

CHILD RIGHTS IN INDIA: ENSURING A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR EVERY CHILD

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INTRODUCTION

Human rights are inherent to all individuals by virtue of their humanity, encompassing essential entitlements that are universally applicable. They are indispensable for our complete development and are fundamental for our existence as human beings. Nonetheless, specific groups necessitate particular safeguards due to their vulnerability and disabilities. Among these groups, children hold a prominent position, as they are highly susceptible to abuse and exploitation. Children rely on adults for their well-being and are among the most defenseless members of society. In addition to having specific rights that take into account their unique needs, children and adolescents also enjoy the same fundamental rights as adults. Children are neither the parents' property nor the helpless recipients of charitable donations. They are people with rights because they are people. (UNICEF.2019).

Children's rights take into account the need for a child's growth. As a result, children have the right to life and to healthy physical and intellectual development. Children's rights programs aim to meet a child's basic requirements for healthy growth, including access to a balanced diet, necessary care, a quality education, etc. They also take into account the child's vulnerability, indicating that we must defend them. It means giving them specific aid and protection that is appropriate for their age and level of maturity. As a result, the kids need assistance and support as well as protection from abuse, exploitation, and kidnapping in the workplace.

NEED: WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHILD RIGHTS?

The proper growth of children is critical to any society's future well-being. Almost every aspect of government policy, from education to public health, has an impact on children, and short-sighted policymaking that fails to include children has a negative influence on all members of society's future. Furthermore, social research findings demonstrate that children's early experiences have a substantial impact on their future. Their contribution, or cost, to society over the course of their lives is determined by the course of their development.

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AN OVERVIEW OF CHILD RIGHTS

Right to Survival: A child's right to survival begins even before birth. As a result, the right to survival includes the right of a child to be born, the right to enough food, shelter, and clothing, and the right to live in dignity.

Right to Protection: A child has the right to be protected at home and elsewhere from neglect, exploitation, and abuse.

Right to Participation: A child has the right to participate in any choice that directly or indirectly affects him or her. Participation levels vary depending on the child's age and maturity.

Right to Development: Children have the right to all types of development, including emotional, mental, and physical growth. Emotional development is met by the care and love of a support system, mental development by education and learning, and physical development by recreation, play, and nutrition.

THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION AND CHILD RIGHTS

India views children as deserving of the nation's care and shelter since it sees them as equals to their adult counterparts. Through the Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy, children are granted the same fundamental/basic citizenship rights as adults. The following are included in these rights.

(i) Right to Equality: Every citizen in India is equal before the law and is given equal protection under the law, according to Article 14 of the Indian Constitution. As a result, since Indian children are also citizens of this country, this right also applies to them.

(ii) Right against Discrimination: The Constitution forbids discrimination on the basis of race, caste, and other factors under Article 15. No citizen shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of his or her race, religion, caste, sex, or place of birth, according to Article 15(1). The State shall not be barred from adopting any specific measures for women and children, according to Article 15(3).

(iii) Right to Freedom of Expression: There is now a right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) that applies to all Indian citizens. Everyone has access to

this privilege, including Indian children. Children are allowed to express themselves freely as long as they don't hurt others with their ideas or expression.

(iv) Right to Life: Each and every person has the right to life, liberty, and security, as stated in Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. Additionally, it stipulates that no one may be deprived of their life or personal freedom until done so in accordance with a legal process. In a similar vein, every child in India is entitled to personal freedom and due process.

(v) Right to Health: Every child has the right to have a healthy life under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. The protection of life includes, among other things, issues like HIV infections, a lack of clean water to drink, proper sanitation, and starvation.

(vi) Right to Education: Every child in the age range of 6 to 14 has the right to free and compulsory primary education under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. The State shall endeavor to provide early childhood care and education for all children under the age of six, according to Article 45.

(vii) Right to protection from trafficking and forced labor: Every person including children, has the right to protection from human trafficking, begging, and other similar types of forced work, according to Article 23 of the Indian Constitution.

(viii) Right to protection from hazardous employment: Every child under the age of 14 has the right to be safeguarded from employment in mines, factories, or other perilous employment situations under Article 24 of the Indian Constitution.

(ix) Right to be protected from abuse: According to Article 39(e) of the Indian Constitution, workers' health and strength, as well as children's tender age and their right to be shielded from abuse, are not to be violated. They also have a right to protection from abuse and from being coerced into minor jobs or avocations against their will because of economic necessity.

