

Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Lost Childhoods

A study on platform children and other children
in distress in India

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Background

India is home to over 400 million children under 18 years old. These children make up more than 55 per cent of the population. Based on state police records in 2005, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) stated that, on average, more than 44,000 children are reported missing in India each year. Around 11,000 of these children remain untraced.¹ This number could actually be much higher, as many cases are never reported because the families of these children are from a marginalised background and do not have the ability to report the incident.

It is estimated that there are 11 million street children living in India, most of whom live in and around railway stations. In Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata, approximately 100,000–125,000 street children figure in the lists of missing, runaway, abandoned or trafficked children.² Without support, these children are at risk of various forms of abuse and a lack of rights that not only denies them a childhood, but also forces them to grow up fast.

Approximately 70,000 children arrive on station platforms in India per year. They come from all over India to find work, escape ill treatment at home, or simply believing that a better life awaits them in the big city. The prospect of better opportunities propels these children to gather enough courage to leave their homes and families behind to venture into unknown territory. The subsequent health and welfare of these children is often ignored. To grant them recognition would be to acknowledge child labour and the concomitant failure of the state to regulate this.

Platform children survive by begging, stealing and doing menial jobs, such as sweeping trains and platforms. They often fall victim to child traffickers, who prowl the platforms in search of cheap child labour for local businesses. Children who have spent a long time living and working on the railway platforms have often experienced violence, abuse and substance abuse. The CHILDLINE report on missing children examines the relationship between trafficking and missing children. The report states that children are often kidnapped or trafficked for prostitution, organ donations or employment.³

About 90 per cent of India's railway children come from a family with two parents; only three per cent are orphans.⁴ Girl runaways spend much less time on the platform than boys, as they are more likely to be immediately recruited into prostitution and other forms of exploitation. However, it is important to note that street boys are also at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation.⁵

¹ <http://www.saralservices.org/Sathi.pdf/> Study of Database of Missing Children in India

² Perspectives on Protection of Child Rights, NCPCR In Focus. August, 2010

³ www.childlineindia.org.in/missing-children-india.htm

⁴ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/picture_gallery/08/south_asia_indian_railways_runaway_children/html/

⁵ Ashalayam: Street children rehabilitation programme. Kolkata. 2010

The socio-economic spectrum of missing children in India is diverse. Children who leave home or disappear may have done so for any one or a combination of the following reasons:

- To earn a living
- To escape abuse
- To elope
- To escape perceived threats or stresses
- For child labour
- For prostitution
- For ransom demands

Our research focuses primarily on platform children and children in distress. While children are always a vulnerable group, some of them are marginalised further due to poverty and other socio-cultural issues. These children are Children in Need of Care and Protection (CNCP) and may be found in the following situations:

- In families 'at risk'
- On the street
- In institutions

The following are some of the vulnerable groups that are included in the CNCP:

- Street children
- Orphaned, abandoned and destitute children
- Working children
- Abused children
- Children who are victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Trafficking
- Children engaging in substance abuse
- Children in conflict and disaster situations
- Children in families 'at-risk'
- Differently-abled children
- Mentally-ill children
- HIV/AIDS-affected/infected children
- Juveniles in conflict with the law

Important things to remember when making decisions relating to children:⁶

- The ‘best interest of the child’ is the guiding principle in all work with children.
- A ‘rights-oriented’ approach is required in all rehabilitation plans for children.
- The child’s ‘right to participation’ must be respected and the child should be consulted when making decisions that will have an impact on his/her life.
- All efforts must be made to ensure that the child grows up in his own family and in a nurturing environment.
- The first priority is the prevention of family breakdown and the subsequent destitution of children, by the strengthening of families ‘at risk’ through supportive services.
- If the child’s own family cannot look after the child, then other family based, community-oriented alternatives should be considered.
- Long-term institutional care as a form of rehabilitation (such as commitment to an institution until the age of 18) should be the last option for a child.
- When handling matters related to Children in Need of Care and Protection and Juveniles in Conflict with Law, we have to ensure that all proceedings are conducted in a sensitive and child-friendly environment, and with a ‘child-centered’ approach.

⁶ Mehta, Neelima, Child Protection and Juvenile Justice System. Childline India Foundation. April, 2008

Methodology

The objectives for this study on children in distress – with a special focus on children living on railway platforms – were identified as the following:

1. To analyse the role of different government departments (police, juvenile justice department, child protection committees and child welfare committees)
2. To understand and document the work of NGOs that engage with platform children
3. To propose innovative strategies to allow PHF to work effectively with platform children

Secondary Research

Desk research of existing data online, along with an analysis of documents/published reports shared by NGOs, donor organisations and government agencies.

Primary Research

Interviews were conducted with members of NGOs that work with children in distress, representatives of government agencies that are involved with them and any other agency that is interested in working for platform children.

A meeting was held at the PHF office with the Salaam Baalak Trust and CHETNA to understand the nature of the organisation's experience with PHF and their understanding of the current scenario in relation to work with children in distress.

Visits were made to Jaipur and Bhopal (and Itarsi) in consultation with PHF to interact with organisations working with children in distress, and to develop an understanding about how best to engage with the issue.

Research findings

India first introduced justice interventions for children via the National Children's Act in 1960. This was followed by the Juvenile Justice Act in 1986 and the current Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000, amended in 2006. The Juvenile Justice Law in India deals with children in need of care and protection, as well as with children in conflict with the law. In 2006, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) proposed the adoption of the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS). In 2009, the scheme was approved by the central government, which began providing children with protection and a safe environment in which to develop and flourish. The purpose of the scheme is to provide support for children in difficult circumstances and to reduce the risks that vulnerable children face. It also seeks to intercept the paths that lead to the abuse, neglect, exploitation, abandonment and separation of children.⁷

We believe that child labour can only be remedied with legislation. We will examine some of the national and international conventions, along with prominent legislations that have made a significant impact on the rights of the child.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)⁸ is a human rights treaty setting out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children. The Convention defines a child as any human being under the age of 18, unless the age of majority is reached earlier under a state's own domestic legislation. Nations that ratify this convention are bound to it by international law.

In August 2012, the Indian Cabinet finally made the employment of children below the age of 14 a recognisable offence by adopting a proposal to amend the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986. This put a total ban on the employment of children under 14 in any industry – hazardous or non-hazardous.

The amendment cleared at the meeting presided over by the Indian Prime Minister also approved a blanket ban on employing children under 18 in hazardous industries like mining. Until 2012, children under 14 could still be employed in non-hazardous industries.

This also enabled India to ratify ILO Convention⁹ 138 (minimum age for entry to employment) and Convention 182 (prohibition of the employment of persons below 18 in hazardous occupations).

It was also decided that the overall responsibility for implementation of the Act would rest with the district magistrate, while the monitoring and inspection would be done by the labour department in the state concerned.

In spite of this ratification, children continue to work in hazardous conditions in India, for instance in the gem industry in Jaipur, glass factories in Firozabad and the lock industry in Aligarh.¹⁰ The Constitution of India (Article 24) says that

⁷ Please check Annex 1 for the complete document

⁸ Please check Annex 1 for the complete document

⁹ Please check Annex 1 for the complete document

¹⁰ Burra, Neera, *Born to Work: Child labour in India*. Oxford University Press. 1997

children below the age of 14 shall not be employed to work in any factory or mine or be engaged in any other hazardous employment. Moreover, one of the Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 39c and 0) says that children should not be abused, that citizens should not be forced by economic necessity to enter a vocation unsuited to their age or strength, and that childhood and youth be protected against moral and material abandonment. Article 45 of the Constitution says that the state must endeavour to provide free and compulsory education for all children until they are 14 years old.

Child labour results in children leading adult lives prematurely – working long hours for low wages in conditions that are damaging to their health as well as their physical and mental development. They are sometimes separated from their families and are frequently deprived of meaningful education and training opportunities that could allow them a better future. When a child is earning a wage – to support himself/herself or the family – and it directly or indirectly interferes with the growth and development of the child, this is child labour. This includes work in any sector – formal and non-formal, organised and unorganised, within or outside the family. Even family labour that deprives the child of his/her right to education, recreation, physical, mental and emotional health is considered child labour.¹¹

Child labour is the result of a combination of factors: poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, unemployment of parents, non-availability and non-accessibility to schools, and school drop-outs. Employers exploit children because they are cheap labour and because of their inability to fight against exploitation. The ineffective implementation and enforcement of legislation relating to child labour also contributes significantly to its continuation.

Long working hours under stressful, hazardous conditions impair a child's physical and psychological health. It undermines the child's dignity and self-esteem and deprives him/her of a healthy, happy childhood. A lack of education creates an unskilled adult labour force with poor employment opportunities. Thus, child labour creates a vicious cycle of poverty, unemployment, underemployment and low wages.

'Children in India 2012 – A Statistical Appraisal'¹² analyses child survival, child development and child protection. There has been a considerable increase in the number of children currently employed in India. Very young children (5–7 years old) are mainly involved in unpaid work for someone who is not a member of their household. Older boys (12–14 years old) are usually engaged in paid work or family work, whereas girls in this age group tend to be involved in household chores or family work. Rural children between 5–14 years old are more likely to be engaged in work than their urban counterparts. The number of children engaged in work activities decreases steadily in direct correlation to their parents' increasing education and increasing wealth.

¹¹ Bajpai, A. (2003): *Child Rights in India. Law, Policy and Practice*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi supported by UNICEF, New Delhi

¹² *Children in India 2012 – A Statistical Appraisal*, Social Statistics Division Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation

In 2012, the Women and Child Development (WCD) ministry revised the National Policy for Children¹³ for the first time since it was adopted in 1974. The draft policy defines any individual below the age of 18 as a child. The key priorities, as listed in the policy, are survival, health, nutrition, development, education, protection and participation. According to ministry officials, the policy will guide and inform all laws, policies, plans and programmes affecting children and all other actions of national, state and local governments in relation to children. As per the draft policy, the state claims that it would take special protection measures to secure the rights and entitlements of children in difficult circumstances; in particular, but not limited to children affected by migration, displacement, communal or sectarian violence, civil unrest or disasters.

