

Proposed amendments to Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015

February 18, 2021

In news : Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the amendments to JJ Act 2015

Key amendments

Union Cabinet has approved the proposal of the Ministry of Women and Child Development to amend the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 to introduce measures for strengthening Child Protection set-up to ensure best interest of children. Amendments include;

- **More powers to DMs:** Authorizing District Magistrate including Additional District Magistrate to issue adoption orders under Section 61 of the JJ Act, in order to ensure speedy disposal of cases and enhance accountability.
- **Smooth implementation:** The District Magistrates(DMs) have been further empowered under the Act, to ensure its smooth implementation, as well as garner synergized efforts in favour of children in distress conditions. The District Child Protection Units will function under the DMs.
- **Child Welfare Committees(CWC):** Proposed amendments define the eligibility parameters for appointment of Child Welfare Committees(CWC) members, and categorizing previously undefined offences as 'serious offence' are some of the other aspects of the proposal.
- **Expand the definition of children:** It is also proposed

to expand the definition of children in need of care and protection and include those children who have been victims of trafficking or drug abuse or child labour as well as those who have been abandoned by their guardians.

- Several difficulties faced in implementation of various provisions of the Act have also been addressed.

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

- It came into force from January 2016 and repealed the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000
- It allows for juveniles in conflict with Law in the age group of 16–18, involved in Heinous Offences, to be tried as adults.
- Change in nomenclature from 'juvenile' to 'child' or 'child in conflict with law', across the Act to remove the negative connotations associated with the word "juvenile"
- New definitions: Several new definitions are included in it such as orphaned, abandoned and surrendered children; and petty, serious and heinous offences committed by children