

CENTRE FOR CHILD AND HUMAN RIGHTS, NLIU

news letter.

EDITION I

Welcome to the first edition of the CCHR Newsletter, your monthly source for insights, updates, and action points from the Centre for Child and Human Rights.

SWEAT AND SILENCE: SUMMER EDITION

As the heat rises, so do stories that often go unheard — of children working through their summers, of quiet acts of resistance, and of communities striving for change. This edition brings together voices, visuals, and initiatives that challenge silence and demand a summer of justice for every child.

Image source : Pinterest "Kate Jeanes titled Children's Right."



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READ, REFLECT,
AND RAISE YOUR
VOICE.

cchr@nliu.in

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As children, the most cherished time during the year was that of summer vacations. It meant freedom from school, endless games with friends, cold drinks, family trips, and late nights with no alarms to wake us.

It was freedom – allowing you to simply be a child. However, millions of children never experience this freedom. They are still waiting.

The image captures the stark contrast with a painful clarity. A young boy, no older than ten, crouched at a roadside tea stall surrounded by steel utensils and boiling kettles. His summer is filled with labour instead of play. While some children spend their afternoons chasing cricket balls or cartoons, he pours tea and clears tables. His childhood is not a season of rest, it is a shift that never ends. The image isn't rare. We have all encountered similar sights of children washing dishes, serving food at dhabas, selling toys or magazines at red lights, or simply standing still with outstretched palms. These scenes blur into the background of everyday life, so common that we forget to feel disturbed. But every such moment is a theft of the very freedom that we take so easily for granted.

This image, and the countless unspoken stories behind it, should stir more than sympathy; it should call us to action. It should raise questions. It should demand change. Because until every child can claim their summer, their play, and their peace, our work - as students, citizens, and a society, is far from done.



 Laredo, Spain

To ensure no child goes hungry when school is out, the Laredo Independent School District (LISD) launched its annual Summer Meals Program with a vibrant kickoff at D.D. Hachar Elementary School. The initiative offers free breakfast and lunch to all children aged 18 and under, with no registration or residency requirements - removing common barriers to access.

Meals are being offered at 50 locations, including schools, churches, and recreation centers, to reach across the community. The launch event was filled with student performances including songs, dances, and the lively “Be a Star with School Breakfast” contest, celebrating the connection between nutrition, movement, and learning. The program aims to surpass last year's distribution of over 128,200 meals, ensuring local children's nutritional needs are met during summer break.

 Tamil Nadu, India

In a firm warning ahead of the summer vacation season, Tenkasi Collector A.K. Kamal Kishore cautioned local businesses against employing children in their establishments. He emphasized that the Tamil Nadu government aims to make the state child labour free by 2025, and such practices directly undermine that goal. To combat school dropouts, the leading cause of child labour, awareness campaigns are being held across the district, especially during the summer break when children are more vulnerable to being pushed into work.

The Collector made it clear: any commercial establishment found employing minors (under 18) may face fines up to ₹50,000, imprisonment for up to two years, or both. Parents who send their children to work could also be fined up to ₹10,000. Calling on the public, business owners, traders associations, and families to support the district's efforts, he urged collective responsibility in ensuring children enjoy their right to rest, play, and education, not work this summer.



 Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

As Bhopal faces soaring summer temperatures, AIIMS Bhopal has launched a vibrant public awareness drive called 'Beat the Heat' to protect the community, especially children from heat-related illnesses. With the empowering tagline "Heat will retreat, we will defeat! Hategi Garmi, Jeetenge Hum," the campaign spreads simple but life-saving tips.

Posters and digital displays across the hospital highlight these essential precautions, encouraging families to make small changes for big health benefits during the scorching summer months. AIIMS Director Prof. (Dr.) Ajai Singh emphasizes the importance of community vigilance, saying, "Small daily actions can prevent serious health risks." This campaign is a timely reminder that summer should be a season of fun and rest for all children, not one of danger or neglect.





“FROM BRIDE-TO-BE TO BEACON OF HOPE”

In the quiet corners of a remote village nestled along the Nepal-India border, where tradition loomed large over dreams, a young girl's refusal to submit to child marriage became a turning point not just for her, but for an entire community.

At 14, Neha overheard her parents finalizing her marriage to an older man across the border. Rather than resigning to her fate, she chose resistance. She fled to her elder sister's home, leaving behind the looming threat of early marriage.