According to the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), many children are trafficked to the sex trade and other kinds of exploitation, including domestic labour, industrial labour, agricultural labour, begging, the organ trade and child marriage. The practice of trafficking children is on the rise, and nearly 60 per cent of its victims are under 18.¹⁴ According to the NHRC report on trafficking in women and children, the number of women and children working in the sex trade in India is between 700,000 and 1 million. Of these, 30 per cent are 20 years old. Nearly 15 per cent began sex work when they were below 15 and 25 per cent began when they were between 15 and 18 years old.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE) of children refers to using a child for sexual activities for the material or monetary gains of an adult. People profiting from this exploitation could include parents, family members, community members, procurers/agents, pimps, brothel owners and others.¹⁵

Poverty and ignorance are the primary reasons for this level of exploitation. Families want their children to contribute to the household income. There are some communities where religious and cultural systems – like the Devdasi, Jogini or the Bedia tribes of Rajasthan – legitimise the sexual exploitation of young girls. The rapid growth of tourism in India has led to the expansion of the child sex industry. In India, there are increasing numbers of instances of CSE of children at popular tourist destinations where they become victims of paedophiles. Child pornography and audio-visual material using children in a sexually abusive manner is another form of CSE of children. Physical, psychological and emotional abuse traumatises the child, and leads to societal or family rejection. Trafficking children for domestic work, adoption and child labour is also a serious concern.

In 2011,¹⁶ Maharashtra accounted for 74 per cent of the 27 cases of ‘buying of girls for prostitution’ and West Bengal accounted for 77 per cent of the 113 cases of ‘selling of girls for prostitution’. A total of 113 cases under the prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 were reported in India. The highest number of cases were reported in West Bengal (25), followed by Maharashtra (19), Andhra Pradesh (15), Gujarat (13) and Karnataka (12). Taking all crimes against children into account, the Indian crime rate has marginally increased from 2.3 per cent in 2009 to 2.7 per cent in 2011. The rate was highest in

¹³ Please check Annex 1 for the section on Protection and Participation

¹⁴ ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/Data/CD-CII2005/home.htm

¹⁵ Mehta, Neelima, Child Protection and Juvenile Justice System. Childline India Foundation. April, 2008

¹⁶ ‘Children in India 2012 – A Statistical Appraisal’, Social Statistics Division Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation

Delhi (25.4) followed by Andaman and Nicobar Islands (20.3), Chandigarh (7) and Chhattisgarh (7), Madhya Pradesh (6) and Goa (5.1).

According to the Statistical Appraisal, Children in India, 2011, 69 per cent of cases of human trafficking were cases booked under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956, though there is a decline of 2.6 per cent in 2011 compared to 2010. Andhra Pradesh accounted for 20.4 per cent and Tamil Nadu accounted for 17.2 per cent of cases under this category, in 2011. An increase of 122.2 per cent has been observed in cases of 'importation of girls' during 2010–11, and 56 per cent of these cases are from Madhya Pradesh.

Child trafficking is akin to slavery; the worst form of exploitation of any human being. The solution lies in a multi-sectoral approach from a child rights perspective. Laws alone cannot eradicate it. It requires the coming together of government and non-governmental organisations, pressure groups and civil society organizations, as well as international bodies to work against it.

Lately, there has been a lot of discussion about juvenile crime and the age of the child. Of the six men accused of raping and brutally assaulting a 23-year-old woman in Delhi in December 2012, one turned out to be a juvenile, making him ineligible to be tried with the others. This has raised a debate surrounding what needs to be done to prevent the rising number of crimes committed by teenagers.

According to the NCRB, juvenile crime rose 40 per cent between 2001 and 2010. The increase in violence and crimes against women by young offenders has also increased. Rapes by juveniles have more than doubled in the same period, murder is up by a third and kidnappings of women and girls are nearly five times what they were.

These figures have prompted a drive to give trial judges the discretion to try juveniles as adults, or to define youths over 16 years old as adults when it comes to serious crimes.

A study done by the Department of Community Medicine, Maulana Azad Medical College, Delhi, and Prayas Observation Home for Boys highlighted, "...a strong positive association between drug use and crime in adolescence." Based on interviews with the staff of an observation home in Delhi, researchers found that the prevalence of drug use among the boys before coming to the observation home was between 60 and 70 per cent. Children can be addicted to medicines, over-the-counter drugs, illegal drugs, beverages, cigarettes, food additives, adhesives, correction fluid, petrol/diesel solution, shoe polish or industrial chemicals. The potent fumes of certain solvents hit a part of the child's brain where it suppresses hunger, cold and loneliness. Children are particularly prone to be lured into addiction by undesirable social elements and to be manipulated for drug trafficking by organised drug groups.

India's only government drug rehabilitation centre for juveniles became operational in Delhi in 2011, after rejoinders from Delhi's High Court. There is an urgent need to understand and explore the link between drug abuse and crime among children in distress. Efforts to prevent addiction and cure those already addicted will undoubtedly limit juvenile crime in India.

The increasing trend of juvenile crime (under the India Penal Code) is a matter of grave concern, though we should bear in mind that the percentage of juvenile crimes between 2001 and 2011 was around 1 per cent, when

compared with total crime figures. Juvenile IPC crimes in 2011 increased by 10.5 per cent over 2010 as 22,740 IPC crimes by juveniles were registered, increasing to 25,125 cases in 2011. Most of these juvenile crimes were theft (21.17 per cent), harm (16.3 per cent) and burglary (10.38 per cent).¹⁷

Some of the factors that lead to juvenile crime are:¹⁸

Poverty: Poverty deprives children of socio-cultural and economic opportunities for growth and development. Poverty-related circumstances like severe hunger, illness, addictions or parental neglect only serve to aggravate the situation. These children are more likely to commit crime.

Family: Criminal family members influence children and they sometimes lead them into a life of crime.

Lack of appropriate guidance and discipline: Inconsistent discipline, parental indifference or abusive parenting can lead to poor self image and personality problems, making children vulnerable to negative influences outside the home.

The home situation: The disintegration of 'families at risk', severe family crisis, migration, and urbanisation have all weakened the positive and nurturing influence of the family on the child. Tension, emotional disturbances and abuse at home may drive children away from the home and make them vulnerable to criminal influences.

Victims of abuse: Research indicates a correlation between child abuse and subsequent delinquency.

School dropouts: Not attending school regularly results in truancy. These children often indulge in unhealthy leisure activities and commit petty crimes to earn a living.

Exposure to media: Exposure to media violence not only increases physical aggressiveness in children, but also makes them more accepting of violence.

Peer influence: In adolescence, experimenting with drugs, gambling, drinking, inappropriate sexual behaviour, the desire for quick money, and involvement in youth gangs often leads to violence and crime.

Lack of age-appropriate sex education: This often leads to sexual abuse and molestation, and even rape by young children.

Gang culture: A gang culture is observed among street children, where the street gang is the substitute family and the child gets bullied into the anti-social activities in return for survival, protection or favours.

Children in need of care and protection are children who are in especially difficult circumstances and need to be protected by adults from all kinds of neglect, abuse or exploitation. It is the responsibility of adults to ensure 'To Every Child a Childhood.'

¹⁷ 'Children in India 2012 – A Statistical Appraisal', Social Statistics Division Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation

¹⁸ Mehta, Neelima, Child Protection and Juvenile Justice System. Childline India Foundation. April, 2008

This issue is being addressed by various NGOs. They are proactive in their efforts to intervene on the issue of runaway, lost and trafficked children. The effectiveness of these organisations varies, but it is commonly felt that it is difficult to coordinate, share data or speed up processes between them.

The role of the police department is crucial. Since both missing and found children have to be reported to the police, they have access to a lot of information on missing children. However, there are few attempts to locate missing children by looking at these databases across different states.¹⁹ When a child goes missing, there is no need to fill out a First Information Report (FIR), as no offence has been committed. The police office concerned simply makes an entry into the general station diary. Information about the missing child is sent to the chief of police, and police officers generate awareness through local media. The police headquarters of each state has a missing persons bureau. A database of missing persons is maintained by the NCRB missing persons wing in New Delhi.

Children living on railway platforms or the street are an extremely vulnerable group as they are forced to live without protection, supervision, care or concern. Street children are primarily working children who have no alternative but to beg, rag pick, shoe shine, work as porters, work on food stalls or in hotels, or pick garbage and empty plastic water bottles from trains. They may have families, but the nature and degree of their contact varies from returning home daily, to returning only a few times a year. Others live on the streets and it is off the street that they seek food, shelter, livelihood and companionship. The abandoned and destitute street children have no ties whatsoever with their families. They are abandoned due to poverty, mental or physical handicap and, in some cases, gender discrimination.

As discussed above, dysfunctional families, poverty, exploitation, domestic violence, sexual abuse, neglect, alcoholism and drug abuse compel children to leave home and live on the streets. They are constantly exposed to the dangers of the city life and are vulnerable to exploitation, violence and various forms of abuse. In the absence of access to the basic resources that are required for healthy growth and development, their rights to education, proper nutrition, clothing, shelter and medical care are grossly violated.

Children living in railway stations are often overlooked. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) consulted representatives of the railway administration, the railway protection force (RPF), the government railway police (GRP) and civil society organisations. They also conducted field visits to understand the predicament of these children. It found that as transit, source and destination locations, railway stations in India were a breeding ground for child labour and child trafficking and exploitation. To address the rights of these children, NCPCR²⁰ made the following suggestions and recommendations. They amount to a multipronged strategy that includes several ministries and departments, and were presented in the document 'Perspectives on Protection of Child Rights, August 2010':

¹⁹ <http://www.saralservices.org/Sathi.pdf>/ Study of Database of Missing Children in India

²⁰ Please check Annex 1 for the complete document

1. Establishing links between the Juvenile Justice Act and the Railway Acts/RPF Act
2. Mechanisms at railway stations for safeguarding children's rights:
 - a. Child protection committees
 - b. Child welfare committees
 - c. Special juvenile police unit
 - d. Child assistance booths
3. Short-stay shelter home for children at railway premises
4. Children's record is referred to voluntary organisations or a competent authority by RPF and GRP
5. Raise awareness of children's rights among travelling public
6. Training and orientation programme on child rights for railway employees
7. Incorporating the Child Rights and Juvenile Justice Act in the syllabus for railway police training
8. Partnership with voluntary organisations
9. RPF Mitra Yojana or the 'Friends of the RPF'
10. Missing Children data
11. Monitoring Mechanisms

Khushboo Jain (Petitioner) was concerned with the plight of the children who arrive and stay at railway stations. She filed a petition against the Ministry of Railways (The High Court of Delhi, at New Delhi. W.P.C [5365/2012]) to demand a system that cares for children in distress and assists them without procedural delays. According to Khushboo, "The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights has a set of guidelines for railway children. The PIL [Public Interest Litigation] demands that these be implemented". The detailed order that was passed on 13 February 2013 has been included as Appendix 3.

