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Pendency of Juvenile Cases in India: A Critical Analysis of Systemic Delays under the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2015

SUNIL KUMAR¹

ABSTRACT

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 was enacted to ensure a child-friendly justice system rooted in rehabilitation, reintegration, and the best interests of the child. Yet, despite its progressive intent, India's juvenile justice mechanism continues to be marred by systemic delays and high pendency of cases. Drawing on the India Justice Report (IJR) 2024—which highlights that over 55% of cases before 362 Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) remain pending—this paper critically analyses the structural, administrative, and procedural shortcomings that contribute to prolonged inquiries. Key factors include understaffed JJBs, weak legal aid support, poor data management, lack of coordination among statutory bodies, and delayed submission of Social Investigation Reports. The study examines the detrimental impact of such delays on juveniles, including violation of statutory timelines under Section 14, non-compliance with India's obligations under the UNCRC, increased exposure to criminogenic environments, loss of educational opportunities, psychological distress, and heightened risk of long-term criminalisation. The paper argues that pendency not only undermines the rehabilitative framework of the JJ Act but also erodes trust in the juvenile justice system. It proposes multi-level reforms such as strengthening institutional capacity, improving coordination, adopting diversion and restorative justice mechanisms, digitising case management, and establishing fast-track inquiry models. The analysis underscores that reducing pendency is not merely an administrative necessity but a legal and moral imperative essential for safeguarding children's rights and ensuring effective juvenile justice in India.

I. INTRODUCTION

Crime is a crime whether it is done by any adult or minor the only difference is procedure and nature of punishment for such crime. In India there were various laws which provide punishment for adult person but no any such laws which provide punishment for minor persons

¹ Author is an Advocate at Punjab & Haryana High Court, Chandigarh, India.

who committed crime. Before passing particular Acts regarding offense done by children was tried by General Laws which are applicable on every person. The Juvenile Justice Act of 1986 and its subsequent amendments can be considered in many ways a landmark in signifying changes in the thought process of lawmakers. At the turn of the 21st century, a need was felt to update the laws bearing in mind prescribed standards set by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989. The UN Standard Minimum Rules for Administration of Juvenile Justice, 1985, as well as the UN Rules for Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty, 1990. The legislative exercise subsequently culminated into the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, along with the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules of 2000, are replaced by the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules of 2007. In the wake of the 2012 Delhi gangrape and murder case, one of the accused, who was a juvenile, was sentenced to three years in a reformation home as per the provisions of the juvenile justice Act, 2000. In light of the Supreme Court judgement upholding the constitutional validity of the Act, in December 2015, the Delhi High Court held itself to be bound by the provisions and refused to extend the sentence of the accused. This led to a widespread feeling of a failure of justice, with the masses protesting in unity with the victim's family. Drawing much flak from various sections to correct the supposed gap in the previous act, the government delivered the juvenile justice (Care and Protection of Children) Bill 2014 which was surpassed by the Parliament in its present shape on 22nd December 2015. It acquired the President's assent on 31st December 2015, and came into impact on 15th January 2016, as the juvenile justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.

In order to achieve the objectives of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as ratified by India on 11 December 1992, the Juvenile Justice Act has been promulgated. The procedural guarantees applicable to children in conflict with the law are specified in this law. The current law addresses the problems of the existing law, such as delays in adoption processes, the high number of pending cases, the accountability of institutions, and so on. The law also addresses the growing number of crimes committed by children aged 16 to 18 in recent years and by children in conflict with the law. Since January 15, 2016, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 has come into force. It repeals the Juvenile Justice (Care and protection of children Act), 2000.

A. Structure of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015

One of the most contentious modifications to Indian juvenile law was brought about by the Juvenile Justice Act of 2015, which superseded the Act of 2000. Heinous Offence Clause was added Subject to a JJB evaluation, this clause permits minors between the ages of 16 and 18 to

be tried as adults for heinous crimes carrying sentences of seven years or more. It Simplified Adoption Procedure, legislative entity is the Integrated Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA). Made more stringent rules for childcare facilities (CCIs). It emphasized mental health assistance and kid-friendly practices².

