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1st National Family Summit 2025

Supporting, Nurturing & Enabling Happy Families

REPORT



Disclaimer

This report provides a summary of presentations, discussions, and key takeaways from the National Family Summit 2025, hosted by Miracle Foundation India in New Delhi, India. It reflects the collective insights shared over the two-day summit and aims to highlight innovative practices and expertise in Family Strengthening (FS) and Family-Based Alternative Care (F-BAC) across India.

We acknowledge the diverse and extensive efforts being made in this space and recognize that only a selection of practices and perspectives could be included in this report. The examples and case studies referenced were those shared by speakers and panelists, and their inclusion does not imply endorsement by Miracle Foundation India.

The recommendations presented in the Outcomes & Roadmap section are a synthesis of inputs from various speakers and panelists throughout the summit. They do not necessarily represent the views of all attendees or Miracle Foundation India.

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Acronyms

CCI:	Child Care Institutions
CNCP:	Children in Need of Care & Protection
CCL:	Children in Conflict with Law
CSOs:	Civil Society Organizations
CWC:	Child Welfare Committee
DCPU:	District Child Protection Unit
DPDP Act:	The Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023
GPDP:	Gram Panchayat Development Plans
GEET:	GIS Enabled Entitlement Tracking System
FS:	Family Strengthening
F-BAC:	Family-Based Alternative Care
IACN:	India Alternative Care Network
ICP:	Individual Care Plan
ICB:	Institutionalised Children Explorations and Beyond
JSCPS:	Jharkhand State Child Protection Society
NCPCR:	National Commission for Protection of Child Rights
NIPCCD:	National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development
NIC:	Non-Institutional Care
PRIs:	Panchayati Raj Institution
SIR:	Social Investigation Report
VCPCs:	Village Child Protection Committees

Foreword

India has recognized the critical need to prioritize Family Strengthening (FS) and Family-Based Alternative Care (F-BAC), reaffirming that every child has the right to thrive in a safe, stable, and nurturing family environment. Acknowledging that institutional care may not always be the best solution for a child's holistic development, the country has made significant progress toward a family-centered approach through national policies and frameworks such as The Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection) Act, 2015 (amended in 2021), Mission Vatsalya, and the Foster Care Guidelines 2024. Mission Vatsalya, launched by the Government of India, promotes FS and F-BAC interventions, including Foster Care, Sponsorship, and Aftercare, to ensure that children grow up in supportive, family-based settings.

The 1st National Family Summit, anchored by Miracle Foundation India, celebrates these achievements, showcasing how India is pioneering solutions that inspire global best practices. The Summit, themed 'Supporting, Nurturing, and Enabling Happy Families', brought together government leaders, child protection experts, NGOs, funders, researchers, and youth advocates to deliberate on advancing family-centered care models and strengthening child protection systems.

We thank the Martin James Foundation, Lal Family Foundation, The Miracle Foundation, and UBS Optimus Foundation for their funding support, as well as the India Alternative Care Network (IACN), Care Collectives of Miracle Foundation India, and Neev Collective for their technical collaboration, which contributed to the successful convening of the summit at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, on 13th–14th February 2025.

This report captures the insights, discussions, and key takeaways from the summit, including state government accomplishments, promising models, and transformative solutions that contribute to the continuum of care for children. It also presents practical recommendations emerging from the sessions, emphasizing a clear path forward for strengthening child protection and family-based care in India.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed guests and speakers, including Honorable Chief Guest Dr. Divya Gupta, Member, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR); Honorable Guest of Honor Dr. Rita Patnaik, Joint Director, National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD); Global Expert Mr. Hugh Salmon, Director, Global Social Service Workforce Alliance (GSSWA); Esteemed Board Member Ms. Chhavi Rajawat, Miracle Foundation India; Senior Dignitaries from State Governments; Esteemed Panelists and Moderators; Youth Champions; Distinguished Delegates; Partners; and Care Collectives.

Finally, our deepest appreciation goes to the children, whose resilience and aspirations continue to inspire us in our mission to create a safer, stronger, and more inclusive world for future generations.

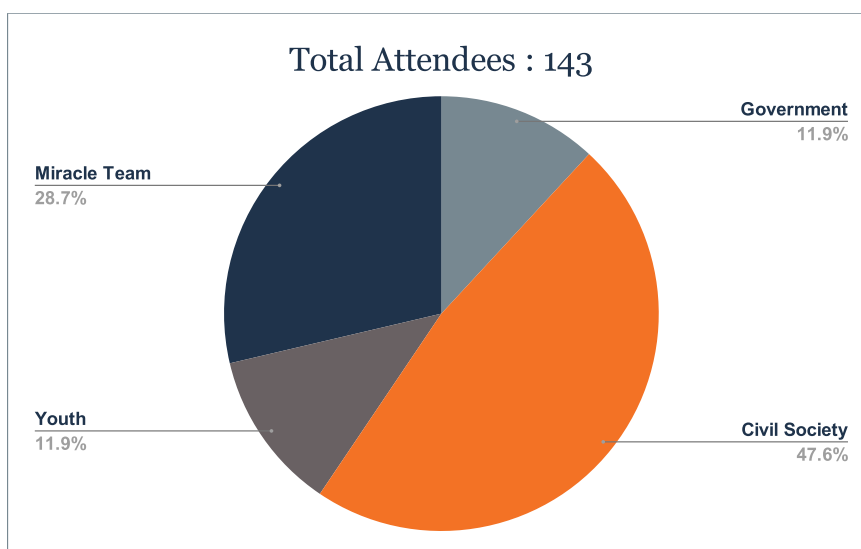
With Deep Gratitude,

Miracle Foundation India

INTRODUCTION: National Family Summit 2025: A Landmark Gathering

The first-ever National Family Summit, anchored by Miracle Foundation India, celebrated achievements, best practices, and collaborative partnerships that have enabled India to pioneer innovative solutions in family strengthening and the care continuum. The summit served as a convergence point for diverse stakeholders, showcasing India's progress and leadership in advancing family-based care models that inspire global practices.

Over the past year, through a series of Leadership Dialogues, Miracle Foundation India has facilitated critical discussions among government officials, child protection experts, civil society organizations (CSOs), funders, researchers, and youth advocates. This summit, attended by 143 participants, consolidated those experiences, providing a platform for states to highlight their accomplishments, share impactful models, and celebrate the transformative efforts of various organizations. Youth with lived experiences played a pivotal role, sharing personal narratives that underscored the importance of a supportive family environment, reinforcing the urgency of strengthening family-centered child welfare policies.



Held on February 13-14, 2025, in New Delhi, the summit aimed to:

- **Celebrate Success Stories** – Showcasing exemplary practices in Family Strengthening (FS) and Family-Based Alternative Care (F-BAC), fostering pride and collective achievement. The Summit also recognized the dedication and contributions of the social service workforce, whose efforts have transformed child protection and family-centered care.
- **Encourage Collaborative Action** – Providing a dynamic platform for Government bodies and CSOs to engage in meaningful dialogue, identify challenges and opportunities, and foster innovative collaborations to strengthen child protection systems.
- **Empower Youth Voices** – Elevating the perspectives of care-experienced youth and young advocates, whose stories of resilience inspired stakeholders to build a stronger, more inclusive, and family-centered child protection framework.

