision. By analysing the work of SHINE IRCA and Punya Children Home, this research highlights the importance of sustained, community-oriented interventions in building a more inclusive and supportive society.

II. OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the role and functioning of SHINE IRCA and Punya Children Home in providing rehabilitation and child welfare services.
2. To evaluate the impact of these institutions on beneficiaries' health, education, and social well-being.
3. To analyse the challenges faced by IWCDC and its associated institutions in delivering effective services.
4. To suggest measures for improving the effectiveness and sustainability of rehabilitation and child welfare programs.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Concept of Development and Expanding Role of NGOs

The understanding of development has gradually shifted from a purely economic perspective to a more holistic one that emphasises human well-being, social inclusion, and quality of life. Development is now widely seen as a process that enhances people's capabilities and freedoms, rather than simply increasing income levels. While early scholars like Sen (1999) laid this foundation, more recent studies have expanded on this idea by highlighting the importance of inclusive growth and equitable access to basic services (UNDP 2020). Within this broader framework, NGOs play a critical role by reaching populations often excluded from formal development processes and by ensuring access to healthcare, education, and social protection.

2. NGOs as Intermediaries and Grassroots Actors

NGOs function as important intermediaries between the state and society, particularly in regions where governance structures are weak or uneven. Their grassroots presence allows them to engage directly with communities, understand local challenges, and design context-specific interventions. Edwards and Hulme (2015) argue that NGOs are uniquely positioned to combine flexibility with community participation, making them effective agents of development. Similarly, Banks, Hulme, and Edwards (2015) highlight that NGOs contribute to improving accountability and service delivery by acting as a bridge between policy frameworks and local realities. This role becomes especially significant in remote or conflict-affected regions where direct government intervention may be limited.

3. Rehabilitation and Integrated Approaches to Substance Abuse

Substance abuse is increasingly recognised as a multidimensional issue requiring integrated interventions. Contemporary research emphasises that effective rehabilitation must go beyond clinical treatment to include psychological counselling, behavioural therapy, and social reintegration (UNODC 2016). Studies also show that community-based rehabilitation models are more sustainable, as they focus on long-term recovery and reintegration rather than short-term detoxification (National Institute on Drug Abuse 2020). This shift reflects a growing understanding that addiction is closely linked to social and economic factors such as unemployment, trauma, and marginalisation.

4. Child Welfare, Protection, and Institutional Care

Child welfare has gained significant attention in global and national policy discussions, particularly in relation to vulnerable and marginalised children. Modern approaches emphasise a rights-based framework, where children are seen as individuals with entitlements to protection, development, and participation (Save the Children 2019). Institutional care, although sometimes debated, continues to play an important role when family-based care is not possible. Research suggests that well-managed care institutions can provide stability, access to education, and emotional support, especially for girls and children with special needs (Better Care Network 2021). In the Indian context, schemes such as Mission Vatsalya reinforce the importance of integrated child protection systems (Ministry of Women and Child Development 2021).

5. Education, Skill Development, and Empowerment

NGOs have been widely recognized for their contribution to education and skill development, particularly among disadvantaged groups. Studies indicate that NGOs often fill gaps in formal education systems by providing informal learning opportunities, vocational training, and life skills education (UNESCO 2021). Skill development programs are especially important in improving employability and promoting self-reliance among vulnerable populations. Research also suggests that combining education with livelihood training enhances long-term socio-economic outcomes (Canton 2021). This is particularly relevant in rehabilitation and child welfare settings, where beneficiaries require both academic and practical skills for future independence.

6. Challenges in NGO Functioning

Despite their significant contributions, NGOs face a range of structural and operational challenges. Financial sustainability remains a major concern, as many organizations rely heavily on external funding and government grants (Brass et al. 2018). Additionally, there is often a shortage of trained

professionals, particularly in specialized areas such as counselling, mental health support, and child care services. Studies also highlight issues related to governance, accountability, and coordination with state agencies, which can affect the efficiency of program implementation (Anheier 2014). These challenges underline the need for capacity building and institutional strengthening.

