



Bi-Annual Newsletter August-November 2025



Welcome!
to the *digital edition* of the
“*Centre for Child Rights*
newsletter” at NUSRL,
Ranchi!

Together we aim to
champion child rights,
amplify their voices, and
pave the way for a brighter
and more equitable future
for every child.

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About NUSRL

National University of Study and Research in Law (NUSRL), Ranchi, is one of India's premier national law universities, established in 2010, to advance legal education and research. The University is committed to fostering a deep understanding of law and justice through an interdisciplinary approach that blends theoretical knowledge with practical application. NUSRL strives to produce socially conscious and professionally competent lawyers, scholars, and policymakers who contribute meaningfully to nation-building. With a strong emphasis on innovation, research, and community engagement, NUSRL continues to nurture an academic environment that upholds constitutional values and promotes access to justice for all.

About CCR

The Centre for Child Rights (CCR), NUSRL, Ranchi, is dedicated to promoting research, advocacy, and awareness on issues concerning children's rights and welfare. Established with the objective of integrating child rights into legal education and practice, CCR collaborates with governmental, non-governmental, and international organizations to advance policy dialogue and legal reform. The Centre undertakes capacity-building initiatives, organizes sensitization programs, and engages in impactful field research to protect and promote the rights of children. Through its activities, CCR seeks to strengthen the implementation of child protection laws and ensure that every child's voice is heard within the justice system.

Message from the Vice-Chancellor



Prof. (Dr.) Ashok R. Patil
Vice-Chancellor
NUSRL, Ranchi

It gives me immense pleasure to extend my warm greetings to all readers of the Child Rights Newsletter, a dedicated initiative of the Centre for Child Rights (CCR), National University of Study and Research in Law (NUSRL), Ranchi. This publication reflects our University's steadfast commitment to the protection, promotion, and advancement of child rights through research, advocacy, and community engagement.

Children represent the most vulnerable and valuable section of our society. The strength of a nation lies not merely in its economic progress, but in how it safeguards the dignity and development of its youngest citizens. At NUSRL, we firmly believe that the study of law must go beyond textbooks and classrooms; it must engage with the realities of justice, particularly for those who are voiceless and marginalized. The CCR embodies this vision by striving to bridge the gap between law and lived experience, encouraging students and researchers to explore innovative ways to strengthen child protection frameworks in India.

This newsletter is not merely a compilation of articles and activities; it is a testament to the compassion, diligence, and intellectual curiosity of our academic community. It serves as a platform for dialogue, reflection, and reform, bringing together scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to reaffirm our collective responsibility towards children. I congratulate the entire CCR team for their commendable efforts and hope that this publication inspires continued commitment to creating a just, inclusive, and child-sensitive society.

Message from the Co-Heads of CCR



Prof. (Dr.) Syamala Kandadai
Faculty Co-Head, CCR

It is a matter of great pride to present this edition of the Child Rights Newsletter, an initiative that reflects the Centre for Child Rights' ongoing efforts to advance awareness, research, and action in the field of child welfare and protection. At NUSRL, we believe that safeguarding children's rights is not only a legal responsibility but also a moral imperative that defines the strength of our society.

Through this newsletter, we aim to highlight key issues affecting children, showcase the Centre's initiatives, and encourage academic and policy-oriented discourse around child protection. I am deeply grateful to the faculty, student coordinators, and contributors whose collective dedication has brought this publication to life. May this effort continue to inspire meaningful dialogue and reinforce our shared vision of ensuring that every child grows in an environment of dignity, safety, and opportunity.



Ms. Rimjhim Vaishnavi
Faculty Co-Head, CCR

The Child Rights Newsletter stands as a testament to the University's and CCR's commitment to upholding and mainstreaming the rights of children within the framework of law and justice. Each contribution in this issue represents a conscious effort to amplify the voices of the unheard and to explore solutions that strengthen India's child protection mechanisms.

As a faculty co-head, I take immense pride in witnessing the dedication and intellectual engagement of our student body and faculty members who have worked tirelessly to make this publication possible. It is our hope that this initiative serves not only as an informative resource but also as a catalyst for advocacy and reform. Together, let us reaffirm our pledge to build a society that prioritizes compassion, inclusion, and justice for every child.

CCR Engages in Capacity-Building Workshop for GJC Counsellors on MHPSS



From August 12-14, 2025, the Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS), in a strategic collaboration with UNICEF and with specialized technical support from the Centre for Child Rights (CCR) at NUSRL, Ranchi, organized a comprehensive three-day capacity-building workshop. Held at the Hotel Mantri Residency in Ranchi, this "Batch I" training was specifically designed for a cohort of 42 Gender Justice Centre (GJC) Counsellors and Paralegal Volunteers (PLVs). The primary objective was to rigorously contextualize Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) within the intersecting legal and social frameworks of child protection and gender justice. By rooting the curriculum in key statutes such as the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, the program aimed to equip these frontline workers with the analytical tools and emotional resilience necessary to navigate complex psychosocial realities defined by deep-seated poverty, displacement, violence, and gender inequity.

The workshop followed a carefully structured three-day curriculum that transitioned logically from foundational theory to applied practice. The initial sessions, facilitated by experts like Mrs. Varghese, focused on establishing a continuum between mental health and well-being, covering developmental milestones and the psychosocial determinants of child growth. Subsequent days, led by Dr. Neha Sayeed and Dr. Tabrez Alam, delved into the complex intersection of gender and violence. The facilitators utilized immersive, participatory tools—such as "Body Mapping" to understand somatic trauma and "Community Resource Mapping" to visualize support systems—enabling participants to embody the understanding of trauma rather than just intellectualizing it. The final day emphasized the acquisition of hard skills in counselling, distinguishing clearly between general guidance and professional, client-centred counselling through structured role-plays and reflective exercises like the "Tree of Sustenance," which allowed counsellors to map their own professional strengths and resilience strategies.