(x) Right to facilities and equal opportunity: Children must be given fair opportunities, facilities to advance in a healthy fashion, and conditions of liberty and dignity, according to Article 39(f) of the Indian Constitution. Children are also to be protected from maltreatment and material and moral abandonment.

(xi) Rights against exploitation and social injustices: The rights of the weaker members of society are covered in Article 46 of the Constitution, which also states that they must be protected from social injustice and all other forms of exploitation.

(xii) Right to identity: The right to identity and registration is a crucial component of children's rights. In India, just 41% of births are recorded. A fundamental human right that grants someone the freedom to exercise all of their other rights is having an identity. An individual's family name, last name, date of birth, gender, and nationality make up their identity. An individual will have rights and responsibilities according to their position (woman, man, kid, etc.) by identifying such identities. (Sehgal, 2021)

KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES BEING FACED IN INDIA

Despite some improvements in reducing malnutrition and childhood diarrhea, progress has been unsatisfactory in India. Data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) in 2015-16 indicates that 35.5% of children suffer from stunted growth. While the proportion of under-5 deaths caused by diarrhea has decreased from 13% in 2000 to 9.5% in 2016, other areas show slow progress. Child labor prevalence has only slightly decreased from 5.4% in 1991 to 3.9% in 2011. Disturbing trends exist in child rights, such as declining child sex ratios, with the ratio dropping from 927 (Census 2001) to 919 (Census 2011). Violence against children, particularly sexual abuse, remains a significant concern, with an alarming number of reported cases. Approximately 10.1 million children aged 5-14 are engaged in work, and states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra contribute significantly. Urgent and comprehensive action is needed to address and combat these pervasive problems and safeguard the rights of children in India (Rai, 2020).

In most of these countries, the root causes of the problem are similar and include the following:

- Cultural expectations consider children as integral to the socio-economic survival of families and communities.
- Persistent poverty, which drives families entrenched in poverty to have larger households for increased chances of economic survival,
- Environmental degradation in rural areas leading to mass migration to cities and the gradual collapse of rural economies.

- The establishment of export industries in cities, relying on mass production factories utilizing low technologies and maintaining competitiveness through low wages and substandard labor conditions.
- Inadequate enforcement of the right to free and compulsory primary education.
- Cultural bias against female children.

LEGAL SAFEGUARDS

- Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986.
- The Children's Pledging of Labour Act, 1933
- The Factories Act, 1948
- The Plantation Labour Act, 1951
- Mines Act, 1952
- Apprentices Act, 1961
- The Beedi and Cigar Worker's Conditions of Employment Act, 1966
- The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976

CURRENT LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN INDIA FOR SOME MAJOR ISSUES

(i) The Child and Adolescent (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986

The Act encompasses crucial provisions regarding child labor. Section 3 permits children to work in non-hazardous family enterprises during vacations and after school hours, and in the audio-visual entertainment industry with safety measures. Section 3A prohibits children's employment in hazardous industries. To define hazardous industries, Section 5 appoints a Technical Advisory Committee by the Central Government. Section 6 outlines permissible places for children to work. This Act is pivotal in addressing child labor, establishing norms, discontinuing harmful practices in industries, and rehabilitating child labor victims for reintegration into society. Regular inspections ensure compliance with standards and regulations by factory owners.

(ii) The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012

The legislation aimed at addressing and preventing child sexual abuse is crucial, providing clear definitions of offenses like "penetrative sexual assault" and "aggravated penetrative sexual assault" in Sections 3 and 5, respectively. It imposes strict punishments, with a

minimum of 20 years imprisonment, extendable to life imprisonment, along with fines, which are used for victims' medical treatment and rehabilitation. The Act also covers the use of children for pornographic purposes, with offenders facing imprisonment and fines. Abetment of offenses is also addressed with corresponding punishments. Since its implementation, the Act has encouraged victims to report incidents, resulting in increased cases and convictions. Failure to report witnessed abuse is also criminalized, leading to higher case filings. Special courts efficiently resolve cases within 1-3 months, and the Act has successfully raised awareness about its provisions and consequences.