The National Family Summit 2025 marked the beginning of a transformative movement—one that champions family-based care as a fundamental right for every child in India.

Inaugural

Session Speakers

- Ms. Kusum Mohapatra, CEO & Regional Director Miracle Foundation India
- Ms. Chhavi Rajawat, Board Member, Miracle Foundation India
- Honorable Chief Guest Dr. Divya Gupta, Member, NCPCR
- Mr. Hugh Salmon, Director, GSSWA

Opening address

The inaugural session commenced with an opening address by Ms. Kusum Mohapatra, Regional Director & CEO, Miracle Foundation India, who provided an overview of the summit's purpose and objectives. She expressed heartfelt gratitude to all stakeholders for their commitment to the cause of "A Family for Every Child" and emphasized that children, families, and youth remain at the heart of Miracle Foundation India's work.

Welcome address

This was followed by a welcome address by Ms. Chhavi Rajawat, Board Member, Miracle Foundation India, who highlighted the transformative power of collaboration in child protection. She stated, "Together, we have the power to innovate and create lasting change for children. The National Family Summit is both a celebration of progress and a call to reimagine child care in India, ensuring that every child grows up in a safe and loving family."

Keynote Address by the Chief Guest

Dr. Divya Gupta, Member, NCPCR, delivered the keynote address, outlining NCPCR's key initiatives in child protection, including identification of vulnerable families, monitoring mechanisms, and the importance of digital safety for children. She underscored that understanding the root causes of a child's vulnerabilities is crucial in providing effective and impactful support.

She emphasized:

- A one-size-fits-all approach does not work, as every child is unique and requires tailored interventions.
- Love and family support are essential for a child's well-being, and addressing a family's economic condition is key to preventing separation.
- A comprehensive, partnership-driven approach is needed to strengthen families and implement care reforms effectively.

Global Perspective on Family-Based Care

Mr. Hugh Salmon, Director, GSSWA brought in a global perspective, highlighting international promising practices in deinstitutionalization and social workforce development. He reinforced the need for capacity building within child protection systems and shared success stories from Moldova, Bulgaria, Rwanda, Cambodia, Nepal, the UK, and the USA.

He underscored the critical role of the social service workforce, emphasizing:

- A child-centered, rights-based, and need-led approach to maximize child participation.
- The multi-faceted role of social workers in supporting children, families, and communities.
- The necessity of contextualized interventions, ensuring care systems are responsive to the individual needs of children.

The session laid a strong foundation for the summit, setting the stage for discussions on policy reforms, collaborative action, and best practices in FS and F-BAC.

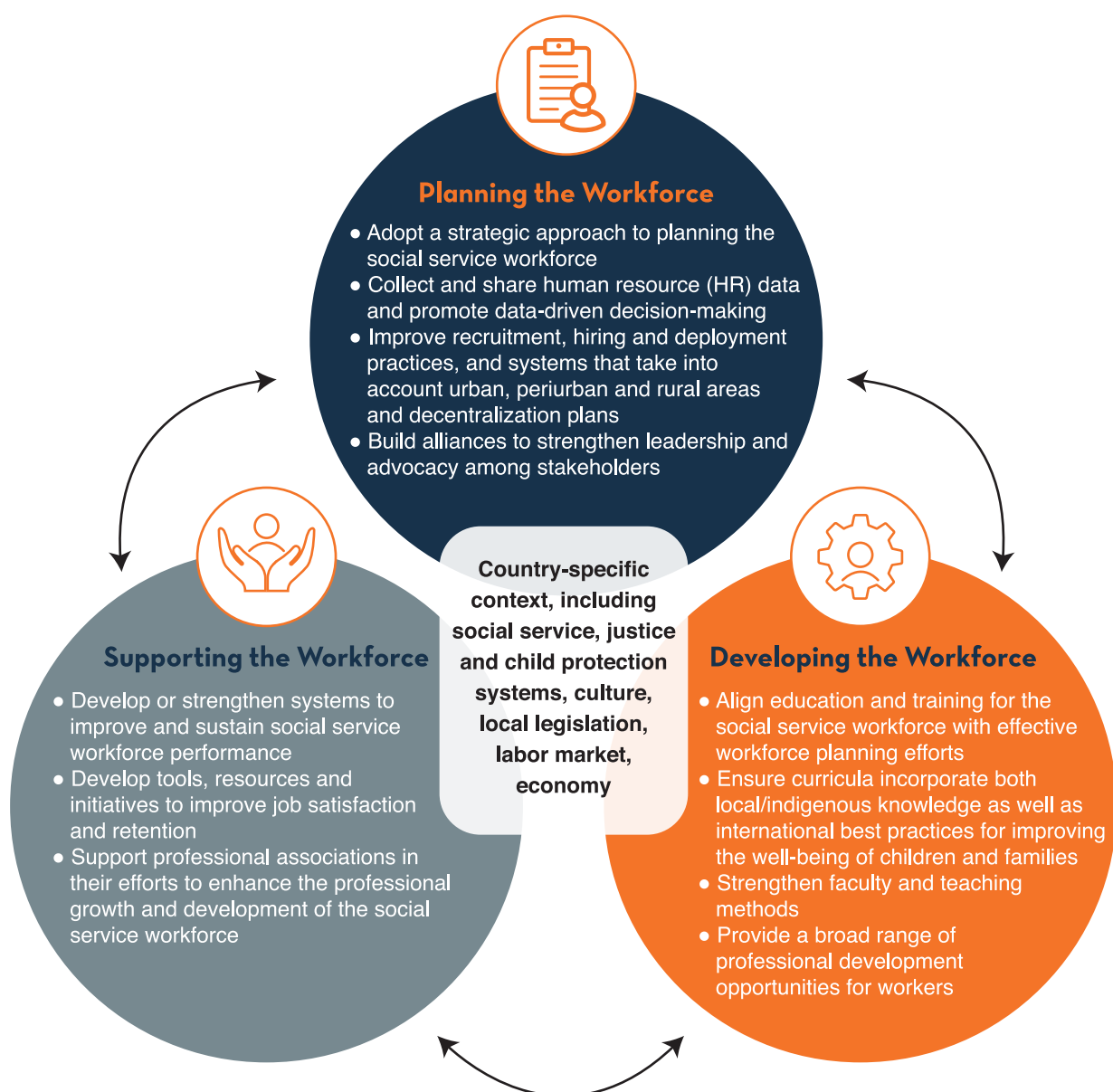


Figure 1: Framework for Strengthening Social Service Workforce

Unveiling of Miracle Mascots

Miracle Foundation India launched our **Mascots - Veera and Saathi!** Representing the voices and unique perspectives of care-experienced youth, Veera and Saathi would act as role models for children and youth, inspiring them, and showing that it's not the adversities but their resilience and potential that define their future. With our mascots, we are now all set to incorporate them in our program design, curriculum, storytelling and campaigns. We are hopeful to create a more engaging and supportive environment towards ensuring a family for every child by facilitating greater societal awareness and systemic change.