1. Juvenile Justice Board (JJBS)

The foundation of the juvenile justice system is the Juvenile Justice Board. Every district is required to have a JJB, which is in charge of managing matters involving children in conflict with the law (CCL), in accordance with Section 4 of the JJ Act, 2015. Every JJB constitutes of -A presiding officer is either a Metropolitan Magistrate or a Judicial Magistrate (First Class). Two social workers, at least one of them needs to be female. JJBs' duties include looking into crimes committed by minors, assure the youngster of legal assistance and psychological support, determine if a juvenile (ages 16 to 18) should face adult charges in egregious situations, issue directives for community service, counselling, rehabilitation, or institutional care. Initial Evaluation (Section 15)-The 2015 Act has a contentious clause that permits the JJB to perform an initial evaluation of the child's mental and physical potential to commit a serious crime. The matter may be sent to the Children's Court for an adult trial if it is judged appropriate (Section 18).³

2. Child Welfare Committee (CWCS)

Section 27 of the JJ Act created CWCs as quasi-judicial entities to handle Children in Need of Care and Protection (CNCP). This covers victims of abuse, runaways, orphans, and youngsters involved in human trafficking. Every CWC is made up of - A chairperson, who typically has experience in child welfare. At least one woman and a specialist in child psychology, education, or law are among the four members. Functions of CWC includes, making enquiries about CNCPs' condition, identify a child's legal status (orphaned, abandoned, or relinquished). Put kids in foster care, shelter houses, or institutions. Advocate for repatriation or adoption. Supervise rehabilitative programs and keep an eye on childcare facilities. Additionally, CWCs have the authority to instruct police and District Child Protection Units (DCPUs) to track down families and, if feasible, assist in reuniting 3. Ministry of Women & Child Development, Guide for Child Welfare Committees, Govt. of India (2018)

3. Institutions of Child Care (CCIS)

² (Hira Singh, 'Foreword' in Operations Manual for children Act, National Institute of Social, Defence, Ministry of Welfare, New Delhi, 1982, p. 5)

³ Ministry of Women & Child Development, Guide for Child Welfare Committees, Govt. of India (2018)

Government-run or NGO-supported facilities that accommodate and care for minors in accordance with the Act are known as child care institutions

CCI types includes:

- Observation homes which provide short-term lodging for minors while JJB investigations are ongoing.
- Special Homes: For juvenile offenders incarcerated.
- Places of Safety: For kids who need safe custody or are prosecuted as adults.
- Children home: CWCs look after CNCs in Children's Homes.
- Open shelters and shelter homes: they are available for drop-in help or temporary protection. Basic necessities, education, career training, psychiatric counselling, and recreational amenities are all required of these establishments. However, many come under fire for their poor facilities, lack of employees, and disregard for the mental health and rehabilitation requirements of kids.

4. District Child Protection Units (DCPU)

At the district level, DCPU are responsible for carrying out child protection services. They were set up under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), and among their duties are coordinating JJB, CWC, and CCI operations, creating care plans for each individual, checking foster and adoptive parents' backgrounds, ensuring that children are produced on time to the appropriate authority, keeping an eye on and overseeing child protection services.⁴

5. State and Central Level Institution

The State Child Protection Society-To supervise the execution of state-level child protection programs, each state must establish a SCPS. It facilitates communication between the district administrations and the Centre and guarantees: enhancing the abilities of child protection professionals, monitoring and distribution of funds, compliance and data management.

6. National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)

The NCPCR was created in accordance with the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act of 2005 and serves as a watchdog for: Keeping an eye on and assess regulations pertaining to children, make policy and legal reform recommendations, examine day care centres, respond

⁴ National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), Social Audit of Child Care Institutions in India (2018)

to complaints and take suo moto action when there are abuses of children's rights.⁵

II. PENDENCY OF JUVENILE CASES IN INDIA

Like other cases in India, the matters related to juvenile are also pending and delayed at Juvenile Justice Board. The India Justice Report (IJR) 2024 has released a first-of-its-kind nationwide study on the status of Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) bodies created under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 to address cases involving children in conflict with the law. As per this report more than half (55%) cases before 362 Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) across the country are pending as of October-2023. The findings reveal serious gaps in staffing, infrastructure, legal aid, and data management, leading to a high pendency of cases and poor justice delivery for juveniles. Over 55% cases before 362 JJBs were pending as of October 31, 2023. Out of 1, 00,904 cases, less than half were disposed of.

