

# CHILDREN'S MANIFESTO

TRANSLATING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS INTO REALITY

LOK SABHA ELECTION 2014



Education



Health



Protection

[#Vote4Children](#)

Save the Children works in 120 countries globally and across 15 states in India for children's rights - To inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives. It is determined to build a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation. We deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide. Save the Children works for:

- A world which respects and values each child.
- A world which listens to children and learns.
- A world where all children have hope and opportunity.

**Published by:**

Save the Children, India  
3rd Floor, Vardhaman Trade Centre,  
9-11 Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110 019  
Phone: +91 11 4229 4980  
Fax: +91 11 4229 4990

**Website:** [www.savethechildren.in](http://www.savethechildren.in)

**Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/india.savethechildren>

**Twitter:** [https://twitter.com/stc\\_india](https://twitter.com/stc_india)

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# Preface

At the beginning of the 20th century, Save the Children's founder Eglantyne Jebb had a vision to achieve and protect the rights of children. Her vision has survived into the second decade of the 21st century.

Every child and young person has rights, no matter who they are or where they live. Nearly every government in the world has promised to protect, respect and fulfil these rights, yet they are still violated worldwide.

Eglantyne Jebb wanted to make the rights and welfare of children a major issue around the world. Her 'Declaration of the Rights of the Child' was adopted by the forerunner of the UN, The League of Nations and inspired the current UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) an international statement on the rights of children. It's based on the world's first declaration on children's rights, written by our founder **Eglantyne Jebb** in 1923.

Governments rarely prioritise children, and fail to recognise that they have rights. India continues to hit the headlines for our staggering statistics on all indicators relating to children's well-being. India loses 14 lakh children under the age of five every year – highest anywhere in world; One in three children are malnourished; 80 lakh children still remain out of school; 126 lakh children are engaged in child labour. Children constitute 36 percent or a third of India's population but these statistics reflect that we as a nation are not investing enough for children in our country. By ignoring children we are not only putting our present at peril but also our future.

Save the Children believes that if we are to lead as a nation, we must put our children first. In order to realize inclusive development and growth we must do much more to ensure children are healthy and well nourished, educated and protected.

Issues concerning children must emerge high on political agenda and translate into commitments for children in our country, and together we create a nation where every child counts.

In the lead up to the general elections, Save the Children appeals to all the political parties to give significant attention to issues related to child health, education and protection.

# Why Children?

- 40% of India's Population are children
- Children are not part of adult franchisee but they have vision and expectation
- Children are the most vulnerable from any action or inaction
- To make sure children are treated fairly and their needs are fulfilled
- Children have right to express their views in matters affecting their own lives
- Children must be protected because they are future of our nation

## Who is a Child?

A child is any human being below the age of eighteen years according to United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

## What are Children's Rights?

- **Survival rights:** include the child's right to life and the needs that are most basic to existence, such as nutrition, shelter, an adequate living standard, and access to medical services.
- **Development rights:** include the right to education, play, leisure, cultural activities, access to information, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
- **Protection rights:** ensure children are safeguarded against all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including special care for migrant children; safeguards for children in the criminal justice system; protection for children in employment; protection and rehabilitation for children who have suffered exploitation or abuse of any kind.
- **Participation rights:** encompass children's freedom to express opinions, to have a say in matters affecting their own lives, to join associations and to assemble peacefully. As their capacities develop, children should have increasing opportunity to participate in the activities of society, in preparation for adulthood.

