

India's Ballooning Child Rights Crisis

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- **January 18.** Two-year-old Falak was admitted into the trauma centre of AIIMS, New Delhi. Abandoned by her sex worker mother, she was battered, beaten and left for dead. Two months later, on March 19 she succumbed to her injuries.
- **February 21.** Six-year-old Pankaj, a kindergartener of Rajkul Senior School in Haryana's Karnal district, was locked in a bathroom for several hours by his school teacher for not completing his homework. He fell ill and died after 55 days.
- **March 29.** Thirteen-year-old Munni was rescued by an NGO from the home of an affluent doctor couple in Delhi. Munni was beaten, denied food and made to work 18 hours per day.
- **April 11.** Two-month-old Hina's short life was cruelly snuffed out by her father who beat and burnt her with cigarette butts because of his aversion for girl children.



Delhi street children: gross institutional, societal and parental neglect

These shocking cases of child abuse which have attracted 60-point newspaper headlines and prime time television coverage for their unbelievable cruelty and brutality over the past four months, have dramatically highlighted the gross institutional, societal and parental neglect of children in India. But these horror stories are just the tip of the iceberg. Child neglect and abuse is widespread in this nation of 1.2 billion people, of whom 480 million are children below 18 years. As testified by several national and international reports and surveys of child rights organisations and development agencies, India has arguably the worst child neglect and abuse record worldwide.

Read more: <http://hyd-news.blogspot.com/2013/02/indias-ballooning-child-rights-crisis.html#ixzz3JFjk9wrM>



Chennai's largest observation home

In Chennai's largest observation home, located on the premises of the directorate of social defence on Purasawalkam High Road, which currently houses 37 boys between the ages of six-18, the situation is slightly better. Besides tailoring, VET programmes on offer include videography, computer science, book binding, carpentry and baking. The home has an in-house counselor who visits thrice a week besides guest counselors from NGOs. Meenakshi Rajagopalan, additional secretary, department of social defence, and principal secretary, ICDS, Tamil Nadu, informed EW correspondent Hemalatha Raghupathi that the AIADMK government has drawn up big plans to improve education and training facilities in all juvenile homes statewide: "We plan to improve infrastructure facilities in government observation homes to make them child-friendly, and introduce several new job-oriented vocational training programmes," she says.

Vidya Shankar, the Chennai-based founder of Relief Foundation and former chairperson of the juvenile justice board, Tamil Nadu, accepts that government-run juvenile homes in this southern state have better conditions than elsewhere. However, she believes a lot more needs to be done to ensure rehabilitation and protection of children in conflict with the law in the state. "Tamil Nadu does not have a State Commission for Protection of Child Rights. The state government believes this role is already being discharged by child welfare committees in each district. Unfortunately, this is not working and a state commission with powers to prosecute has to be set up immediately," says Shankar.