Launch of compendium SNEH (Supporting, Nurturing & Enabling Happy Families): A Compendium of Perspectives & Practices



Figure 2: Launch of SNEH Compendium.

A key milestone of the day was the launch of 'SNEH', a comprehensive compendium capturing best practices, innovative models, and contributions from governments, NGOs, and experts in Family-Based Care. Ms. Kusum Mohapatra, Regional Director & CEO, Miracle Foundation India, and Ms. Richa Tyagi, Director, Program Design & Development, Miracle Foundation India, led the launch, accompanied by distinguished guests. Ms. Tyagi introduced SNEH as a comprehensive compendium capturing diverse perspectives and practices on FS and F-BAC from governments, practitioners, and key stakeholders.

She emphasized that Volume 1 of the SNEH Compendium:

- Chronicles the evolution of child care reforms in India over the last four years, including COVID and post-COVID landscape.
- Documents insights from five Leadership Dialogues, offering a deep reflection on key discussions that shaped the sector.
- Features commentaries from expert panelists, encouraging innovative thinking and bold action in advancing FS and F-BAC.
- Includes a curated repository of FAQs raised by participants, providing clarity on FS and F-BAC.
- Offers a basket of reference resources from across the sector, serving as a valuable knowledge tool for practitioners and policymakers.

SNEH stands as a **testament to collective learning**, equipping stakeholders with the **insights, strategies, and inspiration needed to drive impactful change** in child protection and alternative care.

State-Level Achievements in Family Strengthening (FS) and Family-Based Alternative Care (F-BAC)

The National Family Summit 2025 provided a platform for states to showcase best practices and innovations in FS and F-BAC.

Jharkhand: Mr. Vikas Kumar, Deputy Secretary, JSCPS, highlighted the state's progress from 2017 to 2024, emphasizing budget allocations, workforce capacity-building, and financial support through Sponsorship and Aftercare schemes. These efforts have significantly contributed to an **increase in the number of children** transitioning from institutional care to **non-institutional care (NIC)**.

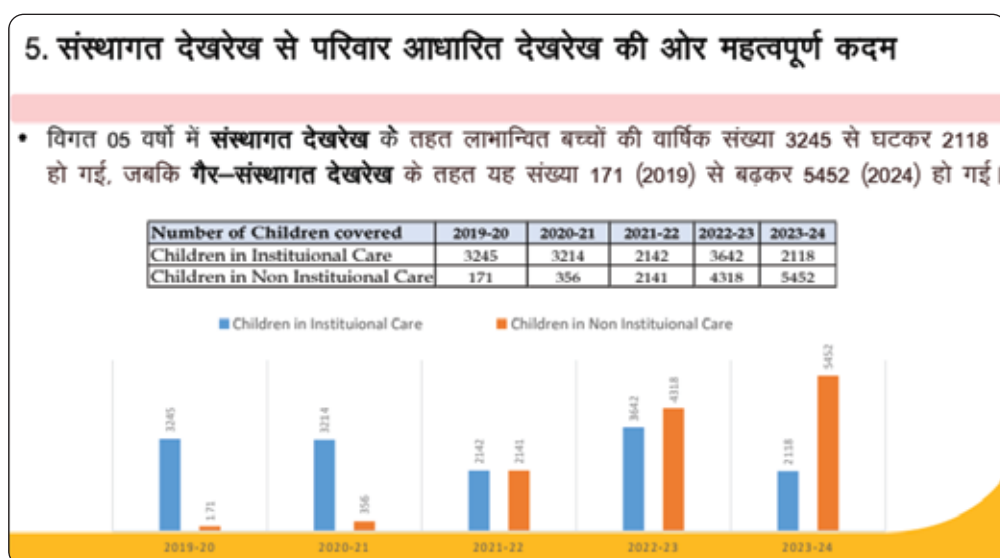


Figure 3: Key Achievements towards Family-Based Care in Jharkhand

Jharkhand faces key challenges in identifying foster families, strengthening prevention and gatekeeping mechanisms, enhancing data management for F-BAC, grading and monitoring CCIs, and establishing robust aftercare networks for youth empowerment. Moving forward, the state aims to develop a five-year FS & F-BAC plan, enhance collaboration with NGOs for effective prevention, and invest in training and capacity-building of the social workforce to ensure sustainable and impactful family-based care solutions.

The state remains committed to scaling up family-based care, ensuring sustainable models, and prioritizing child rights.

Karnataka: Ms. Arundhati T.S., Deputy Director, Directorate of Child Protection, highlighted the state's remarkable efforts in strengthening Family-Based Care (FBC). She shared key initiatives, policy advancements, and successful models that have contributed to enhancing child protection and family-strengthening mechanisms across the state.

Non Institutional Care

- Adoption, Sponsorship, Adoption, Aftercare
- Vishesha Palana Yojana (VPY)
- Prevention and Rehabilitation

Community and family strengthening

- Anna Bhagya Scheme - Nutritional support to vulnerable families
- Gruha Laxmi Scheme - Financial support to women head of households

Initiatives

- 385 Orphaned, Abandoned, Surrendered (OAS) children identified
- 728 children received Sponsorship Support, 71 children in foster care, 298 children in After care
- 7477 children prevented entering CCIs
- 113 children reunited with families

Convergence and Collaboration

- Collaboration with NGOs - Where are India's Children, BOSCO, CSA, CRT, UNICEF
- Collaboration with other Government Departments

Figure 4: Key Achievements towards Family-Based Care in Karnataka

Karnataka faces challenges primarily due to limited resources to support vulnerable children, along with difficulties in adoption, foster care implementation, and disruptions in placements.

As a way forward, the state is focusing on developing clear Sponsorship guidelines, implementing the Model Foster Care Guidelines, and accelerating deinstitutionalization efforts to keep children within family environments. Notably, Karnataka provides financial assistance to women-headed families, a flagship initiative aimed at strengthening family-based care. Through Vishesha Palana Yojana and Sponsorship schemes, 20,819 children are currently receiving support.

Maharashtra: Mr. Rahul More, Joint Commissioner, WCD, Commissionerate Pune highlighted Maharashtra's innovative initiative—the formation of a Child Rights Institute, fostering collaboration between the government, NGOs, CSRs, and CSOs. The state prioritizes capacity-building of the child protection workforce and community prevention programs, embedding FS and FBAC approaches across initiatives. The state has engaged local organizations to promote the Bal Sangopan Scheme for preventing unnecessary family separation. Under the Bal Sangopan Scheme, families receive a monthly stipend of ₹2250 per child to support essential needs such as education, nutrition, and healthcare, ensuring children's well-being within a family environment.



Figure 5: Key Achievements towards Family-Based Care in Maharashtra

Key challenges include the need for increased financial support to reach vulnerable children, a central policy for the recruitment and welfare services for the child protection workforce, and better coordination among government departments. Maharashtra faces a shortage of CCIs for girls, highlighting the need for increased facilities to ensure adequate care and protection for them. Moving forward, Maharashtra aims to strengthen the implementation of Mission Vatsalya to enhance family-based care initiatives.