Runaway children and those living on platforms and streets require more attention from central and state government bodies, as well as from NGOs and civil society organisations. A chronological analysis of the NGOs that have been working with children in distress can be understood on the basis of three phases of its development:

Phase One:

The discourse on street children gained prominence after the film *Salaam Bombay* in 1988. The formation of the Salaam Baalak Trust also led to the initiation of organisations like Don Bosco, Butterflies and Prayas. These organisations have worked with the contacts at various railway stations in the city, to create drop-in centres and night shelters that attempt to offer a safe and secure environment for street children.

Phase Two:

In 1989, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was a defining moment in favour of child rights. It made the 'best interest of the child' the central priority in all the matters impacting children. The CRC not only gave children their basic human, civil, economic, social, cultural and political rights; but also covered four main areas: the survival, development, protection and participation of children. In 1995–96, there was a general trend towards 'activist' engagement with child rights issues.

Phase Three:

With the Juvenile Justice Act in 2000 and its amendment in 2006, CHETNA, Sathi, NIWCYD and other NGOs with a focus on the vulnerability of runaway children made the protection and rehabilitation of the child their central focus. Most organisations believe that, ideally, children should live with their parents, and attempts are made to reunite the runaway child with its family. If this is not possible, an institutional approach is taken.

An analysis of the approaches and strategies used when working with runaway children showcases not only the great insight of the NGOs, but also their commitment to the wellbeing of children in distress. In the following section we look at some case examples.

Approaches and strategies for working with runaway children: Case examples

Approach 1: Children have a right to a safe and happy home. Returning runaway children to the family home is the best intervention.

Case example one: SATHI

Sathi has worked with separated and runaway children on railway platforms since 1992. Sathi's objective is to reunite the children with their families. Sathi started out in Raichur (Karnataka) in the 1990s and developed a model that chose a railway station, worked in collaboration with local NGOs, and looked to return runaway children to their homes. It began work in eastern UP and Bihar in 2007. These are India's least developed areas and most runaway children now originate from there. Sathi currently works in 15 railway stations across the country.

Key achievements of Sathi:

- Extended its operation to 25 railway stations in nine states.
- Home-placed 22,237 children in 10 years. Approximately 80 per cent of home-placed children were found living with their parents in subsequent surveys.
- Collaborated with 35 NGOs and helped them to replicate the concept of home placement. Over 50 capacity-building programmes were organised in different locations to benefit the staff of collaboration NGOs.
- Organised nearly 80 home-orientation camps for habitual runaway and repeated substance abuse children. Ninety per cent of enrolled children were reunited with their families after the camps.
- Working with 10 Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) in nine states. Activities include publishing newsletters, an awards programme for best CWC team and home placement of children from government children's homes.
- Sathi has associated itself with academic institutions like NIMHANS, Bangalore, and TISS, Mumbai. The Module of Home Orientation Camp was developed with the support of Dr Sekhar Sheshadri, NIMHANS. The camp was evaluated by Dr Neela Dabir, TISS. Conceptualisation of Sathi's activities was done with the support of Dr Rajshree Mahtani, TISS.
- Strong networking with Railways, Railway Protection Force (RPF), and Government Railway Police (GRP). Due to Sathi's intervention on railway platforms, RPF has initiated a programme called 'Bal Mitra Yojan' to help needy children on railway platforms. RPF also issues identity cards for Sathi staff to work on railway platforms.
- Sathi has built up comprehensive documentation of its activities, which includes data on almost 14,000 children. Sathi also initiated a fellowship programme and research on the effectiveness of rehabilitation strategies for vulnerable children. Follow up work includes a system of telephone calls to each restored child.
- Sir Ratan Tata Trust, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, Despande Foundation-USA, Every child-UK, TDH-Luxemburg, Railway Children-UK, Infosys Foundation and HSBS have been funding partners for the Sathi initiatives.

Source: 2010 proposal to PHF

Core strategies:

- Identification of 'separated' children, facilitating safe and suitable transition shelter, family tracing and home restoration.
- A specialised model of five-day 'home orientation camps' for supporting children to assess their personal situations and recognise the significance of home; the camp enlists children habituated to running away and to platform life, and who engage in repeated use of substances and disagree to going back home.

- Shelter related services: Teaching government home staff address-tracing and home restoration counselling for children. Additional support in organising child-centred activities is also provided.
- Collaboration with CWCs to resettle children living in government children's homes.
- Advocacy and awareness on the issues of separated and runaway children and the possibilities of home placement.
- Research on separated children and their rehabilitation. Follow-up studies to assess the quality of home placements.
- Capacity-building programmes for staff to equip them to deal with children in difficult situations.

Emerging from a comprehensive evaluation in July 2012, Sathi reorganised some of its organisational strategies and priorities to include:

- Encouraging a focus on child counselling beyond address tracing, and supporting children in dealing with trauma.
- Working more intensively with parents and the family to understand home situations (which cause children to run away) before considering restoring the child to the same environment.
- Work with the district-level Child Welfare Committees to enhance their participation in rehabilitation and provide a local institutional connection when a child is restored to its family.
- Work with the community that the child is restored to, so that the family of a runaway child and the child itself gets community support.
- Create a focus on children who could not be restored to their families for whatever reason, and plan a way to facilitate their rehabilitation, whether this is from the use of drugs or alcohol or whether they have been involved in theft on trains, or any other disastrous situation the child is found to be in.
- Explore the possibility of working with the police/missing children's unit in government to set in process the creation of an internet-based database which could simplify the search for children.

Case example two: SOS Children's Villages

SOS Children's Villages is an independent, non-governmental, social development organisation that has provided family-based care for children in India since 1964. It advocates the concerns, rights and needs of children. More than 6,000 children and young people live in 33 SOS Children's Villages and 27 SOS youth facilities in the country.

**Key programme of SOS Children's Villages:
Family Based Care (FBC)**

- The mother: Each child has a caring parent
- Brothers and sisters: Family ties grow naturally
- The house: Each family creates its own home
- The village: The SOS family is a part of the community

Family Strengthening Programme (FSP)

This programme works with the concerned communities and with local partners to support disadvantaged and 'at risk' families based on local circumstances. FSPs are divided into three phases:

- Short-term support
- Mid-term support
- Long-term support

Source: SOS Children's Villages website

At SOS Children's Villages, it is believed that every child should grow up in a strong family environment, so SOS helps families to create a loving, caring home. Their work focuses on strengthening families, helping them to stay together during difficult times and providing the best care possible for their children. The needs of a family can be varied. SOS Children's Village experts work with families to help them develop a wide range of skills, including:

- Household budget planning
- Searching for employment and earning a living
- Bonding with a child or young person and learning to create a stable family life at home

In cases where it is not possible for a child to stay in the family, SOS finds tailor-made solutions that respond to each situation. SOS Children's Villages is the only global organisation that provides direct care to children who can no longer stay with their families. SOS supports families, communities, local and state governments to develop the attitudes, skills, resources, and structures to protect and care for a child.

SOS Children's Villages of India has set up kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, professional institutes and vocational training centres. These educational institutions not only cater to children and youngsters under SOS's care, but also reach out to children in need from neighbourhood communities.

Approach 2: Protection and rehabilitation is an entitlement of children. Runaway girl children have special vulnerabilities.

Case example one: NIWCYD

The National Institute of Women Child & Youth Development (NIWCYD) has worked in marginalised communities since 1982. It reaches around 1,500 tribal and rural pockets, and 80 urban slums, addressing the development concerns of poor families through the creation of Sangathans and facilitating a demand for their rights. Since 2001, it has organised the BACHPAN project in Madhya Pradesh (MP), which has evolved as a resource centre on child rights. As part of this, the 'Support to girl children in need of care and protection' project has been working in three railway platform settings (Itarsi, Bhopal and Katni) and the tribal concentrated district of Umariya, with a vision to create a protective environment for neglected girls. This allows them to access their rights, leading to self-sustainable development through learning and action.

Achievements of NIWCYD in the last three years:

- Establishment of CWC and a Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU) in three districts of MP.
- All three CWCs and SJPU are keenly involved in identification, placement and providing support to the girl children. NIWCYD is running an educational/vocational training centre along with CWC and SJPU.
- NIWCYD has assisted CWCs, transition homes and GRP and RPF in setting up robust case documentation processes including health, education and counselling documents.
- Links with Sarva shiksha abhiyan to establish a human development centre for children in the Itarsi home.
- Over 200 girl children restored to their families and over 100 girls and boys linked with institutions.
- Children's vulnerability issues, such as child labour on platforms have been raised and addressed through community engagement and education options.
- Bal adhikar mitra groups mobilised in three districts, allowing 85 members to raise pertinent issues regarding children's rights.

Source: Project reports to PHF

Core strategies:

- To advocate and support the creation of a safe, sensitive and creative space as a short-stay shelter to provide immediate support to children, with the support of local administration.
- Work with the CWCs to prepare and support the children to return back home where possible.
- Create a child-friendly environment for learning in Juvenile Justice girl's institutions and mobilise staff participation in processes.
- Build an alliance with organisations to emerge as a vigilance, response and advocacy group on issues of child protection in the form of bal adhikar mitras.
- Bridge a resource pool for the development of infrastructure in institutions from government and civil society organisations.
- Develop girls living in short-stay or institutional care, or on the platforms through skills training and support to resume education.
- Organise processes to help with addictions for girls continuing to live on platforms.
- Activating the various state mechanisms under the Integrated Child Protection scheme and building the proactive engagement of diverse stakeholders in the protection of runaway girls through qualitative service delivery in care settings and protection in vulnerable settings.
- Developing a state-wide alliance of girls, starting with city and regional forums. Encourage children's right to express themselves through the publication of a quarterly magazine, Pankhodi.