The initiative successfully bridged the gap between theoretical frameworks and community realities, significantly enhancing the professional competence of the participants. Key outcomes included not only improved case management skills and a deeper understanding of referral pathways but also the establishment of a supportive peer cohort of field-level counsellors. Participant feedback indicated high satisfaction with the methodology, though there was a constructive recommendation to develop future resource materials in Hindi to ensure better adaptability in rural field settings. As one participant poignantly reflected, "The sessions helped us understand how to deal with trauma in our communities with patience and empathy." Ultimately, the training reaffirmed the vital role of GJC Counsellors as catalysts for change within Jharkhand's social protection ecosystem, fostering a commitment to ethical, gender-responsive psychosocial care.

CCR Participates in Refresher Training of Trainers on the GTA Toolkit



From August 18-20, 2025, the Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS), in a strategic collaboration with UNICEF and with specialized technical support from the Centre for Child Rights (CCR) at NUSRL, Ranchi, convened a three-day Refresher Training of Trainers (ToT). Held at the Saptrishi Seva Bhawan in Tupudana, Ranchi, this advanced capacity-building initiative was specifically designed for a select cohort of Master Trainers (MTs) responsible for cascading gender-transformative approaches at the community level. The program was conceptualized to align with UNICEF's Gender Action Plan (2022-2025), aiming to reinforce the Master Trainers' competencies in promoting adolescent health, preventing gender-based violence, and eliminating child marriage. By revisiting the core tenets of the Gender Transformative Adolescent (GTA) Toolkit, the workshop sought to renew conceptual clarity and consolidate institutional collaboration between JSLPS, UNICEF, and academic partners for advancing gender equality across Jharkhand.

The training was structured around a rigorous, practice-based curriculum that utilized six specific resource components: the Action Toolkit, Aadhaful Comic, Facilitator's Manual on Positive Masculinities, Parent Handbook, Stakeholder Toolkit, and Kyu Cards. The sessions were co-facilitated by a diverse panel of experts, including Mr. Gaurav (UNICEF), Mr. Narendra Kumar Sharma and Dr. Md. Tabrez Alam (CCR, NUSRL), along with Mr. Tanveer Ahmad and Mr. Aniket (JSLPS). The methodology moved beyond didactic instruction, prioritizing hands-on engagement through small group exercises, simulations, and peer-led facilitation. This experiential approach allowed participants to contextualize theoretical discussions—such as the distinction between equality and equity—within real-world scenarios involving financial abuse, early marriage, and systemic exclusion. By actively using the toolkit resources in mock sessions, the Master Trainers could identify and rectify gaps in their delivery styles, ensuring they are better prepared for grassroots mobilization.

A central theme of the workshop was the deconstruction of entrenched social norms, with a specific focus on "Positive Masculinities." Reflective discussions led by the resource persons highlighted the systemic barriers restricting adolescent participation, including parental resistance and rigid gender stereotypes. The session on Positive Masculinities was particularly transformative; it challenged the traditional notions of male dominance and privilege, encouraging trainers to reframe masculinity as a construct aligned with empathy, emotional openness, and shared domestic responsibility.

Participants examined how localized facilitation techniques—such as storytelling and empathy-based dialogue—could be used to navigate these sensitive topics in conservative rural settings. This segment underscored that achieving social justice requires not just the empowerment of women and girls, but a fundamental shift in how men and boys perceive their roles within the family and community.



The refresher training yielded tangible outcomes in both individual competence and institutional convergence. Master Trainers demonstrated a marked improvement in their methodological precision and confidence in cascading the GTA modules. Crucially, the program solidified a commitment to sustainability; trainers developed actionable plans to integrate GTA practices into existing Self Help Group (SHG) and Village Organization (VO) platforms, ensuring the intervention reaches the "last mile." Feedback from the participants was overwhelmingly positive, with high appreciation for the shift from lecture-based learning to participatory, activity-based pedagogies. Ultimately, the workshop reaffirmed the Gender Transformative Adolescent Toolkit as a vital pedagogical and policy instrument—one capable of challenging gender hierarchies and fostering inclusive, equitable communities across the districts of Jharkhand.

Capacity-Building Program on "Child Psychology and Communication" for Child Welfare Police Officers (CWPOs)



On August 23, 2025, the Ranchi Police Department, in collaboration with UNICEF and the Centre for Child Rights at NUSRL, convened the second phase of a capacity-building program aimed at institutionalizing child-sensitive policing in Jharkhand. Held at the U.C. Jha Hall in Ranchi, this specialized session focused on "Child Psychology and Communication," targeting Child Welfare Police Officers (CWPOs) and members of Special Juvenile Police Units. The primary objective was to bridge the gap between statutory mandates—specifically the Juvenile Justice Act and POCSO Act—and on-the-ground enforcement. By moving beyond mere procedural compliance, the initiative sought to equip officers with the necessary psychosocial competencies to handle sensitive cases involving children in conflict with the law or in need of care, emphasizing that effective policing must be grounded in empathy and the protection of a child's dignity.

The training methodology prioritized experiential learning over traditional didactic instruction to foster a deeper emotional connection with the subject matter. Technical sessions led by experts like Dr. Madhumita Bhattacharyya provided critical insights into child psychology, stressing the importance of non-accusatory questioning and emotional safety. To reinforce these concepts, facilitators utilized interactive exercises such as "Life of a River," "Empathy Circles," and role-reversal simulations. These participatory tools allowed officers to step into the shoes of vulnerable children, helping them visualize the long-term psychological impact of stigmatizing language and authoritative posturing. This blend of clinical theory and practical empathy training was designed to transform the officers' approach from a purely investigative mindset to one of care and rehabilitation.

The workshop yielded significant shifts in both the attitude and aptitude of the participants, who reported a newfound confidence in applying trauma-informed techniques during investigations. Officers acknowledged the critical need for interdisciplinary collaboration with social workers and psychologists to prevent the re-victimization of minors. While the feedback was overwhelmingly positive regarding the transformative nature of the curriculum, participants noted logistical constraints, such as the lack of adequate refreshments, which slightly impacted the learning environment. Ultimately, the program successfully laid the groundwork for a more humane policing framework in Jharkhand, with recommendations to standardize these modules across all districts to ensure continuous professional development for the state's law enforcement personnel.

