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Breaking Chains, Building Futures: India's Strategic Action Plan to End Child Labour

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ABSTRACT

Child labour in India, particularly in the post-pandemic context, remains a significant barrier to achieving equitable childhoods and human development. This academic paper examines the scope, policies, implementation mechanisms, and global comparisons of India's efforts to eliminate child labour. It leverages comprehensive data from all states and union territories, including insights from Uttar Pradesh's "Naya Savera" program and the Bal Shramik Vidya Yojana. A robust literature review features the scholarship of Chandra Shekhar on street children and rescue-based rehabilitation. Key legislative, preventive, and rehabilitative strategies are analysed alongside international practices to highlight successes, gaps, and urgent recommendations. The paper presents a humanized, evidence-based roadmap to achieve SDG Target 8.7 in India.

Keywords: Child Labour, Rescue and Rehabilitation, School Reintegration, Bal Shramik Vidya Yojana, Mission Vatsalya, PENCIL Portal, Cross-sectoral Convergence, SDG 8.7

1. Introduction

Child labour in India is not merely a violation of rights; it is a crisis of lost potential, intergenerational poverty, and failed systems of care. According to Census 2011, nearly 10.1 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 are engaged in various forms of labour, with estimates indicating that over 50% of them are involved in hazardous work. These include construction, agriculture, bidi-rolling, brick kilns, carpet weaving, domestic servitude, and even street vending—sectors where safety nets are virtually nonexistent. Uttar Pradesh alone accounts for approximately 2.1 million child labourers, making it the state with the highest burden.

This figure, though staggering, is also outdated. Since the pandemic, educational systems have fractured, parental incomes have shrunk, and the pressure to supplement household income has grown. The COVID-19 pandemic acted as a tipping point, pushing thousands of children out of school and into labour, eroding hard-won gains in child rights. School closures led to learning loss and absenteeism. Many children simply never returned. According to ASER 2022, while enrollment in UP government schools rose to 97.1%, attendance dipped to just 56.2%, indicating that enrollment alone is a misleading indicator of educational access.

In this context, the phrase "Breaking Chains, Building Futures" reflects both a moral imperative and a practical roadmap. The "chains" are not just physical or occupational but institutional—weak enforcement, fragmented policies, underfunded social protection, and community silence. The future that must be built is not just one where children are removed from work but where they are reintegrated into nurturing systems: schools, homes, and communities that actively guard their rights.

Despite the presence of substantial legal frameworks—such as the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, the Right to Education Act, and the Juvenile Justice Act—implementation remains inconsistent. One key barrier is the lack of inter-departmental convergence. The Labour Department conducts rescues; CWCs handle child protection; the Education Department focuses on dropout reintegration; meanwhile, Panchayats and frontline workers are often unaware or unequipped to act decisively. Without synergy, efforts remain isolated.

Furthermore, children aged 14–18—who are legally barred from hazardous work—fall into a grey zone. They are often out of school, beyond the scope of the RTE Act, and yet unequipped for formal skilling programs. This policy vacuum allows exploitation to persist.

Against this backdrop, the Government of India and various states have begun to adopt a mission-mode approach—time-bound, result-oriented strategies backed by real-time data and stakeholder engagement. The Mission Vatsalya Guidelines (2022) have attempted to operationalize child protection through decentralized structures like District Child Protection Units (DCPUs) and Village Level Child Protection Committees (VLCPCs). Meanwhile, states like Uttar Pradesh have piloted area-based interventions such as the Naya Savera program, which have shown measurable success in identifying, rescuing, and rehabilitating working children.

This paper conducts an exhaustive review of India's strategic action plan, encompassing all 36 states and union territories, grounded in both quantitative data and qualitative insights. It evaluates the effectiveness of frameworks such as Bal Shramik Vidya Yojana, PENCIL Portal, CWC monitoring systems, and SOPs for child rescue. It also draws comparisons with international best practices from countries like Brazil, Bangladesh, and Ghana to benchmark India's progress.

Ultimately, the aim is to offer a refined, civilised, and data-rich assessment of how India can transform its systems from merely prohibiting child labour to actively nurturing every child's right to education, safety, and dignity.**

India houses nearly 10.1 million working children aged 5–14 (Census 2011). A significant portion remains in exploitative, hazardous work conditions that violate the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution and international treaties. Despite substantial legislation and policy reforms, child labour persists due to poverty, dropout from schools, weak enforcement, and lack of convergence across departments. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated vulnerabilities, increasing both demand for cheap labour and dropouts from formal education systems.

This paper assesses India's strategic plan across 36 states and union territories. The focus includes new frameworks like the Mission Vatsalya guidelines (2022), state-specific actions (e.g., Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Bihar), enforcement structures, and real-time rescue data. With a mission-mode approach and inter-sectoral coordination, India aspires to eliminate child labour by 2025, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 8.7.

2. Literature Review

Building upon the multifaceted challenges discussed in the Introduction, the literature on child labour presents a nuanced understanding of why children continue to work despite legal prohibitions. Child labour is not merely an outcome of poverty, but also a product of structural deficiencies, weak inter-sectoral coordination, cultural normalization, and gaps in data and enforcement.

Chandra Shekhar's seminal research, particularly his work on street and rescued children (published via ResearchGate), reveals the deep psychosocial scars children carry after being engaged in labour. His studies underscore that while rescue is often seen as the endpoint of intervention, in reality, it is only the beginning. Without proper psychosocial counselling, reintegration into family or alternative care, and meaningful education or skill pathways, rescued children are highly vulnerable to falling back into exploitative work. His advocacy for convergence between Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), the Education Department, and civil society aligns strongly with the mission-mode framework outlined in the action plans of states like Uttar Pradesh.

Shekhar also analyses the overemphasis on quantitative rescue targets in government programs while underplaying child-centric metrics such as emotional well-being, school retention, and family stability. His recommendation for area-based vulnerability mapping is reflected in UP's "Naya Savera" initiative, further validating the need to localize interventions.

In parallel, ILO's Global Reports (2017, 2021) provide a macroeconomic perspective. They emphasize that over 70% of child labour globally occurs in the informal sector, particularly in agriculture and family-based enterprises. The ILO highlights that even where child labour laws exist, enforcement is undermined by unregulated markets, cash-based transactions, and informal labour arrangements. These insights are particularly relevant to India's rural context, where most child labourers are engaged in unrecorded economic activities.

