

FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

This issue is a special one, after re-launching the *Journal on the Rights of the Child of National Law University Odisha*, six months ago in April 2025, this is the first issue post indexation. The Journal has been assigned the e-ISSN number 3107-4030. In current times, academic publishing done right, with all the due diligence, is an onerous task. Ours is a journal with intensive editorial review, high level double blind peer review, plagiarism check, AI check and fact-check. We took a leap of faith and committed to bi-annual issue. We are delighted to offer our readers, authors and the world, the second issue after six months.

This journal believes in data-analysis, re-analysis and visualization in the most accessible and impactful format. Hence we have an info-graphic on one essential theme of child rights in every issue. In this issue, it is schools at a glance, in India and Odisha.

This issue of our journal is an intentional reminder that child rights is essentially an intersectional issue, it is everyone's business. Just as the saying goes, justice is too important to be left to lawyers alone, public health too important to be left to doctors alone, similarly child rights, or for that matter human rights, is too important to be left to the legal professionals and the legal discipline alone. Hence our inter-disciplinary journal.

We are proud to state that in the Centre for Child Rights (CCR) of the National Law University Odisha (NLUO), we have always been clear to cover the entire spectrum of child rights and their determinants. In this issue we have original submissions with the lens of public finance, education, nutrition, consent, role of social work in rehabilitation and reintegration of children in conflict with law, decriminalizing young love, digital safety of children and advancing child-centred justice etc.

We, at the NLUO's CCR, are aware of academia's essential role in fostering a pro-child rights, progressive, inclusive temper, culture of centering, protecting and promoting child rights from conception to adolescence and beyond. Our perspective is optimal life chance for every child, everywhere and this issue of the journal is a reiteration of that commitment.

In spite of recent significant strides through policy, legislative and judicial interventions, there are still substantial challenges that needs to be addressed. Issues like education, have improved by the virtue of the Right To Education Act, 2009, but ensuring the retention of students in senior secondary school along with quality, transformational learning and access to marginalised sections remains a concern. Child budgeting is gaining ground in theory and practise but budgetary allocations are still less for the ideal childhood. Nutrition has caught the public imagination thanks to the National Food Security Act, 2013, yet its operationalization in letter and spirit demands constant public engagement and scrutiny. Child poverty still continues to be an enabler of child labour. Child marriage and child trafficking still continues to exist. And in this digital age children are extremely vulnerable to cyber bullying, online exploitation, harassment and sextortion. The dichotomy in young love and application of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, continues as does the inadequate justiciability of many economic, social and cultural rights of children. All these challenges calls for granular research, new rules, new roles and new perspectives and our journal is committed to plat-forming just that.

In our last two calls for submissions for both the issues of the journal, pre and post indexation, we have received an over-whelming submissions. Yet we continue to see an over-presence of submissions around the Juvenile Justice Care and Protection of Children Act, 2015 and POCSO Act, 2012. We call upon the authors i.e. practitioners, academics, researchers and students, alike, to expand their world view of child rights and cover the entire spectrum.

I sincerely believe that this current issue touching on several key themes would bring before its readers, child rights perspectives rarely explored before. Each contribution of this issue calls for a greater need for urgent discourse on the evolving nature of child rights in a dynamic world.

I would also like to thank all the contributors to this issue and would encourage them to keep contributing as it reiterates the CCR's commitment to promotion of research, scholarship and plat-forming of new perspectives. I also thank the authors who have not been published yet. We hope to publish some of the submissions in our future issues as we make fresh calls for submissions.

The authors contributing to this volume include practising academics from law and humanities disciplines, researchers, students and practising advocates.

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 Hon'ble Justice Madan B Lokur, Hon'ble Justice Gita Mittal, Professor Bernard Dieter Meier, Professor Christopher Birbeck and Professor Bhabani Panda whose collective wisdom has greatly contributed to the academic integrity of this issue. 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 the world.

I would also like to thank my co-members in the Editorial Board i.e. Professor Ravinder Barn, Professor Frederick de Moll, Professor Damanjit Sandhu, Dr Asha Bajpai, Dr Kalpana Purushottaman and Professor Biraj Swain for their engagement and commitment. I thank and appreciate the tireless efforts of our team of Associate Editors comprising Dr Swagatika Samal, Dr Pradipta K Sarangi, Mr Ankit K Keshri, Dr Rashmi Rekha Baug, and Dr Shubhanginee Singh led by our Editor Professor Biraj Swain and the student editor Madhulika Tripathy.

We cannot discuss the journal without discussing the parent centre i.e. the CCR. Since our last issue, much has been achieved by the CCR too. It hosted one of the official satellite events of the 5th World Congress on “Children’s Access to Justice” in partnership with Child Rights and You (CRY). The Editor-in-Chief of this journal cum Patron-in-Chief of CCR, also attended the 5th World Congress in Madrid and spoke in various plenary sessions. As its commitment to the NLUO’s flagship outreach programme Project KUTUMB, CCR launched and facilitated the operationalization of the Community Level Child Welfare Protection Committee (CLCWPC) in the neighbouring vulnerable settlements of Brajabeharipur, Baba Tilka Nagar, Valmiki Nagar per the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Niti Ayog mandate. The CCR won an Indian Council of Social Sciences Research (ICSSR) grant led by the Editor-in-Chief of this journal cum Patron-in-Chief of CCR. The CCR launched the child protection mentorship programme for frontline cadre, first responders in child protection space in the state of Odisha. CCR re-constituted the student body

after an open and inclusive call for applications and rigorous interview process. The Director of CCR, who is also the Chief Minister's Chair Professor, has taught 234 students "Child Rights Course" in the 7th semester and "Food and Nutrition Justice Course" in the 10th semester and the Chief Minister's Chair Professor team has evaluated, will be evaluating, as many students across both the semesters in a single calendar year. The speaking engagements in various important, consequential events, consultations on child rights are too many to list here. In summary, it has been a busy and enriching time for CCR and the journal gets intentionally more topical and relevant for these engagements and activities too. Additionally the student committee members of CCR have conceptualised, curated and produced three bi-monthly newsletters on child rights. These newsletters are a global and local scan of important developments in the space. The student body of CCR has managed and run two active social media handles on LinkedIn and Instagram with explainers and posts, making child rights and various articles of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) accessible to one and all.

Just like child rights is everyone's business, knowledge needs to be accessible to all. Hence we have intentionally transformed this journal from fully physical mode to fully digital mode. This journal is freely and fully accessible to individuals and institutions alike. I invite one and all to engage with this journal, this issue and future issues.

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