

Educational Opportunities for Juveniles under India's Legal Framework

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Abstract

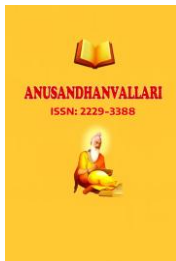
Education has been a key factor in juvenile justice and has been viewed as one of the most significant rehabilitation, re-integration and social transformation tools. The Indian law governing the juvenile, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 and the constitutional provisions, such as Article 21A, view education as a right to a basic necessity and one of the most effective ways of addressing the causes of delinquency. The paper will discuss the nature and achievement of educational accessibility among juveniles within the Indian legal system, supported by the up-to-date statistics and policy shifts. There is empirical evidence that low education levels correlate strongly with juvenile delinquency and the percentage of juveniles in conflict with the law is quite high and is either illiterate or school dropouts. Although legal requirements are to offer formal education, non-formal education, vocational education and life skills in juvenile institutions, there are gaps in implementing the same because of infrastructural gap, lack of trained personnel and poor monitoring systems. Also, the policy contradictions, specifically, the transition to punitive treatment of juveniles aged 16-18 in heinous crimes, are also a matter of concern due to the erosion of rehabilitative goals. The research takes a qualitative and analytical stance where theoretical approaches of restorative justice, capability approach, and child rights framework are incorporated to comprehend the role of education in rehabilitating juveniles. It claims that education does not only increase the capacity of an individual but also decreases recidivism and leads to social reintegration. As the paper finds, the legal framework of India is progressive in theory, but has little or no effect due to gaps in implementation, and thus, greater institutional capacity and a more comprehensive, education-focused approach to juvenile justice are necessary.

Keywords: Juvenile Justice, Restorative Justice, Capability Approach, Child Rights, Rehabilitation

Introduction

Juveniles are persons under the age of eighteen years as defined by Indian law, a special group in the criminal justice system, who demand special protection, care, and rehabilitation. The recognition of juveniles is based on the fact that kids do not have the same mental strength and judgment as adults and thus are easier to reform. In India, juvenile justice system has been developed with a shift in orientation towards a welfare and reformist system of juvenile justice, focusing on rehabilitation and reintegration, instead of punishment. In this context, education can be viewed as one of the key pillars as it can be both preventive and corrective.

Factors which push the youths into the law are complicated and firmly embedded in socio-economic fact. The issue of poverty is among the most considerable contributing factors because children with disadvantaged economic backgrounds are not always able to receive a good education, healthcare, and a stable living environment. This deprivation leads to exposure to exploitation, child labour and crime. On the same note, education is a cause and an effect of delinquency, itself. Children who leave school prematurely or those who have



never received any formal education will have higher chances of indulging in deviant behavior because of few opportunities and being exposed to bad social habits.

Issues that are related to the family are also very important. Developing emotional instability and insecurity in children due to broken families, domestic violence, neglect, and parental guidance leads many of them into delinquency. The problem is also worsened by rapid urbanization, migration and exposure to crime prone environments. Social media and digital platforms pressure as well as peer influence have become modern causes of juvenile delinquency. Therefore, young people who are in conflict with the law are not necessarily criminals but are victims of structural inequalities.

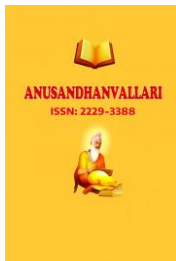
Education in this case takes up a transformative role. Not only is it a basic right that is enshrined in Article 21A of the Constitution but it is also an effective instrument of socialization, empowerment, and behavioral change. Education also prepares juveniles with the necessary skills in life, morality and vocational skills and they are re-integrated back to the society as responsible citizens. It also minimizes chances of recidivism through offering alternative ways of developing personally and economically. In terms of rehabilitation, education focuses on the causes of delinquency and increases the opportunities, as well as a sense of purpose with juveniles.