State-Level Consultation on Safeguarding the Girl Child

On August 30, 2025, the Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Auditorium at the Judicial Academy, Ranchi, hosted a landmark "State-Level Stakeholders Consultation on Safeguarding the Girl Child." Organized under the aegis of the Juvenile Justice-cum-POCSO Committee of the Jharkhand High Court, in collaboration with the Department of Women, Child Development & Social Security and UNICEF, the event brought together approximately 400 stakeholders. The consultation was convened to address deep-rooted structural challenges—including child marriage, trafficking, and emerging digital vulnerabilities—by fostering a convergent strategy among the judiciary, executive, and civil society. Grounded in constitutional principles and the Juvenile Justice Act, the gathering reaffirmed the state's commitment to building a safer, more enabling environment for the girl child.

The proceedings were anchored by visionary addresses from eminent dignitaries, including the Chief Justice of Jharkhand, Hon'ble Justice Tarlok Singh Chauhan, who framed the protection of girls as the "true measure of societal progress." Technical sessions moved beyond ceremonial speeches to facilitate in-depth deliberations across four thematic areas, ranging from legal oversight mechanisms to harmful social norms. A distinguishing feature of the consultation was the active inclusion of adolescent change-makers, whose lived experiences provided a reality check for policymakers. Their testimonies, alongside empirical data presented by experts, underscored the urgent need to integrate psychosocial support within justice systems and to treat child protection not just as a legal mandate, but as a moral imperative requiring compassionate, survivor-centric interventions.

The consultation concluded with a consolidated roadmap for inter-agency convergence, emphasizing that law enforcement, education, and social welfare cannot operate in silos. Key outcomes included a strengthened commitment to scale up Gender Resource Centres and school wellness initiatives, alongside a judicial pledge to institutionalize child-friendly practices across all districts.

Capacity-Building Workshop on Child Psychology & Communication for CWPOs

On September 21, 2025, the Ranchi Police Department, in collaboration with UNICEF and with technical support from the Centre for Child Rights at NUSRL, organized Phase III of the capacity-building series titled "Child-Sensitive Policing: Statutory Provisions and Role of CWPOs." Held at the Conference Hall of the SSP Office in Ranchi, the training aimed to strengthen the operational and legal understanding of Child Welfare Police Officers (CWPOs) in handling cases involving children in contact with the law.

The training adopted a participatory and practice-oriented approach, combining conceptual clarity with field-based problem-solving. Experts such as Mr. Gaurav from UNICEF and Mr. Narendra Sharma from CCR-NUSRL led technical sessions on statutory mandates, procedural safeguards, documentation norms, and inter-agency coordination. Officers engaged in case study discussions on real-world challenges such as child trafficking, abuse, child marriage, and reporting procedures. Group exercises and open dialogues fostered peer learning and reflective thinking, allowing officers to revisit their roles through a child-rights lens. The interactive sessions helped participants connect legal provisions with ethical conduct, encouraging trauma-informed, empathetic, and non-intimidating engagement with children.

The consultation led to significant takeaways regarding legal compliance, coordination, and behavioral change. Officers reported greater clarity in implementing child-friendly procedures and expressed readiness to adopt empathetic interviewing practices, proper documentation, and better coordination with CWCs, JJBs, and DCPUs. While acknowledging the progress made, participants also highlighted the need for standardized SOPs, uniform reporting formats, and continuous training support. The session concluded with a collective commitment to strengthening institutional accountability and embedding child-sensitive policing within routine law enforcement. Recommendations included regular refresher trainings, peer mentoring, and policy-practice integration, marking a strong step toward fostering a child-friendly justice system in Jharkhand.

Consultation with CSOs on Ending Child Marriage



On September 12, 2025, the Jharkhand Women Development Society (JWDS), in partnership with UNICEF and the Department of Women, Child Development & Social Security, convened a strategic one-day consultation at Hotel Shivani International, Ranchi. Organized with technical support from the Centre for Child Rights at NUSRL, the event gathered diverse Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to actively shape the revised "State Action Plan to End Child Marriage (2025-2030)." Against the backdrop of alarming NFHS-5 data revealing a 32.2% prevalence of child marriage in the state, the consultation sought to harness the experiential knowledge of grassroots organizations. The initiative recognized that while legislative frameworks exist, systemic barriers like poverty and entrenched social norms continue to impede progress, necessitating a collaborative approach that positions CSOs as vital "trust intermediaries" between policy design and community reality.

The proceedings adopted a participatory methodology, moving from strategic context-setting to co-creation. Keynote addresses by Ms. Sujata Kumari (JWDS) and Ms. Priti Srivastava (UNICEF) emphasized that eradicating child marriage requires robust inter-departmental convergence and evidence-based targeting of high-prevalence districts. Following these insights, participants engaged in rigorous thematic group discussions covering four critical domains: Education & Skilling, Adolescent Agency, Health & Nutrition, and Social Norm Change. These breakout sessions allowed stakeholders to dissect the intersectional drivers of early marriage, such as dowry, school dropouts, and lack of vocational opportunities, and propose solutions tailored to Jharkhand's specific tribal and rural contexts.

Intensive deliberations during these thematic sessions revealed that child marriage in Jharkhand is sustained by a complex web of structural drivers that legal enforcement alone cannot dismantle. Civil society representatives argued that in remote tribal areas, geographical isolation and infrastructural deficits compound vulnerabilities, making access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) information nearly impossible. Consequently, the consultation highlighted the indispensability of "Social and Behaviour Change Communication" (SBCC) to complement statutory measures. There was a strong consensus on adopting a gender-transformative approach—specifically the inclusion of men, boys, and faith leaders—to challenge the patriarchal norms that normalize early unions, effectively moving the discourse from protectionism to adolescent agency.

The consultation culminated in a consensus-based roadmap for the 2025–2030 State Action Plan, with CSOs advocating for the integration of psychosocial support (MHPSS) and stronger vocational linkages for the 15–16 age cohort. A major outcome was the proposal to establish a dedicated "Jharkhand CSO Forum on Ending Child Marriage" to ensure sustained collaboration and accountability. Participants commended the inclusive format of the event, reinforcing the understanding that policy success depends on identifying local implementation gaps. Ultimately, the session successfully bridged the divide between state mechanisms and civil society, ensuring that the upcoming State Action Plan is not just a document of intent but a holistic, community-anchored strategy aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 5.3.

