

India Alliance for Child Rights (IACR)

*Written submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child for the
2005 Day of General Discussion*

Children Without Parental Care

THE INDIAN CONTEXT-2005 Report from Indian NGOs

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India Alliance for Child Rights

Based on NGO Consultations in Bangalore and Delhi, July and September, 2005

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THE INDIAN CONTEXT, 2005 – Report from Indian NGOs

Of the millions of children in India, one can only guess that a worrying but unknown number are Children without Parental Care. Both government and NGOs have tried over the years to estimate each category of these unfortunate children in institutions and in informal kinship care. The data is more available for the institutions but for the children in informal kinship care, the numbers can only be guessed. One can only note that the estimates vary so widely in most of them that it is difficult to depend on any of them.

The immediate causes for the lack of parental care are easier to comprehend than the root causes. The common thread that seems to run through the background of the vast majority of Children without Parental Care begins at the family level. Indians typically love their children and often both parents show their love in demonstrative ways to infants. The mother is the one that takes the nurturing role all through the day, while the father assumes a caring playful one for a brief period. As the child passes the toddler stage, however, demonstrative affection is less evident and the father becomes more distant too. Soon and abruptly, in most traditional, and low-income families, childhood is replaced by a precocious assumption of adult and gendered roles, with the parents becoming more of taskmasters than caring adults. At such times, there are many chances of disruption and trauma that can lead to a child either running away or being sent to work away from home [domestic labour or in hotels and other establishments].

Thus even in families that are considered well knit and the children cared for, there is often corporal punishment, strict expectations of appropriate behaviour, and no scope for recreation or individualism. Conditions may be worse among the poor due to the uncertain financial situation of casual daily wage or landless labourers, the problem of alcoholism, domestic violence and the burden of debt-inducing traditional social expenditures. This is generally the background of abused children, street children and trafficked children. These families especially lack parenting skills and traditions.

On the other hand, the denial of parental care is not unknown in better-off families, though less common; here, the problems are exceedingly high expectations, and non-countenance of the maturing child's tendency to independence and individuality. Further, there are increasing numbers of disaster victims and migrants due to the family's search for livelihood. In such circumstances, the family may deliberately or inadvertently be split leading to Children without Parental Care.

Orphans are yet another important category, whatever the cause of their loss. If it is due to the parents falling a prey to AIDS, the stigma and consequent problems fall on the children too. There is also traditionally stigma attached to the mentally challenged, along with fear and shame, while the physically challenged are also over-protected and if a girl, sometimes hidden.

These various forms of the phenomenon of Children without Parental Care can be clubbed into four main categories - Children in Institutional Care, Children without Parental Care in own family settings, Children who are not in own family or institutional settings and children affected by disasters or family uprooting/migration. The key issues affecting them in some/many cases and the solutions that have been attempted or suggested to address such issues can also be looked at first in general and then by category. In addition to attitudes, inadequacy of financial resources also plays a vital role in the negative performance of these institutions. As a solution to this problem we propose joint involvement of Government, Corporates and civil society to take up the responsibility of resource mobilization.

Box 1: Issues Regarding All Children Without Parental Care

PROBLEMS/ISSUES	SOLUTIONS/SUGGESTIONS
<p>GENERAL</p> <p>Parental Care often fails in being carried out in counter-productive parenting styles by parents, other care-givers and significant adults [who are in a parenting role in particular circumstances</p>	<p>Prevention and rehabilitation strategies to be reviewed in the light of CRC and implemented, with adequate training.</p>
<p>Lack of Parenting awareness and skills in parents, families, Anganwadi workers, teachers, police, and other care-givers. . Holistic education policy for parenting, counseling is lacking in the country.</p>	<p>Train all those in the parenting role to create awareness on effective parenting practices for the holistic development of the child in any situation and care. This should be a comprehensive parenting awareness and skill programme for all types of officials who come in contact with children, and for the public through existing channels such as anganwadis, women’s self-help groups, youth clubs, farmers' groups, urban slum development and resident welfare associations, and in the school curriculum.</p> <p>Parenting training for expectant couples, new parents, adolescent boys and girls could be most opportune.</p>
<p>Numbers of children without parental care not known even as rough estimates.</p>	<p>Essentially not fully solvable, as numbers in family settings cannot be gauged, and even in other categories, not easy. There is need to make five essential registrations compulsory - marriage, pregnancy, birth, entrance into pre-school, entrance into school to ensure that tracking of missing children is easy and can be computerised.</p> <p>There is also a need for surveys to estimate the number of children without parental care under different categories.</p>