Case example two: SALAAM BAALAK TRUST

Salaam Baalak Trust (SBT) grew out of Nukkad, a street-based intervention programme that began working with street children in and around New Delhi railway station in 1987. After the success of Mira Nair's film *Salaam Bombay* in 1988, the Salaam Baalak Trust was established to help promote such work, and took over Nukkad's activities a couple of years later.

Salaam Baalak Trust is dedicated to the care and protection of neglected street children, reaching out to them on railway platforms, at crowded bus stops, and in the lanes around temples. Their comprehensive services include five long-term, full-care residential facilities (one being exclusively for girls), 15 ongoing contact point programmes, and an emergency telephone helpline for children in distress.

Key achievements of Salaam Baalak Trust:

'In a 22-year journey, the organisation has already supported more than 50,000 children from all over the country and abroad. Some children from the early phases have now joined the organisation as employees. One group of SBT boys has taken our mission one step forward through Lakshya-Badhte Kadam or Goal Forward Step. This is a peer-run community initiative that supports 50 street children with food, education and vocational training. Children, who have left SBT and gone on to establish meaningful lives for themselves, embrace a wide variety of jobs and vocations. Our roots in the performing arts have enabled some to become highly regarded freelance photographers, dancers, choreographers, film makers, actors, puppeteers, and theatre directors. Others have got steady jobs with companies such as Matrix, Café Coffee Day, Benetton, Pizza Hut, Miditech, DS Constructions (Toll Plaza), Delhi Metro Rail Corporation and Teamwork Productions.'

- In 2011–12, CHILDLINE-SBT helped 662 children, 269 of whom were girls. There were 260 referrals to Child Welfare Committees and 85 children (13 girls) were restored to their families. Eighteen children were hospitalised and one child was operated upon.
- CHILDLINE-SBT rescued 58 children during two major rescue operations in the Kamla Market area (20), Nabi Karim area (28) and others. Of the rescued children, 46 were declared as 'bonded labour' and were provided with a release certificate by the sub-divisional magistrate. It succeeded in getting Rs. 82,400 in compensation for a girl in Jharkhand.
- CHILDLINE-SBT is now a member of the child labour district task force as per the judgment of Delhi High Court and the action plan prepared by NCPCR.
- CHILDLINE, Delhi works in close cooperation with the District Labour Department, Railways, CWCs, and other local NGOs working on children's issues.

Source: Organisational annual report 2011-12

Core strategies/interventions:

- Salaam Baalak Trust has five full-care residential programmes: Aasra, Apna Ghar and DMRC are homes for boys, and Rose Home and Arushi are for girls. A sense of security – be it a safe sleeping place, a small cupboard to store their personal belongings, a sense of routine (such as regulated timings for food, study, play, roll call and going to bed) gives the children an environment in which they can be creative and grow naturally, but also instills in them the idea that discipline and hard work will help them to achieve their dreams.
- The trust uses various schemes of educational intervention, both formal and non-formal. Wherever possible, the objective is to bring children into mainstream education, engaging with the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), formal schools, non-formal education and bridge courses. The trust also provides the children with books, additional materials, clean uniforms, a balanced diet and nutritious food.

- SBT also runs the Chalta Firta School – a mobile bus programme reaching out to vulnerable communities towards the fulfillment of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
- Since 2009, SBT has served as one of the nodal agencies for Delhi CHILDLINE. Salaam Baalak Trust handles the largest number of calls to the service, and has received a total of over 17,000 calls. The service provides immediate assistance to callers, including medical assistance and emotional counselling.
- Children over 15 are encouraged to gain vocational skills. Some of the trades include: candle making, tailoring, electrics, motor mechanics, cooking, photography, computing and driving. Children can also study crafts, music, needlecraft and handicrafts.
- Recreation and talent development is central to a child's all-round development. Boys and girls at the shelters learn dance and music from renowned artists. Annual excursions and tours are organised, taking children to hill stations and tourist spots around the country for up to 10 days. The children also have weekly sightseeing outings and movie screenings.
- SBT has a full-time sports coordinator, facilitating training in sports such as cricket, soccer and squash. Children also attend swimming and karate classes and participate in various local games and sports competitions.
- Children are given regular medical check-ups at the shelters. Individual health cards are maintained for each child. A full-time doctor works with SBT, while other specialists are on call.
- The mental health programme encompasses a preventive programme that forms groups and identifies cases early to help children going through transition or stressful phases. This programme also attempts to train and supervise the staff at Salaam Baalak Trust and its various centres to enhance their counselling skills and mental health education. This allows them to identify cases, refer them, intervene in a suitable manner and then document the case appropriately.
- SBT has placed great importance on one of the missing links for children in care: a process of graduation as they turn 18. SBT helps children to find suitable employment. The trust supports promising candidates by providing small loans in order to help them establish small-scale businesses or jobs. SBT provides support in finding a place to live and helps the 'graduates' with all their expenses for three months. SBT then maintains contact with these young adults, to ensure that they find stability and growth in their work.

Case example three: CHETNA

CHETNA is an NGO working towards the empowerment of street and working children using a participatory approach. CHETNA stands for 'Childhood Enhancement through Training and Action'. It strives to create an accepting and respectful environment for all children, especially those who do not have the privilege of growing up in a loving family or with suitable carers. It was founded in early 2002 and is registered under the Indian Public Charitable Trust Act. CHETNA's core interventions are by way of provision of education, counselling, recreational activities, and a framework to get organised.

Key achievements of CHETNA:

- 552 children have benefited from the 'dreams on wheels' project, which works with platform children. They have been reunited with their families, sent to shelter homes, or seek and find regular support at contact points.
- As part of the substance abuse elimination work at Nizamuddin train station in New Delhi, 40 out of 100 young children are in touch with the clinical psychologist and are beginning to get into a therapeutic process.
- The non-formal education programme is regularly attended by 582 students. An additional 469 join in occasionally, benefitting more indirectly. About half of all the beneficiaries are girls, who are in a particularly difficult situation due to sexist prejudice and oppression.
- In Dehradun, the project directly benefits 295 children, while 220 are indirect beneficiaries.

Emergency medical aid has been provided in over 200 cases. Moreover, two children – one of whom is blind – could be placed in shelter homes.

An initial study in six parts of Delhi saw 1250 families take part in a survey regarding the perception of those affected by birth registration difficulties, revealing significant information as to why problems exist, what their consequences are, and how they can be tackled. This exposed the shocking fact that only 14 per cent of the children surveyed in the national capital have their birth certificates.

- 200 children were helped to get into formal school, about half of them in Delhi.
- From 2003 to 2009, a total of 186 students pursued education through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) with CHETNA's assistance.

Source: CHETNA website

Strategies:

- To identify, rescue and rehabilitate street and working children living on railway platforms, trains, or near railway stations through family reunification, education, recreation, health and other development opportunities. This intervention covers the large area of railway stations, their platforms and surrounding communities all the way from Agra to Gwalior. Contact points have been established at 12 different locations in this corridor.
- To provide good quality education to children who cannot attend formal education due to work responsibilities. The majority of children in south, east and west Delhi are involved in some kind of labour, be it rag-picking, carpentry work, loading/unloading, or helping out at eating establishments. Children can come and attend classes at 25 contact points. They are also given the opportunity to relax and play, making for a child-friendly blend of education and recreation. This way, they can acquire reading and writing skills in Hindi and English, and learn and practice basic maths.
- The same project is also run in the vulnerable areas of Dehradun city.
- CHETNA is an official affiliate of NIOS and runs one NIOS centre in South Delhi, where children can take test papers and qualify for valid reports. In a three-level, open, basic education programme, instruction is offered that equals that given in the third, fourth, and fifth standards of formal schools.
- To develop an intervention model to rehabilitate children abusing substances and to protect children from substance abuse. Regular counselling and therapy sessions (both with individuals and groups) are offered at select contact points in Delhi. Wherever it is in the child's best interest, she or he is sent to a shelter home or the rehabilitation center of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).
- The organisation also runs drives towards universal birth registration for children from marginalised communities in Delhi and Dehradun.

Case example four: TAABAR

Taabar means 'small and loving children' in the local dialect. Taabar is a Jaipur-based, non-governmental organisation. It was established in 2007 with the aim of helping and supporting children in difficult circumstances, especially runaway, orphans and street children in Jaipur. It supports and provides community-based rehabilitation for orphans, runaway, street children, slum children, and misguided youth through its various programmes.

Repatriation details:

Between January 2008 and June 2009, a total of 110 children were repatriated or rescued from different places in India, including Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Goa, Assam and Nepal.

Strategies:

- 'Bal Basera' is a shelter home for homeless youngsters. It provides immediate shelter until they are repatriated and rehabilitated. It is strategically set up in collaboration with the Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC), the latter offering space and Taabar running the centre. The home is situated next to Jaipur railway station and primarily functions as a transit home for boys, hosting a maximum of 15 boys at one time. Besides ensuring care and protection, Bal Basera also offers psychosocial counselling, vocational training and life skills education, along with literacy and support to enrol in schools. The home regularly organises exposure visits and picnics, as well as art and craft workshops for recreation and talent development.
- 'Ghar Vaapasi' – Outreach workers and counsellors contact the newly arrived children on the railway stations and bus stands. After identification and counselling, the children are provided with transit support services and are helped to return to their families, if they so desire. If children are not ready for restoration, they are referred to the Bal Basera transit home or other services.
- Taabar mobile clinic – The hazardous and unprotected work and living environments increases the children's susceptibility to grave diseases including tuberculosis, asthma, hepatitis, jaundice, malaria, respiratory tract infections, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. The Taabar mobile clinic offers counselling, health and medical services to children in diverse settings. On a daily basis, the mobile clinic goes to two different places and spends two hours at each place. These places have been identified on the basis of surveys and requirements of the street children there.
- Migrant workers information centre – the migrant workers information centre offers information, counselling and referral services about STIs and HIV/AIDS to young people who come to Jaipur from remote rural areas in search of work.
- Advocacy – Taabar has been actively involved in advocating multi-disciplinary issues related to street children. The organisation is raising awareness of the problems street children face at their living and workplaces, and in public areas. Efforts are being made to draw the attention of the government, civil society, policy makers and other influencers and stakeholders towards the negligence of the rights of the children.