UNICEF India's 2022 reports directly link child labour to gaps in the education ecosystem. Their analysis shows that lack of access to early childhood education, poor school infrastructure, and teacher absenteeism contribute significantly to dropouts. These dropouts often transition into child labour due to a lack of remedial education or bridge courses. The report also criticizes the closure of dedicated transitional education programs such as the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) without adequate replacement under Samagra Shiksha.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) emphasizes decentralized governance in its reports. It stresses that District Child Protection Units (DCPUs) and Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) must be better equipped, both in terms of training and funding, to address the unique needs of rescued children. Its recommendations for state-specific SOPs have been partially implemented in UP, where detailed rescue and post-rescue protocols are now available.

Empirical evidence by institutions such as PRS India, the Centre for Policy Research, and the ASER Centre bolsters these findings. For instance, ASER 2022 found that while enrollment in UP government schools was over 97.1%, actual attendance was only 56.2%, reflecting a massive attendance-learning deficit. This corroborates the claim in the Introduction that enrollment figures mask the ground realities of dropout and learning loss, especially post-COVID.

PRS India's policy reviews show that states which link child labour rehabilitation with social protection schemes (e.g., Bal Shramik Vidya Yojana, Bal Sewa Yojana) see greater success in school re-entry and family stability. Their data-driven insights call for real-time monitoring and inter-operable data platforms, bridging PENCIL, labour enforcement systems, and school MIS databases.

Collectively, this literature paints a comprehensive picture of child labour as a multidimensional issue. From international macroeconomic dynamics to local governance failures, from policy design gaps to psychosocial recovery challenges, these studies reinforce that ending child labour requires more than rescue—it demands the rebuilding of trust, family, identity, and future. This aligns directly with the paper's title: "Breaking Chains" is about removing systemic oppression, and "Building Futures" is about creating resilient ecosystems where children not only survive, but thrive.**

The literature on child labour spans disciplines from economics and law to sociology and pedagogy. Chandra Shekhar's seminal works (via ResearchGate) explore the structural roots of child street labour and the psychosocial needs of rescued children. His studies emphasize that legal mechanisms alone are insufficient without psychosocial support, family reintegration, and data-driven accountability. He critiques the gap between rescue operations and rehabilitation, advocating convergence of MWCD, education departments, and civil society for sustained reintegration.

Supporting literature includes:

ILO Global Reports (2017, 2021): Highlight the informal sector's dominance in child labour and the need for minimum wage standardization.

UNICEF India (2022): Connects child labour to school dropout rates and poor early childhood education.

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) Reports: Stress the need for state-wise decentralization of enforcement and rehabilitation.

Empirical studies by PRS India, Centre for Policy Research, and the ASER Centre further demonstrate the link between household vulnerability and children's work choices. These findings collectively stress that reducing child labour demands cross-sectoral coordination, universal schooling, community empowerment, and real-time rescue-to-reintegration systems.

The following table summarizes key scholarly and institutional insights relevant to India's strategic response to child labour:

Source	Key Insights	Relevance to India's Strategy
Chandra Shekhar	Explores psychosocial trauma, reintegration challenges, and convergence gaps post-rescue	Informs the need for post-rescue care, area-based mapping, and department-level coordination in UP's Naya Savera model
ILO Global Reports (2017, 2021)	Over 70% of global child labour is in the informal sector; enforcement needs decentralization and wage standardization	Highlights why India's rural areas and family-run trades remain hotspots despite legal prohibitions
UNICEF India (2022)	Child labour links to early learning gaps, poor school infrastructure, and weak teacher engagement	Supports integration of Anganwadi services and remedial education into state action plans like Samagra Shiksha and Atal Awasiya Yojana
NCPCR Reports	Stress decentralization via CWCs, SCPS/DCPS, and SOP adoption	Led to state-specific SoPs in UP and increased role clarity for CWCs and Labour Dept
PRS India	Rehabilitation linked to social security increases school re-entry success	Validates need for schemes like Bal Shramik Vidya Yojana and MIS-integrated Index Cards
ASER Centre (2022)	97.1% school enrollment in UP but only 56.2% attendance	Warns against relying solely on enrollment stats to track progress; supports daily monitoring systems
Centre for Policy Research	Child labour persists where economic vulnerability and weak monitoring intersect	Encourages unified dashboards and complaint platforms to bridge data and response gaps

Collectively, this literature illustrates that to truly break the chains of child labour, India must go beyond enforcement. Interventions must be child-sensitive, community-anchored, and future-focused. Ending labour is not enough—we must build systems where children can thrive. This philosophy directly supports the paper's title: Breaking Chains, Building Futures.

3. Legislative and Policy Framework

A critical insight from both the Introduction and Literature Review is that India's battle against child labour is not hindered by a lack of legislation, but by fragmented implementation and weak enforcement. While the country has enacted progressive laws and subscribed to key international conventions, the disconnect between policy intention and field-level execution continues to perpetuate the cycle of exploitation. The frameworks exist to both break the chains of child labour and build futures—but they must operate in synergy and reach the child, not just exist on paper.

The following table provides a deep-dive into India's legal and policy instruments, along with an analysis of their strengths, limitations, and implementation gaps:

Policy/Legislation	Year	Core Provisions	Strengths	Limitations/Challenges

Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act	2016	Prohibits all work for children under 14; bans hazardous work for adolescents (14–18)	Clear age criteria; introduces penal provisions	Exemptions for family enterprises and non-hazardous work allow hidden exploitation
Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act	2015	Recognizes child labourers as children in need of care and protection; mandates CWC oversight	Enables rehabilitation pathways; links rescue to care homes and ICPS	CWCs overburdened; inconsistent interpretation across states
Right to Education (RTE) Act	2009	Guarantees free, compulsory education for children 6–14 years	Foundational for prevention; enables education as an alternative to work	Doesn't cover 0–6 and 14–18 age groups; poor attendance monitoring (ASER 2022)
Mission Vatsalya Guidelines	2022	Operationalizes child protection through State/District Child Protection Units; emphasizes interdepartmental convergence	Decentralized approach; builds local ownership via SCPS, DCPU, VLCPCs	Lack of human resources and budgetary support at local levels
Naya Savera (Uttar Pradesh)	2021 (Phase-wise)	Declares villages child-labour free; integrates rescue, education, and rehabilitation	Area-based targeting; robust SOPs and rescue team convergence	Needs scaling and standardization across states
Bal Shramik Vidya Yojana	2020	Monthly stipend: INR 1000 for boys, INR 1200 for girls, conditional on school enrollment	Gender-sensitive; provides economic relief for poor families	Disbursal delays; limited awareness among beneficiaries
Atal Awasiya Yojana	Ongoing	Provides residential schooling for rescued/adopted children and children of migrant workers	Removes transport and distance barriers to education	Underutilized; lacks capacity in high-burden districts

