

FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

It is with immense pleasure that I announce the re-launch of the flagship journal of the Centre for Child Rights (CCR), the Journal on the Rights of the Child of National Law University Odisha. This volume commemorates the 10th anniversary of CCR. It reaffirms NLUO's unwavering commitment to scholarship and advocacy in the field of child rights.

The Centre for Child Rights was established on April 12, 2015 under the leadership of NLUO's then Vice Chancellor, Prof Shrikrishna Deva Rao. It was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Justice Dipak Misra, in the esteemed presence of then Hon'ble Chief Justice of Orissa High Court, Hon'ble Justice Pradip Kumar Mohanty and Judges of the Orissa High Court. Two researchers appointed at the Centre namely, Mr S Kannayiram and Mr Pramoda K Acharya played a sterling role in carrying out many research projects, organising various training programmes and colloquiums, writing policy papers, and conducting action research. NLUO supported these researchers even after the UNICEF support ceased during the Covid Pandemic.

The Centre got a new lease of life with the establishment of the Chief Minister's Chair Professor in 2023 fully supported by two full time researchers and an office support staff. The UNICEF also returned on Board in the same year funding a Consultant in the CCR. Since 2024, the CCR's Chief Minister's Chair Professor cum Director Biraj Swain has infused new energy in the Centre which is now fully functional with Dr Swagatika Samal and Dr Pradipta Sarangi, as the researchers, Mr Amulya Swain as the office assistant, and Mr Ankit K Keshri, as the UNICEF Consultant and NLUO faculty members Dr Rashmi Rekha Baug as Co-Director and Dr Shubhnginee Singh as Co-Director.

CCR played a key role in the organisation of the ninth conference of the International Society on Child Indicators (ISCI) in 2024. It was the first ISCI Conference in India jointly proposed by the NLUO, Prof Ravinder Barn of Royal Holloway University of London, and Prof Damanjit Sandhu of Punjabi University Patiala. The Centre has overtaken NLUO's flagship Project Kutumb to ensure that the three nearby villages under this project are declared as child friendly villages as per the SDG / Niti Ayog indicators, in addition to the important action research, critical papers, projects, trainings, thought leadership and teaching courses it is involved in.

This edition—Volume 6 of the Journal on the Rights of the Child of National Law University Odisha—presents original works spanning research papers, case

commentaries, opinion pieces and infographic fact-sheet. The themes explored in this edition include evolution of jurisprudence on juvenile's right to bail, childhood obesity in a fast changing world, status check on the Right to Education, equity as imagined in the school meal programme of PM POSHAN, re-analysis of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data on status of children in conflict with law in Odisha, child marriage, adoption, Romeo – Juliet laws in India, juvenile delinquency in India, refugee children's rights, digital childhood, children's contractual rights in influencer economy with special focus on sports and entertainment industry, best interests of children in custody disputes and visitation rights.

The depth and diversity of these contributions reflect the range and depth of contemporary child rights concerns and the importance of continued policy, practice, legal and societal engagement. Each of these issues highlights the necessity for a deeper understanding of the evolving nature of child rights from the lived experiences of the children, while also providing progressive and aspirational recommendations for strengthening and improving legal and other frameworks.

The authors contributing to this volume include academics from law and humanities disciplines, researchers and students. Each submission has undergone a rigorous editorial process, including two rounds of review and a double-blind peer review. The journal has benefited from the expertise and guidance of an esteemed editorial advisory board comprising eminent scholars and jurists dedicated to advancing justice and child rights. We are privileged to have the guidance of Justice Madan Lokur, Justice Gita Mittal, Professor Christopher Birbeck, Professor Bernd-Dieter Meier and Professor Bhabani Panda, whose collective wisdom has greatly contributed to the academic integrity of this volume. Their insights have not only strengthened the scholarly rigor of our journal but have also served as a northern star, guiding light in child rights discourse in India and beyond.

At the National Law University Odisha, our vision extends beyond producing skilled legal professionals. We are committed to fostering an environment that cultivates a deep sense of justice, inclusion, empathy and solidarity. The Centre for Child Rights embodies this vision, playing a pioneering role in shaping child rights discourse, bridging the lexis and praxis gap, influencing policy and advocating for systemic change. This journal stands as a testament to the dedication, hard work, and editorial excellence of the CCR team. As we mark a decade of impactful work, we extend our deepest appreciation to the editorial team comprising Dr Rashmi Rekha Baug, Dr Swagatika Samal, Dr Pradipta K Sarangi, Mr Ankit K Keshri, and Dr Shubanginee Singh, student editor Madhulika Tripathy, led by our editor

Prof Biraj Swain. Their tireless efforts, academic rigour, passion and commitment shows in this milestone publication. Their collective efforts have ensured that the journal remains a platform for meaningful scholarship and thought leadership, pushing forward the discourse on child rights that are both timely and essential.

We invite legal scholars, researchers, educators, practitioners, policy makers, activists, advocates, students, and all those engaged in child rights advocacy to engage with this journal, this volume and future issues. We hope that this journal serves as a vital academic resource sparking meaningful discussions, further research, and sustained advocacy for a more just and equitable world where every child has the opportunity to thrive. We look forward to the engagement, insights, and contributions of readers and future authors in shaping the future of scholarship, practice and advocacy on child rights that works for every child, anywhere and everywhere in the world.

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