One-Day Consultation on Adolescent Voices, Development, Empowerment and Ending Child Marriage



The One-Day Consultation on Adolescent Voices, Development, Empowerment and Ending Child Marriage was held on 16 September 2025 at NUSRL, Ranchi. It was jointly organized by JWDS, the Department of Women, Child Development and Social Security, UNICEF, and CCR-NUSRL to support the revision of the State Action Plan to End Child Marriage (2025-2030). With Jharkhand's child marriage prevalence at around 32%, the consultation aimed to ensure that adolescents' real experiences meaningfully shape state policies. The event brought together adolescents, government officials, CSOs, and development partners to encourage legally strong and socially grounded strategies.

The sessions began with opening remarks from Prof. K. Syamala highlighting adolescents' participation in rights-based policymaking, followed by UNICEF's presentation linking the issue with SDG 5.3. Through cue-sheet exercises and group discussions facilitated by Pratigya, CCR, and UNICEF teams, adolescents identified personal, family, and community challenges such as gendered restrictions, unequal access to education, social stigma, household responsibilities, and early marriage pressures. They categorized issues into Family Challenges and Social Challenges and brainstormed on safe spaces, empowerment, and communication gaps with parents.

A case study session helped adolescents critically reflect on real-life scenarios involving economic insecurity, education, health rights, and community leadership. They recommended stronger law enforcement, accountability of Child Marriage Prohibition Officers, adolescent clubs, safe spaces, peer support groups, greater access to adolescent-friendly services, and awareness of government schemes. They emphasized that ending child marriage requires structural change like challenging poverty, patriarchal norms, and limited educational opportunities.

The consultation contributed valuable insights for policy formulation, strengthened engagement between youth and stakeholders, and established a foundation for adolescent-led participation. Participants gained confidence, awareness of their rights, and recognized their role as change-makers. Stakeholders acknowledged the event as a strong example of how adolescent voices can shape effective and inclusive policy-making for the 2025-2030 State Action Plan to End Child Marriage.

Review-Cum-Consultation on Foster and Aftercare Systems



On September 18-19, 2025, the Jharkhand State Child Protection Society, in collaboration with UNICEF and with technical support from the Centre for Child Rights at NUSRL, Ranchi, convened a two-day review-cum-consultation on foster care and aftercare implementation in Jharkhand. Held at Hotel Shivani International in Ranchi, the consultation brought together district officials, mentors, and technical experts to evaluate the progress of pilot initiatives in Bokaro, Hazaribagh, and West Singhbhum, launched in April 2025. The program aimed to strengthen family-based alternative care models under the Juvenile Justice Act and Mission Vatsalya, moving beyond institutional care to promote foster care and aftercare as sustainable, community-rooted solutions. In his keynote address, Mr. Bijay Kumar Sinha emphasized the state's focus on evidence-based planning and family reintegration, while UNICEF highlighted the importance of bridging policy frameworks with on-ground delivery.

Throughout the consultation, district teams shared their implementation experiences, highlighting achievements such as the identification of foster families in West Singhbhum and improved administrative engagement, while also addressing persistent challenges like inadequate documentation, verification delays, and infrastructural limitations. Mentors enriched the discussions by introducing national best practices and recommending strategic steps such as creating Standard Operating Procedures, appointing Aftercare Nodal Officers, and establishing peer support networks for care leavers. Technical demonstrations by Mr. Sanjay, DCPO, provided hands-on experience in MIS-based registration and documentation, reinforcing the importance of accurate data management and digital monitoring. Interactive group exercises, peer dialogues, and mentor-led sessions fostered a collaborative learning environment, enabling participants to co-create district-specific action plans.

The consultation resulted in a consolidated six-month roadmap focused on strengthening documentation, improving coordination among CWCs, DCPUs, and JJBs, enhancing capacity-building efforts, and deepening convergence with livelihood and CSR partners to support aftercare sustainability. Participants appreciated the experiential and solution-oriented format of the sessions, noting the value of practical tools, mentorship, and cross-district learning. The consultation marked a meaningful step toward institutionalizing foster care and aftercare in Jharkhand, reinforcing the shared commitment to ensuring that every child transitions into a safe, nurturing, and empowering family environment.

Reimagining India's Criminal Justice System Through the Lens of Prisoners' Children



In the intricate gears of India's justice system, imprisonment is essentially viewed as an individualised act of punishment, one that affects only the criminal. But this limited view does not consider the deep ripple effects a prison term can have, particularly on the helpless dependents left behind. As the parent is being sent to jail, a child starts serving a sentence of his or her own, one that is intangible, open-ended, and wholly unwarranted. The law does not take the time to inquire: Who will look after the child? Will forced separation destroy the child's developmental and psychological weave? Will the parent's sentence quietly smother the potential of an innocent? These are not merely issues of sympathy. These are matters of constitutional accountability, statutory duty, and international responsibility, all of which the State is obligated to respond to.

A holistic and child-centered re-baselining of India's criminal jurisprudence is not merely long overdue, it is necessary. The starting point of intervention has to be the establishment of a statutory framework for Child Impact Assessments (CIAs) at all point-of-decision stages of the criminal process: arrest, bail, sentencing, and incarceration. Emulating the South African Constitutional Court's historic ruling in *S v. M* (2007 (2) SACR 539), that the sentencing of the primary caregiver should be accompanied by a judicial consideration of its impact on minor dependents, Indian law needs to develop a similar statutory obligation. Sections 482 and 483 of the BNSS need to be amended to place a positive obligation on authorities to probe caregiving responsibilities, irrespective of whether the accused is male or female or his/her biological status. Incarceration must therefore be determined by the principle of least harm to the dependent child. Additionally, the scope of definition of "child in need of care and protection" under Section 2(14) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 should be clearly extended to cover children who are made functionally parentless because they are behind bars. The absence of explicit statutory mandates causes ambiguity and delays intervention. A binding legislative or executive directive should make it compulsory to report such cases to the CWC, triggering protective proceedings under Chapter IV of the JJ Act. Further, higher judiciary must mandate trial courts to apply a "best interests of the child" test before ordering custodial detention of primary caregivers, institutionalising child-sensitive justice.

