

New Delhi,
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STATES SUGGEST THOROUGH REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION ACT

The Two-day review-cum-consultation with the States and Union Territories on devising ways to re-engage Out of the School Children (OoSC) concluded here Tuesday with a call for thorough review of the implementation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. The consultation organized by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the National Council of Educational Research and Training saw participants make suggestions to clearly define the term OoSC and their classifications, such as children who have never enrolled in a school, children that have enrolled but never attended school, children who have dropped out of school, and devise appropriate methods to bring them back to the formal school system.

The other suggestions made by the participants were, study the challenges and best practices followed by the States and make proper guidelines using their experiences, identification and information on OoSC through Child welfare Committees , Child Help Line, in context of children on railway platforms and child care institutions. Participants were of the view that monitoring of OoSC in conflict areas should be done by NCPCR and that 3 to 6 year old children should be brought under the RTE Act.

Addressing the participants, Chairperson, NCPCR Ms. Stuti Kacker informed that a capsule course would be developed by NCPCR for children in conflict with laws. She asked participants to leverage technology for children with special needs so that they are brought back to the school system. She said that the nation is losing human resources as OoSC often indulge in crimes, living on streets and begging. She wanted such children to be given skill-based learning.

Member of NCPCR, Shri Priyank Kanoongo wanted participants to clearly define the term OoSC. He asked them to devise methodology to assess the exact number of such children and their classification so that appropriate strategy could be deployed for each category to get them to the formal school system. He also suggested for a National Plan for OoSC. Besides, Shri Kanoongo wanted a Volunteer Assistance Program to be implemented for identification of OoSC. The program can be implemented through the School Management Committees where Senior Citizens could be made members.

Member of the NCPCR, Sh Yashwant Jain cited the example of Chhattisgarh where OoSc in the Naxal-affected areas of the State have successfully been placed in schools though residential hostels programme.

Member of the NCPCR, Ms. Rupa Kapoor informed that the Commission is in the process of drafting a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Street Children and views of the participants would be incorporated in the SOP. She pointed out that sometimes Children drop out of school due to language barrier which needs to be tackled.

The Problem of OoSC, non-enrolment of children in school, low attendance and drop-outs requires urgent interventions and devising strategies to counter the issue. As NCPCR is the monitoring body of the RTE Act 2009, and as member of Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), NCPCR is paying attention to issues relating to the exclusion of children from free and compulsory education as one of its core areas. In the context of OoSC and their re-engagements, the Commission is of the view that emphasis must be laid on the understanding and strengthening of the preventive strategies.

NCPCR will submit the recommendations of the meeting to CABE.

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