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Legal analysis of juvenile justice system in Sri Lanka: A human rights perspective

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Background: The primary goal of Sri Lanka's juvenile justice system is to support the reintegration and rehabilitation of children who run afoul of the law while making sure their rights are upheld. Concerns exist, meanwhile, about how effectively this system conforms to other international human rights norms, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The purpose of this study was to assess how well Sri Lanka's juvenile justice system upholds and defends children's rights while adhering to the best interests of the child premise.

Method: The research approach used was qualitative. The study looked at domestic laws, policy papers, court rulings, and reports from organizations like the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) and UNICEF that were published. To get useful insights on using the best interest principle in the juvenile justice system, semi-structured interviews were carried out with child rights activists, juvenile justice officers, and attorneys.

Results: The juvenile justice system in Sri Lanka has serious flaws including arbitrary detention, a dearth of child-friendly courts, procedural delays, and insufficient rehabilitative measures were among the main problems. The interviews brought to light a lack of training for authorities who interact with children, as well as irregularities in legal procedure.

Conclusion: Urgent institutional and legal reforms are needed to guarantee that the juvenile justice system complies with international norms. Rehabilitation, child-sensitive practices, and the uniform application of the child's best interests at every step of the legal system must be prioritized.

Keywords: Juvenile justice, child rights, rehabilitation, best interests of the child.