

MUZAFFARPUR CASE EFFECT

Govt's New Protection Policy for Children Shelters Soon

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New Delhi: After a Supreme Court rap over the case of sexual abuse case in a state-run shelter home in Bihar's Muzaffarpur, the Centre plans to launch a new child protection policy for shelters across the country.

The women and child development ministry had come up with the guidelines drafted by the NGO Childline in 2013 before the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.

But the ministry officials said the guidelines were a mere 'wish list' that lacked any concrete direction.

The guidelines of the National Policy for Children, 2013, which was drafted by the NGO, merely defined the rights of children as individuals and made the ministry the nodal authority to follow the norms.

"The idea is to fix responsibilities to ensure accountability. We are looking at defining responsibilities of each stakeholder such as the district magistrate and the child welfare committees," said WCD secretary Rakesh Srivastava. The ministry will submit the revised protection scheme in the court on



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SUBMISSION



Women & child development ministry to

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October 8.

While WCD minister Maneka Gandhi had ordered audit of all 9,000 child care institutions across the country, Srivastava said the Centre has so far received reports of about 6,000. "While it is only a report on the infrastructural facilities in these homes, the situation is

quite 'grim'," he admitted.

On Thursday, the Central Bureau of Investigation, which is probing the physical and sexual abuse of girls in the Bihar shelter home, told the bench headed by Justice Madan B Lokur that that it had recovered the skeleton of a minor girl. Justice Lokur had said framing a policy for child protection might take time but a shorter and immediate action was necessary to help the victims of abuse.

Over 30 girls were allegedly raped and sexually abused at a shelter home run by an NGO in Muzaffarpur and the issue was highlighted in an audit report submitted by Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) to the Bihar social welfare department.