	The government needs to make more efforts
Inadequate or Counter-productive Laws and Policies [e.g. the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act and the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act	Address legislative issues - amendments/necessary new enactments. Follow up with rigorous Prosecution and Penalties

Children In Institutions

While India has a number of institutions catering to children without parental care, they are not spread rationally in all districts or between rural and urban areas. In addition to government-run institutions, there are non-governmental ones, supported either by government or private sources or by a combination of both. Public charity and donations are another important source of funding and sponsorship. Many of the government institutions are derived from the model of a correctional facility for 'juvenile delinquents' or boarding schools, and though now termed 'Observation Homes' or just 'Boys' Home' or 'Girls' Home', they are in essence cast in the same mould. Box 2 details the key issues and suggestions to tackle them in the case of institutional care.

Box 2: Problems/Issues Related To Children In Institutions

PROBLEMS/ISSUES	SOLUTIONS/SUGGESTIONS
<p>Whether in the same or separate institutions, these may be orphans, abandoned children, street children or children in conflict with the law.</p> <p>Alienation from family and real life situations. They feel misfit and unable to relate to outside world when they grown-up</p> <p>Children in tribal ashram schools have difficulty in integrating both within own community and outside.</p> <p>Health, nutrition, education, recreation, self-esteem affected. .</p> <p>Children are lonely. The large numbers of children in any one institution means that there is difficulty in giving them the attention, love and care they need</p> <p>Environment not conducive to maximising development.</p> <p>Staff counseling is not a substitute for parental guidance, as it seems routine.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reunification where feasible and desirable, with counseling of both parties; exposure to outside world through common schools, periodic visits and home stays. • Convert the present rigid institutional setup to more of hostel with bridging classes, or open centres or SOS type homes [on a less elitist and more sustainable basis]. A couple rather than a single woman should head each 'family' as kids need the father figure also • Mentorship programme has been planned in some institutions - needs careful selection of mentors. • Give older children some skill training, life skills. • Formation of children's committees within institutions should be encouraged. Child participation in institutions is very little. Most institutions are more interested in administrative matters. Child committees may induce more participation - can give them some roles and tasks appropriate to age/maturity. Such participation should lead to enhanced ability to transit from the institution to the larger world.

<p>Periodic visits of children in institutions to a 'normal' home are good for them, but the disadvantages of the institution are more evident to them on return.</p> <p>Children lack sensitisation on their duties [civic, social, etc.]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The institution should feel responsible to follow up children who pass out of the institution for three years at least. The Child Welfare Committees of each district should do this. In some children's homes, there are child tracking projects and this method could be an alternative.
<p>All types of children often clubbed together with the public image of delinquent children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Relations campaigns must be run to improve image
<p>Institutions are badly designed and run. Occupancy rate is low in some institutions.</p> <p>The involvement and responsibility of the Community should be well defined.</p> <p>Parents are unable to control children so they send them to observation homes that thus become hostels depriving deserving children of places.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements with use of good models and resource persons. Article 3 of CRC spells out conformance to internationally agreed standards of this institution. Procedures & Guidelines for management of institutions to be updated. Need correct and clear protocols. Evolve standards for both state run institutions and NGO's • Co-management/neighbourhood committees and decentralisation of institutions, Community management • Children's homes must be licensed. Government institutions to be adopted by NGOs • For periodic supervision and monitoring by a joint govt./NGO team. Monitoring of NGO institutions is also needed.
<p>Marriages of children in institutional care fail due to lack of preparation.</p> <p>- Institutions do not allow for different sexual orientations.</p> <p>Children who get more care and affection in institutions refuse to go back to their own families, so have to balance these</p> <p>Differently-abled, substance and betting addicted children keep running away from open homes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care-givers in institutions need special orientation on emergency procedures, communication, handling of special children, counseling, effective parenting practices, etc.

Children in Own Family Settings

One of the most disturbing categories of children without parental care are those living in their own families but who are abused [physically, verbally or sexually], neglected or overburdened and pushed into early assumption of adult roles, as this is quite pervasive and by definition, hidden or socially accepted. It is common to have girls in almost total care of their siblings, even if they themselves have hardly passed the toddler stage, or to be labouring day long in assisting their mothers in household tasks such as fetching fuel and

water. Both boys and girls are pressed into working in the family occupation or for wages; some become bonded labour, generally as 'payment' for a loan taken by the parents. Corporal punishment is harder on boys than girls and justified on the basis of 'Spare the rod and spoil the child'.