Case example five: RAILWAY CHILDREN

Railway Children is an international charity with a vision of a 'world of protection and opportunity for children living alone and at risk on the streets'.

Safe Spaces:

Safe Spaces is an initiative at Charbagh station, the main railway station in Lucknow. It pilots a pioneering, 'child-friendly' station initiative that promotes proactive care and protection for all children arriving alone. A 'Child Protection Booth', manned by project staff and members of the Railway Protection Force, ensures that no unaccompanied child is left alone and that all children have access to a safe place. The assistance available to children is publicised on station announcements and displays.

It is estimated that 12 million children live on the streets of India, with around 120,000 arriving on platforms every year. In simple terms, a child arrives alone on a railway platform every five minutes.

- Huge numbers of children are running away from abuse, violence and poverty at home and use India's extensive railway network to get to the cities. As a result, thousands of children who arrive at railway stations dreaming of adventure end up living on railway platforms. Many children resort to drugs and substance abuse to get through the day.
- Ragged, hungry children begging for survival is such a common sight at India's major stations that it has become 'normal'. People no longer see these children.

In response to this large and alarming situation of vulnerability, Railway Children has initiated work that focuses on:

- The creation of safe spaces, where children and young people alone and at risk on the streets can access food, medical attention, emotional and psychological support, and education. Created through a range of partnerships, safe spaces are drop-in centres located on or near the railway platforms where children can access essentials in a safe space. Drop-in centres also offer vocational training to children and assist young people to secure jobs that can help them leave street life. Counselling sessions give children the opportunity to explore their experiences through music, dance and art. They can address their emotions and prepare for a return to family life. With the child's participation, they begin the process of reuniting them with their family by creating an individual childcare plan.
- **Street Work:** When children arrive on the streets, reaching them at the earliest opportunity is crucial to protecting them from the many risks of the environment they are about to enter. Railway Children's street work strategy in India is focused intensively around railway platforms, as large numbers of children arrive at railway stations, some having travelled long distances. Street workers talk to children to gain their trust and encourage them to choose an alternative to living on the platforms. They also work with police, vendors on the platforms, railway staff and older street children to teach them how to help vulnerable children arriving alone, instead of seeing them as criminals or a nuisance.

- **Working with government homes:** Through its network of partners, Railway Children works with government and observation homes in India to ensure children are given the opportunity to return to their families, or to live in a child-friendly environment. Interventions include training staff in government homes to create a child-friendly environment, and equipping them with the knowledge to counsel children and trace their addresses.
- **Reuniting families:** When a child wants to return home it is crucial to establish whether or not the family is willing and able to care for him/her. Sometimes it is difficult to trace a child's family, because this is done with the support of various stakeholders. There is a rigorous follow-up procedure for children who are returned to their homes.
- **Changing perception:** Because children living alone on the streets are seen begging, loitering and becoming involved in drugs and crime, local people often perceive them as a problem and a nuisance, rather than as vulnerable children who are exposed to abuse, violence and exploitation. Changing the way people see these children is crucial to protect them from the dangers of the streets. Our work raises the awareness of child rights with vendors, rickshaw pullers and porters, encouraging them to consider child protection issues and to refer children to our projects. The projects also work with police to help children living alone and at risk by providing spaces for shelters in and around the stations. Some of the current projects run in rural and urban areas of West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh to prevent large numbers of children leaving their families in those areas. They make communities aware of child rights issues and engage them in child protection activities, to create a support network for children and families.

Case example six: CINI

The Child In Need Institute (CINI), Kolkata is recognised as a leading Indian NGO in the field of sustainable development in nutrition, health and education.

Primary beneficiaries of CINI ASHA programme:

- Street children
- Children living in slums and squatter colonies
- Children of sex workers
- Slum dwellers

CINI ASHA: Key strategies:

- Temporary shelters to help children to reunite with their families, if possible. If not, to reintegrate them with mainstream society.
- In partnership with the government, CINI provides a response team in West Bengal for calls to CHILDLINE, a 24-hour, free telephone helpline.
- This service is used by adults, the police and children themselves to report instances of child abuse, child labour and child trafficking.

CINI Asha's is the urban unit of CINI. Its mission is to improve the quality of life of the urban disadvantaged population and protect the rights of the child through education, health and social mobilisation. It believes in participation and progress as provided for in the 'Convention of Rights of the Child'. Its services are concentrated in the red light areas and around train stations. In these locations, CINI runs a number of temporary shelters, both on a drop-in basis and as a halfway house for children in trouble.

Child protection strategies

- 1. Drop-in/night shelters:** This shelter is in the vicinity of the train stations and red light area of Kolkata. Children are provided with:
 - Basic security
 - Medical aid
 - Two meals (breakfast and lunch)
 - Individual and group counselling sessions
 - Creative activities
 - Basic primary education
 - Contact with their parents
- 2. Halfway houses:** This is for children without parents, street children and children of sex workers, children with a single parent and children with a very low socio-economic background. Children can stay in this shelter for between six months and one year. They get training for primary school, and are also provided with food and medical assistance. They participate in creative activities. After this period of readjustment, some children return to their families and to a regular school.
- 3. Non-residential camp:** This is for children who are not living on the streets, but with their family. They start working at a very young age in factories or in homes for low wages in poor conditions. They do not go to school. In the non-residential camp, they are trained to join regular schools. Their parents are counselled about the importance of proper education and training.

Case example seven: KARM MARG

Karm Marg, means 'path of work and action' and was started in February 1997. The driving force behind Karm Marg's function has been the desire to be self-sustaining, without regular dependence on external support. This extends to their internal functions as well as to the people Karm Marg supports as an organisation.

Key activities of Karm Marg:

- Karm Gaon
- Education
- Counselling and health care
- Sports and fitness
- Visual and performing arts
- Vocational training and income generation

Sugandh – Vocational training project:

The current programmes are:

- 1) Paper craft
- 2) Stitching
- 3) Candle-making
- 4) Carpentry
- 5) Metalwork
- 6) Silk-screen printing
- 7) Clay modelling and papier-mâché

Jugaad – Income generation project:

Key skills:

- Making products out of waste
- Running income generation programmes

The primary activity of Karm Marg has been to provide a home for children and youths who urgently and desperately need a safe shelter. The home provides shelter, care, medical support and education to the children.

Karm Marg focuses on disadvantaged children, young adults and economically backward rural women from villages near the campus. All of these groups receive vocational training before joining the production process. Eventually, the products made by these people are sold under the brand 'Jugaad'. It's worth noting that most of the Jugaad products utilise as much recycled and reused raw material as possible.

In addition, Karm Marg offers mainstream education, medical care, counselling, health and hygiene advocacy, sports, visual and performing arts – all of which we believe are critical to the holistic growth of young adults.

Karm Marg also conducts on-demand workshops with groups working on similar focus areas. These workshops are uniquely designed to accommodate the needs of specific groups.

Case example eight: PLATFORM KIDS

Platform Kids was established by a group of western Australians who were deeply concerned about the plight of children worldwide. It upholds the rights of children everywhere to have their basic needs met: love, shelter, nourishment, health, education, safety and freedom from exploitation.

The focus for Platform Kids is on rescuing and rehabilitating homeless children found begging on railway stations in Andhra Pradesh, India. They also devise fund-raising activities to ensure a steady flow of cash into the programme.

The platform children of India form a sub-culture within the confusion and complexity of mainstream Indian society. Lost, unwanted, orphaned, outcast and handicapped kids gravitate to the stations from drought-stricken villages and squalid urban slums. They become trapped in a cycle of begging and scavenging from which few escape.

Case example nine: UDAYAN CARE

'Udayan', means 'eternal sunrise' in Sanskrit. Registered in 1994 as a Public Charitable Trust, Udayan Care works to empower vulnerable children, women and youth in seven states of India.

Udayan Care believes that every individual has the right to develop their full potential and has enabled the most vulnerable sections of underprivileged communities to live in dignity and self-reliance.

Programmes of Platform Kids:

- Shelter and girls' home – The Platform Children's Society runs a shelter in a house near the station at Kothavalasa. It is staffed by a house mother, a supervisor and an 'ex-platform kid' who regularly travels on trains between Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram to befriend, counsel and win the trust of platform children and welcome them to the centre. They are then free to come and go for clean-ups, medicine and food.
- Rural property – The Platform Children's Society wholly owns its headquarters, a rural property at Kantakapalli, 30km from Visakhapatnam. 'Charminar', the home constructed here, serves as a kitchen and accommodates two staff members, who cook, clean, supervise laundry and administer medicine as required. Sick children in need of medical help can stay here.

Key programmes of Udayan Care:

- Udayan Ghars (Homes)
- Udayan after-care programme
- Udayan Shalini-Fellowships (USF) – Educating and nurturing young girls towards a life of economic independence and dignity.

Udayan's Care Information Technology and Vocational Training Centres (IT&VT) bring technology and vocational choices closer to the underserved, improving their livelihood opportunities. The IT&VT model is designed with the purpose of bridging the technological divide and bringing IT and vocational training closer to youth from low resource settings, thus enabling them to improve their employability.

The Big Friend Little Friend programme enables the social integration of adolescents living in Delhi slums by pairing these Little Friends with a Big Friend of the same gender in a bond of friendship.

Approach 3: Paradigm shift required from welfare to development, from needs to rights and from institutional to non-institutional care when dealing with children in difficult circumstances. The primary focus needs to be on child participation.

Case example ten: BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies is a registered voluntary organisation working with street and working children in Delhi since 1989. Its core belief is that 'every child has a right to a full-fledged childhood where s(he) can have protection, respect, opportunities and participation in his/her growth and development.' The rights of street and working children are no exception. Butterflies is committed to a non-institutional approach. It follows principles of democracy and promotes children's participation in decision-making as part of its programme planning, monitoring and evaluation. Butterflies is in contact with more than 1,500 street and working children on a regular basis through 12 contact points in Delhi and has earned recognition worldwide for its innovative, realistic and relevant programmes. Butterflies also works with 6,000 children in tsunami-affected villages of the Andaman Nicobar Islands.

