

# Who cares for children?

Human rights violations are rampant, says JAYANT BHANDARI

It's horrifying. A 12-year-old child, Paras, is slapped inside the most revered temple in a small village in Rajasthan. The place is bursting with religious fervour. However, what is missing is the spirit of humanity.

No one even gives a second glance at the child now being held by neck and dragged out. One person moves out and challenges the perpetrators. They say that it's none of his business, the child is a criminal. But do they have the right to deliver justice?

A line of children outside a railway platform sit up and down holding their ears while two policemen laugh and brandish their sticks. It is a big city where no one cares. When a complaint to the police control room is lodged, the person on the other side responds by saying that the police are doing their job!

A cyclist jumps the red light. Infuriated, the traffic policeman goes and slaps. Some think that's the way to treat them. Others don't care. It is an incident forgotten a moment later. It is because we refuse to get horrified by such acts of reckless abuse of human rights that they are continuing. It is true that a criminal should be punished. But there is a code of conduct for that also. A letter is sent to the boss of the perpetrators. The copies are sent to some human rights organisations,

some newspapers. But nothing necessarily happens. The human rights organisations won't necessarily do much, neither will the media necessarily investigate.

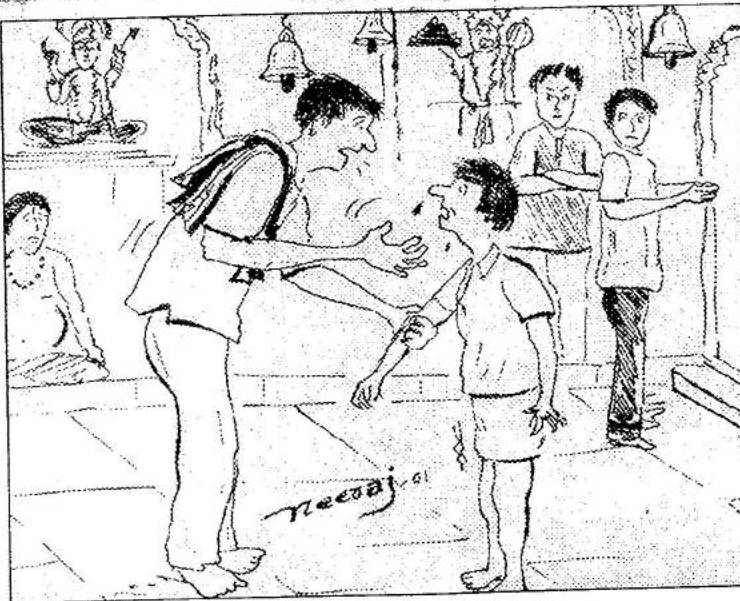
It is late 1980s. In a top engineering college in Indore, a child is working in the hostel mess. He has no

And residents are among the smartest and the most eligible bachelors of the country! Anyway, the residents, by some trick of logic, believe that the abuse issue should stay within the 'home'.

A few find it unacceptable, take the matter to the administration.

They are warned that this would harm the prestige of the college and are threatened with dire consequences if the matter goes out. For an educational institution one wonders what is more harmful - hiding an abuse or letting the truth prevail.

A mistake and the boss comes out thrashes his subordinates in front of everyone else in an amusement park in a big city. The fact that there are no



family - having run away from an abusive stepmother in Bihar. Seven workers of the hostel find the child stealing something. Good excuse for them to abuse him.

The violators themselves get beaten up. The residents themselves get badly ragged. The seniors say they do it because they got beaten up 'as well! This carries on with no thought or analysis of breaking the vicious cycle. It is the rationalisation of sadists.

proper safety measures is the management's mistake. A car mechanic employs children who are poorly paid. These children often get lashed. Some clients even love the mechanic for his strict discipline! Everyone can do their bit - make the abusers aware of your displeasure. Walk out so that their business suffers. And you do count, in fact every bit does. And if people complained, felt horrified, were more sensitive, so much could happen!