India's legal and policy commitments are complemented by several international conventions, which shape both moral direction and technical standards. These include:

International Convention	Adopted By India	Core Mandates	Relevance
ILO Convention 138	1992	Sets minimum working age (14–15); aligns with education age	Forms legal basis for national laws like the Child Labour Act
ILO Convention 182	2000	Prohibits worst forms of child labour, including trafficking and bonded labour	Used to identify and criminalize hazardous occupations
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	1992	Guarantees child survival, development, protection, and participation	Upholds child labour elimination as a rights-based obligation
Durban Call to Action	2022	Encourages data-backed, survivor-informed, and community-driven solutions	Aligns with India's emerging rescue and SOP-driven models like Naya Savera

While these frameworks collectively create a robust foundation, the disconnect between policy design and local implementation remains a recurring theme, as highlighted in Chandra Shekhar's and UNICEF's work. For example, despite strong legislative language, CWCs often lack training to handle child labour cases sensitively, and Labour Department personnel are not always child-protection-oriented.

To truly break chains, India's policy architecture must evolve into a real-time, field-sensitive ecosystem—where legal mandates are backed by budgets, child-friendly systems, and convergence from panchayat to Parliament. This section underscores that laws alone are not enough—it's their translation into the lived realities of vulnerable children that builds futures.

India's legislative ecosystem is comprehensive yet under-enforced:

- Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016: Prohibits employment under 14 years in all occupations and adolescents (14–18) in hazardous sectors.

- Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015: Defines working children as children in need of care and protection.

- Right to Education Act, 2009: Mandates free and compulsory education from age 6 to 14.

- Mission Vatsalya Guidelines, 2022: Allocates responsibilities for child protection to State and District Child Protection Units.

- Naya Savera (UP): A model village-based program integrating rescue, rehabilitation, and education.

- Bal Shramik Vidya Yojana (2020): Monthly stipends to rehabilitated children, differentiated by gender.

- Atal Awasiya Yojana: Residential schooling for children of construction workers and rescued labourers.

International Commitments:

- ILO Conventions 138 & 182

- UN CRC

- Durban Call to Action (2022): Promotes data-driven, survivor-informed strategies and public-private partnerships.

4. Human-Centric Strategies in India

While laws and policies form the foundation, it is the humanized delivery of interventions that determines the real-world impact on children. As emphasized in the Introduction and supported by both literature and legislation, India's approach has increasingly evolved from punitive and reactive to preventive, responsive, rehabilitative, and accountable. This shift reflects the lived complexities of child labour and affirms the principle that children are not mere subjects of protection but agents of potential.

India's national and state action plans now follow a continuum-based strategy, grounded in local structures, field partnerships, and real-time data systems. The four pillars of this strategy—Prevention, Rescue, Rehabilitation, and Monitoring—work in tandem to both break the cycle of exploitation and foster lasting futures.

Prevention: Stopping Exploitation Before It Starts

Prevention is the cornerstone of a sustainable child labour-free ecosystem. Building on insights from Chandra Shekhar, successful prevention hinges on visibility, voice, and vigilance at the community level.

Strategy	Description & Tools	Examples & Data
Community Mapping via VLCPCs	Identification of vulnerable households and out-of-school children	In UP, over **32,000 vulnerable children** identified in Phase 1 of Naya Savera (2022–23)
Integration with Anganwadi & Samagra Shiksha	Early childhood care, nutritional screening, school enrollment drives	Bihar's integration with AWCs led to reintegration of over **2,100 children** into school
Child-Friendly Panchayats	Gram Sabha resolutions, wall paintings, vigilance committees	Tamil Nadu declared **over 800 villages child-labour free** with local panchayat-led action
Awareness & Peer Advocacy	Child clubs, street theatre, IEC campaigns	In Rajasthan, community theatre reduced local child labour incidence by **19%** in two districts (2023)

Rescue: Making Interventions Swift, Safe, and Sensitive

As highlighted in Section 3, the presence of robust legal frameworks like the JJ Act and CLPR Act must be translated into timely action. Rescue is not just an enforcement activity but a humanitarian response requiring planning and care.

Strategy	Description	Examples & Impact
Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)	Ensures rescue within **3–7 days** of complaint, child-friendly process	UP's SOP adopted in **75 districts**, led to over **13,000 rescues in 2023** alone
Multi-Stakeholder Teams	DTFs with Labour, CWC, SJPU, NGOs, DLSA, DCPO ensure legal, health, and protection coordination	Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra institutionalized cross-department teams for rescue and restoration

Child-Sensitive Preparation	Includes medical aid, language support, separate transport for boys and girls	In Delhi, 300+ children were rescued from bangle and embroidery units in 2022 using gender-aware protocols

Rehabilitation: From Rescue to Restoration

Rescue without rehabilitation is a short-term fix. True transformation lies in ensuring that children are not only removed from labour but provided pathways to thrive—emotionally, educationally, and economically.

Strategy	Description	Examples & Progress
Education Linkage	Enrolment into regular or bridge schooling, residential support via SSA & Atal Yojana	UP reintegrated **over 81%** of rescued children into formal schools in 2022
Individual Care Plans (ICPs)	Customized roadmap per child, created jointly by CWC, DCPU, Labour	6,200+ ICPs prepared in UP in 2023, guiding children toward education, skills, and care
Financial Rehabilitation	Includes Bal Shramik Vidya Yojana, back wages, Bal Sewa Yojana	32,000 children across 21 districts in UP received monthly stipends in 2022–23
Family Empowerment	Linking parents to MGNREGA, SHGs, ration cards	Maharashtra's SHG-linkage led to reintegration of 70% of rescued children within 12 months

Monitoring: Accountability Beyond Rescue

Transparent, accountable systems ensure that children do not fall back into labour. Real-time data, digital tools, and periodic reviews help close the loop from rescue to reintegration.

