

## **EDITORIAL**

### **Fate of Missing children in India**

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It is estimated that approximately 45000 children are reported every year from our country. The reasons for missing are generally cited as abduction or kidnapping of children by family members or nonfamily people, runaway children or those forced to runaway by family or due to circumstances unfavorable to child. Problem children like aggressive, hyperactive or those involved in crime or delinquent also seem to be missing occasionally.

Missing children may be exploited by various criminally deviated personalities for obvious reasons known to them. They may become victims of organ trade, traded to countries like gulf for petty jobs or can even fall into prey of cannibals found in many areas of India. Runaway children usually migrate to glamorous cities and fall prey to exploiters and are employed in tea stalls, brothels and beggary etc. Most of these children are coming from poor background that do not have access to authorities or are ignorant, and even if they approach someone their reports also are not taken seriously.

### **What happens when child is found missing**

Missing child is not cognizable offense committed by anyone according to law. First information report is usually not filed and concerned police station just does general entry in station diary. Some media awareness is done depending on case. The database of missing persons is maintained by The Missing Persons Wing at the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) in New Delhi. According to child helpline data 2018 around 22000 Children out of 45000 are found and are identified as lost. Rest half children remain untraceable in spite of best effort from Government.

Available NCRB data shows that rate of crime against children has increased from 21.1 in 2015 to 24 per cent in 2016. Kidnapping and abduction are highest registered category followed by POCSO related crime. Juvenile conflicts cases also have increased from 33433 in 2015 to 35849 in 2016.

To rehabilitate the children found and identified as lost Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) was found in 2015. CARA mainly deals with adoption of orphans, abandoned and surrendered children through its associated /recognized adoption agencies. The principles governing adoption are laid down.

The child's best interests are of paramount consideration, while processing any adoption placement. The scrutiny of parents is done by special committee, before giving child to prospective parents. The child is preferably given to Indian parents as there are sociocultural environmental issues in foreign country placement.

In spite of best efforts, it is found that only 3-4 % of missing children will find parents and another 10 percent are rehabilitated through adoption. The present drive of finding and investigating missing children with help of ADHAR will be helpful in improving future of missing children in our country.