Recent statistics underscore the importance of the need to mend the gaps in education in the juvenile justice system. As the National Crime Records Bureau records, 31,365 cases of juveniles were registered in 2023, which is slightly higher than in the past years (NCRB, 2024). More than 40,000 juveniles were caught in such incidents which implies the magnitude at which children are getting into the criminal justice system. A large percentage of these juveniles- about 79 percent- falls within the 1618 age bracket which is a vital education and skill-building period (NCRB, 2024).

The level of education of these juveniles is also of concern. Statistics on NCRB always indicate that many juveniles who are facing conflict with the law are poorly educated. A significant number of them are either illiterate or have a primary or secondary level of education. A substantial number of them are school dropouts, which is indicative of failure in the system to provide equal access to quality education. This low educational attainment and juvenile delinquency correlation highlights the significance of enhancing educational interventions as a means of the justice process.

Although there is a strong legal framework that stipulates the delivery of education in juvenile institutions, there is still the challenge on the ground. Most of the observation homes, special homes and child care institutions have been reported to have poor infrastructure, incompetent teachers and structured educational programs. Cases disposal also creates a hindrance in continuity of education as juveniles in protracted institutional facilities do not get a chance to learn. Moreover, stigma of being on the wrong side of the law can also act as an impediment to their re-entry into mainstream educational institutions once released.

Then the problem lies in the lack of connection between the law and practice. Despite the importance of education that has been acknowledged in legislations such as the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 and the Right to Education Act, 2009, the delivery of education in the juvenile justice system is still not provided in a consistent and adequate manner. This depersonalization does not only frustrate the rehabilitative purposes of the system but also recidivism and marginalization processes. It tries to look at how the legal system has made provisions to provide education opportunities to juveniles as well as to look at whether the provisions are being effectively implemented in practice. The research will contribute to the gap between the law and reality and will be a part of a more coherent discussion of the role of education in juvenile rehabilitation and underline the need to change policies and institutions.



Theoretical Framework

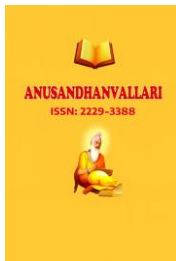
The analysis of the opportunities of juveniles regarding education in the legal environment of India must be based on the theoretical perspectives relevant to defining the meaning and role of juvenile justice. The three major frameworks, which are the Restorative Justice Theory, the Capability Approach, and the Child Right Approach, offer an overall perspective regarding the reason, why education is a central approach in juvenile rehabilitation and social reintegration.

Restorative Justice Theory can be described as a break in the conventional punitive approaches to justice and a move to a system that has a focus on healing, responsibility and integration. Restorative justice in contrast to retributive justice aims at repairing the damage that criminal activity has brought about on the community by means of dialogue, reconciliation and participation of the community. Such a method has been applied in the juvenile justice system to acknowledge that children who are in conflict with the law are not hard-core criminals, but those who can be reformed. In this context, education is vital because it provides the juveniles with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to make good life decisions. The system allows juveniles to redefine their identities and rejoin the society by offering them access to formal education, vocational training and life skills. Education is, therefore, a means of restoring social harmony and a means of avoiding offending in the future.

To supplement this view is the Capability Approach formulated by Amartya Sen, which is a conceptualization of development in terms of widening individual freedoms and capabilities. This perspective holds that the only way to develop is through individuals being able to make significant decisions regarding their lives. The main part of this framework is education, which upgrades the ability of an individual by making him/her more knowledgeable, critical-thinking and opportunity-accessible. With juveniles, where a large number of them have marginalized backgrounds, the absence of education is a denial of basic abilities. The juvenile justice system must, therefore, play a role in reclaiming such lost opportunities by providing quality education. In this light, the educational programs in juvenile institutions are not only corrective efforts but important tools towards empowering the people and empowering them to live dignified lives.

This argument is also supported by Child Rights Approach which renders education an inalienable right and not a discretionary good. The underlying reasoning is that this is founded on international standards and norms such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child where every child regardless of his or her legal status has the right to protection, development, and participation. Education has been known to be one of the fundamental rights which should be availed to all children including the children who are against the law. This view changes the emphasis on juveniles being treated as criminals to considering them as rights holders, who are in need of care and support. It also gives a burden to the state to facilitate their growth by giving them a good education in institution.

