

A STUDY ON THE PROGRAMMES AND POLICY MEASURES FOR CHILD WELFARE

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ABSTRACT

This research article examines the scope, implementation, and gaps within national and international policies and welfare programmes dedicated to safeguarding child rights, preventing exploitation, and promoting holistic child development. It evaluates key legislative measures and developmental frameworks to determine how effectively they address modern vulnerabilities.

Keywords : Child protection, Child welfare, Child rights, Social security

INTRODUCTION

Although a formal legal definition might need to be established, the status of a child under 7 years and a child between 7 to 12 years, depending on their mental maturity, is widely acknowledged to the extent that it protects them from legal proceedings under the general exceptions clause of the Indian Penal Code. The Constitution guarantees special protection through the 'Directive Principles,' ensuring that the State will specifically work to prevent the abuse of children at a young age. Society has not fully recognized the uniqueness of a child. In some ways, social traditions shape their future. Primarily, the marginalized groups, both socially and economically, are targets of different forms of violence. Crimes like foeticide and infanticide jeopardize the survival of particularly female children. Social remedies are essential to guarantee a secure status for children; however, it is crucial to address and suppress any form of violence, be it physical or mental, that constitutes a crime.

NATIONAL CHARTER FOR CHILDREN, 2003

Based on the convention regarding children's rights, the declaration on social and legal principles for the protection and welfare of children, and the declaration of children's rights, the Government of India has considered the adoption of a National Charter for Children to reaffirm its dedication to children's welfare, ensuring that no child is left hungry, uneducated, or unwell. Following deliberation, the decision has been made to implement the National Charter for Children as stated below: While the Constitution of India safeguards the rights and welfare of children in both Parts III and IV, it mandates that the State create specific provisions for them. The State must ensure free and compulsory education for all children aged six to fourteen years, prohibiting the employment of any child under fourteen in factories, mines, or any dangerous jobs. It aims to prevent the exploitation of young children and to ensure that no citizen is compelled by financial pressure to take up work inappropriate for their age or strength

SURVIVAL, LIFE AND LIBERTY

The State and community shall undertake all possible measures to ensure and protect and survival, life and liberty of all children. In particular, the State and community will undertake all appropriate measures to address the problems of infanticide and foeticide, especially of

female child and all other emerging manifestations that deprive the girl child of her right to survive with dignity.

PROMOTING HIGH STANDARDS OF HEALTH AND NUTRITION

The State shall take measures to ensure that all children enjoy the highest attainable standards of health, and provide for preventive and curative facilities at all levels especially immunization and prevention of micronutrient deficiencies for all children. The State shall take steps to provide all children from families below the poverty line with adequate supplementary nutrition and undertake adequate measures for ensuring access to safe drinking water and environmental sanitation and hygiene.

ASSURING BASIC MINIMUM NEEDS AND SECURITY

The State recognizes that the basic minimum needs of every child must be met that foster full development of the child's faculties. In order to ensure this, the State shall in partnership with the community provide social security for children, especially for abandoned children and street children. State and community shall try and remove the fundamental causes which result in abandoned children and children living on streets, and provide infrastructure and material support by way of shelter, education, nutrition and recreation.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE FOR SURVIVAL, GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The State shall in partnership with the community provide early childhood care for all children and encourage programmes which will stimulate and develop their physical and cognitive capacities. The State shall in partnership with the community aim at providing a child care centre in every village where infants and children of working mothers can be adequately cared for. The State will make special efforts to provide these facilities to children from SCs/STs and marginalized sections of society.

FREE AND COMPULSORY PRIMARY EDUCATION

The State recognizes that all children shall have access to free and compulsory education. Education at the elementary level shall be provided free of cost and special incentives should be provided to ensure that children from disadvantaged social groups are enrolled, retained and participate in schooling. At the secondary level, the State shall provide access to education for all and provide supportive facilities from the advantaged groups. The State shall in partnership with the community ensure that all the educational institutions function efficiently and are able to reach universal enrolment, universal retention, universal participation and universal achievement. The State and community recognize that a child be educated in its mother tongue. The State shall ensure that education is child-oriented and meaningful. It shall also take appropriate measures to ensure that education is sensitive to the healthy development of the girl child and to children of varied cultural backgrounds. The State shall ensure that school discipline and matters related thereto do not result in physical, mental, psychological harm to trauma to the child. The State shall formulate special programmes to spot, identify, encourage and assist the gifted children for their development in the field of their excellence.

PROTECTION FROM ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION AND ALL FORMS OF ABUSE

The States shall provide protection to children from economic exploitation and from performing tasks that are hazardous to their well-being. The State shall ensure that there

is appropriate regulation of conditions of work in occupations and processes where children perform work of a non-hazardous nature and that their rights are protected. The State shall move towards a total ban of all forms of child labour.

All children have a right to be protected against neglect, maltreatment, injury, and trafficking, sexual and physical abuse of all kinds, corporal punishment, torture, exploitation, violence and degrading treatment. The State shall take legal action against those committing such violations against children even if they be legal degrading treatment. The State shall in partnership with the community set up mechanisms for identification, reporting, referral, investigation and follow-up of such acts, while respecting the dignity and privacy of the child. The State shall in partnership with the community take up steps to draw up plans for the identification, care, protection, counseling and rehabilitation of child victims and ensure that they are able to recover, physically, socially and psychologically, and re-integrate into society

The State shall take strict measures to ensure that children are not used in the conduct of any illegal activity, namely, trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, begging, prostitution, pornography or violence. The State in partnership with the community shall ensure that such children are rescued and immediately placed under appropriate care and protection. The State and community shall ensure protection of children in distress for their welfare and all round development. The State and community shall ensure protection of children during the occurrence of natural calamities in their best interest.

CONCLUSION

The General Assembly of the United Nations on the basis of the convention on the rights of the child has declared certain rights to the children. The rights accorded to children relating to general family and child welfare, foster placement and adoption have been explained in this paper. The rights extended to the children through the Declaration of the Rights of the Child have been explained. The National Charter for Children, 2003 has provided certain rights to children to secure for every child its inherent right to be a child and enjoy a healthy and happy childhood, to address the root causes that negate that healthy growth and development of children, and to awaken the conscience of the community in the wider societal context to protect children from all forms of abuse, while strengthening the family, society and the Nation.

REFERENCES

1. Declaration on Social and Legal Principles Relating to the Protection and Welfare of Children, Article 1.
2. Declaration of the Rights of the Child, Principle 1.
3. Resolution No 6-15/98C.W., dated 9.2.2004, Issued by Ministry of Human Resource Development.
4. Constitution of India, Article 15(3).
5. National Charter for Children, 2003, Section 1 (a) & (b).