

THE IMPACT OF MISSIONARY INTERVENTIONS ON EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION OF DEPRIVED CHILDREN – A FUZZY ANALYSIS

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The term “Deprived Children” in this paper denotes those who are child labourers / orphans / very poor children / runaway children / children of the depressed castes and classes / children of alcoholic parents/ children whose parents are in prison. At large, these children are found destitute and on the streets, or in places like railway stations, and other urban areas where they can struggle for their livelihood — which often involves begging, carrying sundry errands, rag-picking or some other ‘menial’ jobs. Here we analyse the impact of missionary interventions on the rehabilitation of these children. We have taken 12 attributes related to these children and the missionaries. Having these attributes in mind a linguistic questionnaire was prepared and several experts were asked to fill it. Also, here we have obtained the opinion of some adults who were successfully rehabilitated by these missionaries. The linguistic questionnaire was transformed into a Fuzzy Cognitive Map (FCM) with these 12 main attributes as nodes. These FCMs were converted into connection matrices and using the fuzzy matrices the following conclusions were derived from the hidden pattern of the FCM:

1. Except for the support (education, economic, as well as vocational training) extended by the missionaries, several of these deprived children would have remained in the same social and economic condition.

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2. The social outcasts would be in greater numbers but for the successful interventions carried out by the missionary groups.
3. The gap between the educated caste-hindus and the educated of the deprived classes would have been still wider, with the rich becoming richer and the poor being further exploited with no respect for human dignity.
4. Several children in these rehabilitation homes felt that they were not only happy with food, shelter, clothing and education but they also felt that here they were free from insults like untouchability, ill-treatment and harassment. Above all, they mentioned that they could experience a greater degree of equality.
5. It could be gathered from our interviews, that owing to the contribution of the missionaries, large number of children were rehabilitated into a more secure world where they wouldn't become victims of exploitative people or turn into anti-social elements themselves.
6. Apart from being happy for the literacy and vocational training that was imparted to them, they also mentioned that the atmosphere in these mission-run homes were free from casteist discriminations which had earlier been a major barrier in their lives.

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