Madhya Pradesh: Dr. Amitabh Awasthi, Joint Director, Directorate of Women and Child Development shared insights on the state's commitment to reaching vulnerable children. He highlighted key achievements in FS and F-BAC, as reflected in Figure 8. Madhya Pradesh has developed its own tool for conducting vulnerability assessments of families, which was successfully administered in Ujjain a few years ago. This initiative aids in identifying at-risk children and families, ensuring timely interventions and support for family strengthening and alternative care.

S.no	Name of Scheme	Achievements	
		2023-24	2024-25
1	Sponsorship	9,473	25,733
2	Foster Care	126	150
3	Mukhyamantri Bal Aashirwad Yojana	5,461 60 (After Care)	6,331 60 (After Care)
4	Mukhyamantri COVID-19 Bal Seva Yojana	1,435	1,225
5	PM CARES for Children Scheme	433	435
6	Child Helpline	5,049	6,396

Figure 6: Key Achievements towards Family-Based Care in Madhya Pradesh

The Directorate of Women and Child Development (DWCD), Madhya Pradesh, also plays a crucial role in ensuring the effective implementation of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act (JJ Act), 2015, and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012. Through a combination of policy implementation, capacity building, monitoring, and collaboration with various stakeholders, the Directorate ensures child protection and welfare in the state.

He has shared limited awareness and access to social protection schemes, reintegration, and aftercare support as some of the challenges as well as strengthened family-based care models, enhanced aftercare support, improved Community-Based Child Protection systems, and convergence as a road ahead to success.

Tamil Nadu: Ms. G. Kasturi, Deputy Director (M&E), Department of Child Welfare and Special Services has shared that the State has the highest number of CCIs for CNCP children in the country. There were 49430 children in 1168 CCIs before Covid-19 and 27009 children in 859 CCIs post-COVID-19. There are some enabling factors in system strengthening as shared by Ms. Kasturi.

- Tamil Nadu Child Protection Policy 2021
- 5-year state strategy & SOPs
- Formal Partnership with the CSOs
- Creating of Integrated Training Centre for Social Empowerment (ITCSE) for regular knowledge-building
- Rewards and Recognition of Child Protection Workforce



Figure 7: The Progress towards Family-Based Care in Tamil Nadu

Ms. Kasturi highlighted key challenges in the deinstitutionalization process, particularly in transitioning children from NGO-run CCIs to family-based care. One of the significant challenges is the integration of children from migrant families, who often lack stable support systems, making reintegration efforts more complex. Additionally, monitoring and follow-ups remain a critical concern, ensuring that reintegrated children and care leavers receive sustained support to prevent re-entry into institutional care.

Looking ahead, the state is focusing on rehabilitative sponsorship as a strategic intervention to strengthen family-based care. Efforts are being directed towards comprehensive documentation, ensuring that every child's reintegration journey is well-documented for better tracking and intervention. Furthermore, Tamil Nadu plans to implement a systematic support and follow-up mechanism for both care leavers and reintegrated children, ensuring they receive continued guidance, financial support, and access to services essential for their long-term well-being. These initiatives reflect the state's commitment to strengthening child protection and ensuring a successful transition from institutional to family-based care.

Telangana: Ms. N. Mothi, Regional Joint Director of the WD&CW Department, provided an overview of Telangana's state initiatives and the current adoption landscape during her presentation. Through a specific program, Telangana has successfully facilitated the evaluation and inclusion of older children in the adoption pool, challenging traditional adoption norms. This initiative is driven by the belief that "No Child is Too Old to Adopt," reinforcing the state's commitment to providing family-based care and long-term stability for every child in need.

A key highlight of the state's efforts is the establishment of a State Counseling Centre for Children. This center plays a crucial role in providing psychosocial support, ensuring the well-being of children in need of care and protection.

State Initiatives	Achievements (2024-25)
- Adoption help desk - State Counseling centre - Deinstitutionalization of children - Bal Raksha Bhavans and Vehicles	- Sponsorship - 7827 children - Adoption - 161 Children

Figure 8: Key Achievements towards Family-Based Care in Telangana

Bihar, Gujarat, Tripura: Mr. Subroto Chatterjee, Associate Director of Miracle Foundation India, shared insights on FS and FBAC initiatives in Bihar, Gujarat, and Tripura. He highlighted the key support provided to children across these three states, emphasizing efforts to ensure family-based care, reintegration, and long-term well-being.

The presentation focused on strengthening families to prevent separation, state sponsorship schemes, and supporting the reintegration of children from CCIs into family-based care. Additionally, he discussed state-level collaborations, capacity-building efforts, and policy interventions aimed at enhancing child protection systems and ensuring sustainable care solutions. In Gujarat, in partnership with the Districts of Mehsana, Vadodara and Chhota Udepur, Miracle Foundation India is working towards ensuring community-level prevention to stop unnecessary child separation from families and strengthening child welfare committees to initiate gatekeeping at the district level.

Gujarat	Bihar	Tripura
Palak Mata Pita Yojana - 20929 children	Parvarish Yojana - 14746 children	Non Institutional care schemes - 1373 Children
Sponsorship - 1030 children	Sponsorship - 10633 Children	
Foster Care - 112 Children	Bal Sahayata Yojana 0 52 Children	
After Care - 21 Children	Restoration - 14500 Children	

Figure 9: Key Achievements towards Family-Based Care

Gallery Walk: The Gallery Walk was a visually engaging and interactive segment of the National Family Summit, designed as a platform for cross-learning and knowledge-sharing. It provided state governments with an opportunity to creatively showcase their promising practices and key initiatives to a diverse audience of delegates.

State representatives from nine states, along with Miracle Foundation India, set up kiosks displaying IEC materials and state-led interventions. Delegates were divided into ten groups, ensuring systematic engagement with each kiosk. This format facilitated meaningful discussions, enabling CSOs, partners, and government officials to gain insights into various state policies, schemes, and processes. The exchange of knowledge fostered collaboration, offering valuable takeaways for refining and strengthening state-level policies and procedures.

Panel Discussions

Panel 1: Children and Youth's Voices in Care Reform

The panel highlighted the role of children and youth in shaping child protection policies, emphasizing youth-led action, safe spaces, and family-based care. It reinforced that solutions must be designed with and not just for children and youth.

The panel was introduced by **Mr. Vivek Lakra** and his **foster mother, Ms. Sarita Pandey**, former **CWC Member**. Their journey, deeply rooted in their association with the **Centre of Excellence in Alternative Care (CEAC)** through the Chhattisgarh Project, exemplifies the transformative power of F-BAC. Vivek's compelling life story and **powerful voice** resonated deeply, inspiring **youth with lived experiences** and reinforcing the importance of **foster care as a meaningful family-based alternative** for children without parental care.

Moderator: Mr. Absalom Birua

Panelists:

- Ms. Surja, Founding Member of Care Leavers Unite,
- Ms. Sonali Arjun Ghodke, Community Youth Leader, Maharashtra
- Ms. Anisha Sharma, Co-Founder & CEO/Careleaver Inner Circle forum
- Ms. Jyoti, Mobilizer, CHETNA

"Youth need to be at the decision-making table. Youth need to be heard. Creating safe spaces, empowering young voices and ensuring representation will drive real change in child protection," says Surja, Founding Member of Care Leavers Unite.