A. Reasons for Pendency of Cases

There are various reasons for pendency of cases related to juvenile offenders and some of areas:

1. Staff Shortage and Vacancies

In India as per India Justice Report-2024, 24% Juvenile Boards are still not constituted. For the fulfilment of the objectives of any Act it must be required that it has to be fully implemented and needs to be operated in a fully structured way. Due to various reason Government failed to establish pending Juvenile Justice Board

2. Weak Legal Aid Support

As per the record of India Justice Report-2024, 30% of JJBs do not have legal service clinic. Article 39-A of Indian Constitution (Equal Justice and free legal aid) has provides free legal aid to all persons and in this Juveniles are also covered. As per this report Juvenile Justice Board has not getting any financial support to run their Institution and also not to provides any kind of legal aid to Juveniles for defend themselves.

3. Poor Data Management and Transparency:

Another important reason behind the pendency of cases against juvenile is poor data management. Like National Judicial Data Grid there is no such kind of system in JJBs. If we have proper data in structure way than we can easily analysis the reason of pendency and find out the solution how to end this pendency. If we talk about transparency than various social

⁵ National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), Social Audit of Child Care Institutions in India (2018)

reformer has filed various RTI for seeking data but due to poor management no structure data are available.

4. High Workload

For smooth functioning of any Institution their has require limited workload and proper staff for that particular works. If workload is high and improper staff than efficiency of work would not come.

Structural Problem in the Juvenile Justice System:- In Juvenile Justice Act 2015 there has provision to make various Institutions like:

- Juvenile Justice Board
- Child Welfare Committe
- District Child Protection Unit
- Child Care Institutions

Although these institutions are made under Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 but as per report there are no co-ordination between these Institutions

III. CURRENT SCENARIO OF JUVENILE OFFENDERS

In India juvenile offenders are increasing day by day due to various reasons. As per the report of The India Justice Report-2024 about 40000 juveniles are apprehended. The crimes perpetrated by the juveniles are ceaselessly expanding regardless of harshening the penal outcomes on carrying out of the deplorable crimes like murder, rape, abduction etc., as referenced in the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015. Under the new legitimate arrangements, if a juvenile of 16 years or above carries out a heinous crime, a primary appraisal of his psychological and physical development will be made by the Juvenile Justice Board. Level of understanding will be coordinated to his ability to commit such an offence, his capacity to comprehend the results of his offence and the circumstances where he alleged to do the offence. The criminality of an individual juvenile cannot be assessed purely on the basis of age rather it should be dealt on the basis of the individual mental capacity of the offender. There has been an enormous increase in serious crimes involving youth of 16-18 years of age and the age factor had been utilized as a departure from the criminal indictment. The Juveniles commit such offences with full knowledge and maturity. Consequently, the present Juvenile Law in India, considers Age Determination as a fundamental significance to see if the guilty party falls under the domain of Juvenile Justice Act. The current law for the sake of Age assurance or Age Consent, isn't making a deterrent effect on the anti – social conduct of youth. The present Act

is totally concentrating on the reformation rather than penalization of the juveniles.⁶

IV. EFFECTS OF PENDENCY OF JUVENILE CASES

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 aims to ensure speedy inquiry, rehabilitation, and reformation of children in conflict with law. Timely disposal of cases is not only a statutory mandate but also a psychological necessity for juveniles, who are at a critical stage of development. However, the increasing pendency and delay in juvenile cases undermine the very objectives of the Act. The consequences are multi-dimensional—legal, psychological, social, and systemic.