A general pattern can be identified when these theoretical frameworks are applied to the juvenile justice system: education is the heart of restoring dignity and reducing recidivism. Restorative justice is preoccupied with reintegration, capability approach is preoccupied with empowerment and the child rights approach entails giving legal rights. Together, they arrive at the conclusion that denying adult juveniles education is not only a violation of their rights, but also, it is tantamount to killing the spirit of rehabilitation. Conversely, meaningful educational benefits will help juveniles rebuild their self esteem, learn to work and reintegrate back to society as responsible citizens. The two theoretical approaches taken together emphasize the transformative aspect of juvenile justice education. Not only is it an institutional imperative but also a stepping stone towards the achievement of justice, equality and sustainable social development.



Constitutional and Legal Framework

The educational opportunities provided to juveniles in India have strong constitutional and statutory foundations that demonstrate the concern of the nation to care about child welfare, social justice, and human development. This legal foundation does not only acknowledge education as a basic right, it is also employed in the overall goals of rehabilitation and reintegration into juvenile justice system.

Article 21A is a critical article at the constitutional level because it ensures that children of all ages between 6-14 years have a right to free and compulsory education. This was introduced by the 86th Constitutional Amendment, which declares education as a justiciable basic right, thus binding the state to provide and make it available and accessible. In the case of juveniles, even in times of conflict with the law, this right is not terminated with institutionalization but, on the contrary, it becomes all the more active as a method of rehabilitation and personal growth.

To supplement this provision are the Directive Principles of State Policy, especially Article 39(e) and (f). Article 39(e) instructs the state to make sure that economic necessity does not compel children to work at ages or strengths that are unsuitable and Article 39(f) urges the state to make sure that children are not exploited and that they grow up in a healthy and dignified way. Though these principles cannot be enforced in the court of law, they are guiding principles to legislative and policy actions, which underscores the significance of education as an instrument to protect the well-being and development of children.

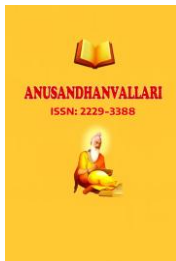
Based on these constitutional requirements, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 is the main law document that regulates the juveniles in India. The Act is child-focused and reformative, which is based on child care, protection, development, and rehabilitation. One of the important aspects of this law is that it explicitly acknowledges education as a vital part of the rehabilitation. It requires that children who are in conflict with the law, and those who require care and protection should be accorded access to formal education, vocational training and development of life skills during their period of stay in institutional care.

According to the Act, the institutions like observation homes, special homes, and places of safety must provide an environment that allows individuals to learn and develop. The learning programs in these institutions should address the needs of the juveniles, even the illiterate, school dropouts, and those with special needs to learn. Besides academic training, the Act puts a lot of focus on vocational training as a way of providing juveniles with skills that they can utilize in employment thus increasing their chances at achieving economic independence on release.

The constitutional requirement in Article 21A is further implemented in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act). It establishes norms and standards of school infrastructure, qualifications of teachers and curriculum to ensure that education received by children is of minimum quality. Significantly, the RTE Act also applies to children under institutional care, thus, giving a renewed emphasis to the duty of the state to deliver quality education to the juveniles. Inclusive education is another aspect that the Act supports by banning any discrimination and providing an equal opportunity to access education to children with the marginalized background.

These legal provisions are important in the implementation process through institutional mechanisms. Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) are charged with the responsibility of dealing with the cases involving children who are in conflict with the law. Their responsibility is to ensure that the rights of the juveniles are safeguarded in the entire legal procedure even in their right to schooling. JJBs are in position to give orders on how the placement of children should be to the relevant institutions where educational and rehabilitative services can be provided.