Ms. Surja: Care Leavers from CCIs often face rejection when voicing concerns, limiting their participation in decision-making. Rigid rules, lack of choices, and fear of consequences create further barriers. Individual Care Plans (ICPs) are usually developed without their input. Those receiving financial literacy, job counseling, and life skills training are better prepared for adulthood. For lasting change, Care Leavers must actively shape policies that affect them. Care Leavers must actively participate in developing policies that impact them if they want long-lasting sustainable changes.

"Empowering young minds is a key to child protection! From mentoring students to advocating for safe spaces, I believe youth-led action is the future. Positive Parenting training for the parents is also very important," says Sonali, a community youth leader from Maharashtra.

Ms. Sonali: Sonali's peer group, initially formed to **bridge learning gaps**, evolved into a support platform for shared struggles. Her involvement in the Bal Panchayat introduced her to child rights and advocacy. A key moment was organizing a menstrual hygiene workshop, overcoming reluctance through encouragement. She believes that **strengthening narratives on child protection**, positive parenting, and leadership can build informed and empowered communities.

"A 'family-like environment' can transform lives. Policies and programs must be designed with children and youth, not just for them but with them. A child-centered approach is the way forward. Let's build a system that truly supports care-leavers," says Ms. Anisha Sharma, Co-Founder and CEO/Care leaver Inner Circle Forum.

Ms. Anisha Sharma emphasized the importance of including children and youth in policy creation, program design, and implementation. She highlighted the need for child care facilities to foster a nurturing, inclusive environment where children feel valued and heard. Youth should actively engage in policy discussions rather than being passive recipients of decisions. Building their agency is crucial for meaningful participation in advocacy and decision-making. At the Care Leaver Inner Circle Forum, they equip youth with skills and knowledge to advocate for themselves and others, ensuring their voices shape policies and programs effectively.

"Support shouldn't be based on chance; it should be a right. We need better awareness, accessible resources and stronger community engagement. Every child deserves protection," says Jyoti, mobilizer from CHETNA NGO.

Ms. Jyoti highlighted a significant lack of awareness about available child protection services at the community level. Many young people are unaware of where to seek help for challenges related to education, health, or other issues. Support should be well-structured and organized, ensuring that all youth in need know where to turn. Governments, civil society organizations, and NGOs must focus on communities lacking such support. Many young individuals are unaware of the resources available to them. Establishing mentorship programs and safe spaces can provide guidance and ensure assistance reaches those who need it most.

Key Takeaways:

- Foster safe spaces where young people can express themselves without fear.
- Equip youth with essential skills and training to navigate life beyond care.
- Actively involve young people in policy-making, ensuring their voices lead to real change.
- Enhance awareness of child protection services, so youth know where to seek help for education, health, and other needs.
- Establish structured and accessible support systems, ensuring assistance reaches all, not just a selected few.
- Create nurturing, family-like environments in CCIs, fostering long-term connections and support beyond care.
- Engage youth in decisions affecting their lives, giving them real choices and opportunities to shape their futures.
- Invest in mentorship and skill-building programs, empowering youth to advocate for themselves and influence policy.

Panel 2: Data driven decision making in Child Protection and Technology as an enabler

The panel discussed the significance of evidence generation, longitudinal studies, technology, and research in the domains of family strengthening (FS) and family-based alternative care (F-BAC).

They highlighted how data-driven evidence can inform policy decisions, address data gaps, and tackle challenges related to confidentiality and risk assessment. The conversation also explored leveraging innovative digital tools and applications to support the social workforce, ultimately benefiting children and families. Additionally, the panel emphasized the importance of understanding data security and confidentiality, particularly in compliance with the Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023.

Moderator: Ms. Kusum Mohapatra, CEO & Regional Director, Miracle Foundation India

Panelists:

- Dr. Kiran Modi, Founder Managing Trustee, Udayan Care
- Ms. Swagata Raha, Director-Research & Co-Director, Restorative Practices, Enfold Proactive Health Trust
- Ms. Shikha Rana, Assistant Vice President, Research, Sambodhi Research and Communications Private Limited
- Mr. Anuj Agarwal, Advocate, Supreme Court; Founder & Chairman of the National Cyber, AI & Data Privacy Bar Association, New Delhi

Dr. Kiran Modi highlighted the critical gap in longitudinal studies and evidence in child protection, FS and F-BAC with the most reliable research coming from the West. She emphasized the need for robust evidence generation and data analysis. At Udayan Care, several monitoring and research tools were developed with families, communities, and children at the core, designed by statisticians, psychologists, and expert committees to address real challenges. The "Institutionalised Children Explorations and Beyond" (ICB) journal, published by Udayan Care in partnership with Sage Publications, is now recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC). The mission of ICB journal is to create a rich platform for sharing discourses related to laws, practices, and evidence-based research, regarding alternative care for children and youth without parental care and family strengthening in South Asia (now Globally) to serve the purpose of developing dialogues and debates amongst practitioners, academics, researchers, policy makers, advocates, activists and volunteers.

Ms. Swagata Raha highlighted the biggest challenge in child protection and care reforms—the lack of readily available data in the public domain to guide informed decision-making. This gap can lead to actions that may not fully prioritize children's welfare and the best interests of the child. Ms. Raha emphasized key strategies to uphold the best interests of the child and ensure effective restoration processes:

- Capacity building of child protection functionaries is non-negotiable. There is a need for integrating various dashboards to enable data-driven decision-making. For example, gaps such as missing details and orders at the CWC level and poor-quality SIRs must be addressed.
- When working with CNCP and F-BAC methods, functionaries and service providers must maintain impartial and non-judgmental attitudes, ensuring decisions are based on ethical considerations.

- The child protection system is under-resourced, leading to insufficient funding, staffing, and services. This lack of resources limits the system's ability to prevent and respond effectively to child abuse, neglect, and exploitation, often resulting in inadequate support for at-risk children.

Additionally, Ms. Raha reiterated that the best interest of the child does not always equate to restoration. Instead, decisions must be guided by a thorough analysis of the child's safety, well-being, vulnerabilities, and developmental, emotional, and cultural needs before determining the most suitable course of action.

Ms. Shikha Rana emphasized the need for a more robust, innovative, and cost-effective MEL system and procedure. A sustainable model and strategy would be one that develops community-based monitoring tools and measurements while keeping communities and children at the center. A few sustainable techniques to work with include using community score cards, engaging youth groups and volunteers in the community to document the most notable changes they observe, taking community-based testimonials into consideration, etc. Ms. Rana adds that to prevent duplication and provide greater space for shared learnings and innovations; organizations, civil societies, and other stakeholders must work together and collaborate on reports, evidence, and data that are currently available in the public domain. Additionally, we must unify definitions and improve the usability and insight of dashboards and reports.

Mr. Anuj Agarwal emphasized the importance of supervised and directed data usage under the DPDP Act, given the vast amount of online data today. He highlighted that the law applies as soon as any data is digitized and outlined three key considerations:

1. **Goal** – Minimizing unnecessary data collection.
2. **Consent** – Data must only be used for its originally intended purpose.
3. **Storage** – Data should be securely stored to prevent misuse.