In the Indian family settings parental care is denied to the child mainly in three different stages of his/her lifetime:

- 1) The girl child is denied the right to be born by his biological parents
- 2) Mainly the girl child is denied of nutrition security due to intra-family unequal distribution of food.
- 3) In economically disadvantaged families the adolescent is used to increase family income. They either take up jobs as domestic help or as bonded labourers.

In urban better-off families, especially when both parents are working, the TV becomes the baby-sitter and the only attention that the parents seem to give the school-going child is through admonishments to study, and yet again study harder.

Traditionally, the differently-abled is regarded with pity and over-protectiveness at best, and shame and fear at worst. There is little positive re-enforcement of their capacities. Prevention and early detection and treatment are woefully inadequate.

The HIV/AIDS scourge is hitting a worrisome number of families, and children suffer most on multiple counts - the loss of parents, or their earning capacities, the stigma that is still attached to it, and its transmission to them from their parents. The houses at times become child-headed. Myths and irrational fears confront their ability to enjoy as normal a life as their circumstances will allow.

Box 3: Children in Own Family Settings

PROBLEMS/ISSUES	SOLUTIONS/SUGGESTIONS
<p>A. Children without Parental Care in own family settings: abused, neglected, differently-abled, HIV/AIDS affected, etc.</p> <p>Abused, neglected and over-burdened children.</p> <p>Girl child who receives unequal treatment at home</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept of childhood needs to be defined and there is a need to define guidelines for considering whether the child is abused or willfully neglected by the family. • Different factors influence the denial of parental care in different scenarios. Those factors to be examined minutely while taking a decision on whether reunification with the family is the best solution. Decisions and choice by children should be given proper respect. • Every child has a right to family -hence it is important to strengthen family ties. The state should facilitate the community to build up a support

	<p>system so that the reunification solution is tried out first</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If necessary, give family support option through schools to destitute families after CWC identified need. • If parent[s] addicted to substance abuse, make them responsible after de-addiction programmes
B. Problems related to the differently - abled	
<p>Discrimination - due either to compassionate attitudes or superiority complexes</p> <p>Taboos and traditional myths and attitudes [shame, fear etc.]</p> <p>Little assurance of appropriate parental care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of respite centers and day care centers for the differently-abled (specially for the mentally challenged) should increase to provide relief to the over burdened family members. This will prevent unnecessary institutionalization and the person with disability can be a part of the family • Strengthening of parent networks and community based rehabilitation solutions are suggested.- Training persons to help differently-abled, • Wider publicity/ sensitisation and training • Government should have inclusive policies and programmes for mainstreaming the persons with disabilities. • Stronger prevention and early treatment strategies are to be adopted by the state, community and institutions.
<p>Not many NGOS attend to spastic and M.R. children. Lack of trained staff is also an issue</p> <p>Attitudes among teachers in integrated schools need to be changed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State needs to follow up children with special needs -: drug addicted, mentally and physically challenged. • More attention to prosthetics and training, • Rehabilitation and Special or integrated schooling
C. HIV/AIDS Affected Children	
<p>Discrimination and isolation</p> <p>Trauma</p> <p>Isolation</p> <p>Projected rate of affected adults and children - implications not taken into account</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider publicity/ sensitisation and training • Inclusive policies and programmes • Special schools or home learning only as a temporary measure. • Preparation for 'Children heads of households'. The community must also plan supportive measures for these families.

Children Away from the Family

A large number of Indian children work outside the family settings and are mostly away from any caregiver such as the parents or teachers. Some live at their place of employment - domestic labourers, hotel and restaurant boys, even some working in shops, repair garages and small factories, or in rural areas, in a landlord's fields. Some are bonded labourers. There are also a significant number of street children and runaway children.

Working children may or may not have had some schooling. Some drop out at the very early stages, others may have failed the elementary school board examination [typically at the end of the 7th or 8th grade]; yet others, mostly in rural areas, have no local school that carries the higher grades and may drop out due to the distance to the upper primary level schools [6-8th]. Most such children are hardly even literate.

Parents might sometimes leave an unruly boy under the care of a rich relative or acquaintance, in the city or other village in the hope that he will be trained and looked after well. Their expectations are sadly belied. Similarly, girls are put into domestic service to earn some money for their dowry or to support the family [in any case, it is one less mouth to feed] till such time as she gets married. Again, their belief that she is in safe hands is a misplaced one.