India needs to account for the insufficiency of its carceral policies. The Model Prison Handbook, 2016, although innovative in scope, is disproportionately geared towards children living with imprisoned mothers. It does not envision systems for children left behind, who are likely more vulnerable due to the absence of direct state intervention. Each prison needs to be mandatorily required to have a Dependent Child Register, which documents the details of the left-behind children, their caregivers, schooling, and health status. This data needs to be automatically reported to the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) and the CWC, warranting a statutory response under the JJ Act. In addition to that, the statutory organizations like the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) need to have an active role in mainstreaming this issue. The NCPCR should be authorized to file suo motu reports, issue model rules, and monitor inter-agency coordination among police, courts, prison departments, and child protection services. In addition, the Ministry of Women and Child Development must launch a centrally sponsored scheme similar to Palna or Ujjawala focusing specifically on education, nutrition, health care, and psychological well-being of children of prisoners, both inside and outside prisons.

As a signatory to the UNCRC, India is bound to prioritise the child's best interests and ensure continuity of parent-child relationships during incarceration, yet it lacks structured visitation or communication systems, breaching its treaty obligations. In *R.D. Upadhyay v. State of A.P.* (2006), the Supreme Court laid down detailed guidelines for children residing in prisons but left out those who are outside, who continue to remain invisible to the law. Likewise, in *Gaurav Jain v. Union of India* (1997), the Court held that children born into socially vulnerable contexts should not bear the burden of their parentage, a principle equally applicable to prisoners' children. These cases highlight the judiciary's recognition of the issue, but the absence of statutory and institutional safeguards renders such recognition insufficient in practice.

Finally, the imprisonment of a parent cannot be considered a private family setback, it is a public legal duty. In a country which proudly boasts of reformatory justice, we cannot turn a blind eye towards the fact that children of prisoners are undergoing invisible life sentences of neglect, stigma, and deprivation.

Case Analysis on In Re: Right of Privacy of Adolescents



The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act POCSO, enacted in 2012, was a watershed moment for child protection law in India. Its primary objective is to provide a robust legal framework to comprehensively address sexual offences against children, ensuring not only penalties for perpetrators but also mechanisms for victim support and improved investigative procedures. The Act was necessitated by alarming data, India has one of the world's largest child populations constituting almost 19% of the world's children, with the 2011 census counting over 472 million children under 18. Studies and surveys in the late 2000s revealed endemic sexual abuse among minors, with many cases going unreported or inadequately prosecuted due to the limitations of traditional criminal law, such as the Indian Penal Code, which lacked both comprehensive definitions and gender neutrality.

Despite its significance, POCSO's broad definitions and strict age-based criteria (all sexual activity with persons below 18 is deemed criminal, irrespective of consent) have led to several instances of misuse and unintended consequences, especially in a culturally conservative society like India. Reports and academic studies highlight how the Act has frequently been deployed, not solely to protect minors from abuse, but also to regulate adolescent sexuality and punish consensual relationships to protect family "honour" or as a tool to prevent or penalise elopement and love marriages. According to National Crime Records Bureau data, in about 48.6% of POCSO cases, the accused is a friend or romantic partner of the victim; nearly 80% of complainants in "romantic" cases are parents or relatives registering cases after the discovery of adolescent relationships or pregnancy.

Courts have acknowledged this trend. The Allahabad High Court in Ajay Yadav vs. State of U.P. and the Madras and Delhi High Courts and other High Courts in several rulings have pointed to the Act's misuse in consensual adolescent partnerships, marital or property disputes, and to extort compensation. These judicial observations reflect a growing concern that POCSO's noble intentions are at times subverted, with the law being wielded to enforce social and familial control rather than strictly to protect minors from predatory abuse.

In this landmark Supreme Court case, Re: Right of Privacy of Adolescents 2025 SCC OnLine SC 1200, the "misuse" trope of POCSO took central stage. A 14-year-old girl had eloped and entered into a consensual relationship with a 25-year-old man, later marrying him in a temple. When the relationship came to light, her parents lodged an FIR, and the accused was charged under Section 6 of the POCSO Act (aggravated penetrative sexual assault) and multiple sections of the Indian Penal Code (Sections 363 and 366 for kidnapping, Section 376 for rape).

The Special Judge convicted him, sentencing a rigorous imprisonment of 20 years, but the Calcutta High Court, exercising powers under Article 226 of the Constitution and Section 482 of the CrPC (inherent powers of High Courts), set aside the conviction.

The Supreme Court, however, reversed the High Court's acquittal, reaffirming the conviction under Section 6 POCSO and Sections 376(2)(n) and 376(3) of the IPC. Importantly, the Court stayed the actual sentencing, pending a detailed report from a multidisciplinary committee and after extensive hearings with the victim, who by then was an adult and wanted to keep her family intact with her husband (the accused) and child.

Confronted with a scenario where strict enforcement of the law would deepen the victim's trauma the victim had suffered abandonment by her family, stigmatisation, and economic hardship the Supreme Court invoked its extraordinary jurisdiction under Article 142 of the Constitution. Article 142 empowers the Supreme Court to "pass any decree or make any order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it." This discretionary power, unique to India's highest court, is not limited by the technicalities binding on lower courts. In this case, citing precedents like *Gian Singh v. State of Punjab* (2012) 10 SCC 303, *K. Dhandapani v. State*, (2022) SCC OnLine SC 1056, and principles from *Shilpa Sailesh v. Varun Sreenivasan* (2023) 14 SCC 231, the Court held that the "ends of justice" would not be met by mechanically enforcing the minimum sentence. Recognising the victim's wishes, her family's welfare, and the proven systemic and societal failures, the Court ordered that "though the accused stands convicted, he will not undergo sentence," while making it clear that this decision should not be treated as precedent.