(iii) The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 is a significant legislation aimed at safeguarding juvenile rights. It mandates the establishment of specialized juvenile justice boards in each district, comprised of qualified civil servants and activists, to address issues concerning children in conflict with the law. These boards have the necessary authority, and meetings adhere to child-friendly procedures. The Act sets timelines for investigations and bail provisions for child offenders. Additionally, child welfare committees are established in each district to provide care and protection to vulnerable children, handling related cases and inquiries. The Act also covers the rehabilitation of children with special needs, coordination of adoption policies, and monitoring by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights. Overall, the Act ensures the protection of juveniles' best interests and effective resolution of cases.

(iv) The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006

The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act encompasses crucial provisions to comprehensively address the issue of child marriage. Notably, Section 3 renders a marriage void if either party was a child at the time of marriage, while Section 8 ensures appropriate care and shelter for children born from such marriages, declaring them legitimate for all purposes. Section 9 imposes rigorous imprisonment for two years on males aged 18 or above who marry minors, including those aiding and promoting such marriages. Section 12 nullifies marriages where a child is taken from their legal guardian through deceitful means, and Section 13 grants courts the power to issue injunctions. Offenses under the Act are cognizable and non-bailable, as per Section 15. This Act's significance lies in nullifying all forms of child marriage, deterring

offenders through punishments, and protecting the rights of children born from such unions. It is hoped that this Act will continue to achieve success in the future (Rai, 2020).

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMMES

(i) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan: The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a prominent government scheme in India aimed at achieving universal elementary education (UEE) within a specific timeframe, as mandated by the 86th Amendment to the Constitution. Operating as a collaboration between the central and state governments, the scheme's primary objective is to establish and enhance schools in rural areas lacking adequate facilities while improving the quality of existing schools through modernization measures. It focuses on teacher training and recruitment to address staffing gaps and provides learning manuals to enhance their skills. The scheme places significant emphasis on promoting girls' education and includes training programs to equip them with essential life skills. It also caters to the educational needs of children with special abilities.

(ii) Beti Bachao Beti Padhao: The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme was introduced by the government to combat the pervasive discrimination faced by girls in India, both before and after birth. While the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has made some efforts to improve the situation, additional measures were necessary. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao operates as a nationwide campaign, jointly undertaken by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development, and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Its primary goals are to eliminate gender discrimination, safeguard the survival and protection of vulnerable girl children, ensure their active participation in education, and address the decline in the child sex ratio. The scheme has shown positive results thus far, contributing to an improvement in the child-sex ratio as awareness and consciousness regarding this issue have increased among the general population. Recent data from the Health Management Information System (HMIS) in 161 districts indicates a significant increase in the sex ratio at birth.

(iii) Operation Blackboard: Operation Blackboard was a significant initiative introduced during the Rajiv Gandhi government's tenure as part of the National Policy of Education in India. It aimed to enhance elementary education by upgrading primary schools with two classrooms, two teachers, and essential teaching-learning aids like science and math kits, maps, and blackboards. The project aimed to create a conducive environment for effective

education delivery, emphasizing interactive teaching methodologies and teacher training. By bridging the gap between urban and rural areas, Operation Blackboard sought to ensure every child had access to quality education, making it a pivotal step in India's pursuit of universal and high-quality elementary education.

(iv) Integrated Child Development Scheme: The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme was launched to enhance the nutritional and health status of children aged 0-6 years and promote their overall development. Its objectives include reducing mortality, morbidity, malnutrition, and school dropout rates while ensuring coordination among departments involved in child development. The scheme offers six services, including supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check-ups, referral services, preschool non-formal education, and nutrition and health education. Three services are delivered through the Public Health Infrastructure, aiming to improve children's well-being and empower mothers to meet their children's health and nutritional needs through education and support.

(v) Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG)–‘Sabla’: The Scheme Sabla consists of two primary components: Nutrition and Non-Nutrition, catering to the specific needs of adolescent girls. The Nutrition component provides supplementary nutrition to out-of-school girls’ aged 11-14 attending Anganwadi Centers and all girls aged 14-18, offering 600 calories, 18-20 grams of protein, and essential micronutrients daily for 300 days a year. The Non-Nutrition component focuses on holistic development, offering services like IFA supplementation, health check-ups, nutrition and health education, ARSH counseling, life skill education, access to public services, and vocational training for girls aged 16-18. The scheme aims to integrate out-of-school girls into formal or non-formal education systems, benefiting approximately 100 lakh adolescent girls per year.