7. Social Stigma and Reintegration Barriers

Social stigma continues to be a major barrier in both rehabilitation and child welfare contexts. Individuals recovering from substance abuse frequently face discrimination, which limits their opportunities for employment and social acceptance. Similarly, children from institutional backgrounds may experience exclusion and negative labeling. Research shows that stigma not only affects individuals psychologically but also reduces the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs (Corrigan et al. 2014). Addressing stigma requires community-level awareness, inclusive policies, and sustained efforts to change social attitudes.

8. NGOs in Conflict-Affected and Fragile Contexts

Operating in conflict-affected regions presents additional challenges for NGOs (OECD 2020). Insecurity and infrastructural limitations in particular can significantly disrupt service delivery (Stoddard et al. 2020). In regions like Manipur, where socio-political tensions persist, NGOs often have to navigate uncertainty while continuing to provide essential services. Despite these constraints, they play a crucial role in maintaining social support systems and addressing the needs of vulnerable populations. Their adaptability and resilience are key factors in sustaining development efforts under such conditions.

9. Institutional Framework: IRCA, IWCDC, and SHINE in Practice

While broader literature provides a theoretical understanding of NGOs and social welfare, it is equally important to examine specific institutional models that operate at the ground level. In India, Integrated Rehabilitation Centres for Addicts (IRCAs) function under the support of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and represent a structured response to substance abuse. These centres are designed to provide a comprehensive range of services, including detoxification, counselling, relapse prevention, and social reintegration (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment 2021). Research on de-addiction programs in India indicates that their effectiveness depends largely on continuity of care, availability of trained counselors, and community support systems (Dhawan et al. 2017).

The Integrated Women and Children Development Centre (IWCDC) represents a localized NGO framework that adapts national policies to regional needs. NGOs like IWCDC are often described as "implementing partners" that translate government schemes into actionable programs at the grassroots level (Planning Commission of India 2013). Their role becomes particularly significant in regions like Manipur, where socio-political conditions and geographical barriers limit direct administrative outreach. Studies suggest that such organizations are more effective when they combine institutional care with community engagement, ensuring both immediate support and long-term sustainability (Story et al. 2017).

SHINE IRCA, functioning under IWCDC, reflects the practical application of the IRCA model in a regional context. Unlike generalized rehabilitation frameworks, localized centres like SHINE are shaped by specific socio-economic realities, including the prevalence of drug use, community attitudes, and access to resources. Research on community-based rehabilitation highlights that localized interventions tend to have better outcomes because they are more culturally sensitive and accessible (UNODC 2016). In the case of SHINE, its focus on structured rehabilitation combined with counseling and reintegration aligns with global best practices, while also responding to the unique challenges of Manipur.

In parallel, child welfare institutions operating under frameworks such as Mission Vatsalya are increasingly emphasizing integrated care models. Organizations like IWCDC, which manage homes such as Punya Children Home, play a dual role, providing immediate protection while also focusing on long-term development. Studies indicate that NGOs managing child care institutions are more effective when they incorporate education, psychosocial support, and skill development into their programs (Better Care Network 2021). This aligns with the approach followed by IWCDC, where institutional care is combined with developmental interventions.

However, literature also suggests that institutions like IRCAs and child care homes face common challenges, including funding constraints, staff shortages, and social stigma associated with beneficiaries (Brass et al. 2018). In regions like Manipur, these challenges are further intensified by political instability and infrastructural limitations. Despite these constraints, localized institutions such as SHINE IRCA and IWCDC-managed homes continue to play a critical role in sustaining welfare services and addressing gaps in public service delivery.

Overall, the inclusion of IRCA models and organizations like IWCDC within the literature highlights the importance of context-specific, institution-driven approaches in addressing complex social issues such as addiction and child vulnerability. These institutions not only operationalize policy frameworks but also adapt them to the lived realities of the communities they serve.

IV. RESEARCH GAP

Based on the above analysis, it is evident that there is a lack of focused, region-specific studies that examine the functioning of NGOs at the institutional level. In particular, there is limited research on organizations such as the Integrated Women and Children Development Center (IWCDC) and its associated institutions, such as SHINE IRCA and Punya Children Home, operating in Manipur.

Most existing studies do not explore how rehabilitation services and child welfare initiatives can be analysed within a single framework, despite their interconnected nature. Additionally, insufficient attention is paid to how national-level schemes, such as those under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and Mission Vatsalya, are implemented at the grassroots level through NGO-led institutions.