Across India, courts are increasingly acknowledging the "misuse" dilemma. The Madras High Court in *Vijayalakshmi v. State*, 2021 SCC OnLine Mad 317 have called for sensitive handling of consensual adolescent relationships, sometimes citing social realities and the risk of criminalising normative sexual behaviour between teenagers. At the same time, the Supreme Court has cautioned that even its powers under Article 142 must be used sparingly, guided by overarching public policy and the spirit of the law. This Supreme Court judgment is extremely important as it marks a humane evolution in interpreting POCSO in the context of adolescent relationships, reinforcing that justice requires nuance and context, especially in a society grappling with rigid ideas of sexuality and family

Source: 2025 SCC Online 1200

The Overlooked Minority: Orphaned Children with Disabilities and India's Aftercare Framework



INTRODUCTION

Within the complex system of India's child protection regime, orphaned children with disabilities represent a significantly vulnerable and often neglected group. Major strides have been made in addressing the needs of children in need of care and protection (CNCP) in accordance with the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (referred to as the "JJ Act"); however, the specific vulnerabilities faced by both disabled and orphaned children remain not sufficiently addressed. This double marginalization—of being without parents and also being disabled—creates a unique vulnerability that India's aftercare and rehabilitation mechanisms have not entirely acknowledged or persistently supported. This article sets out to critically examine the gaps in India's aftercare system regarding orphaned children with disabilities. It looks at legislation, policy deficits, operational challenges, and emerging best practice, and offers suggestions to create a truly inclusive child protection and aftercare system.

UNDERSTANDING THE DUAL VULNERABILITY

Orphanhood and disability individually make a child vulnerable to systemic exclusion, stigma, and neglect. Together, they have compounded disadvantages. UNICEF estimates that there live in India about 29.6 million orphaned children, and estimates are that around 2.2% of Indian children have some kind of disability. No solid data is available about the total number of children belonging to both groups—symbolizing the invisibility of the group in policy and research.

Disability in children is often associated with higher dependency needs, specialized care, and tailored educational or medical interventions. When such a child is also orphaned, the caregiving vacuum becomes even more pronounced. In institutional care settings, these children are more likely to be overlooked due to limited resources, lack of trained staff, and the absence of targeted policies that recognize their unique requirements.

LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK: A SURFACE-LEVEL INCLUSION

The JJ Act, 2015, defines children with disabilities as a special category in need of care and protection under Section 2(14)[1]. While the Act recognizes the need for rehabilitation and social reintegration, including provisions for aftercare under Section 46[2], it largely fails to provide disability-specific guidelines within these frameworks.

Additionally, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD Act) mandates the State to ensure the inclusion and welfare of persons with disabilities across life domains. Section 16 specifically directs the government to undertake measures to ensure inclusive education and the establishment of child care facilities.[3] However, in practice, the convergence of the JJ Act and RPwD Act remains weak, especially in aftercare provisions.

Even schemes such as the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), now merged under the Mission Vatsalya, do not provide concrete guidelines on how aftercare services are to be adapted for children with disabilities. This results in a legal framework that appears inclusive on paper but lacks the operational clarity needed for real-world implementation.

THE AFTERCARE FRAMEWORK: GENERIC PROVISIONS, SPECIFIC NEEDS

Aftercare refers to the process of preparing and supporting children who age out of institutional care (upon attaining 18 years) for independent living. Section 46 of the JJ Act provides for aftercare to be extended until the age of 21 (and up to 23 in special cases), with services such as education, vocational training, medical assistance, and mentorship.[4]

However, aftercare homes and services across states follow a one-size-fits-all approach. For children with disabilities, this means being placed in facilities not designed for them, with staff often untrained in disability-inclusive practices. Research by the Centre for Equity Studies (CES) in 2020 highlighted that most aftercare programs in India lack accessible infrastructure, mental health services, or linkages to disability-specific social welfare schemes.

Moreover, existing guidelines fail to integrate Individualized Transition Plans (ITPs) for children with disabilities—a standard best practice in countries like the UK and Australia, where post-care transitions are customized based on the child's developmental, educational, emotional, and physical needs.

CHALLENGES ON THE GROUND

1. Data Deficit and Invisibilization

Perhaps the most glaring gap is the lack of disaggregated data. The absence of comprehensive information on the number, location, and needs of orphaned children with disabilities makes it impossible to design evidence-based interventions. Without visibility, advocacy becomes weak and accountability diluted.

2. Lack of Trained Personnel

Caregivers, social workers, and aftercare personnel often lack training in disability rights, inclusive communication, and trauma-informed care. This inadequacy leads to misdiagnoses, mistreatment, or benign neglect of children with disabilities in aftercare settings.

3. Infrastructural and Financial Constraints

Most child care institutions and aftercare homes are not designed to accommodate children with mobility, sensory, or cognitive disabilities. In the absence of accessible toilets, ramps, or Braille resources, children are deprived of even basic dignity and autonomy.

Financial support provided under the Mission Vatsalya guidelines, usually ₹2,000 to ₹3,000 per month per child, is often insufficient to cover specialized medical care, therapy, or assistive devices required by children with disabilities.

4. Lack of Continuum Between Child Care and Disability Services

Government schemes for persons with disabilities (such as ADIP, scholarships under the National Trust, or pension schemes) are seldom linked with child protection systems. Once children exit institutional care, they often fall through the cracks, unable to navigate the complex application processes required for disability certificates or access to benefits.

EMERGING JURISPRUDENCE AND JUDICIAL INTERVENTIONS

Indian courts have intermittently recognized the need for inclusive care systems. In *Reena Banerjee v. Government of NCT of Delhi*[5], the Delhi High Court directed authorities to develop more robust rehabilitation plans for children with special needs, emphasizing the right to dignity and independent living under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Further, in *National Commission for Protection of Child Rights v. Union of India*[6], the Supreme Court stressed the need for disaggregated data on children in child care institutions and emphasized inclusive planning in rehabilitation schemes. These interventions, though important, remain isolated and have yet to transform systemic practice on the ground.

BEST PRACTICES AND GLOBAL COMPARISONS

Globally, some models have managed to merge aftercare with disability rights. In the United Kingdom, for example, the *Leaving Care Act, 2000* requires all children in care, including disabled children, to have a personal advisor and a "Pathway Plan" until they reach age 25. Likewise, Australia's *National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)* guarantees continuity of care beyond childhood through individualized funding.