NATIONAL AND STATE-LEVEL BODIES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS

(i) National and State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights: The Child Rights Act of 2005 mandates the establishment of National and State Commissions for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR and SCPCRs) in every state and union territory. These commissions are tasked with evaluating and analyzing legal safeguards for children, making recommendations for their effective implementation, and submitting reports to the central

government on safeguard effectiveness. They investigate violations of children's rights and suggest appropriate legal actions, review policies and programs impacting children's rights, and raise awareness about these rights in society. Additionally, they establish specialized Children's Courts, expedite judicial processes for cases involving children, and encourage the appointment of Special Public Prosecutors for effective handling of such cases. Their role is crucial in ensuring the protection and enforcement of children's rights as per the Child Rights Act of 2005.

(ii) The Juvenile Justice Board: The Juvenile Justice Board is a crucial institution established under Section 4 of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, by the State Government for each district. Its primary responsibility is to address cases involving children in conflict with the law, as defined in Section 2(13) of the Act. The Act's "saving clause" empowers the Board independently, overriding provisions in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. Section 7 emphasizes the importance of child-friendly procedures and the Board's duty to create a non-intimidating environment for the child during proceedings. In situations where the Board is unavailable, a child in conflict with the law may be presented before an individual member, and the Board holds the authority to issue valid orders even in the absence of a member during any stage of the proceedings (Sehgal, 2021).

(iii) Child Welfare Committee: The Child Welfare Committee, established under Section 27 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, is an independent body responsible for addressing the needs of children in need of care and protection. Each district is mandated to have one or more committees, comprising a Chairperson and four members appointed by the State Government, with at least one woman member and one member with expertise in children's matters. The District Child Protection Unit provides administrative support to the Committee. Members must have relevant experience or professional qualifications, and their appointment lasts for a maximum of three years. The Committee functions like a bench and operates under the powers of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. Any individual associated with a child can file a petition with the respective district's Magistrate, who reviews the case and issues appropriate orders (INDIA CODE, n.d.).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CHILD RIGHTS IN INDIA

A. Evolution of child rights laws and policies in India

The aftermath of World War II brought immense suffering to children worldwide, leading to the establishment of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) on 11 December 1946. Initially focused on aiding war-affected children in Europe and other regions, UNICEF later expanded its mandate to provide long-term assistance to underprivileged children facing economic and political instability caused by war. Renamed the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF has been actively collaborating with the Indian government since 1949, organizing programs and initiatives to foster the growth and development of children in India (Rana, Laxminath, & Singh, 2021).

The evolution of child rights in India has seen significant milestones. It began with laws like the Apprentice Act in 1850 and the Reformatory Schools Act in 1897, addressing children's special needs within the criminal justice system. The Madras Children Act in 1920 followed recommendations for child welfare. International organizations like the International Save the Children Union and the League of Nations emphasized global efforts for child well-being. India passed laws like the Child Marriage Restraint Act in 1929 and enacted the Children's Act in 1960. The UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959 and the Juvenile Justice Act in 1986 highlighted children's rights and welfare. The Child Labour Act of 1986 tackled child labor. The UNCRC, adopted in 1989, and India's ratification in 1992 strengthened child rights commitment. The establishment of the National Human Rights Commission in 1993 protected human rights, including those of children, showcasing India's dedication to safeguarding children's rights.

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Since 1994, India has witnessed significant milestones in child rights, including the enactment of the Pre-Conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Technique Act and the Prohibition of Child Marriages Act. The establishment of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and the launch of the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) were crucial steps. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act were implemented to safeguard children's rights. Amendments were made to the Juvenile Justice Act to align with UNCRC provisions. These legislative changes reflect India's continuous efforts to strengthen child rights protection and welfare. (Evolution of Child Rights in India, Menachery, n.d.)

INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS AND INDIA'S PARTICIPATION

A. India's ratification of international treaties and conventions

(i) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC): In 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) marked a significant milestone in protecting the rights of children aged 0 to 18 globally. As India commemorates the 30th anniversary of its ratification in 2019, the UNCRC's principles of ensuring civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights for all children remain relevant. India, with a substantial child population, ratified the UNCRC in 1992 and has made remarkable progress in advancing children's rights. The convention has influenced the enactment of crucial legislations like the Protection of Children against Sexual Offences Act, the Child Marriage Prohibition Act, and the Right to Education Act. The establishment of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights further demonstrates India's commitment to safeguarding children's rights (NCPCR, n.d.).