Key achievements of Butterflies:

- Skill and enterprise-building initiatives, with a focus on offering subsidised, quality food to street and working children. Butterflies' community kitchen project involves 12 adolescents from the street who have received intensive training in cooking, catering, packaging and business management from training institutes of national repute. The community kitchen experience equips them for a career in the hospitality industry or setting up their own enterprise. The community kitchen offers subsidised and healthy food to a large number of street children through outlets in strategic locations and catering supplies to the night shelters.
- Butterflies' Resilience Centre serves as a transit facility for children who need immediate shelter, medical attention/care, and legal help and counselling. Any child in distress or feeling a transgression of his/her rights can walk in or call at the center and seek help. Children stay at the centre and have access to educational and recreational activities during the day. If a child stays long-term, they are offered counselling and trauma redressal support, as well as links to education opportunities. They are supported in tracing their families and home restoration, or they are connected with NGO or a government children's institution for long-term rehabilitation. Some children also decide to go back to the streets while remaining in touch with Butterflies. They often stay in the night shelter, working and studying at the same time.

Source: Butterflies website

Core strategies/interventions:

- Butterflies implements a non-formal education programme with an inclusive and participatory curriculum focused on life skills such as reading, writing, arithmetic and art work. Trained teacher-facilitators are available at all times and classes are conducted on street corners, in parks and at vegetable markets. When children reach a certain level of educational achievement, they are coached to undertake national exams. Coaching classes are held for those children who go to formal schools in the night shelters.
- In 2008, Butterflies started a mobile education programme called Chalta Firta School mobile learning centre and Chalo School Aaya (a life-skills-focused mobile education and research centre) to bring education to children's doorsteps, as part of a unique initiative of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
- Butterflies Alternate Media gives children the space to create their own media, giving expression to the unheard voices of children. The media project provides opportunities for children to train and to participate in the production of their own newspaper, radio programmes or theatre productions.
- Butterflies has been the South Delhi collaborative agency of CHILDLINE since 1998, running a 24-hour telephone helpline service for children in need of special care and protection. Any child/concerned adult can dial the toll-free number 1098 to access its services.

- Butterflies runs three night shelters in Delhi located at Fatehpuri, Nizamuddin Dargah, and Ashram. Apart from providing a safe place to sleep, it also has facilities such as lockers and toilets and services such as Alternate Education, the Children's Development Bank, Alternate Media, and computer training for street and working children.
- The Night Reach Intervention ensures a night presence in vulnerable areas, by visiting places where children sleep or work, interacting with them and others, such as shop owners and police. It also deals with emergencies such as police atrocity and medical matters.
- Since 1989, the Butterflies health programme has made curative and preventive treatment accessible to children on the street. As an empowering intervention, the programme provides child health educators who volunteer to provide care and support. This unique health cooperative fosters mutual support, common health investment and the prevention of disease.
- In 2007, Butterflies initiated Health Post, which is primarily a treatment centre as well as a convalescence space. Beds are available for street and working children who, although discharged from hospitals, still require medical care and assistance. Strategically located near the New Delhi railway station, which is one of our contact points, the Health Post also provides counselling services to children.
- The Children's collective, or Bal Sabha, is a collective of street children that allows them to take part in decision-making and planning.

Butterflies firmly believes in a non-institutional approach, as it believes that long-term institutionalisation may result in the following:

- Emotional deprivation
- Separation anxiety
- Maternal deprivation
- Anonymity and lack of personal attention
- Physical abuse and trauma
- Low self esteem
- Interpersonal relationship problem
- Segregation and isolation from society
- Failure to trust
- Difficulty in adjusting to mainstream society
- Excessive regimentation
- Delay in a child's natural development

A child living in a residential institution needs care and protection. Therefore, children's institutions have to function as substitute families, and provide for the child's emotional and developmental needs, as well as their physical wellbeing. However, there has been an alarming increase in the number of cases of physical and sexual abuse in institutions. In many cases, it is the 'caregivers' who are the abusers.²¹ Many cases go unreported and no disciplinary action is taken against the perpetrators of the crime.

²¹ Mehta, Neelima, Child Protection and Juvenile Justice System. Childline India Foundation. April, 2008

The abuse can range from corporal punishment such as beating, caning and physical assault to deprivation of food, using abusive language, passing sexually abusive remarks, physical touching, molestation and rape. Improving the quality of childcare in residential institutions and shelters is a major challenge.

Given the fact that residential institutions are not always a viable alternative to life on the street, it may be argued that there is an urgent need for quick identification of runaway, abandoned, neglected and vulnerable children. Their vulnerability increases due to a lack of support structures – family or otherwise. Proper identification, provision of care and support, and a safe place is vital for them. These children are recognised as children in need of care and attention, under the JJ act. This is usually achieved by producing them before CWC and ensuring that they are cared for in concerned ‘homes’. In the absence of government homes, appropriate NGOs with homes are asked for their support. However, a lack of funds and the delayed response to the individual identification of vulnerable children often leads to children being in an unsafe and abusive environment for longer than they should be. Often, because these children were driven to the point where they were left with no option but to abandon their dysfunctional and uncaring homes, the unsafe environment also appears attractive. They find ways of adjusting to their new surroundings and become a part of existing networks. In the process, they get more entangled in a web of drug and sexual abuse and a state of temporary highs and threatening lows. If a child has spent more than three to six months at the platform or on the street, it is difficult to repatriate them with their families. NGOs have managed to engage with some of these children and have helped them live a life of dignity and safety; others, however, face a rather grim and often forbidding future.

Most runaway children escape from a set of shared rural predicaments generated by interwoven histories of industry, empire, and urban growth or, rather, they flee from emotional and domestic predicaments caused by these historical formations.²²

Nowadays, violence resulting from the uprising of Maoists – the so-called Naxalites – and corruption in state governments makes life for street children even more precarious, while unpredictable new monsoon patterns destabilise crops and increase flooding. Most men are gone for at least half the year, seeking jobs in the city, and domestic violence is widespread. In the face of such harsh reality, some children leave home with neither word nor permission.

Poor but railway-dense states like Bihar have stations in or near almost every village. Many families introduce their children to the rite of working and selling goods like tea, refilled water bottles, and trinkets at these stations at a very young age. Their exposure to railway space begins early and the notion of its potential for movement is easily realised. The web of railway economies extends right into the village, where gangs recruit children to work in the stations. And, as villagers have made it appealing, children move slowly away from home and into railway space. Thus, the running away process may be more gradual than one might assume.²³

²² Steinberg, Jonah, Runaway Train: Railway Children and Normative Spatialities in India. 2011

²³ Ibid

The current scenario is marked by the lack of interstate cooperation, which is often due to the absence of an integrated country-wide database for missing children. The inability of the departure and destination CWCs to communicate with each other often blocks effective rehabilitation. If a child is reported lost in one state, but has been trafficked to another state, there is no mechanism to ensure that the child will be searched for countrywide. Due to the absence of adequate counselling for parents, extended families and peer groups, the act of repatriation often ends up putting children back into the same situation that they ran away from in the first place. Children then move to another destination, forced to become 'frequent' runaway children.

It is imperative that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) becomes an effective tool for child rights and not simply a declaration of intention.

The paradigm shifts, from

Welfare	—————→	Developmental
Needs	—————→	Rights
Institutional care	—————→	Non-Institutional care,

represent significant changes in the nature of intervention for 'Children in Need of Care and Protection' (CNCP).²⁴ The practice so far has been to concentrate on the rehabilitation of abandoned and destitute children through institutional care, which is a definite requirement for some children. However, it is fairly clear that the emphasis in the future should be on improving the quality of childcare and facilities provided in residential institutions, both government and NGO run. There should be regular monitoring of camps, homes, resilience centers, and night shelters, while ensuring the participation of children at every stage of decision-making. It is also important to develop family based alternatives to prevent children from leaving their homes, for instance through family counselling or the vigilance of community gatekeepers. This would go a long way in making the process of repatriation of runaway children truly successful.

As Khushboo Jain rightly says, "We're a society based on hierarchies, these young people (on the streets) are dynamic. They've taken control of their lives. But we don't want people to come up. And if they do, we try to subjugate them in any way possible."²⁵

Poor, addicted to drugs, and living on the street, these children illustrate the disturbing dark side of India's so-called demographic dividend, which economists predict will help this country surpass China as the world's manufacturing hub by 2020. Although the economic boom is making more people rich, we are also seeing the rise of inequality, poor education and persistent unemployment. These have prompted a steady increase in juvenile crime, leading to a more unjust, undemocratic and increasingly dangerous society.

²⁴ Mehta, Neelima, Child Protection and Juvenile Justice System. Childline India Foundation. April, 2008

²⁵ www.globalpost.com › Home › Regions › Asia-Pacific › India

Future strategy ideas

The future strategy ideas for PHF primarily focus on the long-term and sustainable changes that can be made in the lives of children in distress. Our research has pointed out the lack of information on repatriation and offers a detailed study of its impact. We may conclude that we only have limited information on what happens to children at shelters/homes or what happens to them after the age of 18. It is our belief that children in conflict with the law are in need of care and protection and that there is an urgent need to restore the child's sense of dignity. Based on our study of approaches and strategies of NGOs working with runaway children and an analysis of the primary issues concerning children in distress, the following suggestions have been made:

1. At the micro level, PHF's continued support to NGOs working with children in distress will be most meaningful through direct implementation of the programme among children in distress.
 - Offering training modules at After Care Homes to deal with the baggage of trauma and fear, using creative arts, drawing and theatre to work with the inner psyche of children in distress.
 - Using music and theatre as a recreational facility at children's homes for community building and personal development. The programme could focus on children-at-risk and urban youth to create participative music education programmes and life-skills.
2. At the meso level, PHF could look at supporting and taking forward some innovative and established NGOs who are running programmes that have been successfully franchised nationally and internationally, with the aim of restoring children's dignity.
 - NGOs that run successful vocational training programmes where street children are trained by leading institutions in the field. This has a direct and significant impact on children who undergo training and find a job.
 - Fellowships could be given to street children who want to study/train further for a limited period of time.
3. At the meta level, PHF could look at supporting research, with a focus on the gaps in our information about children in distress by sponsoring research at reputable academic institutions, creating further knowledge and information about children in distress.