Closer to home, NGOs like *Latika Roy Foundation* in Uttarakhand and *Shishu Sarothi* in Assam have pioneered integrated care models that combine child protection with disability inclusion. These organizations emphasize participatory care planning, parent surrogacy models, and supported housing that could serve as templates for wider replication.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE FRAMEWORK

To begin with, there is an urgent need to personalize the transition process for every child with a disability who is exiting institutional care. A generic approach simply does not suffice. What these children need are *Individualized Transition Plans (ITPs)*—structured, written strategies that reflect their personal aspirations, learning capacities, health conditions, and emotional needs. These plans should be developed well in advance, ideally from the age of 16 onwards, through collaboration between care workers, disability professionals, and the children themselves.

Another crucial gap is the lack of reliable data. Without concrete numbers on how many children with disabilities are in child care institutions and how many are ageing out each year, it becomes impossible to plan or allocate resources effectively. The government must take proactive steps to build a centralized database that captures disaggregated information, by age, gender, type of disability, and region. This should not just be a statistical exercise but the foundation for thoughtful and responsive policymaking.

Equally important is strengthening the link between aftercare services and existing disability welfare schemes. At present, many children with disabilities exit the child protection system without the necessary documents—such as disability certificates or Unique Disability IDs—that would help them access entitlements under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act. These linkages must be built before they turn 18. Institutions should ensure that children are supported through the application process and enrolled in relevant government schemes, such as those offering assistive devices, educational scholarships, or housing benefits.

There is also a pressing need to make available to aftercare staff the necessary knowledge and awareness. Staff members at child care centres and aftercare centres are often not trained to work with or support children who are disabled. Many of these children, therefore, feel neglected or misunderstood. Implementing mandatory training modules on disability rights, inclusive communication, and trauma-informed care would greatly improve the quality of support given to them during this vulnerable transition. We must also address the issue of physical accessibility. Many aftercare centers lack the basic facilities for children with mobility impairments—such as ramps, accessible toilets, or Braille signage. Compliance with universal design principles, as set out in the Government of India's Harmonised Guidelines (2021), needs to be mandatory for all government-funded establishments. Accessibility should not be viewed as an added feature; it is a right.

Lastly, appropriate guardianship model and decision-making structures must be developed, especially for young people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. Many such children in this category fail to lead independent lives once they leave care and require ongoing support. The National Trust Act of 1999 has supported structures of assisted choice-making and legal guardianship that should be purposively used. These models can provide a sense of security and safety while maintaining respect for the autonomy of the individual.

In essence, ensuring disabled orphaned children are not abandoned takes a combination of legislative reforms, administrative will, and sympathetic implementation. These suggestions aren't just policy recommendations—they're moral imperatives that show a society acts for its most vulnerable people.

CONCLUSION

The journey to adulthood is not an easy one for any child in care. But for orphaned disabled children, the road is significantly tougher and lonely. The aftercare system in India, while improving, still looks at these children from a generalized vision—failing to recognize the extra hurdles that they face as a disability. The existing need is to move beyond shallow inclusion and adopt a rights-oriented, disability-sensitive aftercare system. Through strengthened ministry coordination, application of global best practices, and an appreciation of the actual lived lives of these children, India can put in place an aftercare system that truly leaves no child behind

[1] Section 2(14), The JJ Act, 2015

[2] Section 46, The JJ Act, 2015

[3] Section 16, The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

[4] Section 46, The JJ Act, 2015

[5] *Reena Banerjee v. Govt. of NCT of Delhi*, 2020 SCC OnLine Del 1893.

[6] *NCPCR v. Union of India*, W.P. (C) No. 102/2007.

Invisible Victims: Children in the Mental Health Institutions in India



Children are the most vulnerable group in society but the majority of them in India languish in mental health institutions behind closed doors. Such children are usually not mentally sick but are placed in institutions because of poverty, disability, abandonment or family breakdown. Their autonomy is taken away, and they are voiceless victims in the system that does not care about them and their well-being.

The process of admission of children to mental health institutions is open in India and children may be taken to the institutions by their parents, by Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) or under court order. Worse still, admission is usually not accompanied by any thorough psychiatric examination or by regard to the will and preferences of the child. According to the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, the minor cannot be sent to the institution without due process, which involves the opinion of a board and consent of the guardians. Implementation is however weak and seldom monitored.

The situation is aggravated once it is institutionalized. Investigative reports by groups such as Human Rights Watch and even the statutory bodies such as the NHRC (National Human Rights Commission) have shown pathetic conditions: children being over-medicated to make them passive, being subjected to verbal and physical abuse and being denied any education or rehabilitation. Children are locked up in a number of institutions over years without being judged or having any significant contact with the outside world. Others are placed in the same institutions with adults with severe mental conditions, which is against all principles of child protection.

The systemic problem is also burdened with the fact that there is no clear separation between intellectual disabilities and mental illnesses. Autistic kids, Down syndrome, or delayed development is being regularly accepted in mental institutions under the pretence of treatment. Such a confusion results in improper treatment, false imprisonment and a lifetime of mental torture. Moreover, these children are further isolated by the stigma attached to mental illness, not only by society, but also the opportunity, and many times by their own families as well.

There are legal systems that are in bad shape and disintegrated. Although the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 offers rehabilitation and social integration of the children in need of care, it hardly applies meaningfully to the children in psychiatric institutions. There is almost no coordination between the health and child protection system. The needs of institutionalized children seldom come across the mind of mental health professionals who are overworked and underqualified in child psychology.

India has to move on to a rights-based, community-oriented care model in order to combat this latent crisis. This involves the investment of community-based support mechanisms such as inclusive education, counseling and short-term group homes. The capacity-building programs of CWCs, hospital staff, and child protection officers should make sure that they know more about the intersectionality of disability, trauma, and child rights. Above all, there should be regular judicial check and balance, independent monitoring and accountability systems that are to be implemented.

Mentally ill children in institutions are not patients, they are people with rights, feelings and potential. A country which neglects their silent struggles disowns its own tomorrow. These victims who remain in the dark need to be brought to the fore and made safe, listened to, and feel empowered.

Stateless Children in India: Rights Denied by Borders and Bureaucracy



In the age of globalisation, where borders increasingly define the world, citizenship is often taken for granted. In an age where people and information transverse borders effortlessly, the irony remains that countless children are left behind, without a nation to call their own. Stateless children, particularly in India, are among the most invisible and vulnerable groups in society. The absence of legal nationality translates into a life of exclusion, denied education, healthcare, and even basic identity. Statelessness disproportionately affects children, leaving them in a legal limbo where their fundamental rights are systematically violated. The tangled web of borders, bureaucracy, and political indifference has made statelessness a silent crisis affecting thousands of children across the country.