There is also a gap in understanding how socio-political conditions, resource limitations, and social stigma collectively influence the effectiveness of these institutions. The absence of such context-specific analysis limits the ability to assess the real impact of NGO interventions and to identify practical areas for improvement.

This study attempts to address these gaps by providing a detailed examination of SHINE IRCA and Punya Children Home under IWCDC, focusing on their functioning, contributions, and challenges within the specific context of Manipur. By combining the analysis of rehabilitation and child welfare within a single framework, the study offers a more integrated understanding of NGO-led interventions in addressing complex social issues.

V. METHODOLOGY

The present study is based entirely on secondary data collected from a range of credible and relevant sources. These include government reports, policy documents, publications of non-governmental organizations, institutional records, and academic literature such as books, journal articles, and research studies. Key policy frameworks related to rehabilitation and child welfare have also been examined to understand the institutional and administrative context within which these organizations operate. The use of secondary data is widely accepted in social science research, particularly for studies that aim to analyse policies, institutional structures, and documented practices (Johnston 2017). The reliance on secondary data is appropriate for this study as it allows for a comprehensive and systematic understanding of existing frameworks without the limitations of time, cost, and accessibility associated with primary data collection. It also enables the researcher to compare information across multiple sources, thereby enhancing the reliability of findings (Bryman 2016). Institutional reports and official documents provide valuable insights into the functioning and service delivery mechanisms of organizations such as SHINE IRCA and Punya Children Home.

The study employs a descriptive-analytical research design. The descriptive approach is used to present a detailed account of the institutions under study, including their structure, objectives, and services. This method is useful for systematically documenting "what exists" within a given context (Kothari 2004). The analytical component, on the other hand, involves examining relationships, identifying challenges, and evaluating institutional performance. By combining these approaches, the study moves beyond mere description and offers a deeper understanding of the effectiveness and limitations of NGO interventions (Creswell 2014).

In addition, the study follows a case study approach, focusing specifically on SHINE IRCA and Punya Children Home under the Integrated Women and Children Development Center (IWCDC). The case study method is particularly useful when the objective is to gain an in-depth understanding of specific institutions within their real-life context (Yin 2018). This approach allows the study to explore how national-level policies and schemes are implemented at the grassroots level through NGO-led initiatives.

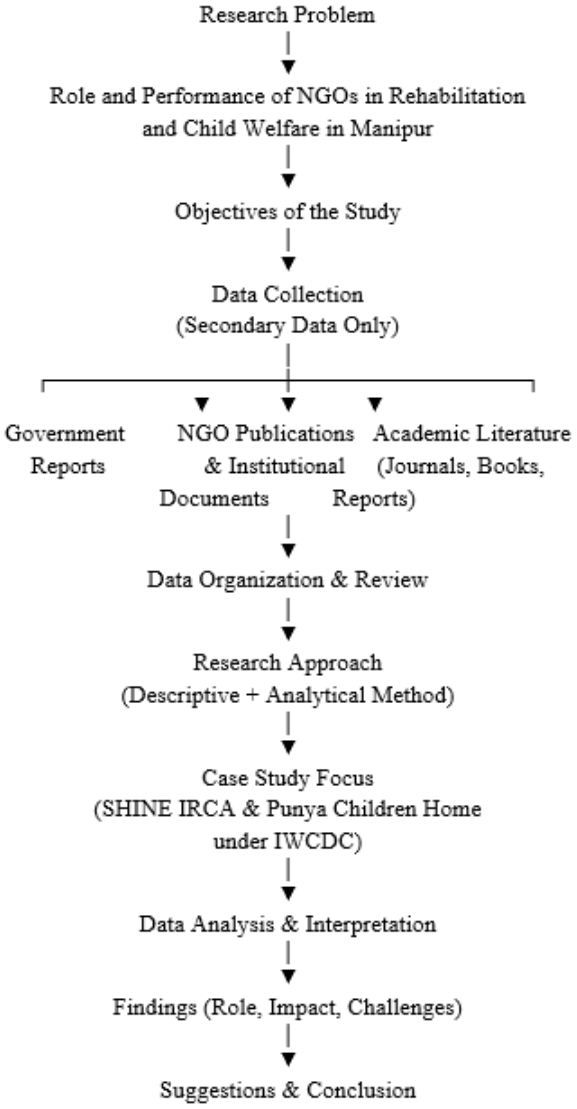
A comparative perspective is also incorporated by examining two distinct yet related areas, drug rehabilitation and child welfare, within the same organizational framework. This enables a more integrated analysis of how NGOs address multiple social issues simultaneously. Comparative analysis helps in identifying similarities and differences in service delivery, challenges, and outcomes across sectors (Goodrick 2014).