On the same note, Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) are charged with the responsibility of offering care and protection to children who may not be necessarily going against the law but they are children in need of protection



and care. CWCs are important in seeing to it that such children are fitted in an environment where they can get education and other developmental opportunities. Their other duties are to observe the operation of the child care institutions and to see that they meet the legal standards.

The network of Observation Homes, Special Homes and Places of Safety constitute the institutional base of the juvenile justice system. The Juveniles are accommodated in temporary homes referred to as the observation homes where they are during the pendency of inquiry and the special homes are the homes where they are to be rehabilitated in the long run. These agencies have to provide a host of educational services like schooling, non-formal education, vocation training and counseling. The non-formal education programs are specifically applicable to the juveniles who have dropped out of school or have disproportionate background of education as they help them to fill the gaps in the learning process and fit into the mainstream education systems.

Incorporation of formal, non-formal and vocational education has a lot of consideration by the legal framework. Formal education ensures that the juveniles have the opportunity to continue with their education and get qualifications. Non-formal education is useful to address the needs of those who cannot immediately continue with formal education and provides flexible and accessible learning opportunities. Instead, vocational training equips the juveniles with the skills to enable them to be more employable and self-reliant. All such forms of education put together are used to give a holistic model which takes into account all the cognitive and socio-economic factors of the rehabilitation process.

Despite the fact that this legal framework is highly powerful, there continue to be problems in the effective implementation of the same. Problems like poor infrastructure, unqualified teachers and coordination among institutions usually hinder provision of educational services. However, the constitutional and legal provisions offer a solid basis on the way of ensuring that education takes center stage in the juvenile justice in India.

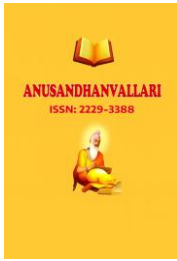
Lastly, the legal and constitutional system of providing education to juveniles in India can be said to be progressive and rights-based. The law will attempt to address the issue by addressing the needs of the children by providing them with an access to formal, non-formal and vocational education, which will not only assist in fighting the real causes of delinquency, but also assist in holistic development of children. The effectiveness of this framework though, is manifested at the end of the day to its implementation which entails long term commitment, supply of adequate resources and regular follow up.

Educational Opportunities Provided

The educational opportunities at the juvenile justice system in India are built to facilitate holistic rehabilitation through the multiple academic, vocational and psychological needs of children who are in conflict with the law. The framework focuses on a multi-dimensional strategy comprising formal learning, non-formal learning, vocational learning and life skills training. All of these elements are designed to reinstate continuity in learning, improve employability, and promote emotional well-being.

(a) Formal Education

Formal education is the basis of educational opportunity availed in juvenile institutions. Observation Homes and Special Homes have children who are motivated to proceed with their school education using organized educational programs. There are various institutions associated with state education boards or National institute of open schooling (NIOS) which provide flexible learning to children who are unable to attend normal schools. Juveniles who were interrupted during their studies are the beneficiaries of open schooling since they can continue with their studies at convenience and they can rejoin the mainstream education systems.



In others, state programs have enabled schools to provide in-house classrooms in child care facilities, thus continuity of formal education. An example is the collaboration between state education authorities and juvenile centers that allow children enrolled there to attend board exams, thus improving their future lives.

(b) Non-Formal Education

Non-formal education is important in meeting the needs of illiterate or dropped-out school-going juveniles. Literacy programs are structured to offer the basic reading, writing and numeracy skills, which are the basis of further learning. Another significant element is bridge courses that assist children to get between non- and formal education by bridging learning gaps and preparing them to take age-related classes.

Non-profit making organizations like Pratham have been on the frontline in the implementation of remedial education programs in partnership with government institutions. These programs lay emphasis on basic education and have had a positive effect on raising the literacy levels of the marginalized children, even in institutional care.

(c) Vocational Training

A major component of the rehabilitative approach is vocational education, which focuses on providing juveniles with practical skills which can help them to become more employable and financially independent. Juvenile institutions usually have training programs in carpentry, tailoring, handicrafts, computer literacy and digital skills. Not only do these programs offer livelihood opportunities but also give them a sense of being self-reliant and confident.

