

## FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

It is with great pride and immense pleasure I present this issue of the *Journal on the Rights of the Child of National Law University Odisha*. This issue of the journal marks completion of one year after the re-launch of the journal last year in April 2025, and reaffirms the Centre for Child Rights (CCR), National Law University Odisha (NLUO)'s unwavering commitment to scholarship, advocacy, curating change and shaping the discourse on child rights. With intensive editorial review, high-level double-blind peer review, plagiarism check, AI check and fact-check of all the contributions, our journal commits to maintaining academic integrity, quality and credibility.

The journal's each issue, is not merely a compilation of academic writings; it is a reflection of evolving conversations, emerging challenges, and renewed commitments within the field of child rights. This edition, informed by rigorous scholarship and diverse perspectives, continues our endeavour to position the journal as a meaningful platform for critical engagement, interdisciplinary dialogue, and transformative thought.

At a time when the discourse on child rights is both expanding and becoming increasingly complex, each new issue of our journal presents an opportunity to pause, reflect, and reimagine our collective commitments. The journal continues to serve as a vital intellectual space where law, policy, and lived realities converge. The present issue is a testament to that vision—bringing together diverse, critical, and interdisciplinary perspectives that interrogate not only the promises of child rights frameworks but also their limitations and lived consequences.

This edition of the journal offers a rich and nuanced exploration of contemporary child rights concerns, bringing together diverse yet interconnected scholarly contributions. It opens with a compelling Presidential Address by Hon'ble Justice Savitri Ratho, Judge & Chairperson of Juvenile Justice Committee, Orissa High Court - that calls for a decisive shift from a welfare-oriented approach to a rights-based understanding of childhood, recognizing children as active rights-holders whose dignity, agency, and participation must be central to all frameworks.

This issue of the journal has original submissions on the key areas such as right to education (RTE); sexuality education; role of children's courts when children

are tried as adults; performance, gaps and reform imperatives of juvenile justice institutions; child sexual abuse laws; misuse of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012; commercialization of children's mental health; commentary on Netflix's limited-series 'Adolescence' etc. In keeping with the journal's commitment to accessible and impactful knowledge dissemination, this issue features an info-graphic on child budgeting, via data-visualisation, showing the trends in public expenditure on child-focused interventions, linking child rights to economic policy and resource allocation.

The volume also expands beyond law into mental health and digital culture, critiquing the globalization of child mental health frameworks and exploring adolescent experiences in digital environments.

As CCR, NLUO, remains committed to fostering scholarship that not only advances knowledge but also informs practice and policy. This journal is a key instrument in that mission. It is a space where critical questions are asked, where dominant narratives are challenged, and where new ideas are nurtured.

A notable strength of this issue lies in its diversity of contributors. The authors who have contributed to this volume includes an Hon'ble sitting Judge, academics from law and humanities disciplines, practitioners, legal researchers, students and civil society organization, each bringing unique perspectives and expertise. This plurality enriches the discourse, ensuring that the journal remains inclusive, dynamic, and responsive to emerging challenges. I sincerely thank all the contributors of this issue and encourage them to keep contributing as it reiterates our commitment to the promotion of research, scholarship and platforming of new perspectives.

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 immensely contributed to the academic integrity of this issue.

I would also like to thank my co-members in the Editorial Board i.e. our Editor Professor Biraj Swain, Professor Ravinder Barn, Professor Frederick de Moll,

Professor Damanjit Sandhu, Dr Asha Bajpai, Dr Kalpana Purushothaman for their leadership, engagement and commitment to the journal to see the light of the day.

I also thank and appreciate the efforts of our team of Associate Editors comprising Dr Swagatika Samal, Dr Pradipta Kumar Sarangi, Mr Ankit Kumar Keshri, Dr Rashmi Rekha Baug, and Dr Shubhanginee Singh and our student editor Ms Madhulika Tripathy.

I am proud to share here that, CCR has added much more to its list of achievements. In addition to bringing out this journal every six months with academic rigour and all due diligence, CCR has offered the first ever Child Protection Mentorship Programme for capacity building of around 100 frontline cadre, first responders in the child protection space in the state of Odisha. As its commitment to creating child-friendly communities per NITI Ayog mandate and the Sustainable Development Goals' mandate, and to NLUO's flagship outreach programme - Project KUTUMB, CCR organised a Special Aadhar Enrolment Camp for over 50 children (experiencing documentary challenges) of marginalised migrant and poor families of neighbouring vulnerable settlements of Brajabiharipur, Baba Tilkanagar, and Balmiki Nagar, in collaboration with the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) and District Child Protection Unit (DCPU), Cuttack, thereby ensuring social inclusion of the vulnerable children. The CCR team also met as a delegation with the Deputy Chief Minister of Odisha in charge of Women and Child Development, Mission Shakti and Tourism portfolio, Shrimati Pravati Parida and the Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights Chairperson Shrimati Babita Patro.

The Chief Minister's Chair Professor cum Director of CCR, has taught 117 students in the "Child Rights Course" in the 7th semester and 95 students in the "Food and Nutrition Justice Course" in the 10th semester. Both of these courses are over-subscribed and highly valued by the students at the University. The speaking engagements of Chief Minister's Chair Professor cum Director 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 a series of bi-monthly CCR newsletters on

child rights in 2025. These newsletters are a global and local scan of important developments in the child rights space. Starting 2026 these newsletters by CCR student members will be quarterly. The student body of CCR has managed and run two active social media handles on LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/centre-for-child-rights-nluo-88a27b338/>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/centreforchildrightsnluo?igsh=MW5oZHRwdTBhaGpuaQ=>) with explainers and posts, making child rights and various articles of the United Nations' Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC) accessible to one and all.

As we present this issue, we are reminded that the journey towards realizing child rights is ongoing. It requires continuous engagement, critical reflection, and collective action. We invite our readers to engage with the issues meaningfully and critically. We hope that the insights presented here will not only deepen understanding but also inspire action. The realization of child rights requires collective effort, sustained commitment, and an unwavering belief in the inherent dignity and potential of every child.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to expanding the scope of child rights practise and discourse, encouraging interdisciplinary engagement, and amplifying diverse voices. We call upon contributors to continue exploring under-researched areas, challenging conventional boundaries, and contributing to a more holistic understanding of child rights.

This journal, in its essence, is not just about documenting knowledge-it is about shaping the future. A future where every child is not only protected but empowered; not only heard but understood; and not only included but cherished.

We invite our readers and contributors to provide us feedback for improving the journal further. The readers and contributors are also encouraged to mention any theme, area of specific concern in the field of child rights, for inclusion in the future issues.

**Prof Ved Kumari**

**Editor-in-Chief**

***Journal on the Rights of the Child of National Law University Odisha***

**Former Vice Chancellor, National Law University Odisha**