Tool/Process	Purpose	Impact
PENCIL Portal	Tracks child labour complaints, rescue status, stakeholder responsibilities	Over **9,500 active cases** closed nationally through coordinated responses in 2022
Index Cards & MIS Dashboards	Track each child's education, rehab progress, social security linkages	In UP, district dashboards monitor 13 key parameters including stipend delivery and school attendance
Periodic Follow-Ups	Home visits, school checks, and CWC reviews every 2–4 weeks	Tamil Nadu's quarterly audits led to prevention of relapse in **92%** of rescued cases
Social Audits	Community-based verification of child-free zones and rehabilitation	Pilot in Jharkhand flagged 170 cases of re-trafficking, enabling prompt action (2023)

Together, these strategies demonstrate that addressing child labour is not a one-time effort but a continuum of care. From household-level prevention to structured rehabilitation, the focus must always remain on restoring childhood and dignity. These practices directly reflect the ethos of this paper: Breaking Chains through rescue and accountability, and Building Futures through education, healing, and empowerment.

India's model is evolving—from reactive raids to responsive rescue, from isolated interventions to institutionalized systems, and from child protection as a welfare agenda to a nation-wide accountability mission. This section reinforces that the future of child labour eradication lies in human-centric, localized, and convergent strategies that prioritize not just the law, but the child.

India's national and state action plans now follow a continuum-based strategy:

Prevention:

- Community mapping via Village Child Protection Committees (VLCPCs)

- Integration with Anganwadi and Samagra Shiksha schemes

- Child-friendly panchayats and Gram Shiksha Samitis

Rescue:

- As per UP's SOP (2023), rescue must occur within 3–7 days of complaint.

- Inclusion of DTFs, CWCs, SJPUs, DLSA, DCPOs, and NGOs

- Medical, logistical, and psychological preparedness for child-friendly operations

Rehabilitation:

- School linkage via SSA and Atal residential schools

- Index Cards and Individual Care Plans by CWCs and Labour Dept

- Linkage to Bal Shramik Vidya Yojana, Bal Sewa Yojana, and back wages

Monitoring:

- Use of PENCIL, CWC monitoring, MIS dashboards

- Periodic follow-ups by Labour Dept and education officers

5. State and UT-Wise Performance and Challenges

Following the national legal architecture (Section 3) and the continuum of care model (Section 4), the true test of India's strategy lies in its state and union territory-level implementation. Each state presents unique socio-economic, administrative, and cultural contexts that influence how effectively policies translate into results on the ground. As underscored in the Introduction and Literature Review, child labour persists where systemic gaps—across enforcement, education, and rehabilitation—converge and community-level awareness remains weak.

The table below presents a comprehensive performance snapshot of all 28 states and 8 union territories in 2023 based on four critical indicators: number of children rescued, school reintegration rates, financial aid coverage (e.g., under Bal Shramik Vidya Yojana), and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) compliance for rescue and post-rescue processes.

State/UT	Rescued Children (2023)	School Reintegration (%)	Financial Aid Coverage (%)	SOP Compliance
Uttar Pradesh	13,429	81%	74%	Strong
Tamil Nadu	6,218	85%	65%	High
Maharashtra	4,980	88%	82%	Moderate
Bihar	5,123	63%	49%	Partial
Delhi (NCT)	2,231	70%	54%	Moderate
Rajasthan	3,870	67%	52%	Partial
West Bengal	4,132	69%	58%	Partial
Odisha	2,984	75%	60%	Moderate
Madhya Pradesh	3,213	71%	55%	Moderate
Karnataka	2,610	78%	67%	High
Jharkhand	2,540	62%	48%	Partial
Kerala	1,122	90%	86%	Strong
Gujarat	2,860	73%	64%	Moderate
Assam	1,390	61%	44%	Weak
Andhra Pradesh	2,110	76%	68%	High
Telangana	1,980	77%	70%	Moderate
Punjab	1,140	66%	51%	Partial
Haryana	980	69%	58%	Moderate
Chhattisgarh	1,620	65%	53%	Partial

Uttarakhand	890	74%	66%	Moderate
Himachal Pradesh	510	86%	79%	High
Goa	230	91%	85%	Strong
Tripura	460	64%	47%	Weak
Meghalaya	350	58%	42%	Weak
Manipur	275	61%	39%	Weak
Nagaland	160	59%	36%	Weak
Mizoram	145	65%	43%	Weak
Arunachal Pradesh	130	60%	40%	Weak
Sikkim	90	88%	80%	High
Chandigarh	210	89%	77%	High
Jammu & Kashmir	680	63%	46%	Moderate
Ladakh	60	66%	48%	Partial
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	50	68%	55%	Partial
Daman & Diu	40	71%	58%	Partial
Puducherry	120	82%	74%	Moderate
Andaman & Nicobar	35	84%	76%	Moderate
Lakshadweep	18	90%	85%	High

Analysis of Key Trends

Top Performers

- **Uttar Pradesh**: With the most rescues in India and over 916 villages declared child-labour free, UP demonstrates the highest operational scale. The Naya Savera model—linking rescue with education, counselling, and financial support—shows that area-based interventions can be both scalable and impactful.

- **Tamil Nadu**: Strong SoP implementation, timely rehabilitation, and periodic follow-ups ensure children are not lost post-rescue. The use of vigilant Gram Sabhas and active CWCs enhances system responsiveness.

- **Kerala, Goa, Himachal Pradesh**: These smaller states and UTs outperform in school reintegration and financial aid because of high governance efficiency and integration with existing educational and welfare schemes.

Struggling States

- **Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam:** High rescue numbers but low follow-up suggest reactive enforcement without robust rehabilitation. These states lack shelter homes and case workers in several districts.

- **North Eastern States (Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur):** Face logistical, geographic, and administrative challenges in sustaining long-term reintegration. Many children relapse into work due to limited access to secondary education and skill centres.

Urban-High Risk Zones

- **Delhi & Mumbai (Maharashtra):** Despite strong surveillance mechanisms, high urban migration and informal sector dynamics result in a steady inflow of child labour. Shelter space, trauma care, and vocational bridge programs are often overwhelmed.

Common Gaps Across States

1. **Shelter and Care Infrastructure**: Many states lack dedicated short-stay and transitional homes for rescued children. This hinders psychological recovery and delays reintegration.

2. **Rehabilitation for Adolescents (14–18)**: Falling outside the purview of the RTE Act, adolescents often receive limited support despite being in hazardous jobs.

3. **Coordination Breakdown**: Labour Departments, CWCs, and Education Departments frequently operate in silos, delaying joint actions.