He asserted that the DPDP Act will aid individuals, scholars, and organizations engaged in meaningful work while reinforcing the need for data protection and ethical data collection. He said "We need to be careful about data protection and only collect data that is relevant. Consent is of the utmost importance"

Key Takeaways:

- The DPDP Act should be thoroughly understood by organizations and stakeholders.
- Community centered monitoring processes and tools need to be developed which must be led by the community and facilitated by external technical support.
- Organizations, civil societies, and other stakeholders with shared mission and objectives must collaborate together on commonly existing reports, evidences and in order to avoid duplication and provide more room for shared learnings and innovations in the domains of Child Protection, FS and F-BAC.
- Capacity building and upholding the understanding of child protection functionalities towards FS & F-BAC should be non-negotiable.
- The "best interest of the child" principle.

Panel 3: Strengthening Family Support Systems

The panel explored comprehensive approaches to building resilience in families and children through an inclusive lens, emphasizing well-being domains as foundational pillars of family support. Key discussions focused on the provision of essential services, including Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), strengthening linkages with social protection schemes, and promoting cross-sectoral collaboration to ensure holistic and sustainable support systems.

Moderator: Mr. Prabhat Kumar, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF

Panelists:

- Ms. Sonal Kapoor, CEO, Protsahan India Foundation
- Mr. Ashok Jani, Foundation for Ecological Security (FES)
- Mr. Rahul More, Joint Commissioner, WCD, Commissionerate Pune, Maharashtra
- Ms. Richa Tyagi, Lead - Program Design and Development, Miracle Foundation India

Mr. Rahul More highlighted family-strengthening initiatives in Maharashtra, including women's policy, local governance funds, and skill development programs, emphasizing their role in empowering women to care for their children. He discussed schemes like Bal Sangopan, which provides financial and family support through trained social workers. A comprehensive booklet detailing these schemes underscores the government's commitment to building strong, resilient families. During COVID-19, 32,000 children received support through Bal Sangopan, including financial aid and follow-ups, while school fees for over 4,000 children were covered. Currently, 53 sectors are engaged in family strengthening, employing diverse strategies, including sports-based interventions, to support children and families.

Ms. Sonal Kapoor emphasized the need for integrating Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), education, life skills, and livelihoods to effectively empower families at the last mile. She highlighted the importance of capacity-building, particularly for supporting street and migrant children, with a strong focus on mental health and psychosocial care. She stressed the need for developing resources in local languages using graphics, videos, and AI to provide affordable and accessible support, in collaboration with the system. The Government and NGOs must adopt a family-centric approach, recognizing intergenerational trauma as a public health issue. She also shared how Protsahan has developed trauma-informed tools and resources to enhance care practices and is available in the public domain to use. Finally, she underscored the importance of framing strong narratives in child protection, urging stakeholders to ask the right questions to the right audience for impactful change.

Mr. Ashok Jani emphasized the significant role of livelihoods in maintaining family stability, stressing that government schemes require a proactive and collaborative approach to access. He highlighted the need for context-specific information and the integration of technology across departments using a standard platform. An example of this is the GIS-Enabled Entitlement Tracking System¹ (GEET) app, which uses eligibility criteria to suggest relevant schemes, interfacing with various departments to provide targeted support.

¹<https://geet.observatory.org.in/>

GEET GIS Enabled Entitlement Tracking System

English

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Ms. Richa Tyagi outlined key challenges in family strengthening - in terms of the availability of basic documents, quality follow-up at scale, and strengthening community front-line workers and VCPCs. Despite having tools and policies, more collaboration and convergence are needed, she said. A collaborative approach, involving all stakeholders, is necessary for the effective implementation of family-strengthening programs, she stated, further adding that local structures, such as VCPCs, PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institution) are essential in identifying at-risk families and providing support solutions.

Key Takeaways:

- Empower Families: Strengthen programs like Bal Sangopan to provide financial support, women empowerment, capacity building to social workforce
- Integrate MHPSS & Life Skills: Incorporate mental health, life skills, and livelihoods into family strengthening efforts, focusing on trauma-informed care.
- Leverage Technology: Use GIS-enabled platforms like GEET for targeted access to social welfare schemes.
- Strengthen Local Systems: Build capacity in VCPCs, PRIs, ULBs for community-based identification and support of at-risk families.
- Improve Documentation & Follow-up: Address gaps in basic documents and ensure quality follow-up through trained front-line workers.

Panel 4: The Role of Community as a Gatekeeper and First Support System for Children at Risk of Separation

The discussion emphasized integrating child rights into Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GDPs) and mobilizing resources for child-friendly villages. Panelists explored strategies to strengthen community roles in child protection and family support, showcasing successful community-led gatekeeping models and best practices.

Moderator: Joseph Sebastian, Chief of Party, Keystone Human Services International

Panelists:

- Dr. Indrani Bhattacharyya, Chief Executive Officer, CINI
- Mr. Lokanath Misra, Chief Functionary, ARUNA
- Ms. Nicole Rangel, Co-Founder, Leher
- Mr. Pankaj Pandey, National Program Officer, Transform Rural India Foundation

Mr. Lokanath Misra emphasized the need for stronger convergence between panchayats, communities, and Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) to mobilize resources for child-led development through Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs). He highlighted successful practices from his organization in Odisha, demonstrating how they mobilized 5% untied funding from Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to support child protection initiatives. He highlighted the importance of integrating child protection into broader social programs, including livelihood, education, health, and nutrition, to ensure a holistic approach. Mr. Misra pointed out that the challenge is not a lack of resources but rather their effective allocation and prioritization for child protection. Additionally, he stressed the need to address the complex vulnerabilities of children in urban spaces by strengthening local urban governance to create a safer environment for children.

Ms. Nicole Rangel discussed Mission Vatsalya, which prioritizes children's rights and mandates local governments to ensure comprehensive protection and care, with the goal of "leaving no child behind." She highlighted how Mission Vatsalya underscores the critical role of communities and Panchayats in strengthening child welfare, protection, and alternative care. This is achieved through the reinforcement of Child Welfare and Protection Committees, increased community involvement, capacity-building of frontline workers and social workers, and enhancing child participation through various initiatives. Ms. Rangel also emphasized the importance of fostering conversations on inclusivity in child protection efforts.

Dr. Indrani Bhattacharyya discussed the three-level preventive model for child protection. At the primary level, children with minimal risk of separation and vulnerabilities continue to live with their families. The secondary level includes children at higher risk of separation, requiring targeted support at the community level. The tertiary level comprises children facing complex vulnerabilities, necessitating specialized interventions. Dr. Bhattacharyya emphasized that the goal should be to shift all children toward the primary level through effective interventions and strategies.

Mr. Pankaj Pandey emphasized the importance of integrating child rights into GPDPs to ensure children's needs are prioritized in village-level planning. He highlighted the role of Panchayat-level tied and untied funds in creating child-friendly Panchayats that uphold children's rights. Strengthening the capacity of communities and first-level service providers is crucial for mobilizing resources and fostering. Mr. Pandey also emphasized the critical role of women collectives in ensuring the creation of child-friendly communities at the village level.