A. Violation of Statutory Mandate under JJ Act, 2015

Section 14 of the JJ Act mandates that inquiries involving juveniles shall be completed within four months from the date of first production, extendable only by two more months for specific reasons. Pendency beyond this period violates the statutory guarantee of speedy inquiry.⁷ Section 3(xvi) recognizes the principle of speedy trial as a fundamental right of every child in conflict with law. Delay defeats this principle, resulting in injustice to both the child and the victim.⁸ Section 3(iv) – Principle of Best Interest requires that decisions concerning juveniles must prioritize their rehabilitation and overall development. Prolonged pendency keeps the child under continuous legal uncertainty, psychologically harming the juvenile and obstructing reintegration.⁹

B. Violation of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

India, as a signatory to UNCRC, is obligated to ensure a child-friendly justice system. Delay in cases violates multiple Articles. Article 37(b)¹⁰ Detention of children should be used only as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time. Pendency leads to prolonged institutionalization or supervision. Article 40(2)(b)(iii)¹¹ Every child accused of violating the law has the right to a hearing without delay. Undue delay in hearings is a direct violation. Article 3: Best interests of the child must be a primary consideration. Uncertainty and elongated legal process go against this principle. Article 39 Children who are victims or offenders have the right

⁶ Vedkumari: The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015- Critical Analysis, Lexis Nexis, 1st edition (2017).

⁷ Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2015

⁸ Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2015

⁹ Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2015

¹⁰ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child/visited> on 25.11.2025

¹¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child/visited> on 25.11.2025

to physical and psychological recovery.

C. Possibility of Criminalization of Youth

One of the most serious consequences of prolonged pendency in juvenile cases is the increased likelihood of criminalization of youth. The Juvenile Justice system is based on the principle that children are capable of reform and must not be allowed to drift into a lifetime of crime. However, when inquiries are delayed and rehabilitation is not initiated promptly, the system may inadvertently contribute to pushing juveniles deeper into criminal behaviour.

D. Prolonged Exposure to Criminogenic Environment

Many juveniles are placed in Observation Homes or Special Homes during inquiry. Delay in case disposal results in extended stay in these institutions where youth often interact with peers who may have committed more serious offences.

This exposure can lead to:

- Learning of new criminal techniques
- Normalisation of delinquent behaviour
- Strengthening of deviant peer networks
- Instead of reform, the environment may unintentionally reinforce criminal tendencies.

E. Loss of Educational And Vocational Opportunities

Under the scheme of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, children alleged to be in conflict with law are placed in Observation Homes, Special Homes, or other Child Care Institutions established or recognized by the State Government. During the pendency of proceedings before the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), these children remain in institutional care for extended periods¹². However, it has been consistently observed that the educational facilities and vocational training opportunities made available within such institutions are often inadequate and fail to meet the developmental, academic, and rehabilitative needs of the children. The absence of structured and quality education, coupled with limited avenues for skill development, adversely affects the holistic growth of children who are already in a vulnerable position.

Further, prolonged delays in inquiry and disposition of cases before the JJBs exacerbate this deprivation. Instead of receiving timely rehabilitation, children remain in institutional settings without meaningful engagement, resulting in stagnation of their educational progress and loss

¹² Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2015

of crucial formative years. Such delay defeats the very object of the Juvenile Justice Act, which emphasizes the principles of best interest, rehabilitation, and reintegration of the child into society. Consequently, when children are eventually released from Child Care Institutions after long-drawn proceedings, they often lack adequate education, employable skills, and social preparedness necessary for their reintegration. This creates significant challenges in securing livelihood opportunities and increases the risk of social marginalization, thereby undermining the rehabilitative framework envisioned under the Act.

F. Psychological Frustration And Deviant Behaviour

When juveniles go through long and confusing legal processes, their minds become overloaded with stress. They don't fully understand what is happening to them, and this emotional pressure builds up inside. This pressure does not stay inside forever—it comes out through behaviour. Here is how each feeling contributes:

- **Feeling of Injustice:** Juveniles may believe they are being treated unfairly—either by the police, judges, family, or society. This belief creates anger and resentment. When someone feels “wronged,” they may stop caring about rules altogether. Resultant they may break rules intentionally because they feel the system doesn't treat them fairly anyway.
- **Feeling of Helplessness:** Most juveniles have no control over legal decisions. They don't get to choose lawyers, they don't understand legal terms, and they cannot decide the outcome. This makes them feel powerless, like their actions don't matter resultant they become passive and easily influenced by negative peers or criminal groups because they believe, “No matter what I do, nothing will change.”