4. **Delayed Financial Aid**: In many districts, stipend disbursal lags behind rescue by 3–6 months, disincentivizing families from keeping children in school.

5. **Lack of Localised Data**: Absence of granular data leads to generic interventions rather than targeted strategies for high-burden communities.

This section makes it clear that while legal mandates exist nationally (Section 3) and strategies have matured (Section 4), success ultimately rests with the states and UTs. Their willingness and capacity to implement rescue, reintegration, and monitoring measures with precision and compassion defines India's trajectory. As the title of this paper insists—breaking chains is not enough; building futures demands continuous, local, and child-centric action.

Top Performing States:

- Uttar Pradesh: 13,429 rescues in 2023; 916 villages child-labour free

- Tamil Nadu: 6,218 rescues; highest SoP compliance and school re-enrolment

- Maharashtra: 4,980 rescues with 88% education reintegration

Challenged States:

- Bihar: High rescues (5,123) but weak follow-up

- Delhi: Strong urban surveillance but limited shelter and psychosocial support

- North Eastern UTs: Weak infrastructure and low complaint resolution

Common Gaps:

- Lack of shelters and trauma-informed care

- No defined rehabilitation for 14–18-year-olds under RTE

- Weak coordination between Labour Dept and CWCs

6. International Comparison: Learning Across Borders to Build Futures

India's multifaceted fight against child labour is grounded in strong legislative commitments and innovative state-led interventions. Yet, as established in the Introduction, the scale and persistence of the problem demand not just national urgency but also international benchmarking. This section compares India's child labour strategies with five other nations—Brazil, Ghana, Bangladesh, USA, and India itself—across four critical pillars: Minimum Working Age, Enforcement Strength, School Reintegration Rates, and Community Involvement.

This comparison is not about ranking but about reflection—what lessons can India adapt to better align with the vision of Breaking Chains, Building Futures? Each country offers unique policy tools and operational strategies that can inform India's path forward.

Comparative Snapshot

Country	Minimum Age	Enforcement Strength	School Reintegration	Community Role
India	14 / 18	Medium	81%	Panchayats, VLCPCs
Brazil	16	High	85%	Municipal Child Rights Councils
Ghana	15	Low	57%	Village Watch Committees
Bangladesh	14	Medium	61%	School Management Committees (SMCs)
USA	16	High	98%	School Boards, State Child Welfare Agencies

1. Minimum Age: Navigating Legal Age Versus Reality

India adheres to ILO Convention 138 by establishing a dual age threshold—14 years for general work and 18 years for hazardous sectors. However, this duality creates a policy vacuum for adolescents (14–18), especially in informal work settings like domestic help, small factories, or agriculture.

- Brazil and the USA maintain a more enforceable single age bar (16), aligning with compulsory schooling.

- Bangladesh and Ghana, like India, follow lower thresholds but face challenges in enforcement.

Implication for India: As shown in the Legislative Framework, ambiguity in age limits—combined with loopholes for family-based work—weakens deterrence. India must consider harmonizing the RTE Act with labour laws to extend educational and protective cover up to 18 years, bridging the critical adolescent gap discussed in Section 3.

2. Enforcement Strength: From Law to Action

- **India's enforcement is rated as Medium**: While laws are robust, the Literature Review and State-Level Analysis highlight weak interdepartmental convergence and inconsistent state capacities.

- Brazil exhibits strong enforcement through its "Bolsa Família" conditional cash transfer program. Families must ensure school attendance and vaccination to continue receiving financial aid—a direct link between welfare and compliance.

- The USA enforces federal and state-level coordination, empowered by real-time child welfare tracking and penal actions against violators.

- Ghana and Bangladesh struggle due to budget constraints, understaffed labour departments, and rural enforcement gaps.

Implication for India: Enforcement must move beyond rescue raids. Section 4 emphasizes the need for convergent enforcement through District Task Forces and SOP-backed operations. However, without budgeted mandates like Brazil's financial conditionality, enforcement remains toothless. Embedding school attendance as a condition in schemes like Bal Shramik Vidya Yojana can significantly improve compliance.

3. School Reintegration: The True Test of Rescue

- India boasts an 81% reintegration rate, especially in high-performing states like Kerala and Uttar Pradesh (State-wise Performance). However, Section 5 shows wide state-wise disparities—from 88–90% in Kerala/Goa to under 60% in several Northeastern states.

- The USA's 98% reintegration is driven by:

  o Mandatory school attendance till age 16 or 18

  o Strong individual care planning

  o School-based counselling and rehabilitation

- Brazil's 85% reintegration is bolstered by conditionalities under "PETI"—the Program for the Eradication of Child Labour, which links cash assistance to school enrolment.

- Bangladesh and Ghana report lower rates due to weak infrastructure and limited access to bridge education.

Implication for India: As discussed in Human-Centric Strategies, while bridge schooling and residential programs (e.g., Atal Awasiya Yojana) exist, their reach is limited. India must scale up special education zones, mobile learning units, and trauma-informed pedagogy, especially for adolescents aged 14–18. Furthermore, every rescued child must receive an Individual Care Plan (ICP) and access to bridge schooling—a lesson from both Brazil and the USA.

4. Community Role: From Passive Bystanders to Active Custodians

- India's local institutions—Panchayats and VLCPCs—are emerging anchors, but their legal mandates and resources remain weak. In Uttar Pradesh, Naya Savera has shown how child-labour-free village declarations and wall posters can mobilize communities. Still, most VLCPCs lack funds, training, and operational clarity (Section 4).

- Brazil's Municipal Councils have constitutional status and budget allocations. These bodies include civil society, educators, health workers, and government officials, making child protection truly decentralized.

- The USA integrates school boards and state agencies to maintain continuous oversight.

- Ghana and Bangladesh rely on informal community groups or school boards, but often without formal authority.

Implication for India: Community ownership is the linchpin for prevention. As seen in Section 4, when VLCPCs function effectively (e.g., Tamil Nadu, UP), they identify vulnerable children early and avert exploitation. India must formalize these structures through legal notifications, earmark funds under Mission Vatsalya, and create accountability dashboards for Panchayats. Lessons from Brazil's empowered municipal governance must be adapted into Indian federalism.

5. Conditional Cash Transfers: The Missing Link in India

One of the biggest insights from this comparison is India's lack of programmatic linkages between social protection and school retention. Brazil's Bolsa Família and the USA's targeted welfare programs (like SNAP, housing assistance) condition financial aid on child well-being metrics.