The use of secondary data is further justified by practical and contextual constraints. Conducting primary fieldwork in Manipur can be challenging due to geographical barriers, limited accessibility, and periods of socio-political unrest. Such conditions can restrict mobility and access to institutions, making data collection difficult. Additionally, the sensitive nature of the study, particularly in relation to drug rehabilitation and child protection, raises ethical concerns regarding confidentiality and the well-being of beneficiaries (Israel and Hay 2006).

However, the study also acknowledges certain limitations. Since it relies on secondary data, the findings depend on the accuracy, availability, and quality of existing sources. There may be gaps or inconsistencies in reporting, and the absence of direct interaction with beneficiaries and staff limits the ability to capture personal experiences and qualitative insights. Despite these limitations, the use of diverse and credible sources helps ensure the validity and reliability of the analysis (Bryman 2016).

Overall, the chosen methodology is appropriate for achieving the study's objectives. It provides a structured framework for analysing the roles, functions, and challenges of NGOs involved in rehabilitation and child welfare, while also enabling a context-specific understanding of institutional performance in Manipur.

Research Design



Institutional Profile and Service Framework

SHINE IRCA (Integrated Rehabilitation Centre for Addicts) operates as a structured rehabilitation facility supported by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. It focuses on addressing substance abuse through a comprehensive approach that combines medical treatment, detoxification, psychological counselling, and social reintegration (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment 2021). The centre primarily caters to male beneficiaries and functions with a limited capacity, allowing for closer monitoring and individualized care. Its structured programs are designed not only to treat addiction but also to support long-term behavioural change and recovery (UNODC 2016).

Punya Children Home for Girls, functioning under the Mission Vatsalya framework, provides institutional care and protection for girls aged 0–18 years (Ministry of Women and Child Development 2021). The home accommodates children who are orphaned, abandoned, or in need of care and protection, including those with special needs. It offers a secure and nurturing environment where children receive access to education, healthcare, and emotional support. Such institutional care models are considered essential for safeguarding vulnerable children and promoting their overall development (Better Care Network 2021).

Service Framework

The services provided by these institutions are multidimensional, reflecting an integrated approach to rehabilitation and welfare. In the area of healthcare, beneficiaries receive regular medical attention, treatment, and psychological counselling. SHINE IRCA specifically focuses on de-addiction services, combining medical intervention with behavioural therapy to ensure sustainable recovery (WHO and UNODC 2020).

Education forms another key component of the service framework. Informal learning programs support individuals who have discontinued formal education, while children at Punya Home are encouraged to pursue formal schooling. Life skills education is also emphasized to enhance communication, confidence, and decision-making abilities (WHO 1994). Special education support is provided to children with disabilities, ensuring inclusive development (UNICEF 2012).

Vocational training is incorporated as a means of empowerment and self-reliance. Beneficiaries are trained in practical skills such as tailoring, handicrafts, and basic computer operations, which improve their employment prospects.

Research shows that skill development plays a crucial role in enhancing livelihood opportunities and long-term rehabilitation outcomes (Canton 2021). Rehabilitation efforts also extend to counselling, family engagement, and community reintegration, aiming to restore stability and independence in the lives of beneficiaries (National Institute on Drug Abuse 2020).

VI. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study indicates that SHINE IRCA plays a crucial role in addressing the growing problem of drug addiction in Manipur by providing structured and sustained rehabilitation services. Its integrated approach, combining detoxification, medical treatment, psychological counseling, and social reintegration, aligns with established models of effective substance abuse treatment (World Health Organization 2020). The emphasis on both physical recovery and behavioural change suggests that the institution is not merely addressing symptoms of addiction but also working toward long-term recovery outcomes. This reflects broader findings that rehabilitation programs are most effective when they incorporate both clinical and psychosocial support mechanisms (UNODC 2018).