Some juvenile homes have been extended government programs such as the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship initiatives, which allow children to receive certified skill training. Moreover, NGOs partner with organizations to offer specialized training programs that are specific to local jobs.

(d) Life Skills and Counseling

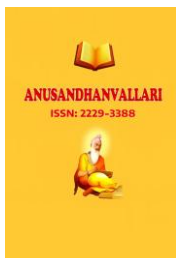
In addition to academic and vocational training, counseling and education in life skills are necessary to meet the emotional and psychological needs of juvenile. A lot of children who are in conflict with the law have suffered a trauma, neglect, or abuse which may influence their behavior and decision making. Life skills programs are aimed at communication, problem-solving, emotional regulation, and interpersonal relationships, and they enable juveniles to become resilient and socially competent.

Behavioral correction and mental health: Counseling services are crucial in facilitating behavioral corrections and mental health, often supported by professionally trained psychologists and social workers. Interventions in psychosocial programs like those created by the Tata Institute of social sciences have helped in enhancing psychosocial interventions in juvenile institutions.

The manifestation of the holistic approach, which includes formal education, non-formal learning, vocational training, and development of life skills, are educational opportunities offered to the juvenile justice system in India. Though these programs show that the system is ready to rehabilitate the system, their success rests on the regularity of implementation, the resources, and long-term cooperation of government bodies, and the civil society.

Recent Data and Trends

Recent empirical evidence (2023-2025) offers important insights into the truths of juvenile justice in India, especially the relationship between educational deprivation and delinquency, and institutional care lapses in the system. These tendencies support the thesis that although the provisions of the law are available, their application, in particular, in the field of education is unsatisfactory.



According to statistics provided by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), in 2023, 31,365 juvenile cases were registered, and 40,036 juveniles were arrested, indicating an ongoing increase in juvenile crime involvement (NCRB, 2024). A large percentage - about 79%- falls within the 16-18 age bracket which is also a critical period of secondary school and acquisition of skills. The implication of this concentration is that the inability to keep adolescents in the education system might be a significant source of delinquency.

There is also the educational profile of juveniles which is equally important. According to the regular trends in NCRB, a significant proportion of juveniles in conflict with the law are either illiterate or have primary education or middle education (NCRB, 2023). Many of them are school dropouts, which means that there is a high degree of correlation between low education level and the high probability of involvement in crime. This corroborates the popular sociological thesis that educational exclusion is a cause and effect of juvenile delinquency.

The other issue of concern is the backlog of cases in the juvenile justice system. Recent reports show that more than 50,000 children in conflict with the law are awaiting the disposal of the case, and more than half of them are awaiting the Juvenile Justice Boards. These delays not only ruin the effectiveness of the justice system but also interrupt the further education of juveniles. Children are left to stay in the observation homes longer without any form of academic interaction which results in even more school marginalization.

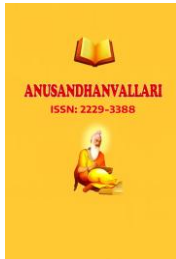
The institutional issues are also highlighted using the figures provided by the National Commission of Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). The Commission was flooded with almost 1 lakh complaints in 2024, out of which more than 39,500 were juvenile justice and child care institutions complaints. Majority of these complaints were associated with poor living conditions, rehabilitation and lack of support to schooling in institutions. There were also more than 8,200 complaints that were directly related to education and this is an indication of systematic failures to provide access to basic education.

These trends exhibit a particular pattern, i.e., the juveniles, who are deprived of the right to education, are more vulnerable to crime, and they are exposed to the justice system, which only makes them lack the need to have the educational infrastructure, which only further marginalizes them. Low education and high levels of delinquency are not only correlated but structural with its basis on socio-economic inequalities and institutional failures.