- In India, schemes like Bal Shramik Vidya Yojana and Bal Sewa Yojana offer post-rescue aid but are often delayed, underpublicized, and not conditional on attendance.

- PRS India and UNICEF's findings (as cited in the Literature Review) reinforce that when economic vulnerability is addressed through conditional transfers, dropout and re-labour rates drop significantly.

Implication for India: Embedding conditionalities into Direct Benefit Transfers—especially for high-burden districts—can create strong incentives for families to keep children in school. India's existing JAM trinity (Jan Dhan–Aadhaar–Mobile) infrastructure offers a ready platform for such reforms.

6. Integrated Data Systems: Closing the Loop

- The USA's Child Welfare Information Gateway and Brazil's SIMPETI databases enable real-time case tracking from rescue to education to reintegration.

- India's PENCIL Portal, while promising, remains underutilized at the district and block levels. Only a fraction of rescued cases are actively monitored with real-time status updates (Section 4).

- Ghana and Bangladesh have no centralized monitoring systems, resulting in high recidivism.

Implication for India: As stressed in Section 5, real-time dashboards, integrated MIS for schools, CWCs, and Labour Departments are critical to sustaining long-term rehabilitation. Lessons from the USA show that even complex federal systems can align through interoperable databases.

Conclusion: Building Futures Through Global Learning

The global fight against child labour is not about competition—it is about collaboration, convergence, and courage. India, with its demographic scale, legal architecture, and civil society participation, has made commendable progress. Yet, the Literature Review, State-Level Analysis, and Field Data confirm persistent structural gaps.

To truly "break chains," India must move beyond reactive enforcement. And to "build futures," we must:

- Elevate community structures to constitutional bodies (as in Brazil)

- Embed conditionalities in welfare (as in Brazil and the USA)

- Close adolescent protection gaps through unified laws

- Scale bridge schooling and ICPs with urgency

- Institutionalize real-time, cross-departmental monitoring

Child labour is not just a violation—it is a theft of dreams. Learning from global best practices, and humanizing them within India's socio-political fabric, is not just an option—it is an obligation.

7. Recommendations: A Roadmap to Break Chains and Build Futures

Despite India's commendable legislative structure and innovative state initiatives, child labour remains an enduring reality. As documented across Sections 1–6, systemic fragmentation, budgetary shortfalls, policy silos, and community disengagement continue to undermine efforts. This section transforms those gaps into actionable policy recommendations—creating a blueprint for a child labour-free India that is both compassionate and accountable.

1. Unified Complaint and Case Monitoring System Across States

Why it matters:

Currently, multiple platforms (PENCIL Portal, MWCD trackers, Labour Department helplines, state MIS dashboards) operate in isolation. There is no real-time, interoperable system that tracks a child's journey from rescue → education → rehabilitation → follow-up.

Evidence from the field:

- As noted in Section 5, Uttar Pradesh monitors 13 child-specific indicators via district dashboards. However, this system isn't linked to PENCIL or school MIS, causing duplication or data loss.

- In the USA, integrated child welfare databases at state level ensure zero dropout post-rescue by connecting education, social protection, and juvenile services.

Policy Action:

- Create a National Child Labour Dashboard linked with CWC databases, UDISE+ (school data), Labour Department records, and Index Cards.

- States should be mandated to report quarterly progress and flag delays in stipend disbursal, school attendance, or legal proceedings.

Impact:

Improves accountability, reduces re-trafficking, and ensures visibility of every rescued child.

2. Dedicated Rescue and Rehabilitation Budget Per District

Why it matters:

As seen in Sections 3 and 4, lack of decentralized financing delays rescue logistics, stipend payments, shelter provision, and education linkages.

Case in Point:

- In Tamil Nadu, district-level budget allocation under Samagra Shiksha + Mission Vatsalya enabled rescue within 48 hours and reintegration within 21 days (2023 data).

- In contrast, states like Bihar and Jharkhand (Section 5) saw delays of 3–6 months in post-rescue support due to budget routing through state HQs.

Policy Action:

- Mandate a minimum annual fund allocation (₹1–2 crore) per district exclusively for rescue operations, education linkage, trauma counselling, stipend disbursal, and family rehabilitation.

- Empower District Child Protection Units (DCPUs) to manage and monitor the fund use.

Impact:

Ensures timely response, avoids bureaucratic bottlenecks, and incentivizes district-level innovation.

3. Permanent Human Resources at Block and Village Level

Why it matters:

India's child protection architecture is heavily reliant on ad hoc staff or overburdened government officers. Section 4 showed that VLCPCs and DCPUs often lack trained personnel.

International Insight:

- Brazil's municipal councils include full-time child protection officers, data analysts, and child rights monitors.

- In Ghana, absence of community-level staff correlates with low school reintegration (57%).

Policy Action:

- Sanction permanent child protection staff in every block: one technical officer (legal+monitoring), one social worker (psychosocial), and one education mobilizer.

- At the village level, revive and fund VLCPCs, offering honorariums to community members.

Impact:

Improves case follow-up, community vigilance, and early detection of at-risk children.

4. Child-Friendly Shelters in Every District

Why it matters:

As revealed in Section 5, lack of safe, temporary shelters post-rescue often leads to trauma, delays, or relapse into labour.

Data & Cases:

- Kerala and Goa—with established shelters—report 85–90% school reintegration.

- Delhi and Bihar, despite high rescues, suffer from overcrowded or absent shelters, affecting psychosocial recovery.

Policy Action:

- Every district must establish at least one short-stay, child-friendly shelter with separate facilities for boys and girls.

- Align with Atal Awasiya Yojana and Mission Vatsalya for funding, and partner with NGOs for trauma care, art therapy, and counselling.

Impact:

Promotes dignity, emotional healing, and smoother school transition.

5. Integration of Social Security Schemes via Index Cards and Panchayat Endorsements

Why it matters:

Section 4 emphasized that Bal Shramik Vidya Yojana and Bal Sewa Yojana are effective only when timely and visible. Without integrated tracking, families remain unaware or face delays.

Brazil's Lesson:

Linking school attendance with cash transfers under Bolsa Família ensured 85% school re-entry.

Policy Action:

- Every rescued child must receive a digitally verifiable Index Card that includes: UID, school ID, stipend status, ration card link, MGNREGA job for parent.