In addition to the problems of working children, runaway and street children face exploitation from unscrupulous contractors and middlemen who befriend lost or runaway children newly arrived in a city and then lead them into exploitative work situations or even crime.

Box 4: Children Away from the Family

PROBLEMS/ISSUES	SOLUTIONS/SUGGESTIONS
A. ORPHANS	Presently -Adoption, foster Care, Institutional care, no care [child left to own resources -e.g. on the street.].
<p><u>Institutional Care for this category of children.</u></p> <p>They often have emotional, behavioral problems, trauma & attitudes</p> <p>Self-esteem is especially low among orphans.</p> <p>Loss of identity, sense of belonging in most cases</p> <p>Also, there is an inferiority complex among them [and children separated from parents/family] especially at vacation time as they have no home to go to.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State to use stringent protocols for selection, monitoring and follow-up with help of NGOS. • Group foster homes have been successful [Matruchaya - a couple with children are given 4-5 Children without Parental Care in foster care. Condition is that they educate all the children, and financial support is given. Such homes allow intermingling of sexes and normal assumption of different familial roles • Foster care has been operating in state since 1989 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give financial assistance to children living under kinship care for their schooling.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure support of caretakers in a caring situation. • Need for extensive follow-ups, meetings • Once this is taken care of, children will take care of the rest. Otherwise, there are adjustment problems. • Could match old age homes and orphanages but monitor interaction to see that improper treatment of children does not take place. Care-giving and interaction with old age residents is another measure that helps children relate to others, and different age groups. • Older children can be given some child to child responsibilities & 'earn while you learn' programmes
<p>B The No Care Situation</p>	
<p>When a child, whether an orphan or an abandoned or a lost or runaway child, is left on its own, one may term the situation one of No Care.</p> <p>This total lack of care is a violation of all child rights.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended family or community must respond first and then place in state care if necessary. • The cradle schemes [as in Tamil Nadu state] have both plus and minus points - the child might be taken care of, but does the society should not encourage abandonment. • Support to unwed mothers needed
<p>C. Missing, Runaway and Street Children</p>	
<p>Lack of care/love and facilities makes them run away. 80% of street children have both parents, many others one at least.</p> <p>Some run away due to peer influences, city lure, school problems, etc</p> <p>Often these children are working and thus have problems similar to working children.</p> <p>Even if has home/parents, spends most of time away from them and thus vulnerable - exposed to physical/sexual/emotional & environmental dangers. Strangers control & often steer towards undesirable ideas & practices.</p> <p>Targeted by police as vagrants and sometimes assaulted.</p> <p>Reunification may not work if home</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing Children Network for entire country. Track every child; use ID cards. Divide every city/district into zones, each under care of an NGO - they know cost-effective solutions. • Reunification to be tried • Rehabilitation and education/training through institutions or open centres. • Partial support -meals, literacy, health care, counseling, legal support • Training them to take on voluntary roles of some responsibility as they near adulthood empowers them • Several NGOs have formed children's groups to discuss issues such as their own attitudes. • Reunification accompanied by counseling of parents/other adults concerned and monitoring

<p>environment/relationship is poor.</p> <p>Institutions have their own set of problems for such children: Child is branded as criminal. Charity breeds a dependency syndrome.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open centres approach expanded and as a phase before full schooling • Hostels along with bridging classes and schooling • Night shelters
<p>D. Child Labour Including Domestic Service</p>	
<p>Inadequate functioning of schools, poor enforcement pushes the child to the misery of child labour. The state also is not giving sufficient attention to problems related to child labour.</p> <p>Rehabilitation is not easy. There are lots of setbacks, systemic problems.</p> <p>This situation leads to deprivation of education, recreation, overwork, various types of abuse, lack of development including training for the future. Wages are extremely low and if the child is in domestic service he/she is bound to suffer from loneliness,</p> <p>99% of domestic labour [full day and staying on the premises] is girls 6-18. They have all the problems of other working children plus some more.</p> <p>Self-esteem is especially low among such children.</p> <p>Victim acceptance - they feel obligated to the employers, so prepared to work hard.</p> <p>Their trust in adults is negated by exploitation and abuse. Children's aspirations are restricted and curtailed.</p> <p>Parents' wrong assumptions about 'family care' when they place them as domestic labourers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure proper working of SDMCs to minimise dropouts, absenteeism, • Strengthen/revise the Child Labour Act, Ban all types of Child Labour till minimum 18 years of age. • Revise universalisation of Elementary Education [Acts not comprehensive enough, not in tune with CRC or constitution]. • Follow up with rigorous Prosecution and Penalties • Rehabilitation through bridging classes and re-entry into schooling. • Support families with children at risk of becoming Child Labour - various methods. • enforcement of Minimum wages and employment guarantee acts and schemes. • Provide better social security such as federation of unorganised labour, health insurance, substance de-addiction programmes, etc. • Make local governments responsible and accountable. • If necessary, give family support option to destitute families after CWC identified need and only through schools etc. • If parent[s] addicted to substance abuse, make them responsible after de-addiction programmes. • Sensitisation of the middle and upper classes needed to launch a movement against employment of children in domestic services