Areas of research: While much attention has been given to children in distress, some gaps persist. A long-term longitudinal study, monitoring the movement and rehabilitation of runaway children is likely to help us understand the actual impact of repatriation. Similarly, the way life unfolds for institutionalised children will also help us to understand and compare the two primary approaches towards working with runaway children.

Another area for research would be to understand the extent of drug abuse among the street children and explore the link between juvenile crime and drug addiction.

4. Finally, PHF's support can play a crucial role in policy advocacy at the macro level. This could be done by creating a network and/or successful partnerships with NGOs that work with children in distress and those NGOs that focus on advocacy.

Judiciary-focused advocacy could help in supporting the campaign for the rights of runaway children, with a focus on the role of the Judiciary.

With these strategy ideas, PHF could contribute towards a life of safety, dignity and care for children in distress, making a sincere step towards helping them to realise their potential and enjoy a better quality of life, thereby restoring their lost childhoods.

Appendix I

Interventions on justice for children

National and international policies, programmes and conventions related to children

1. The National Policy for Children

Declared by the Government of India in 1974 to ensure that programmes of children are incorporated in the National Plans for the development of Human Resources. To ensure effective services for children in the areas of Health, Nutrition, Education and Recreation with special emphasis on the weaker sections of society.

In organising these services, efforts would be directed “to strengthen family ties, so that full potentialities of growth of children are realised within the normal family and community environment”.

2. The Draft National Policy for Children, 2012 (Women and Child Development Ministry)

(Section on Protection and Participation)

Protection

3.8 A safe, secure and protective environment is a precondition for the realisation of all other rights of children. Children have the right to be protected wherever they are.

3.9 It is the responsibility of the State to create a caring and protective environment for all children, to reduce their vulnerability in all situations and protect them from all forms of violence and abuse, neglect, stigma, discrimination, deprivation, exploitation including economic exploitation and sexual exploitation, abandonment, separation, abduction, sale or trafficking for any purpose or in any form, pornography, substance abuse, or any other activity that takes undue advantage of them, or harms their personhood and affects their development.

3.10 To secure the rights of children temporarily or permanently deprived of parental care, the State shall endeavour to ensure family and community-based care arrangements including sponsorship, kinship, foster care and adoption, with institutionalisation as a measure of last resort, with due regard to the best interest of the child and guaranteeing adequate standards of care.

3.11 The State commits to taking special protection measures to secure the rights and entitlements of children in difficult circumstances, characterised by their specific social, economic and geo-political situations, including their need for rehabilitation and reintegration, in particular but not limited to, children affected by migration, displacement, communal or sectarian violence, civil unrest, disasters and calamities, children of women in prostitution, children forced into prostitution, abused and exploited children, children in conflict and contact with the law, children in situations of labour, children of prisoners,

children infected/affected by HIV/AIDS, children with disabilities, children from any other socially excluded group and children affected by armed conflict.

3.12 The State shall promote child friendly jurisprudence, enact progressive legislation, build a child responsive protection system, and promote effective enforcement of legislative and administrative measures for comprehensively addressing issues related to child protection.

Participation

3.14 The State has the primary responsibility to ensure that children are made aware of their rights, and provided with opportunities and support to develop skills, to form aspirations and express their views, in accordance with their age, maturity and evolving capacities, so as to enable them to be actively involved in their own development and in all matters concerning and affecting them.

3.15 The State shall promote and strengthen respect for the views of the child, especially those of the girl child and of children from minority groups or marginalised communities, within the family; community; schools and institutions; different levels of governance; as well as in judicial and administrative proceedings that concern them.

3.16 The State shall engage all stakeholders in developing mechanisms for children to share their grievances without fear; monitor effective implementation of children's participation through monitorable indicators; develop different models of child participation; and undertake research and documentation of best practices.

3. National Plan of Action for Children (NPA)²⁶

The NPA had particular significance for Children in Need of Care and Protection (CNCP) since it identified the various target groups of vulnerable children and called for improved protection of these children.

The Plan is an outcome of an Inter-Sector, Inter-Department co-ordination and covered areas of health, nutrition, water and sanitation, education, children in need of care and protection, girl child, adolescent girls, children and environment, women, advocacy and people's participation, resources, monitoring and evaluation.

4. National Plan of Action for the Girl Child

The Government of India prepared a separate Plan for the Girl Child for the period 1991-2000. Three Major Goals were:

- Survival and protection of the Girl Child and safe motherhood
- Overall development of the Girl Child
- Special protection for vulnerable girl children in need of care and protection

²⁶ Prepared by the Government of India under the title "A Commitment to the Child"

5. Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS)

In 2006 the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) proposed the adoption of the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS). In 2009 the scheme is approved by the central government which begins providing children with protection and safe environment to develop and flourish. The purpose of the scheme is to provide for children in difficult circumstances, as well as to reduce the risks and vulnerabilities children have in various situations and actions that lead to abuse, neglect, exploitation, abandonment and separation of children.

The specific objectives of the scheme are:

To institutionalise essential services and strengthen structures

- o Establish and strengthen a continuum of services for emergency outreach, institutional care, family and community based care, counselling and support services.
- o Put in place and strengthen necessary structures and mechanisms for effective implementation of the scheme at the national, regional, state and district levels.
- o Define and set standards of all services including operational manuals for the functioning of statutory bodies.

To enhance capacities at all levels

- o Build capacities of all functionaries including administrators and service providers at all levels working under ICPS.
- o Sensitize and train members of allied systems including local bodies, police, judiciary and other concerned departments of State Governments to undertake responsibilities under ICPS.

To create database and knowledge base for child protection services

- o Create mechanisms for a child protection data management system including MIS and child tracking system in the country for effective implementation and monitoring of child protection services.
- o Undertake research and documentation.

To strengthen child protection at family and community level

- o Build capacities of families and community to strengthen care, protection and response to children.
- o Create and promote preventive measures to protect children from situations of vulnerability, risk and abuse.

To ensure appropriate inter sectoral response at all levels

- o Coordinate and network with all allied systems i.e. Government Department/Government Agencies providing services for effective implementation of the scheme.

To raise public awareness

- o Educate public on child rights and protection.
- o Raise public awareness at all levels on situation and vulnerabilities of children and families.

- o Inform public on available child protection services, schemes and structures at all levels.

6. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) drafted by the UN Commission on Human Rights was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 30th November 1989.

The CRC represents a turning point in the international movement on behalf of Child Rights. It is a comprehensive document containing a set of universal legal standards for the protection and well-being of children. The umbrella principle of the CRC is “The Best Interest of the Child” and that the essential needs of children should be given the highest priority at all times in the allocation of resources.

The CRC gives children their basic human rights – civil, economic, social, cultural and political, which enable children to achieve their full potential. The CRC derives strength from its ratification by governments, implying that governments agree to follow the principles and are committed to certain standards in dealing with children.

The Rights cover four main areas: survival, development, protection and participation.

Right to survival

Covers a child’s right to life and the needs that are most basic to existence including an adequate living standard, shelter, nutrition and access to medical services.

Right to development

Includes those that children require in order to reach their fullest potential like the Rights to education, play and leisure, cultural activities, access to information and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Right to protection

Requires that children be safeguarded against all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation and guarantees special care for refugee children, protection against abuse in the criminal justice system and involvement in armed conflict, child labour, drug abuse and sexual exploitation.

Right to participation

Empowers children to take an active role in their communities and nations encompassing the freedom to express opinions, to have a say in matters affecting their own lives, to join associations and to assemble peacefully.

India ratified the Convention on 11th December 1992, thereby re-affirming its commitment to the cause of children in India.

The range of rights can be summarised as the three Ps: provision, protection, and participation. Children have a right to be provided with certain services ranging from a name and nationality to health care and education. They have

a right to be protected from certain acts, such as torture, exploitation, abuse, arbitrary, detention, and unwarranted removal from parental care and children have the right to participate in the decisions affecting their lives. The CRC gives children their basic human rights – civil, economic, social, cultural, and political – which enable children to achieve their full potential.

The CRC is guided by the principle of a first call for children, a principle that the essential needs of children should, at all times, be given priority in the allocation of resources at all times.

There are four general principles enshrined in the Convention. These are meant to help with the interpretation of the Convention as a whole and thereby guide national programmes of implementation. The four principles are formulated, in particular, in Articles 2, 3, 6, and 12. These are:

Non-discrimination (Art.2): State parties must ensure that all children within their jurisdiction enjoy their rights. No child should suffer discrimination. The essential message is equality of opportunity. Girls should be given the same opportunities as boys. Refugee children, children of foreign origin, or children of indigenous or minority groups should have the same rights as all others. Children with disabilities should be given the same opportunity to enjoy an adequate standard of living.

Best interests of the child (Art.3): When the authorities of a state take decisions which affect children, the best interests of children must be the primary consideration. This principle relates to decisions by courts of law, administrative authorities, legislative bodies, and both public and private social-welfare institutions.

The right to life, survival, and development (Art.6): The term ‘Development’ in this context should be interpreted in a broad sense, adding a Qualitative dimension – not only physical health but also mental, emotional, cognitive, social, and cultural development.

The views of the child (Art. 12): Children have the right to be heard and to have their views taken seriously, including any judicial or administrative proceeding affecting them.

7. ILO Conventions and Recommendations on Child Labour

A majority of countries have adopted legislation to prohibit or place severe restrictions on the employment and work of children, much of it stimulated and guided by standards adopted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). In spite of these efforts, child labour continues to exist on a massive scale, sometimes in appalling conditions, particularly in the developing world. If progress has been slow or apparently non-existent, this is because child labour is an immensely complex issue. It cannot be made to disappear simply by the stroke of a pen.

Nevertheless, the basis of determined and concerted action must be legislation, which sets the total elimination of child labour as the ultimate goal of policy, and puts measures into place for this purpose, and which explicitly identifies and prohibits the worst forms of child labour to be eliminated as a matter of priority.