Understanding Statelessness

According to the 1954 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, a stateless person is one “who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law.” Statelessness can be inherited, caused by migration, loss of documentation, changes in national laws, or discrimination. Children often inherit their parents’ legal status, or lack thereof, without choice or understanding.

In India, statelessness is not just a legal anomaly; it is a humanitarian crisis. It includes Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, Chakma and Hajong from Bangladesh, Tamils from Sri Lanka, and even certain nomadic tribes and undocumented migrants born on Indian soil. The legal and administrative frameworks to deal with their status are not just inadequate—they are often exclusionary.

For example, the Rohingya community in India, mainly residing in Jammu, Delhi, and Hyderabad, faces severe restrictions on movement, education, and employment. Their children live in constant fear of deportation and are denied access to public schooling or welfare schemes.

Similarly, children of Bangladeshi migrants, especially in Assam, are increasingly vulnerable after the implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC). The exclusion of families from the NRC has created a new class of children at risk of statelessness, many of whom were born and raised in India.

The Psychological Toll

The visit of statelessness to children is not limited to material deprivation. The lack of security because of fear of being detained or deported, the stigma that follows the word illegal, and the lack of sense of belonging drastically impact their mental health. Many stateless children are left to grow up in a world that is full of insecurity and discrimination, and this leads to poverty, marginalisation, and trauma.

Legal Reforms and the Way Forward

India urgently needs a comprehensive national legal framework to tackle statelessness, particularly for children. The recognition of the right to nationality must be prioritised as a fundamental child rights issue.

This includes:

1. **Universal Birth Registration:** Birth registration should be separated from the legal status or documentation of parents. Every child born in India must have access to birth certificates and identity documents.
2. **Inclusive Education Policies:** The schools are supposed to take children regardless of their nationality and documentations, as provided by the Right to Education Act, and the international child rights duties.
3. **Safeguarding against Deportation:** children and their families in statelessness situation must be immune to the unreasonable detention and deportation particularly where there is a humanitarian necessity or fear of persecution.
4. **Ratification of Statelessness Conventions:** India should give thought to joining the UN conventions of 1954 and 1961, which help it discern, defend and limit statelessness.
5. **Child-Sensitive Immigration Policies:** Stateless children ought to be defined as a vulnerable group in need of unique protection under the law of juvenile justice and the law covering refugees.

Conclusion

Statelessness among children in India is a profound moral and constitutional failure that demands urgent action. Every child has an innate right to belong, to be protected, and to dream –rights that should never be denied based on borders they have never crossed or documents they have never held. As the world's largest democracy, India has a moral obligation to rise to this challenge and recognise the fundamental rights of its most vulnerable populations. Ensuring that no child remains stateless is not just a legal duty; it is a moral imperative that defines our collective humanity and our commitment to justice for all.

Rights of Street Children in India



India's streets, buzzing with life, carry an invisible population that often goes unnoticed, street children. These children, deprived of family care and basic amenities, live in conditions of extreme vulnerability. Estimates suggest that India has more than 18 million street children, one of the highest numbers in the world. Their existence challenges not only the conscience of society but also the legal and moral duty of the state to protect its youngest citizens.

Understanding Street Children

Street children are those who either live and work on the streets, without parental care, or those who may have families but spend the majority of their time working on the streets to survive. Poverty, loss of parents, migration, domestic violence, natural disasters, and trafficking are among the main factors pushing children to street life. For them, the street becomes a home, workplace, and sometimes a prison.

Constitutional Safeguards

The Indian Constitution, hailed as a document of social justice, extends numerous rights to children, including those living on the streets. Article 14 guarantees equality before law, Article 21 ensures the right to life and personal liberty, and Article 21A provides free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14 years. Furthermore, Articles 23 and 24 prohibit human trafficking, forced labour, and child labour in hazardous industries. In principle, these rights apply equally to street children.

Legal and Policy Framework

Beyond the Constitution, several laws and policies have been introduced to safeguard children:

- The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 defines a "child in need of care and protection" to include street children and mandates the creation of Child Welfare Committees to rehabilitate them.

- The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) recognizes education as a fundamental right and prohibits discrimination against disadvantaged children.
- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO Act) provides stringent measures against sexual abuse, a risk faced disproportionately by street children.
- Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) and Childline 1098 offer mechanisms for rescue, rehabilitation, and reporting of child rights violations.

Despite these frameworks, the gap between law and reality remains stark.

Challenges in Realizing Rights

Street children face multifaceted challenges that make the realization of their rights difficult. Access to education is hindered by the lack of documentation, frequent migration, and discrimination within schools. Healthcare services remain out of reach due to poverty and invisibility in government records. Without protection, they are often subjected to police harassment, sexual exploitation, and child labour. Many fall victim to trafficking networks or end up in conflict with law due to circumstances beyond their control.

One of the biggest challenges is identification. Since street children lack birth certificates, Aadhaar cards, or ration cards, they are excluded from welfare schemes. In practice, the invisibility of their existence deprives them of the very rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

The Way Forward

Ensuring the rights of street children requires more than legal safeguards; it calls for targeted, compassionate action. First, identification and registration of all street children should be prioritized so that they can access education, healthcare, and social security. Second, urban planning must include safe shelters and child-friendly spaces. Third, non-governmental organizations and civil society should be strengthened as partners in rehabilitation efforts. Sensitizing police and local authorities can also reduce the everyday harassment faced by these children.

Above all, public attitudes need to shift. Street children are not merely subjects of charity but citizens with rights. Recognizing their potential and investing in their development can transform them from marginalized outsiders to active contributors in society.

Conclusion

The rights of street children in India remain an unfinished promise. While the Constitution and various laws guarantee them dignity, protection, and opportunities, the reality on the ground often betrays these ideals. Bridging this gap demands political will, societal empathy, and proactive governance. The measure of a society's progress lies not in the prosperity of the privileged, but in how it treats its most vulnerable. For India, securing the rights of street children is not just a legal obligation but a moral one, an investment in a just and humane future.

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