Refugee Children/Children In Disasters

Last, but not least, refugee children and children in disaster and post-disaster situations including migration due to drought, floods or other calamities as well as chronic under employment of the adults thrust children into traumatic turmoil. There may be involuntary

separation, orphanhood, physical injuries, psychological damage and exposure to exploitation.

Trafficking in the name of adoption, temporary care or alternative work while family is in distress is more evident in such situations.

Loss of family ties, security, schooling and choices may have lifelong consequences. Some key issues are examined in Box 6.

Box 5: REFUGEE CHILDREN/CHILDREN IN DISASTERS

PROBLEMS/ISSUES	SOLUTIONS/SUGGESTIONS
<p>PSTD [post-stress trauma disorders] Exploitation by all types of traffickers Trumped up claims of relationships and adoption intentions. Totally exposed to various kinds of abuse and exploitation including criminal activities.</p> <p>Disruption of their academic studies. Health problems.</p> <p>Displacement from their familiar environment and life style. Loss of familiar attached people and belongings creating extreme sense of grief and emotional trauma.</p> <p>Deep sense of insecurity and fear which may result in various behavioural problems.</p>	<p>Immediate relief and rehabilitation centers to protect and provide the basic needs like food, clothing, shelter, love and security. Reunification, institutionalization, Rehabilitation, Foster care,</p> <p>Immediate counseling of the family in care of the children at such situations. Schooling, health care and transit accommodations for learning to be provided.</p> <p>Attempt not to displace the children from their familiar places, but create shelter homes near by.</p> <p>PSTD Alleviation programmes, with training for both GOs and NGOs concerned.</p> <p>Extra stringent adoption process</p>

Government of India has expressed concerns on children who are denied parental care under difficult circumstances but it does not recognize the issue holistically. In the recently launched National Plan of Action most of the situations discussed above have got importance. But they are not dealt on the whole as an issue but as isolated cases pertaining to denial of survival, protection, development and participation rights. We, therefore, request the Government to look at it holistically and suggest policies and programs to address the issue. With this background we turn to the questions to be discussed on the General Day of Discussion.

a) What types of legal frameworks are most likely to ensure that the rights of the child are safeguarded *before, during and after separation from parents*

Right now the laws and policies in place for children without parental care hardly address the issue. There is a need to review the policies, laws and existing legal framework in the rights perspective vis - a - vis family/ community and state. There is also a need to analyze support systems and suggest change in the context of best interest of the child. These policies should help in the survival of the family first in the best interest of the child.

The laws that are in place are:

- Juvenile Justice Act
- Personal laws (Custody of child, one divorced parents etc.)
- Policies related to institutional care
- Policies related to reunion and rehabilitation

Recommendations:

- Counseling and provisions of institutional care to safeguard the child's interest before or during separation
- Create space for children to express themselves.
- Recognition of child as a person in the socio-cultural dynamics.
- Role of the parents as parental caregivers.
(Psychological and emotional separation within the family)
- Framework to include issues of working hours, conditions of service, and support systems (crèches or balwadies) at work place
- Policies for capacity building for parents as well
- Juvenile Justice Act – its impact on child
- Policies related to institutional care
- Personal laws (Custody of child, one divorced parents etc.)
- Structures and functioning of institutions
- Policies related to reunion and rehabilitation.
(To avoid discrimination, we should have all kinds of children in one institution with all their needs being fulfilled).
- Child right to privacy
- Legal Framework and Policies
- Revise / enforce Acts (Child Labour, Minimum Wages, Juvenile Justice, Universal Elementary Education).

b) What family support and alternative care policies can be recommended to help prevent and reduce separation and ensure the most appropriate use of alternative substitute care?