ILO Convention No.182 on the worst forms of child labour, 1999

Child labour, as the statistics clearly demonstrate, is a problem of immense global proportions. Following its comprehensive research into the issue, the ILO concluded that it was necessary to strengthen existing Conventions on child labour. Convention No.182 helped to focus the international spotlight on the urgency of action to eliminate as a priority, the worst forms of child labour without losing the long term goal of the effective elimination of all child labour.

ILO Convention No.138 on the on the minimum age for admission to employment and work

One of the most effective methods of ensuring that children do not start working too young is to set the age at which children can legally be employed or otherwise work. The main principles of the ILO's Convention concerning the minimum age of admission to employment and work are in the table below.

	The minimum age at which children can start work	Possible exceptions for developing countries
<p>Hazardous work</p> <p>Any work which is likely to jeopardize children's physical, mental or moral health, safety or morals should not be done by anyone under the age of 18.</p>	<p>18</p> <p>(16 under strict conditions)</p>	<p>18</p> <p>(16 under strict conditions)</p>
<p>Basic minimum age</p> <p>The minimum age for work should not be below the age for finishing compulsory schooling, which is generally 15.</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>Light work</p> <p>Children between the ages of 13 and 15 years old may do light work, as long as it does not threaten their health and safety, or hinder their education or vocational orientation and training.</p>	<p>13-15</p>	<p>12-14</p>

Both Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 are fundamental Conventions. Under the ILO Declaration, even the member States that have not yet ratified these Conventions should respect, promote and realize the principles.

Appendix II

Perspectives on Protection of Child Rights:

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights. August 2010.

The situation of the children living in railway stations is of grave concern as they are often overlooked. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), which was asked to look into the issue of safeguarding the rights of children at railway platforms, set up a 19-member working group and conducted several consultations during the period August 2008 to February 2010. Meetings were held with representatives of railway administration, railway protection force (RPF), government railway police (GRP) and civil society organisations. Field visits to understand the predicament of these children were also made. It was found that being transit, source and destination locations, railway stations in India were a breeding ground for child labour and child trafficking and exploitation. Therefore, to address the rights of such children there was a necessity for a multi pronged strategy involving several ministries and departments.

Several suggestions and recommendations were made. These include:

1. **Establishing linkages between Juvenile Justice Act and the Railway Acts/RPF Act:** The railway ministry should not only acknowledge the JJ Act but also must recognize that although such children constitute illegal passengers they must be treated as children first.
2. **Mechanisms at railway stations for safeguarding children's rights:** The railways should accept safeguarding the rights of children as their responsibility and hence establish mechanisms to do so. These must include:
 - a. **Child Protection Committees** should be set up at every major railway station. They must be authorised to set up mechanisms for surveillance and monitoring in coordination with representatives of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM), GRP, RPF, railway employees (station master, TTE, coolies, etc), vendors and NGOs who work on child protection issues at or around the railway station (to prevent and protect children/women from human trafficking and abuse and exploitation). The Committee could be jointly headed by DRM and GRP. Definite Standard Operating Procedures need to be worked for protection of children around railway premises;
 - b. **Child Welfare Committees (CWCs)** should be established in close proximity to every railway terminal;
 - c. **Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU)** must be established at every GRP police station across India. It should be customised as per GRP administrative structure. It has been established in Maharashtra (JAPU) and recently in Delhi;
 - d. **Child Assistance Booths** should be set up at every major station and terminal for assisting children who are lost or abandoned or need any help. The space should be provided by railway authorities and run as a public private partnership with local NGOs and midday meal programmes should be extended to these children with the help of railway authorities and local NGOs.

3. **Short Stay Shelter Home for children at railway premises:** The railway terminus is often not a conducive environment for the woman/child and she/he is not ready to trust the staff. A safe space near the railway premises where the child can be accompanied by the staff would give him a sense of security and enable the child to trust the worker. It has been noticed that distances between where the children have been contacted (railway platforms) and the shelter spaces often cause children to drop out. Setting up a short stay home at the railway premise can bridge this gap.
4. **Maintenance of children's record referred to voluntary organisations or competent authority by RPF and GRP:** Children who are found at railway premises by RPF, GRP or NGOs must be registered with concerned GRP office and further referral process should be initiated only after this registration. A register of "Found Children" has to be maintained with its referral at every GRP / RPF stations.
5. **Awareness of child rights among travelling public:** Creating awareness through short clips focused on missing children, information on protection of children and their referral would contribute to child protection in vulnerable areas like the railway terminals. An awareness campaign could be done through hoardings at and around railway premises, information on the back of railway tickets, information on railway websites, information on railway bogies, announcements in Rajdhani and Shatabdi trains and announcements in railway terminals.
6. **Training and orientation programme on child rights for railway employees:** A series of training and orientation programmes on child rights and child protection for railway employees including RPF and GRP, should be organised by the railway authorities. It should be incorporated in the plan of the railway ministry.
7. **Incorporating the Child Rights and JJ Act in syllabus for railway police trainings:** The JJ Act, 2006 and child rights should be meaningfully incorporated in the syllabus of RPF and GRP's police training institutes and refresher sessions should be conducted regularly.
8. **Partnership with voluntary organisations:** Committed NGOs should be given accreditation to work for children in need of care and protection and railway authorities should provide all assistance required to the NGOs
9. **RPF Mitra Yojana or the 'Friends of the RPF Scheme':** The scheme must be extended to include the agenda of child rights.
10. **Missing Children:** All missing children should be recorded in writing by the police. A nation-wide campaign on registration of missing children should be taken up. The registration could be done with help of government and NGOs on the **missing child website**. There should be a provision for recording children who have been found.
11. **Monitoring Mechanisms:** The railway ministry should constitute a multidisciplinary/multi-sectored monitoring committee at headquarter level for reviewing the situation of these children on the basis of periodic reporting from the ground and inputs from spot visits by the members of the monitoring committee.

A website (<http://cwc.wcddel.in>) for Missing and Found children in Delhi is being run successfully by the Department of Women and Child Development, Delhi Government. In addition, the committee recommended that it would be helpful if the Missing Child Search and Home link (web based software developed by Youth at Risk, Delhi) already in use by a couple of states, could be adapted by all states.

Appendix III

Khushboo Jain (Petitioner) vs. The Ministry of Railways

The following case has been included here in order to understand and illustrate the role of the Railways in creating a safe environment for a child arriving at the platform, Khushboo Jain (Petitioner) concerned with the plight of the children, who arrive and stay at Railway Stations, filed a petition vs. the Ministry of Railways (The High Court of Delhi, at New Delhi. W.P. (C) 5365/2012). The order was passed on 13th Feb. 2013 and the Judge disposed of the writ petition with the following directions:-

1. As soon as a child is found sitting at a Railway Station, RPF, GRP/Station Master shall try to obtain name, address and other particulars of his parents/guardian/relatives from the child, the concerned Station Master shall make an announcement on the public address system of the railway station with respect to the child found there and inform the local police station/police post as well as the parents/guardian/relatives of the child about his/her being found at the Railway Station. A copy of such intimation shall forthwith be sent to the Police Station in jurisdiction of which the parents/guardian/relative of the child live, with a request to locate the parents/guardian/relatives of the child and inform him/her about the child having been found at the Railway Station.
2. The children who arrive and stay at Railway Stations shall be produced by RPF, GRP or Railway employees before the Child Welfare Committee constituted under the aforesaid Act, at the earliest possible and in any case within 24 hours of such a child being found at a Railway station.
3. The address and telephone numbers of the Committee shall be prominently displayed on the Railway Station, so as to enable the parents/guardian/relative of the child to approach the Committee along with the information that the children who arrive and stay at the Railway Station, are produced before the Committee.
4. Every Station Superintendent/Station Master shall maintain a register in which he shall record the particulars including name, parents name, age and address of the children who arrive and stay at his Railway Station. He shall also get such a child photographed and place his photograph in the aforesaid Register, against his name, so that his/her parents are able to identify and locate him/her without any difficulty.
5. Till the child is produced before the Committee in terms of this order, he shall remain in safe custody of the RPF, GRP/Station Masters and shall be given adequate care and attention including meals.

6. If a child arriving and staying at a Railway Station is a girl, till the time she is produced before the Committee in terms of this order, she shall be kept in the safe custody of a responsible female member of RPF, GRP/Railways.
7. Every Station Master shall provide appropriate separate space for male and female children arriving and staying at his railway station, till they are produced before the Committee in terms of this order.
8. If the Child Welfare Committee is not sitting, the child shall be produced before the single member of the Committee in terms of Rule 27(4) of The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Rules, 2007 and in case the single member is also not accessible or the child is found at odd hours, he/she shall be dealt with in terms of Rule 27 of the aforesaid Rules till the time of production before the Committee.
9. The articles, if any, found with the child shall be kept in safe custody of the Station Master after preparing inventory of such articles and those articles shall be forwarded to the Committee along with the child. A copy of the inventory shall be placed in the register to be maintained in terms of this direction, against the name of child in question.
10. The whole of the information in respect of such children, including their photographs, to the extent publication of such particulars and/or photographs is not prohibited under the provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 or any other law for the time being in force, along with information relating to his/her being produced before the Child Welfare Committee, shall be made available on the website of Indian Railways, in a searchable format, so that the parents/guardian of such children are able to identify them and seek their custody.
11. The respondents shall give wide publicity in leading English and vernacular newspapers, with respect to the availability of the information, on the website of Indian Railways, in respect of such children, in terms of this order.

Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Paul Hamlyn Foundation began funding development work in India in 1992. It aims to be a small but significant donor organisation in the country.

The PHF India programme works to improve the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable communities in India in a manner that assists them to make efforts to improve their own conditions, ensuring that they have access to their entitlements, creating and providing appropriate opportunities and also by helping influence change in the context within which they live.

The programme aims to enable vulnerable communities living in priority geographical areas, and especially vulnerable people living anywhere in India, to improve their lives. It also seeks to develop the capacity of organisations and people that facilitate these aims, while advancing understanding through research.

Alongside the India programme, the Foundation operates through three programmes in the UK, focusing on the arts, education and learning, and social justice.

Detailed information on the Foundation's work, and case studies related to past grants, can be found on the Foundation's website: www.phf.org.uk

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