G. Weakening of Reformative and Restorative Processes

The weakening of reformative and restorative processes occurs when there is a delay in inquiry under the Juvenile Justice Act, which prevents timely intervention meant to correct and guide a child in conflict with law. The Act is designed to provide immediate counselling, de-addiction support, community service, and close supervision so that the child's behaviour can be addressed at an early stage. When these interventions are postponed, the child is deprived of timely moral guidance and structured behavioural correction. As a result, deeper issues such as trauma, poverty, neglect, or family problems remain unresolved, leaving the juvenile vulnerable to negative surroundings and criminal influences. Ultimately, the delay undermines rehabilitation, slowing the child's reintegration into society and reducing the overall effectiveness of the juvenile justice system.

H. Social Stigma and Social Rejection, Anxiety Etc.

Stigma: Once labelled as “a problem child” or “a juvenile offender,” the label sticks. Teachers, neighbours, and sometimes even parents treat them differently. This constant judgement makes them feel worthless or “already guilty.” resultant they may start acting according to the label, thinking, *“If everyone sees me as a criminal, I might as well behave like one.”*

Social Rejection: Many juveniles lose friends, trust, and social support. Their classmates may avoid them, the community may look down on them, and they feel pushed away from normal social life. Being isolated creates emotional pain and loneliness resultant they this pushes them toward groups that accept them easily—usually delinquent peer groups. These groups often encourage risky or illegal behaviour.

Anxiety: Legal uncertainty is frightening for a young mind. They worry constantly about the future, punishment, school, family shame, and more. This anxiety creates emotional instability they cannot focus, think clearly, or make good decisions resultant they may react impulsively, lash out, or get involved in behaviour that temporarily distracts them from their fear.

Behavioural Disorders Prolonged stress can lead to emotional and behavioural problems such as aggression, lack of impulse control, or defiance toward authority.

These behaviours are not just deliberate—they are often psychological responses to overwhelming stress resultant disorders increase the likelihood of fights, rule-breaking, and repeated offending.

V. METHODS TO REDUCE PENDENCY OF CASES AGAINST JUVENILE

Pendency of cases always affects the procedure of law and also its put harm on substantive rights of the minors who are child in conflict with law and are residing in social institutions maintained by government or private organisations. There are various methods through which we can reduce the pendency of cases against Juveniles and these are:-

A. Strengthening Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs)

Many JJBs face shortage of members, probation officers, and support staff. When the Bench is incomplete or understaffed, hearings get postponed repeatedly. By appointing adequate and full-time members, increasing support staff, and ensuring availability of counsellors and legal aid lawyers, JJBs can function smoothly and dispose of cases faster.

B. Ensuring Timely Submission of Social Investigation Reports (SIRS)

The Social Investigation Report is crucial for understanding the child's background. Delays in SIRs often stall the entire inquiry. To reduce pendency:

- Probation officers should follow strict timelines.
 - JJBs should monitor submission deadlines.
 - Digital reminders and tracking systems can ensure accountability.
- Quick completion of SIRs allows the Board to make informed decisions without unnecessary delay.

C. Provide Time-to-Time Proper Training to Staff of Boards

It is mandatory for the proper functioning of the board that their member and staff are aware with new rule and regulations and guidelines issued by government from time to time. It is duty of government to provide time to time training to the members of boards and other staff.

D. Increasing Frequency of Hearings

One major cause of pendency is long gaps between hearing dates. JJBs can:

- Hold weekly or bi-weekly hearings,
- Schedule continuous hearings for pending cases,
- Prioritise long-pending cases.

Inquiries must be completed within the time limits laid down under the JJ Act, improving both efficiency and outcomes for the child.