Moreover, lack of good educational programs in juvenile facilities also presents a greater implementation gap. Even though law requires formal schooling, vocational training, and education about life skills, most institutions are not able to offer such services regularly due to the absence of resource base, trained personnel and efficient monitoring systems. By this, the juveniles have been observed to graduate out of the system without any meaningful skills or qualification thus a high risk of recidivism. According to the latest statistics, there is a severe paradox in the Indian juvenile justice system. On the one hand, the legal framework highly focuses on education as the means of rehabilitation; on the other hand, systemic inefficiencies and institutional failures disrupt the efficient provision of education. This is a critical gap to the question of the necessity to stop the cycle of delinquency and to ensure that education accomplishes its role of changing lives of juveniles.

Challenges and Gaps (Critical Analysis)

- Poor infrastructure in child care institutions limits access to classrooms, learning materials, and basic educational facilities.
- Lack of trained teachers and educators results in substandard delivery of both academic and vocational education.
- Disruption in education during detention breaks learning continuity and reduces the chances of reintegration into formal schooling.



- Social stigma after release discourages juveniles from rejoining schools and accessing employment opportunities.
- Weak monitoring and accountability mechanisms lead to ineffective implementation of educational provisions in institutions.
- Rural–urban disparities create unequal access to quality education and rehabilitation services across regions.
- Inadequate coordination between legal and educational authorities hampers the integration of institutional learning with mainstream education.
- There exists a significant gap between strong legal provisions and their actual implementation, undermining the rehabilitative goals of the juvenile justice system.

Judicial Approach

Pratap Singh v. State of Jharkhand

The Supreme Court made it clear that care should be taken to determine juvenility depending on the date the offence was committed, and not the date of trial. This made sure that those who were minors during the time of the offence are protected by the juvenile law. The ruling enhanced procedural protection of children who are in conflict with the law. It also further strengthened the issue of a child-friendly justice system. The decision is in line with the rehabilitative aspect of punishment.

Hari Ram v. State of Rajasthan

The Court, in this case, determined that the benefits of juvenile justice legislation were to be retroactive even where the offence happened prior to the law coming into effect. This increased the protection of juveniles. The ruling underlined that positive laws should be construed with a liberal view to support children. It reiterated the reformatory strategy of juvenile justice. The decision strengthened the “best interest of the child” principle.

Shabnam Hashmi v. Union of India

Under the juvenile justice system, the Supreme Court identified the right to adopt regardless of the personal laws. The ruling emphasized the importance of child welfare as the most important factor in adoption issues. It strengthened the notion that all children have a right to a supportive family setting. The case expanded the child rights in the legal system. It also associated rehabilitation with long term developmental outcomes.

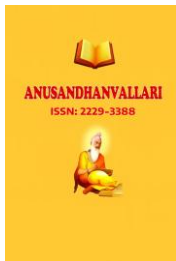
Mukesh & Anr v. State (NCT of Delhi)

This case was a result of the Nirbhaya case, which led to major changes in the juvenile justice law. It gave way to clauses that enable the juvenile aged 16- 18 years to be tried as adults in heinous crimes. The verdict was an indication of increasing social pressure on tougher punishment. Nonetheless, it also brought up the issue of the watering down of the rehabilitative approach. The case represents a turn to a punitive aspect in the juvenile justice.

In all these instances, the best interest of the child has always been seen as the driving force by the Indian courts. The judicial interpretations have been largely in favor of a reformatory and welfare-based approach. However, recent developments show a balancing exercise between rehabilitation and societal needs of deterrence. Such developing jurisprudence indicates both the excellences and the challenges of the juvenile justice system.

Policy Contradictions

The juvenile justice system in India is deeply rooted in reformatory approach of juvenile justice that focuses on rehabilitation, reintegration, and holistic growth of children in conflict with the law. This philosophy is echoed in



the provisions of the law that entails education, vocational training, and psychological support as key elements of the justice process. However, punishment is also inherent in the system, particularly following the enactment of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, which allows the juveniles aged 16-18 to be tried as adults in case of heinous offenses. Such a duality provides a serious policy contradiction in the framework.

