

## Operation Muskaan

Operation Smile, also known as Operation MUSKAAN, is a Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) project to locate and rehabilitate missing children. It is a month-long campaign in which State Police employees engage in various actions to identify and rescue missing children, and reconnect them with their families. As a follow-up to previous initiatives to recover/rehabilitate missing children, "Operation MUSKAAN -III" was launched in July 2017 across the country.

### Operation Smile

In September 2014, the Ghaziabad Police Department in Uttar Pradesh launched this operation, which resulted in the rescue of 227 children in a month. This successful operation prompted the Central Ministry to train state police units and implement Operation Muskaan. It was a month-long campaign in which State Police officers participated in various events. This effort was carried out by police personnel trained and dispatched to various regions of the nation, to locate missing children listed in FIRs lodged at Ghaziabad police stations.

More than 100 police officers from various levels and ranks were assigned and trained for the purpose on issues such as the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, the Protection of Child Rights Act, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, relevant sections of the CrPC and IPC, and Ministry of Home Affairs Advisories, among other things.

The use of various forms of technology, such as print and media, was also influential in sharing information and locating the missing children. This trip made authorities aware that the majority of the children found homeless and living on the streets, in religious centres, and at train stations were also youngsters who had been separated from their families for various reasons. These youngsters might have gone missing for various reasons, including kidnapping, fleeing their homes owing to familial circumstances or poverty, or going missing while travelling.

### Characteristics of Operation Muskaan

Characteristics of Operation Muskaan one should know to boost their **Current Affairs** knowledge:

- The mission's principal goal is to find and rehabilitate the children who have gone missing.
- Building the capacity of the Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU) at the district level to deal with missing children situations.
- Bringing the activities in line with the state's child protection efforts.
- As part of the country's Integrated Child Protection Scheme, improve the coordination of Social Welfare department functionaries, SJPUs, NGOs, Child Welfare Committees (CWC), and community organizations at the district level.

**Activities Involved:**

- The professional staff of the police department inspects all minors living on the streets, railway stations, and other public places. They must gently obtain information from the youngster without frightening or making them feel uneasy.
- During the operation, the respective State Police are expected to upload the data of any identified youngsters to the Ministry of Women and Child Development's 'Missing Child' webpage. It is critical to retain and communicate all data, including complete information on the number of missing children cases at the intra-state and inter-state levels. Pieces on the CWCs would be written and sent to rescue teams and stakeholders.
- When necessary, rehabilitation measures will be implemented in collaboration with other departments such as the Department of Women and Child Development, the Police, and the Labour Department. As a result, the risk of re-victimization is reduced.
- Media, commercials, and national initiatives are also used to raise public awareness.

**Outcome of the Operation**

Operation Muskaan was carried out in several phases by our country's various state police units. As a result, many missing children have been reunited with their families due to the campaign, which is an excellent success for the different state police agencies.

The Union Home Ministry also recognizes and rewards police officers from various States/UTs who have performed outstanding roles throughout the operations. Many of the rescued youngsters were working as child labourers at restaurants, garages, and homes, and some were even exploited for begging and human trafficking.

As a result, this campaign has helped limit these kid exploitations to some extent. According to reports, 19,195 children were rescued during the Operation Muskaan campaign in July 2015. In addition, 12,233 children were discovered during the July 2016 Campaign.