Legal Protection of the Girl Child in India

The Indian Constitution

Constitutional provision	Rights and protection
Article 14	Equality before law.
Article 15(1)	Prohibition of discrimination on grounds including sex.
Article 15(3)	Special provisions for women and children.
Article 21	Protection of life and personal liberty.
Article 21A	Right to free and compulsory education for children aged 6–14.
Article 23	Prohibition of human trafficking and forced labour.
Article 24	Prohibition of employing children below 14 in factories, mines, and hazardous work.
Article 39(e)	Protection of children's health and strength from abuse.
Article 39(f)	Protection of children's development and dignity.
Article 45	Early childhood care and education for children below six years.

1. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012

Protects children below 18 years from sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography. It provides child-friendly procedures for reporting and trial and applies to all children, irrespective of gender.

2. Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

Prohibits child marriage. It defines a female below 18 years as a child and provides legal remedies and punishment for offences relating to child marriage.

3. Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009

Guarantees free and compulsory elementary education for children aged 6–14 and promotes equal access to education without discrimination.

4. Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015

Provides care, protection and rehabilitation for children in need, including abandoned, orphaned and vulnerable children.

Government Schemes for the Girl Child in India

1. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

Launched in 2015 to address gender-biased sex selection, promote the survival and protection of girls and encourage their education.

2. Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana

A savings scheme designed to encourage parents and guardians to build financial security for a girl child's future.

3. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya

Provides residential educational facilities for girls from disadvantaged communities in educationally backward areas.

4. UDAAN Scheme (by CBSE and MHRD)

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) launched it in 2004 under the Ministry of Education, Government of India. The scheme aimed to increase the number of girls in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). It provides free online resources, tutorials, study material, virtual classes and mentoring to Class 11 and 12 girls. The main objective of the scheme was to prepare girls for engineering entrance exams (JEE)

5. The Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG)

It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of the government that targets adolescent girls aged 11 to 14 years. It aims to provide nutrition and enhance the social and economic status of adolescent girls

International Recognition

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): Recognises the equality and dignity of all human beings.

- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989): Establishes children's rights to survival, development, protection and participation.

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979): Requires states to eliminate discrimination against women and girls.

- Sustainable Development Goal 5: Promotes gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

- Sustainable Development Goal 4: Promotes inclusive and equitable quality education for all.