

“BLIND ALLEY - Juvenile Justice in India”

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Cost - INR 300/-

Only Juvenile Justice is the legal system that is meant to protect all young people. Yet, in India, the word Juvenile conjures up the image of ‘delinquency’ and a ‘hardened criminal’. India's first Juvenile Justice Act was passed in 1986 and amended in 2000 (and in 2006). Over time, the law as well as its implementation has become much more child-friendly. In this report, HAQ accompanies the child in his or her journey through the juvenile justice system to show how the different components--the Child Welfare Committees, the Juvenile Justice Boards and other courts, Police, Public Prosecutors, Probation Officers, various homes for children, and government departments--work and whether the child actually gets justice in the end. The report is based on actual case studies from HAQ's five years of work with these children--be it legal support, counseling or rehabilitation, advocacy for change in law and programmes, and monitoring of implementation of juvenile justice by engaging with the system as well as through research and documentation. The overarching aim of this report is to present an overview of the juvenile justice system in India as it exists today with all its inadequacies, highlight and question the slow process of and resistance to change, raise vital questions on the glaring gaps and shortcomings in the law and the system, and offer suggestions on how they could be filled and set right. It also demands precedence to true restoration over institutionalization at any cost and, in the interim, real development of children within the institutions. Finally, it demands a radical change in the attitudes of lawmakers, judiciary, administrators, government and other sector players and upholding respect for the rights of the child.

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