

## AIR Spotlight - Initiatives of the Ministry of Women and Child Development

AIR Spotlight is an insightful program featured daily on the All India Radio Newsonair. In this program, many eminent panelists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in the [IAS exam](#) preparation. In this article, the discussion is on initiatives of the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

### Participants:

1. Indevar Pandey, Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child development
2. Aditi Tandon, Journalist

### Context:

The Juvenile Justice Act 2021 prioritises children in the administration of the country for the first time. Women and Child Development Minister Ms. Smriti Irani, who tabled the Bill in Rajya Sabha, said, “we cannot wait for the children to become victims” and that we must be proactive to protect them. The various recent initiatives of the government in this regard are mentioned below.

Read more on the [Juvenile Justice Act](#) in the linked article.

### Universally acceptable adoption law

- In accordance with the recent reforms to promote domestic and foreign adoptions, the government will make major changes to the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act (HAMA) to promote adoptions among NRIs (Non-Resident Indians).
- The previous standard required monitoring of legally adopted children for at least two years, which meant that NRIs who adopted children in India must stay in the country during this period. As part of the latest changes, the government decided to abolish the regulations that require adoptive parents to stay in India after adopting a child, and at the same time allow the [Central Adoption Resource Agency \(CARA\)](#) to issue ‘No objections certificates’ (NOCs) in this case.
- As there is a gap between the Juvenile Justice Act and the Hague Convention, an international treaty on international adoption to which India is a party, it is necessary to modify the law. After the implementation of the new standard, NRIs will be able to bring children to the country/region where they live with two weeks’ notice, and the screening process will begin in that country/region. The Indian Missions in these countries supervise children to evaluate their performance in their new homes.

### Ensure speedy trials and increased protection of children at the district level

- The changes give District Magistrates more powers and responsibilities not only to ensure faster trials and better protection of children through control and compensation at the district level but also to expedite adoption procedures in the country.
- According to the amendment, District Magistrates, including Additional District Magistrates, can now issue adoption orders under Section 61 of the Juvenile Justice Act to ensure quick resolution of cases and improve accountability. The adoption process is currently the jurisdiction of the court, and

if there is too much backlog, it may take several years to resolve any adoption case. This change will ensure that more orphans who need houses are adopted faster.

### **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) report**

- The amendment in the Juvenile Justice Act 2021 is based on a 2018 report by the [National Commission for Protection of Child Rights \(NCPCR\)](#), which surveyed more than 7,000 Child Care Institutions (or children's homes) and found that 1.5% did not comply with the rules and regulations of the Juvenile Justice Law, and 29% of them had major management flaws.
- District Magistrates are also responsible for ensuring that the Child Care Institutions (CCI) in their areas follow all regulations and procedures.

### **Women and Child Development (WCD) Minister chairs National Conference of States/UTs**

- During the national meeting, the minister discussed the better implementation and governance of the ministry's plans such as new initiatives on key tasks like Mission Poshan and Mission Vatsalya.

### **Mission Poshan**

- The Minister of Women and Child Development (WCD) called on all state governments to participate in the ongoing POSHAN MAAH activities and set their own goals to develop Poshan Vikas. She also urged the states to improve the Anganwadi Centres' infrastructure this month and saturate the supply of mobile phones.

### **Mission Vatsalya**

- When discussing the Vatsalya mission, the WCD Minister emphasized the importance of the recent amendments to the Juvenile Justice (JJ) Act. This change will help improve the accountability of development cooperation/DM and promote the reintegration of disadvantaged children into society.

### **PM-CARES for Children Scheme**

- The government announced a special "PM CARES for children" program for all children orphaned by Covid-19 who lost their parents or single parents or legal guardians or adoptive parents due to Covid-19.
- A corpus of Rs. 10 lakh to each of these children will be allocated from the [PM CARES fund](#).
- From this corpus, starting at the age of 18, in the next five years, until the age of 23, as a lump-sum payment for personal and professional purposes, a monthly subsidy is paid. Education expenditures for young children who attend Kendriya Vidyalayas and private schools up to the high school level are supported.
- These children can also receive support through scholarships or education loans equivalent to tuition fees during their higher education, and the loan interest is paid by the PM CARES Fund.
- All children will be enrolled as a beneficiary under [Ayushman Bharat Scheme](#) with a health insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakh. The premium amount will be paid by PM-CARES till the child turns 18.

Read more Gist of AIR Spotlight [here](#).