

Child Protection In India [UPSC Notes for GS I]

Child Protection In India

Context

- Recently, Supreme Court has drawn attention of the government to the problem of child pornography.
- In case of tragedies like Surat Fire, a lot of victims were children.

Background

- UN Conventions on the rights of the Child states that the State shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected from all forms of punishment or discrimination on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.
- However child labour, malnutrition, stunting etc are still affecting a large population of Indian children.
- As per the Women and Child Development Ministry, 242,938 children disappeared between 2012 and 2017. But according to Track Child, a government database, nearly 237,040 went missing between 2012 and 2014 alone.
- There is a lack of credible data available for missing children.
- Children are still working long hours performing hazardous and exhausting jobs for menial wages.

Existing Provisions

- In order to address the problem of child trafficking, Supreme Court recently ordered that In case of every missing child reported; there will be an initial presumption of either abduction or trafficking, unless, in the investigation, the same is proved otherwise and an appropriate FIR has to be registered.
- Legal measures to protect the right of the child are - Juvenile Justice Act , Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Act (ITPA), 1956 , Pre-Conception and Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994 , Article -21 A: The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age 6 - 14years, Article-45, Article-39(f), Article-243 G.
- National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) are institutional support available to protect and promote the rights of children.

Way Forward

- Government has to ensure that credible data is available at all levels about missing, illiterate and malnourished children.
- Special budgetary provisions have to be made for promotion of child rights.
- Hostels and care homes have to be built to accommodate rescued children.
- Awareness about child labour and strict enforcement is the need of the hour.
- Our effort must be to ensure that every child reaches his/her full potential free from any and all forms of exploitation and abuse.