While she was away, her family engaged with World Vision, a non-profit working to end child marriage through community-based education and life skills training. With the support of the Rupantaran Life Skills Programme, Neha's parents began to question the tradition they had once upheld. When Neha returned home, it was not as a child bride, but as a student.

Today, Neha is 18 and leads change on the very paths where her childhood nearly ended.

As a youth trainer, she educates girls on how to identify the warning signs of early marriage, understand their rights, and protect one another. She leads what she calls a “Circle of Watchers”—a peer support group of adolescent girls who alert NGOs and local authorities to potential child marriages.

While the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006 criminalizes child marriage in India, enforcement remains inconsistent due to lack of awareness, social acceptance of the practice, and weak local monitoring mechanisms. As a result, many cases go unreported or are resolved informally, undermining the law’s intended deterrent effect.

Real change doesn't always stem from policies. It needs to begin with empowering the communities themselves.

Reflection - As law students, advocates, and policymakers, we must ask:

- How are child protection laws being communicated to vulnerable communities?
- What is the role of legal aid clinics and student-run initiatives in supporting such efforts?
- How can pro bono efforts integrate with ongoing NGO-led education campaigns?

Whether it’s through legal literacy drives, policy development, or representation of vulnerable minors, there is ample scope to support and amplify the efforts of young changemakers like Neha.

Legal empowerment does not always begin in courtrooms. Sometimes, it begins with a girl who dares to say “no.”



"Anuja" is a poignant short film that captures the often-overlooked conflict between a child's duties and their fundamental rights in contexts marked by poverty and marginalization. The story follows 9-year-old Anuja, who toils in a Delhi garment factory alongside her older sister, Palak. For these young girls, survival has replaced schooling, and stitching clothes has substituted childhood.

When Anuja is offered a rare chance to go to school, she is torn between embracing her right to education and staying back to support her sister and family. Her decision becomes a quiet rebellion against the systemic forces that normalize child labour and sacrifice education in the name of duty.



This Oscar-nominated film captures a harsh reality that continues to persist despite legal prohibitions on child labor. Through a tender yet confronting narrative, Anuja challenges viewers to reflect on systemic failures, the weight of poverty, and the critical importance of protecting every child's right to education and a life free from exploitation. Anuja's internal conflict raises the dilemma of How often do our systems, despite constitutional guarantees, fail to protect a child's right to dream, to learn, and to just be a child?



"Prioritise Child's Right in Nigeria,"
The Guardian Nigeria, 22 June 2021, .

Every year on May 27, Nigeria observes Children's Day – a moment to celebrate the nation's youth while drawing urgent attention to the state of children's rights across the country. While parades and school programs mark the day with color and energy, the deeper message lies in Nigeria's ongoing struggle to ensure safety, education, and dignity for every child.

In a country **where nearly 10.5 million children are out of school, and millions more face poverty, violence, and child labour**, Children's Day is more than ceremonial. It is a call to action. Despite being a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and enacting the Child Rights Act (2003), enforcement remains inconsistent across states. Over a third of Nigerian states are yet to domesticate or fully implement the law, leaving many children vulnerable to early marriage, abuse, and exploitation.

This urges policymakers, civil society, and citizens to recommit to the promise of protecting every child's right to education, healthcare, and a life free from violence. For Nigeria, Children's Day is not just about celebrating the future – it is about safeguarding the present.

As we close this edition, we invite you to reflect deeply on the stories and realities explored. Summer, for many children, is not a break from school but a descent into invisible hardship – forced labour, early marriage, or exposure to unsafe conditions. These are not isolated incidents but systemic symptoms of neglect.

Consider the following question as a prompt for thought, dialogue, or even legal action:

- Are public awareness campaigns (like those in Tamil Nadu and Bhopal) enough to drive behavioural change, or do we need more community-led legal interventions? How can a common individual contribute to protecting child rights?

Submit Your Reflection:

We invite our readers to send in a short reflection (150–200 words) in response to any of the above questions. The best entry will be published in our next newsletter and receive a shoutout on CCHR's official social media handles.

 Please mail your write-up to cchrc@nliu.ac.in with the subject line: "Reflection – CCHR Newsletter (May 2025 Edition)."

“
Let your voice be part of the
movement – because silence is no
longer an option.
”

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