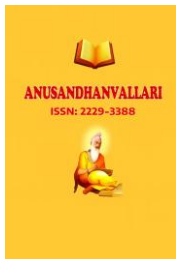
The reformatory approach treats juveniles as individuals that can be reformed and that the criminal behavior is normally as a result of the socio-economic deprivation, education deficiency and environmental factors. In this case, education is considered a change agent which aims at addressing the causative factors of delinquency and reintegrating into society. Conversely, the punitive model emphasizes on deterring and punishing, reflecting the worries of the society on the rising juvenile crime, particularly the more serious types. The provision of juvenile trial as adults is one step towards this punitive paradigm that doubts its appropriateness with child-centric values.

The consequences of taking underage children aged 16-18 to the adult courts in the juvenile justice system are far-reaching on the right to education and rehabilitation of these young children. Juvenile delinquents are very deprived of organized school programs and educational services when they are exposed to adult judicial processes and adult-like custodial environment. No child-centered educational and rehabilitative systems are necessarily provided at adult correctional facilities in contrast to the juvenile institutions that must provide formal and non-formal education. This does not only alter the course of their learning, but also increases the risk of stigmatization and recidivism.

The integrative nature of the reformatory and the punitive approaches has led to confusion in the policy implementation. The authorities are likely to focus on punishment in high profile cases thus compromising with the rehabilitative interests of the juvenile justice system. Such inconsistency undermines the overall efficacy of the educational interventions and restricts their influence on long-term behavior change. Arguably, the growing punitive trend in the juvenile justice system could jeopardize the objectives of education and rehabilitation. It is necessary to adopt a middle ground between the values of child welfare and the issues of grave crimes. Enhancement of access to education, even when serious crime is involved is important in order to maintain the justice system in line with its fundamental goal of rehabilitation and social reintegration.

Policy Recommendations

- Strengthen infrastructure in juvenile homes by ensuring adequate classrooms, libraries, and learning resources.
- Integrate institutional education with mainstream schooling systems to ensure continuity and certification.
- Increase funding and appoint trained teachers, counselors, and vocational instructors in child care institutions.
- Promote digital education programs and e-learning platforms to enhance accessibility and modern skill development.
- Provide post-release educational support through scholarships, bridge courses, and reintegration schemes.
- Reduce case pendency by improving efficiency of Juvenile Justice Boards and fast-tracking proceedings.
- Establish strong monitoring and accountability mechanisms to ensure effective implementation of educational provisions.



Conclusion

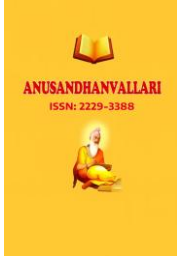
The Indian juvenile legal system is a progressive and child-centred system of law that focuses more on rehabilitation as opposed to punishment. Both constitutional laws and statutes recognize education as a fundamental right, and an important aspect of the juvenile justice system. The law will assist in the treatment of the root causes of delinquency by imposing formal education, vocational training and life skills development in child care institutions and reintegrating the juveniles into the society.

Despite this good legal basis the application of these provisions remains patchy and in most instances, subpar. Some of the challenges that have continued to impact negatively on successful delivery of educational opportunities include inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained teachers, discontinuity of education and weak monitoring systems. New figures also highlight the structural inefficiencies like high pendency of the cases and institutional inefficiencies that have a direct bearing on the quality and accessibility of the juvenile education. This lack of touch with reality on the ground and the law weakens the intention to rehabilitate of the juvenile justice system.

Education is thus seen as the most important instrument of changing the lives of juveniles. Not only does it give them knowledge and skills but also restores their dignity, gives them self confidence and reduces recidivism chances. A good education system can eradicate the vicious cycle of marginalization and open possibilities of social and economic integration. To achieve significant outcomes, institutional capacity accumulation, consistency in education and holistic and child-centered approach is necessary. By dealing with these issues, the juvenile justice system will be able to achieve its real mission of reform and reintegration. Neither is it a mere legal necessity, but it is a social need to invest in the education of the juvenile in an effort to establish sustainable justice.

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