

India: 9,346 Children Abandoned, Orphaned, Lost a Parent to COVID-19: NCPCR Informs SC

The court had directed the district authorities to upload information about the number of children across India, who are in dire need of protection

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On May 28, the Supreme Court had directed all district authorities to [upload information of children](#) who have been orphaned after March 2020 on the national portal of National Commission for Protection of Child Rights called Bal Swaraj on or before May 29.

In pursuance of this, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) informed the Supreme Court that 9,346 children in total are in need of immediate care. Out of this, 4,486 are girls and 4,480 are boys. According to NCPCR’s affidavit uploaded by LiveLaw, 1,742 children have been orphaned, 140 abandoned and 7,464 have lost one parent during the coronavirus pandemic.

A further breakdown provided in the NCPCR affidavit states that 788 children who need immediate protection belong to the age group of 0 to 3 years. 1,515 children belong to the 4 to 7 years age bracket and there are about 3,711 children in the age group of 8 to 13 years.

Uttar Pradesh has topped the list with 2,110 children in need of care, 10 who have been abandoned, 1,830 who lost a parent and 270 who have become orphans. In response to this, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has launched a welfare scheme for children who have either lost both of their parents to Covid or the earning parent, as reported in the media. Under this scheme called the Uttar Pradesh Mukhyamantri Bal Seva Yojana, the government will provide financial assistance to a child’s guardian while those who do not have anyone to look after them will be sent to children’s homes.

The Chief Minister was quoted saying by The Economic Times,

“Children who have lost both of their parents to COVID-19, a surviving parent, legal guardian in case the parents have already died earlier, will be included in this scheme. Children, who have lost the earning parent of their family will also be included in the scheme. The state government is committed to better health, better education and for

the bright future of the children.”

During the court hearing on June 1, NCPCR’s lawyer submitted that the District authorities have not been able to provide the complete information relating to the children who have been affected by the loss of either of the parents or one parent during the pandemic. The time given to the District authorities to upload the information before May 29 has been extended till June 5. NCPCR has also been directed to collate the information and file an affidavit by June 6 evening.

The Supreme Court Bench also noted the Amicus Curiae Gaurav Agarwal’s submission that through the “PM Cares for Children” scheme which was announced by the Prime Minister on May 29 this year, children who have lost both parents or surviving parent or legal guardian/ adopted parents during Covid-19 shall be the beneficiaries of aid from the Central Government.

Since the particulars of the scheme is not available, he submitted that the Central Government should be directed to furnish all necessary details about the scheme announced by the Prime Minister.

Further, the Union government has been directed to furnish information relating to the mechanism that would be adopted for distribution of the benefits. The State governments/ Union Territories have been instructed to appoint a Nodal Officer at the level of Secretaries, Joint Secretaries of the concerned District who would interact with him and provide all the necessary information relating to identification of orphans/CNCP’s (Children in Need of Care and Protection) to alleviate their pain and sufferings.

The States of Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar and Jharkhand have been asked to start with this exercise and complete it before June 7.

The matter has been posted for hearing on June 7.

The order may be read here:

[Sc order 01.06.2021 \(1\)](#) from [ZahidManiyar](#)

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