- Gram Panchayats must co-sign and track usage of entitlements, creating local ownership.

Impact:

Restores trust in government systems, prevents re-labour, and boosts community participation.

6. Adolescent Skill Development Model: Non-Formal Education + Apprenticeship Pathway

Why it matters:

Children aged 14–18 fall in a legal blind spot (Sections 3 and 5). They are neither protected by RTE nor adequately included in vocational programs.

Best Practices:

- USA offers vocational high schools and protected apprenticeships under monitoring.

- India's own NCLP transitional schools were discontinued without replacement.

Policy Action:

- Launch a National Adolescent Transition Scheme (NATS) that combines:

    o   Foundational learning (Grade 5–8 equivalents)

    o   Soft skill training (communication, financial literacy)

    o   Apprenticeship with local businesses (with NGO or ITI supervision)

- Use PMKVY, Skill India and MSDE frameworks for integration.

Impact:

Reduces dropout, prevents re-entry into exploitative work, and aligns education with aspirations.

7. Annual State-Level Surveys to Update Child Labour Data and Response Strategy

Why it matters:

Census 2011 data is outdated. ASER 2022 shows enrollment ≠ attendance. Section 2 and 5 emphasized the importance of granular, real-time data to guide action.

International Reference:

- The Durban Call to Action (2022) mandates periodic, survivor-informed, geo-tagged data collection to track child labour trends.

Policy Action:

- Mandate annual Child Labour Vulnerability Mapping (CLVM) in every district.

- Collect:

        o   Dropout lists from schools

        o   Child protection cases from CWCs

        o   Employment data from unorganized sectors

- Include voices of children, social workers, teachers, and ASHAs.

Impact:

Enables targeted intervention, proactive rescues, and budget alignment with actual risk.

Conclusion: From Recommendations to Responsibility

These seven recommendations do not exist in a vacuum. They are grounded in decades of missed opportunities and emerging evidence, from Uttar Pradesh's Naya Savera to Brazil's conditional transfer success, from the USA's integrated welfare systems to India's grassroots VLCPCs.

- The way forward is clear:
- From policy silos to convergence
- From ad hoc to permanent workforce
- From reactive rescue to proactive prevention
- From disconnected data to unified accountability

Only then can we honor the true spirit of the title—"Breaking Chains" through structural reform, and "Building Futures" through compassion, empowerment, and systemic action.

8. Conclusion: From Crisis to Commitment — India's Defining Moment in Ending Child Labour

India's child labour elimination strategy stands at a historic threshold — one shaped by urgency, but also illuminated by opportunity. The depth of the crisis, as outlined in the Introduction, reveals not just a problem of policy failure but a humanitarian emergency. Millions of children, instead of sitting in classrooms or playing under open skies, are trapped in cycles of work that deny them dignity, education, and a fair chance at life. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed these systemic fractures, reinforcing the need for not just reactive interventions, but long-term structural transformation.

Yet, the contours of hope are visible. India has made considerable strides in legislating against child labour, as detailed in the Legislative and Policy Framework. The legal foundation — from the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act to the Right to Education Act and the Juvenile Justice Act — articulates a strong national commitment to child rights. These laws align with India's global obligations under the ILO Conventions and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, the gap between statutory ambition and ground-level action remains significant. The absence of convergence between departments, inconsistent enforcement across states, and underfunding at the local level have diluted their impact.

The Literature Review underscored that child labour is not solely the consequence of poverty. It is perpetuated by structural neglect, lack of educational alternatives, and poor inter-departmental collaboration. Scholars such as Chandra Shekhar have emphasized that rescue without rehabilitation is insufficient. The emotional, psychological, and educational needs of rescued children are rarely addressed with the sensitivity or continuity required. His work echoes across states and informs the necessity of creating long-term, integrated support ecosystems — not just legal compliance.

India's transition toward human-centric strategies marks a critical evolution in its child protection philosophy. As documented in Section 4, innovations such as Uttar Pradesh's Naya Savera, Tamil Nadu's structured SOPs for rescue, and Maharashtra's SHG-linked reintegration models demonstrate that systemic, child-sensitive, and community-anchored solutions can yield measurable outcomes. These are not abstract concepts but real interventions that are returning children to schools, restoring hope to families, and reducing vulnerability to re-exploitation.

However, state and UT-wise performance analysis revealed that progress is fragmented and often reflects existing socio-economic disparities. High-performing states like Kerala and Himachal Pradesh show that with political will, administrative efficiency, and inter-sectoral coordination, rehabilitation can be swift and effective. In contrast, vulnerable geographies — particularly in parts of Bihar, Jharkhand, and the North-East — struggle with capacity constraints, logistical challenges, and policy inertia. These regions require targeted support, customized interventions, and urgent infrastructure investments — especially in shelter homes, trained child protection personnel, and vocational education.

Looking outward, the international comparison in Section 6 highlighted the practical models India can adapt and scale. Brazil's Bolsa Família program links financial incentives to school attendance, demonstrating how cash transfers can become instruments of protection. The USA's integration of education, welfare, and juvenile justice data systems ensures that rescued children remain within the care net until reintegration is complete. These models show that success lies not in a single program, but in designing a system where every stakeholder — from governments to communities — shares responsibility and is accountable.

India's advantage lies in its democratic institutions, civil society participation, and technological infrastructure — which if aligned strategically, can deliver transformative outcomes. As recommended in Section 7, the roadmap forward must be built on seven pillars: integrated complaint monitoring, district-level budgets, dedicated child protection staff, child-friendly shelters, index-based social protection, skill pathways for adolescents, and annual vulnerability assessments. These are not only technical prescriptions but expressions of a moral duty — to ensure that no child is invisible, unprotected, or forgotten.

Crucially, the elimination of child labour must now be reframed as a nation-building mission. It is not the sole domain of the Labour Ministry or the Child Welfare Committee. It must engage the Panchayat, the schoolteacher, the district magistrate, the parent, and the child themselves. India cannot afford to address child labour with fragmented, short-term responses. What it needs — and what this paper advocates — is a coherent, compassionate, and child-centred national strategy that bridges every gap: between law and implementation, between rescue and rehabilitation, and between survival and true development.

India's commitment to SDG 8.7 — to eradicate child labour in all its forms by 2025 — is bold but attainable. The vision of a child labour-free India is not idealistic. It is pragmatic, data-backed, and increasingly demonstrable. The challenge is no longer in imagining solutions, but in institutionalizing and

scaling what already works. India has shown that it can lead on the global stage in economic, technological, and democratic arenas. The question now is whether it will lead in ensuring justice for its most vulnerable citizens — its children.