Key Takeaways:

- Strengthen Collaboration: Build stronger links between panchayats, communities, and CWCs for child-led development through GPDPs.
- Mobilize Resources: Replicate successful models like Odisha's 5% untied funding for child protection.
- Integrate Child Protection: Embed child protection in all sectors—livelihood, education, health, and nutrition.
- Empower Local Governance: Strengthen urban governance to address children's vulnerabilities in cities.
- Capacity Building: Enhance skills of communities, frontline workers, and panchayats for effective child protection.
- Promote Inclusivity: Foster child participation and inclusivity in protection efforts
- Preventive Models: Implement a three-level prevention approach to keep children with families.
- Support Women Collectives: Empower women collectives to build child-friendly, protective communities.

Panel 5: Role of Philanthropy in Child Protection & Care Reform

The panel on philanthropy in child protection discussed funding challenges and highlighted philanthropy's strategic role as a change agent. They emphasized the need for innovative funding models, collaboration with government agencies, and cross-sector partnerships to create a sustainable impact and drive policy changes in the child welfare system.

Moderator: Mr. Arun Nathan, Partner, Sattva Consulting

Panelists:

- Ms. Meha Tiwari, Manager - HCL Foundation
- Mr. Rishad Surti, Manager, DASRA- Neev Collective
- Ms. Parvati Chandran, CEO Delhi NCR, SVP India
- Ms. Bindi Dharia, Founder V-ALL

Ms. Bindi Dharia pointed out that while funding is available, it is often not being directed to where it is most needed. She mentioned that there is limited funding for child protection compared to sectors like education, healthcare, and climate change. Philanthropists often require guidance on where to allocate their funds, but child protection remains a lower priority under the broader "Others" category. Ms. Dharia shared how V-All was built with the premise that individuals could engage with communities to give back time, talent, and resources, to make giving a part of everyday life.

Mr. Rishad Surti emphasized the need for collaboration and building networks to drive social change. He stressed the importance of strengthening narratives around existing learnings and practices in child protection, family strengthening, and family-based care. By broadening the focus, the right narrative can address wider systemic issues affecting children, enabling more comprehensive solutions and greater impact. His organization aims to unite various entities and collaborate with governments to scale initiatives. Mr. Surti also highlighted the importance of evaluating both qualitative and quantitative results of interventions to present to philanthropists and stakeholders, ensuring lasting impact and fostering strong relationships.

Ms. Meha Tiwari highlighted HCL Foundation's integration of child safeguarding and protection into its programs, expanding the scope of child protection. She emphasized the importance of strong organizational policies and monitoring systems to identify risks and develop strategies to mitigate them. As a corporate foundation, HCL Foundation critically examines the program's theory of change, relies on evidence-based data, and **incorporates innovations and technology** to strengthen its work and build impactful narratives.

Ms. Parvati Chandran emphasized the importance of **telling our stories** more effectively to mobilize resources from High Net-Worth Individuals (HNIs) for various interventions. She pointed out that children from all backgrounds, including middle-class and elite families, are at risk and need protection, not just the underprivileged. Drawing from her experience in the child protection sector, she acknowledged the **challenges of raising funds for child protection** and family strengthening. Ms. Chandran also took the time during the break to speak with **youth with lived experience**, addressing their queries on support for care leavers. She volunteered her time for future engagement, offering her support to the cause.

Key Takeaways:

- Child protection is increasingly integrated into CSR programs across livelihoods, health, and education, but dedicated funding remains limited.
- HNIs need more compelling stories and discussions to direct their contributions effectively.
- Many small and medium enterprises lack awareness on impactful CSR investments in child protection, requiring better guidance.
- Implementation organizations must simplify impact communication, amplify child protection as a mainstream issue, and engage donors effectively.
- Intermediaries play a key role in connecting funders with effective models through due diligence and impact measurement.
- Multi-stakeholder partnerships can ensure sustainable financing, pooling resources for long-term systemic change in child protection.

A summary of all the thought-provoking conversations from Day One kicks off Day Two; followed by dissemination of findings of the project, 'Strengthening the Social Service Workforce for Family-based Care-Learning from young people with lived experience of care'.

How can social workers help me and my family?

Help with education
placing children in safe alternative care

Reducing poverty
Enabling job opportunities

Guidance
protection from abuse / harm

Assessment / referrals / monitoring
Keeping families together

Testimonials:

- "Good social workers help us to study well."
-Child in residential care
- "The staff here [at the CCI] helped us to live in the community, and motivated us. We felt the same support was given even when we went out of the CCI."
-Boy reintegrated from residential care
- "I was in fear. With the help of teachers, I called Child Line. They rescued me and took me to the CWC [Child Welfare Committee]. Through them I joined this CCI."
-Girl in residential care
- "Even after leaving the CCI, the social workers meet us and check if we're safe, once every three months."
-Young woman reintegrated from residential care
- "Social workers can guide parents to focus on the family, help to strengthen the family, make the family run smoothly."
-Young adult who has left residential care
- "Social workers taught us how to behave with the child, how to ensure the safety of the child and legal formalities."
-Foster carer
- "Social workers find time to comfort us during our difficult times."
-Child in residential care
- "Social workers also helped us to understand how to save."
-Mother of a child reintegrated from residential care
- "They connect the children and families, make them understand each other."
-Mother of reintegrated child

Before the summit, the project's findings were presented to the Department of Children Welfare and Special Services, Tamil Nadu. The department received them well, offering valuable insights on resource utilization and future studies. They expressed strong interest in integrating the training manual, videos, and other materials to strengthen the social workforce. The findings and recommendations underscored the **vital role of social workers** in supporting children and families from vulnerable communities and **what children and youth expect** from them.

Discussion Points:

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Recognition & Awards For Promising Practices

The recognition & awards for promising practices session was a key highlight of the National Summit, reinforcing Miracle Foundation India's commitment to honoring the social service workforce and best practices through leadership dialogues. The awards celebrated the dedication and achievements of government officials, care collectives, CCIs making significant progress in reintegration, champions of family-based care (FBC), and youth leaders advocating for family strengthening and alternative care. By recognizing these contributions, the summit aimed to inspire and amplify effective models, fostering a stronger ecosystem for child protection and care reform.

Concluding Address

Mr. Sanjay Mishra, Founder of Bal Kalyan Sangh and NACG-EVAC State Convener, Jharkhand, underscored the critical need for system strengthening, emphasizing that family strengthening must be at the heart of child protection efforts. Mr. Mishra highlighted that the collaboration with Miracle Foundation India emerged from an initiative led by NCPDR and the District Administration of East Singhbhum, aimed at identifying and supporting vulnerable households in Jharkhand. Through a systematic vulnerability mapping process, 1,000 high-risk families were identified for targeted interventions, ensuring that children remain in stable family settings rather than entering institutional care. This initiative serves as a model for proactive family strengthening, demonstrating the power of data-driven decision-making and cross-sector collaboration in achieving long-term child protection goals.