At the same time, Punya Children Home contributes significantly to child welfare by offering a safe, structured, and supportive environment for vulnerable girls. The provision of care, education, and emotional support aligns with child protection frameworks that emphasize holistic development rather than mere custodial care (UNICEF 2012). The inclusion of children with special needs further highlights an effort toward inclusive welfare practices, which are considered essential for equitable development.

A key finding of the study is the importance of education and vocational training in enhancing the long-term outcomes of beneficiaries. Informal education programs help individuals reintegrate into society by improving literacy and social skills, while vocational training increases employability and self-reliance. This supports existing research that links skill development with improved socio-economic outcomes and reduced vulnerability (Canton 2021). In this sense, the institutions extend their role beyond immediate care to long-term empowerment.

However, the study also reveals several structural and contextual limitations that affect the effectiveness of these institutions. Financial constraints restrict their ability to expand infrastructure, upgrade facilities, and introduce new programs. Social stigma associated with drug addiction and institutional care continues to act as a major barrier, often limiting successful reintegration into society (Corrigan et al. 2014). Additionally, socio-political disturbances in Manipur create disruptions that affect continuity in service

delivery, highlighting the vulnerability of welfare institutions in conflict-sensitive environments (OECD 2020).

VII. CHALLENGES

The institutions face multiple interconnected challenges that directly influence their performance and sustainability. One of the most significant issues is inadequate and inconsistent funding, which limits infrastructure development, availability of resources, and the expansion of services. Financial dependence on external or government support can also create uncertainty in long-term planning (Brass et al. 2018).

Another major challenge is the shortage of trained and specialized staff. Effective rehabilitation and child care require professionals with expertise in counselling, mental health, and social work. The lack of such personnel affects the quality and depth of services provided, particularly in sensitive areas such as addiction recovery and child protection (Anheier 2014).

Coordination between NGOs and government agencies also presents challenges. Delays in fund disbursement, administrative procedures, and lack of clear communication channels can reduce the efficiency of program implementation. Furthermore, social stigma and discrimination continue to create psychological and social barriers for beneficiaries, making reintegration into mainstream society difficult.

Finally, the broader socio-political environment in Manipur adds another layer of complexity. Periods of instability and unrest disrupt institutional functioning, restrict access to resources, and create uncertainty for both staff and beneficiaries. These challenges highlight the need for context-specific strategies to ensure continuity and resilience in service delivery.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS

To enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of these institutions, several practical measures can be considered. First, increasing and stabilizing financial support from the government and other funding agencies is essential for improving infrastructure, expanding services, and ensuring long-term planning. Sustainable funding models can significantly strengthen institutional capacity.

Second, there is a need to improve coordination between NGOs and government bodies. Streamlining administrative processes, ensuring timely fund disbursement, and strengthening communication channels can enhance the efficiency of program implementation.

Third, expanding vocational training programs to include a wider range of skills aligned with current market demands can improve employment opportunities for beneficiaries. Linking training programs with local industries or livelihood opportunities can further strengthen outcomes.

Fourth, investing in capacity building through regular training programs for staff can improve the quality of care and service delivery. Skilled professionals are particularly important in areas such as counselling, mental health support, and special education.

Finally, addressing social stigma requires sustained awareness and community engagement initiatives. Public awareness campaigns, community participation, and inclusive policies can help create a more supportive environment for beneficiaries, thereby improving reintegration outcomes (Corrigan et al. 2014).

IX. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, NGOs such as IWCDC play a vital role in addressing complex social issues such as drug addiction and child welfare in Manipur. Institutions like SHINE IRCA and Punya Children Home demonstrate how structured, community-oriented interventions can improve the health, education, and overall well-being of vulnerable populations. Their work highlights the importance of combining immediate care with long-term rehabilitation and empowerment strategies.

Despite their significant contributions, these institutions operate within a challenging environment characterized by financial constraints, social stigma, and socio-political instability. Addressing these challenges requires a combination of stronger policy support, improved institutional capacity, and greater community involvement.

With sustained efforts, better coordination, and increased awareness, these institutions have the potential to further enhance their impact and contribute to more inclusive and sustainable development. Their role is not only important at the

individual level but also in strengthening the broader social fabric of the region.

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