Definition

- "Separation" does not limit itself to physical separation, it can also be, emotional i.e. absence of parental care in spite of physical presence of parents.
- "Separation" can be between parents, as well as between parents and children, or a situation where by accident or natural disaster the parents are no more there.

All capacity building efforts must draw on universal spiritual policies principles for family support and alternative care: -

- "Community" capacity building for family.
- Support, employment policies based on justice and should be family friendly. Providing employment hours and working conditions that will prevent separation of parents from children.
- Trend the migration of labour from rural to urban because of abject poverty.
- Capacity building of parents to spend quality time with each other and with children.
- Media to prepare special educational programmes to bring about attitudinal change of parents their respects towards their children.

- Support of educational institutions to provide holistic education, principles of cooperation instead of competition, regarding each as unique and endowed with special talents and capacities.
- Capacity building through other alternative support care providers such as family counselors, NGOs and communities.
- Special programmes on character development of children at early age on the role of parents, ECCD prenatal care, parent's role in early childhood care and intervention.
- Adequate support services and respite centers for children with disability
- Capacity building efforts backed by organizational support orphanages, foster homes teenaged and juvenile delinquents rehabilitation centers.
- Reexamining of Government run institutions.
- Provision of good environment, infrastructure facilities, love and care and nurture in all support mechanism.
- Corporate working rules and conditions must gear towards fulfillment of child rights to parental care.
- Development of special curriculum materials for children in teenage age groups on junior youth age groups to understand their identity and have a support purpose of life in areas of separation from parents (physical).
- Educational institutions to work towards the development of the power of understanding and articulation of children and Junior Youth
- Psychological needs of stigmatized children

c) What opportunities exist for increasing the participation of children in measures to keep them in safety with their family, and in other decisions about their care, including those pertaining to removal, alternate care placements and reunification?

Urban

- Networking of NGOs
- Awareness through schools
- Counselors in schools

Suburban and township

- Support structures and mechanism
- Nagar Panchayats (Urban Councils)
- Mobile crèches to be expanded as remedial measures.

Rural

- Bal Panchayat (Children's Council)

General

- Parents and teachers to be sensitized
- Space and decision by children is required
- Policy framework for caretakers

Recommendations- General

- Parenting of children has to be addressed at the multi-identity level of the child from the Rights of Child perspective.
- Article 17 of CRC: Child's access to appropriate information should be respected while taking decision on the child's "best interest"
- Separating foster settings from custodial and other institutional settings
- Advocacy followed by intervention is a method which always works
- The method of state interventions should not only be setting up of institutions

- Awareness generation and sensitization of community and society at large the Rights of Child perspective.

Laws and Policy Level Recommendations

- Evolve standards for policies and programmes;
- Frame policies, which take care of rights of the child, parental responsibilities and the socio-economic and cultural realities where the family unit is located;
- Frame laws to support policies and programmes;
- Provide counseling services (in India, this calls for massive investment in setting up training courses, certification and provision of professional counselors).
- Ensure monitoring and evaluation of alternate child care, at the community level and the state level.

Best Practices

- Participation of children at the community level. The Bal Panchayat (Children's Council) model of India can be adopted to have a wider outreach.
- Best practice models like SOS Villages/Kinderdorf can be replicated to provide alternate family care.



India Alliance for Child Rights (IACR) is a countrywide alliance of networks, NGOs, think tanks, activists, academia, and concerned individuals working for the realisation of the rights of children. . It is the national coalition reporting on implementation and monitoring of the UN Child Rights Convention. Having coordinated a country-wide process of the Citizen's Alternate Country Report on CRC 2003, IACR has now initiated a participatory review and reporting process for a citizen's report scheduled for completion in 2007. IACR is affiliated to the South Asia NGO Alliance for Children.

The following NGOs took part in consultations convened by IACR

New Delhi Date: 6th September 2005

YWCA of India
Baha'i Office of External Affairs
Foundation for Advancement of Science
IACR
Women's Coalition for Peace and Development
IACR, Chandigarh
Vidya Foundation
Chetna
Child Relief and You
SOS Villages of India
STOP
Pairvi
Joint Women's Programme
Sahara
Deepalaya
Aastha
Jaishankar Memorial Centre
UNICEF

Bangalore Date: 23rd July 2005

Child Rights Trust
Home for Boys, DWCD
KSCCW, CWC
The Hindu
Jagruthi
Paraspara
Deena Bandhu, Chamarajanagara
DCLP, Bangalore
IACR