Dr. Rita Patnaik, Joint Director, NIPCCD, delivered the concluding address, emphasizing the need for child-centric models and responsive caregiving. Citing a study on CCIs, she highlighted gaps in empathy and training, stressing the importance of capacity-building and integrating technology while valuing human touch. She acknowledged Miracle Foundation India for creating a meaningful platform and shared NIPCCD's commitment to training and child protection services. Dr. Patnaik also underscored mental health in child protection, the role of adolescent girls, and the interconnectedness of mother and child, advocating for supporting pregnant mothers as a foundation for gender equality. She detailed NIPCCD's post-COVID initiatives, including state-specific training, workshops, and counseling services, addressing the growing need for capacity building in the sector.

Valediction

Ms. Sandhya Mishra, Sr. Director – Government Partnership & Strategic Alliance, formally closed the summit, expressing gratitude to the Chief Guest, Guest of Honour, senior government officials, Miracle Foundation India Board and leadership team, supporters, partners, care collectives, panelists, moderators, and youth with lived experience. She emphasized that this is not the end of a conversation but the beginning of a movement—one where collective efforts ensure that no child is deprived of family, love, and stability. She urged everyone to carry forward the knowledge, partnerships, and commitments from these two days into policy, programs, and action, reinforcing a shared dedication to child protection and family-based care.

Key Outcomes

The 1st National Family Summit served as a milestone in advancing the discourse on family strengthening and family-based alternative care in India. It reinforced the collective strength of diverse stakeholders within the child protection system and positioned Miracle Foundation India as a thought leader in driving systemic change.

1. Strengthening Leadership & Stakeholder Engagement

- The summit established a continuous cycle of Leadership Dialogues, ensuring that insights from grassroots stakeholders inform national discussions and vice versa.
- Moving forward, Leadership Dialogues will focus on key thematic areas, ensuring deeper engagement and action-oriented outcomes.

2. Centering Youth Voices & Lived Experiences

- A youth working group will be formed to ensure youth leadership in the 2nd National Family Summit, with a dedicated youth-led panel amplifying their perspectives.
- This cohort will take on projects representing the voices of children and youth with lived experience, ensuring their insights shape policy and practice.

3. Deep-Dive into Government Initiatives & Documentation

- State-led innovations were highlighted in detail by government officials. Moving forward, the Leadership Dialogues will deep-dive into selected initiatives, ensuring they are documented as replicable models.
- This will eliminate the need for separate documentation for policy promotion, as these initiatives will be consolidated into a national compendium of best practices.

4. Elevating the Role of Social Workers

- The critical role of social workers (DCPU, CCIs, etc.) in safeguarding vulnerable children was reinforced. While Miracle Foundation has recognized their contributions through Leadership Dialogues and the summit, a long-term strategy is needed to make this role aspirational, well-respected, and adequately compensated.
- This calls for systemic change to elevate social work as a recognized and valued profession within the child protection ecosystem.

5. Framing Child Protection within Social Protection

- A key takeaway from the summit was the need to position child protection as a subset of social protection rather than an isolated issue.
- This necessitates stronger narrative-building around family strengthening, family-based care, and child protection, ensuring the right questions are asked to drive policy, programmatic, and funding shifts.

6. Strengthening Community-Based Child Protection Mechanisms

- There is an urgent need to work consistently with children, adolescents, and communities at the grassroots level.
- Stakeholders at the block and Gram Panchayat (GP) levels should be supported in translating the concept of child-friendly Gram Panchayats into actionable strategies aligned with local needs and resources.
- The inclusion of child protection priorities in GPDP presents a tangible pathway for community-led child protection efforts and must be continuously strengthened.

7. Enhancing Collaboration & Inclusive Insights

- To avoid duplication and maximize impact, organizations, civil society actors, and key stakeholders must work together on common reports, evidence generation, and shared learnings in child protection and family-based care.
- Understanding and adapting to legal frameworks like the DPDP Act is essential for organizations working in this space.
- There is a growing need for more intersectional discourse on gender and its linkages to family strengthening and family-based alternative care, ensuring a more inclusive approach to child protection.
- Future dialogues must also prioritize children with disabilities, ensuring inclusive policies and collaboration to address their unique needs within family-based care models.

8. Data-Driven Decision-Making & Technology Integration

- The summit reinforced the importance of leveraging data and technology for better decision-making in child protection.
- Data-driven approaches can enhance case management, track family-based care progress, and support evidence-based policy advocacy while ensuring confidentiality.
- Technology can be a game-changer in child protection, enabling real-time decision-making, digital case tracking, and scalable interventions that improve outcomes for children.

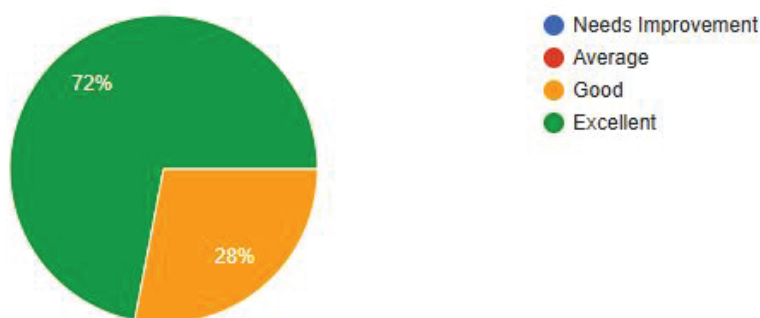
Feedback Summary

The summit provided a forum for civil society practitioners, developmental experts, government officials, and states to highlight their achievements & models, scalable practices and facilitate important discussions on family strengthening, alternative care, and the role of cross-sector partnerships in child protection.

72% of the respondents rated “excellent” in response to their overall experiences at the summit. In response to their intention to put the insights, best practices, or models they learned at the summit into practice, 56% of the respondents said they had obtained important insights and intended to use them in several ways.

1. How would you rate your overall experience at the National Family Summit(NFS), anchored by Miracle Foundation India, on February 13&14, 2025?

25 responses



2. To what extent do you plan to implement the insights, best practices or models shared during the summit in your work?

20 responses



Overall Experience & Execution

- Excellent, wonderful, and meaningful summit.
- Well-planned and executed.
- Enriching experience with great learning.symbol
- Enjoyed the panel discussions.

Suggestions for Improvement

- Provide translation support, even if informal, for non-Hindi speakers.
- Offer session recordings or reports for those who missed parts of the summit.
- Allow more time for state government representatives to present and deep dive into key aspects of family-based care.
- Ensure clear links between concepts and discussions, especially policy-related topics.
- More time was needed for networking before participants had to leave.

Content & Focus Areas

- More discussions on Adoption as an alternative family-based care model.
- Technology in child protection needs more focus—could be a game-changer.
- Data sessions were insightful; maintaining confidentiality while using data for advocacy is crucial.
- Valuable insights from government representatives and diverse donor perspectives.
- Voices of care leavers were impactful—would have liked to hear more from families and young adults restored to family or kinship care.

Logistics & Participation

- Difficult to choose between parallel sessions—consider ways to accommodate participation in multiple sessions.
- Some participants were able to schedule productive meetings with peers, adding to the value of the summit.

Annexures

1. National Family Summit Highlights
2. Photos
3. Agenda
4. State Presentations
5. Social Media Posts
6. SNEH (Supporting, Nurturing & Enabling Happy Families):
A Compendium of Perspectives & Practices