

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR- 55321

Title: Time to Rethink Foster Care in India,

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓,		
Techn. Quality		✓,		
Clarity	✓,			
Significance	✓,			

Reviewer Name: Dr Abdul Haseeb Mir

Detailed Reviewer's Report

The article “Time to Rethink Foster Care in India” offers a timely, well-researched, and normatively grounded examination of foster care as a family-based alternative within India’s child protection framework. Situated within the constitutional ideals of equity, social justice, and inclusive development, the paper addresses a critically underexplored yet policy-relevant area of child welfare. Its central argument—that foster care in India remains marginal despite legislative backing and requires a coherent, rights-based national policy—is both persuasive and significant

One of the key strengths of the article lies in its conceptual clarity and contextual grounding. The authors effectively locate foster care within India’s demographic reality and child rights landscape, drawing attention to the sheer scale of the child population and the structural vulnerabilities faced by children deprived of parental care. The historical narrative, tracing foster care initiatives from the 1960s pilot programs to contemporary frameworks such as the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, Model Guidelines on Foster Care, and Mission Vatsalya, is well structured and informative. This longitudinal approach helps the reader understand both continuity and stagnation in policy implementation.

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The discussion on family-based care versus institutional care is analytically sound and supported by national and international evidence. By emphasizing the psychological, emotional, and developmental advantages of foster care over institutionalization, the article aligns convincingly with global child-rights discourse and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The differentiation between short-term and long-term foster care, as well as individual and group foster care models, is clearly explained and pedagogically valuable, especially for readers unfamiliar with alternative care typologies.

Another notable contribution is the article's institutional analysis. The examination of the roles of the legislature, executive, judiciary, and civil society is comprehensive and well balanced. The authors move beyond descriptive policy analysis to critically assess gaps in funding, administrative coordination, monitoring mechanisms, and public perception. The argument that foster care remains peripheral due to fragmented governance, weak financial commitment, and sociocultural resistance is convincingly articulated. The emphasis on democratic accountability—through legislative oversight, judicial interpretation of Article 21, and civil society engagement—adds normative depth and originality to the study.

Methodologically, the reliance on secondary sources is appropriate given the policy-oriented nature of the research. The paper draws on a wide range of credible sources, including government reports, UNICEF data, NGO studies, and academic literature. This strengthens the paper's empirical foundation and lends authority to its claims.

However, the article would benefit from minor revisions. Structurally, certain sections—particularly those discussing administrative challenges and institutional roles—tend to be repetitive and could be tightened for greater analytical sharpness. While the rights-based argument is strong, the paper could be further strengthened by incorporating brief comparative references to foster care systems in other Global South countries to situate India's experience more globally. Additionally, the conclusion, though normatively powerful, could more explicitly synthesize the analytical sections rather than restating policy prescriptions.

Language and style are generally clear and accessible, but occasional grammatical inconsistencies and overly long sentences may hinder readability for an international audience. Careful editorial polishing would significantly enhance clarity and impact.

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Overall, the article makes a meaningful contribution to the literature on child welfare, social policy, and inclusive development in India. Its emphasis on foster care as not merely a protective mechanism but an empowering, rights-based alternative is both original and policy-relevant. The paper has clear implications for lawmakers, administrators, social workers, and civil society actors engaged in child protection.

Recommendation: The article is recommended for publication after minor revisions, particularly focusing on structural tightening, language refinement, and modest comparative contextualization.