As this paper's title suggests, the journey is twofold:

- To break the chains — institutional, economic, and psychological — that tether children to exploitative work.

- And to build futures — inclusive, safe, and full of possibility — where every child can learn, play, grow, and thrive.

The path ahead is clear. The tools are in place. What remains is the collective resolve to act — not later, not selectively, but with urgency, empathy, and unwavering commitment.

India's development cannot be measured merely in GDP or infrastructure. It must be judged by the safety of its children, the strength of its schools, and the softness of the beds in its shelters. If India chooses to lead with compassion, it will not only fulfil its constitutional promise but shape a future where every childhood is honoured and every child protected.

Let this be the century where India doesn't just grow — it nurtures.

Let this be the moment when India doesn't just rescue children — it restores their future.

9. Appendices

Appendix A: State-wise Rescue and Rehabilitation Data (2022–2024)

State/UT	Children Rescued (2022)	Rescued (2023)	Rescued (Jan–Apr 2024)	% School Reintegration (2023)	Financial Aid Coverage (2023)	Shelter Availability
Uttar Pradesh	12,084	13,429	4,051	81%	74%	Adequate (Child-Friendly Shelters in 58 districts)
Tamil Nadu	5,911	6,218	2,010	85%	65%	Strong
Maharashtra	4,702	4,980	1,575	88%	82%	Moderate
Bihar	4,804	5,123	1,395	63%	49%	Limited
Kerala	1,065	1,122	420	90%	86%	Strong
Delhi (NCT)	2,089	2,231	840	70%	54%	Moderate
Rajasthan	3,640	3,870	1,100	67%	52%	Moderate
Jharkhand	2,410	2,540	780	62%	48%	Poor
Assam	1,314	1,390	410	61%	44%	Poor
Karnataka	2,470	2,610	960	78%	67%	Good
Himachal Pradesh	490	510	200	86%	79%	Strong
Goa	215	230	90	91%	85%	Adequate
Remaining States/UTs	19,000+ (combined)	21,000+ (combined)	7,000+	Varies 55%–78%	Varies 35%–70%	Mixed

Source: Compiled from state-level child protection departments, MWCD reports, and verified CWC records.

Appendix B: Role Matrix for Departments (Labour, WCD, Education, Panchayati Raj)

Department	Core Responsibilities	Critical Gaps Observed
Labour Department	• Lead rescues under CLPR Act• Register FIRs• Coordinate legal proceedings• Disburse Bal Shramik Vidya Yojana stipends	• Delay in FIR registration• Low awareness of SOPs• Limited tracking post-rescue

Department	Core Responsibilities	Critical Gaps Observed
Women & Child Development (WCD)	• Operate CWCs, DCPUs, SCPS• Develop Individual Care Plans (ICPs)• Arrange shelter & counselling• Ensure social protection linkages	• Inadequate counselling staff• Overburdened CWCs• No integrated monitoring with Labour/School data
Education Department	• School reintegration• Maintain UDISE+ data• Coordinate with bridge schools / Atal Awasiya Yojana• Ensure access to NIOS/NIET for 14–18-year-olds	• Lack of remedial or bridge education• Poor follow-up on attendance• No adolescent-skilling integration
Panchayati Raj	• Operate VLCPCs• Declare child-labour-free villages• Identify out-of-school children• Certify Index Cards• Conduct Gram Sabha resolutions	• Weak legal mandate• Limited training/resources• Variable engagement by Panchayats

Appendix C: Summary of Rescue SOP (Standard Operating Procedure)

Step	Action	Timeline	Responsible Stakeholders
Complaint Received	Via CWC, VLCPC, Childline, Police or Labour Dept.	Day 0	Any frontline stakeholder
Preliminary Verification	Quick verification to confirm child's working status and location	Day 1	Labour Officer + DCPU
Formation of DTF Team	Includes Labour, CWC, SJPU, NGO rep, Medical Officer	Day 2	District Magistrate or Child Protection Officer
Rescue Operation	Child rescued in child-sensitive manner; medical care arranged	Day 3–4	Labour Dept + Police + NGO
CWC Production	Child produced before CWC within 24 hours; statement recorded; interim care arranged	Day 4–5	Labour + SJPU + DCPU
ICP & Rehabilitation	Individual Care Plan prepared with school linkage, financial aid, social security entitlements	Within 10 days	CWC + WCD + Labour + Education Dept.
Follow-up & Monitoring	Home visits, school checks, stipend tracking	Bi-weekly for 3 months	VLCPC + Labour + Education Officer

Adapted from UP State Rescue SOP (2023) & MWCD Guidelines (2022)

Appendix D: PENCIL Portal Analytics Summary (2022–2024)

Indicator	2022	2023	Jan–Apr 2024
Complaints Received (online + helpline)	19,650	23,280	7,940
Verified and Converted into FIRs	10,112 (51%)	12,980 (56%)	4,110 (52%)
Rescues Initiated via PENCIL	8,800	9,430	2,910
Children Linked with Bal Shramik Scheme	5,720	6,980	2,230
Average Resolution Time (Complaint → Rescue)	14.6 days	11.4 days	10.2 days
Portal Integration with CWCs/DCPUs	Partial (17 states)	Moderate (22 states)	Full (Planned in 2024–25)

Compiled from Labour Ministry Reports and MWCD updates

Appendix E: Bal Shramik Vidya Yojana District-wise Disbursal (2020–2023)

District (UP – Sample)	Children Benefited (2020)	2021	2022	2023	Cumulative Disbursal (INR Lakhs)
Lucknow	280	340	410	475	₹135.5
Varanasi	310	370	430	498	₹148.2
Gorakhpur	260	320	385	425	₹128.7
Prayagraj	290	335	390	460	₹132.9
Kanpur	300	345	410	470	₹138.4
Agra	220	265	310	355	₹104.1
Meerut	240	290	345	395	₹117.6
Bareilly	200	250	305	340	₹101.3
Ghaziabad	215	275	325	375	₹110.9
Moradabad	180	225	280	310	₹95.2
Total (10 districts)	**2,495**	**3,015**	**3,691**	**4,103**	**₹1,212.8 Lakhs**

Source: Ministry of Labour and Employment, State Labour Departments

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