(ii) Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict: The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict was adopted by the General Assembly on 25 May 2000, entering into force on 12 February 2002, with India signing it on 15 November 2004. This treaty imposes significant obligations on states to protect children's rights. States must refrain from recruiting or conscripting individuals under 18 for military purposes and must take comprehensive measures, including enacting legislation, to prevent such recruitment. States must also demobilize and support the recovery and reintegration of any individual under 18 involved in hostilities. Armed groups, separate from a country's armed forces, are strictly prohibited from recruiting or engaging anyone under 18 in hostilities, ensuring the protection and well-being of children in armed conflict situations (Tremblay, 2017).

(iii) Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography: The Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography is an additional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, aiming to combat these heinous offenses. Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000, it came into effect on January 18, 2002, and has been ratified by 178 states as of October 2022. The protocol emphasizes safeguarding children's rights through "appropriate measures" and requires parties to protect child victims of exploitation, including trafficking, prostitution, pornography, and the worst forms of child labor. It establishes international legal standards for law enforcement, addressing jurisdiction, extradition, mutual assistance, criminal proceedings, and asset confiscation. Participating nations must enact domestic legislation

criminalizing these practices and imposing appropriate penalties to strengthen global efforts against such violations of children's rights ("United Nations Treaty Collection," 2000).

B. The Role of International Bodies in Monitoring and Promoting Child Rights in India

Case Study: United Nations

UNICEF has been a crucial partner in advancing child rights in India, supporting initiatives like ICDS and the Right to Education Act. Their contributions have led to notable improvements in child well-being, with reduced malnutrition and increased school enrollment. Through the establishment of Childline services, UNICEF has provided crucial support to vulnerable children in distress. Challenges remain, and UNICEF continues to collaborate with the Indian government, advocating for increased investment in child-focused policies and programs. By prioritizing child rights in national agendas and empowering communities, they strive to create a protective environment for children to thrive. Through awareness campaigns and partnerships with civil society organizations, UNICEF promotes a child-centered approach to policymaking. Together, they work towards a more equitable future for all children in India (UNICEF, 2019).

CIVIL SOCIETY'S EFFORTS AND SUCCESS STORIES: NGOS THAT ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The NGO actively engages with vulnerable communities across India, collaborating with state and national-level governance to address child rights issues like child labor, abuse, trafficking, and violations of child rights. They promote child education in "safe schools" to ensure equal opportunities for all, establishing inclusive and learner-friendly environments. The NGO assists families in enrolling children in school, uses interactive teaching methods, and provides resources like libraries and Mobile Learning Centers. They also work on reintegrating out-of-school children, street children, and child laborers into the education system. In terms of healthcare, the NGO collaborates with various government bodies to prioritize infant health and survival in marginalized communities, providing healthcare training and access to public health and nutrition services. The NGO also plays a significant role in child protection, with case workers authorized to remove children from unsafe homes and find long-term care providers or adoptive parents. Their mission is to contribute to a better and stronger society by addressing social issues and promoting overall societal growth and development.

(i) Prayas JAC Society: Since its inception in 1988, Prayas has been actively involved in implementing the Juvenile Justice system in India, protecting, caring for, and rehabilitating underprivileged children. Operating three juvenile homes in Delhi, including the Prayas Observation Home for Boys, the Prayas drop-in-center, and the Prayas Home for Girls, the organization collaborates with the Delhi Police to safeguard children from abuse and exploitation. The Institute of Juvenile Justice, a prominent division of Prayas, focuses on Child Rights, Juvenile Justice, and Child Labour. By implementing projects across various districts, Prayas delivers services to over 30,000 children annually. Their goals include eradicating child labor, ensuring fair treatment for juveniles in the justice system, influencing child-centric policies, conducting research, and creating a comprehensive database on neglected children. Through institutional mechanisms, capacity-building, advocacy, and grassroots interventions, Prayas contributes significantly to Juvenile Justice and child welfare, aiming to advance social justice. They have launched several innovative programs and initiatives, such as On Child Rape: A Growing Menace, Prayas Childline, Juvenile Delinquency and Prayas, and Experiments of Observation Home for Boys, showcasing the effective implementation of the Juvenile Justice Act.