## Charter of Demands to Political Party

# Every Child's Right to Health and Nutrition

1. Increase the national budget allocation on health to 5 percent of GDP in keeping with WHO guidelines for developing countries, and ensure 100 percent utilisation of budgetary allocations.
2. Achieve the Millennium Development Goal# 4 of reducing child mortality levels to 42 per 1000 births by 2015. A focused approach is needed to tackle preventable causes of child mortality like respiratory infections (including tuberculosis), diarrheal diseases, low birth weight and malnutrition.
3. Adopt and implement the Newborn Action Plan as an integral part of the National Health Mission. This should also include holistic approaches like Family Friendly Hospital Initiatives to strengthen healthcare delivery system.
4. Enact the Right to Health Bill to enable citizens' access to basic healthcare with a special focus on women, children and unreached populations.
5. Increase coverage of Routine Immunisation by intensifying efforts to provide services to children in the 200 High Focus Districts.
6. Develop and adopt a national policy and guidelines for Human Resources for Health that includes increasing the number of health workers, and enhancing their impact through funding, equipping, capacity-building and role rationalisation. Fill the huge shortfall in the number of required health workers by ensuring at least 23 health workers per 10,000 population, which is the WHO norm. States should take cognizance of currently employed contractual staff and develop a policy to regularize health workers.
7. Establish an independent, convergent body that will anchor nutrition at the national level, develop a national nutrition policy, and issue orders for conducting a comprehensive periodic survey on nutrition to track progress in eliminating malnutrition. Establish Nutrition Missions in all states with high levels of malnutrition.
8. Effectively implement the Right to Food Act to deliver foodgrains as well as nutritional security at household level for all marginalised and excluded populations, especially pregnant and lactating women, and children.
9. Ensure effective implementation of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) such that all six services are delivered – supplementary nutrition, health check-ups, Immunisation, nutrition and health education, preschool non-formal education and referral services. Also, ensure that there is adequate investment in decentralised planning, universal coverage and training personnel.
10. Elevate the Ministry of Women and Child Development to the status of the Cabinet Ministry.

## Charter of Demands to Political Party

# Every Child's Right to Education

1. Increase the budget to 6 percent of GDP for elementary education so that the RTE norms are achieved in all schools by 2014; streamline fund flow for effective utilisation of sanctioned funds.
2. Implement Grievance Redressal mechanisms, especially at block and district levels, define procedures for complaints, support the NCPDR/SCPCRs to enable them to play the role expected, and support the Panchayati Raj system in its role as the local authority.
3. Fill existing gap of 11,87,761 teachers, restructure teacher training systems, and put in place well defined teachers' cadres in every state. This will require serious rethinking of teacher emoluments, service conditions and policies of recruitment.
4. Amend the Right to Education Act to ensure that it covers children under six and those in the 15-18 age group.
5. Launch special training for out-of-school children that match the actual numbers of 1.67 million out-of-school children within the next year.
6. Institute a systematic, pan-national, transparent mechanism for concurrent review of the status of implementation of Right to Education Act.
7. Ensure ownership and accountability of School Management Committees (SMC) and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI)s by implementing decentralised mechanisms already outlined in the RTE.
8. Strengthen convergence between the Ministry of Human Resource and Development and the Ministry of Women and Child Development on the pre-school component of the ICDS.
9. Ensure that state education curriculum and textbooks effectively improve children's learning levels by reviewing and revising them with the inputs of experts.
10. Put in place a strong regulatory framework for private schools that is transparent and accountable to the citizens (read parents/public).

## Charter of Demands to Political Party

# Every Child's Right to Protection

1. Increase at least five-fold the annual budgetary allocation for the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) for protection of children from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. This is critical given that children and women constitute more than 50 percent of the country's population.
2. Invest adequately in ensuring protection for children by: (i) implementing policies and programmes that protect children from abuse, violence and exploitation; (ii) investing in appropriate referral services for the recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of abuse, violence and exploitation; investing in creating a cadre of trained professional (iii) creating robust monitoring of implementation of child protection mechanisms, schemes and policies (iv) creating a proper database for child trafficking, street children, missing children and ensuring a fully functional newly developed child tracking system – 'Track child'.
3. Make Child Impact Assessment (CIA) mandatory for any development project such as infrastructure, industries etc that is likely to impact children.
4. Give autonomy to the NCPCR, and ensure that the selection process of members and Chairperson be transparent based on Paris Principles.
5. Ensure children's voices and participation in determining and auditing all policy, programme and legislative matters relevant to them.
6. Constitute a Law Review Commission to examine all laws affecting children, the recommendations of the CRC and international good practices like Optional Protocols on sale of children, children in conflict etc.
7. Amend the Child Labour(Prohibition and Regulation) Act (CLPRA) to abolish all forms of child labour by removing the distinction between hazardous and non-hazardous categories of work for all children upto 18 years of age.
8. Establish children's courts in every district.

**“There can be no keener revelation  
of a society's soul than the way in  
which it treats its children.”**

– Nelson Mandela

India must emerge as a nation that provides equal opportunities for all children, especially the poorest and the most marginalized, cutting across all barriers of gender, class, caste, religion and ethnicity that violate the rights of children as enshrined in the Constitution of India and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).