E. Diversion Mechanisms for Minor Offences

For petty or non-serious offences, a full judicial inquiry is unnecessary. Children accused of such offences can be diverted to:

- Counselling sessions
- Community service
- Behavioural intervention programs
- Supervision by probation officers

Diversion reduces the burden on JJBs and prevents unnecessary formal trials, allowing them to focus on more serious cases.

F. Better Coordination between Stakeholders

Juvenile justice involves multiple authorities—police, JJBs, Probation Officers, Child Welfare Committees, district legal services authorities, and NGOs. Lack of communication creates duplication of work and delays in obtaining reports, evidence, or witness statements. Establishing coordination meetings, shared digital platforms, and joint training sessions ensures smoother, quicker handling of cases.

G. Training and Capacity Building

Delays often occur due to mistakes in procedure, improper documentation, or lack of understanding of JJ Act provisions. Regular training of:

- Police officers (on child-friendly procedures),
- JJB members,
- Probation officers,
- Institutional staff helps ensure compliance with timelines, reduces procedural errors, and speeds up case processing.

H. Fast-Track Mechanisms for Serious Cases

Serious or complex cases often block the system because they require more evidence and longer hearings. Creating:

- Special fast-track days,
 - Dedicated benches,
 - Priority disposal mechanisms
- helps finish complicated cases without affecting the disposal of minor cases.

I. Improving Infrastructure in Child Care Institutions

Proper infrastructure supports quicker rehabilitation and inquiry. Child Care Institutions must have:

- Counselling rooms,
- Video-conferencing facilities,
- Trained psychologists,
- Proper documentation systems.

This allows interviews, counselling sessions, and hearings to occur without repeated delays due to lack of resources.

J. Use of Mediation and Restorative Justice Practices

For neighbourhood disputes, school fights, or minor conflicts, mediation or restorative circles can resolve issues faster than formal hearings. Restorative justice encourages the child to take responsibility, apologise, and repair harm reducing the need for prolonged inquiries. It also reduces the load on JJBs.

VI. CONCLUSION

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 was enacted with the fundamental aim of ensuring protection, rehabilitation, and reintegration of children in conflict with law, in accordance with both constitutional guarantees and international child-rights standards. However, despite the progressive legal framework, the reality of juvenile justice administration in India remains deeply challenged by systemic delays and high pendency of cases. The India Justice Report 2024 reveals that more than half of the cases before Juvenile Justice Boards remain unresolved, reflecting structural deficiencies in staffing, infrastructure, coordination, and data management. These delays not only violate statutory mandates under Section 14 of the JJ Act and the principle of the child's best interest, but also undermine India's obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Pendency of cases has serious consequences for juveniles. Prolonged inquiries inflict psychological distress, disrupt education and vocational development, increase exposure to criminogenic environments, and weaken reformative and restorative processes that are essential for behavioural correction. Delayed decision-making stalls rehabilitation and heightens the risk of stigmatization, deviant behaviour, social rejection, and long-term marginalisation. Instead of supporting reintegration, the system inadvertently contributes to criminalisation of youth by keeping them in prolonged uncertainty and institutional confinement.

To reverse this trend, the juvenile justice system requires structural strengthening. This includes complete constitution of JJBs, timely submission of Social Investigation Reports, capacity-building of all stakeholders, increased frequency of hearings, and improved inter-institutional coordination among JJBs, CWCs, DCPUs, police, and Child Care Institutions. Diversion mechanisms, restorative justice processes, fast-track facilities for serious cases, and digitisation of records can significantly reduce pendency and enhance efficiency. Strengthening infrastructure in CCIs and ensuring child-friendly procedures are equally essential for meaningful rehabilitation.

Ultimately, reducing pendency is not merely an administrative reform—it is a legal, moral, and developmental necessity. A timely, responsive, and child-centred justice system is vital to

safeguard the rights of children, uphold constitutional values, and ensure that the purpose of the Juvenile Justice Act is fully realised. Only when cases are addressed promptly and rehabilitative measures are implemented without delay can children in conflict with law be given a real opportunity to reform, reintegrate, and rebuild their lives with dignity.