(ii) Save the Children: The leading independent child rights NGO in India operates across 19 states and has positively impacted the lives of more than 10 million children. The organization focuses on empowering marginalized communities, including those in urban areas and remote regions, by providing quality education, healthcare, protection from harm and abuse, and emergency aid during crises. Save The Children also collaborates with the government to drive policy changes that benefit children, extending its efforts to over 80 countries globally.

(iii) Salaam Baalak Trust: Established in 1989, has played a crucial role in rescuing numerous street children and providing them with a secure and nurturing environment. The Trust offers a comprehensive range of services, addressing the physical, medical, educational, social, and vocational needs of street children in Mumbai.

(iv) World Vision India: It is dedicated to creating an inclusive environment where every child is educated, healthy, protected, and valued. Their initiatives focus on ensuring access to nutrition, healthcare, water, sanitation, quality education, and sustainable livelihoods for children. With a vast network of dedicated staff, World Vision India operates in more than

6,252 communities, positively impacting the lives of over 2.6 million children and their families.

(v) SOS Children's Villages: It is committed to the holistic development of vulnerable children from disadvantaged families and orphans. By providing a nurturing and long-term support system, the organization ensures that every child receives care and assistance until the age of 24. With a presence in 22 states and 32 locations across India, SOS Children's Villages has reached out to more than 25,000 children.

(vi) Delhi Council for Child Welfare: Established in 1952, initially focused on caring for children affected by the Partition riots. Over time, their programs expanded to encompass medical services, nutrition, vocational training, adoption, and the rehabilitation of physically and mentally challenged children through daycare and non-formal education. Today, their services cater to approximately 2,500 children daily, and they are provided virtually free of cost. (Hafeez, 2021)

THE WAY FORWARD: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE STATUS OF CHILD RIGHTS IN INDIA

To improve child rights in India, a multifaceted approach is needed, encompassing strengthening legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms, enhancing access to education, healthcare, and social protection, promoting awareness and sensitization among stakeholders, and encouraging a collaboration between the government, NGOs, and civil society. By developing comprehensive legislation aligned with international standards, allocating resources for specialized training of law enforcement agencies, universalizing access to quality education and healthcare, and expanding social protection programs, India can promote the well-being of its children. Furthermore, conducting awareness campaigns and capacity-building programs will foster a culture of respect for child rights, while establishing coordination mechanisms between stakeholders will ensure effective implementation of child rights initiatives. Through these measures, India can make significant progress in safeguarding the rights of its children.

CONCLUSION

In India, the aspect of Child Rights and Child Abuse has not been addressed adequately. Apart from this in the recent past issues relating to that of health and education and the

general well-being of the children have received the focus and attention of the various officials and public authorities but in practice, a lot is yet to be done. For that there is a need to make people aware of, the rights of children and the importance of their growing as responsible and productive citizens. In this regard media, non-governmental organizations and educational institutions can play a vital role. Voluntary organizations could be powerful means of social communication in promoting Child Rights & Preventing their Abuse and Exploitation

The Non-governmental Organizations stand as a beacon of hope in India's journey towards safeguarding child rights and ensuring their protection. Throughout their journey, Manu CSOs, NGOs, and Voluntary Organizations have demonstrated an unparalleled commitment to creating a safe, nurturing, and empowering environment for every child. Their multifaceted approach, encompassing advocacy, education, healthcare, and social support, has not only uplifted the lives of countless vulnerable children but has also inspired other organizations and individuals to join hands in this crucial endeavor.

The impact of different organizations working for child rights resonates far beyond the borders of its inception, reaching the hearts of communities and touching the lives of those who need it the most. The profound changes witnessed in the lives of the children they've touched stand as a testament to the profound difference that can be made when passion and purpose combine.

As a society, we are indebted to the invaluable contributions of NGOs, CSOs, and Voluntary Organizations, and it is incumbent upon all of us to extend our unwavering support to their noble mission. Together, let us build a world where every child can dream, thrive, and flourish without fear or impediment. The future of our children, and thus the future of our nation, lies in our collective efforts to champion their rights, and with organizations like Prayas JAC Society, Uddyan Care, and Save the Children leading the way, we can forge a brighter and more compassionate tomorrow for generations to come.

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