



Save the Children
100 YEARS

INDIA FOR ITS CHILDREN CHILDREN'S MANIFESTO 2019

#VOTE4CHILDREN



Save the Children is a leading child rights organisation operating across 20 states in India to protect the rights of children, to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats them, and to achieve immediate and lasting change for every last child. Our efforts aim to create a world where every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

Save the Children works towards:



**A WORLD WHICH RESPECTS AND
VALUES EACH CHILD.**



**A WORLD WHERE ALL CHILDREN
HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY.**



**A WORLD WHICH LISTENS
TO CHILDREN AND LEARNS.**



WHY CHILDREN?

40%

Of India's population are children.



Children are not part of the adult decision making world but they have vision and expectations.



Children are most vulnerable to any action or inaction.



Children have a right to express their views in matters affecting their own lives.



Children must be protected because they are not just the future but the present asset of our nation.



To make sure children are treated fairly and their needs are fulfilled.

WHO IS A CHILD?

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

WHAT ARE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS?

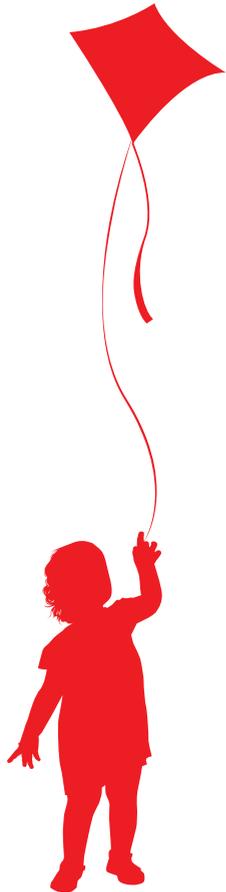
Right to life and the needs that are most basic to existence such as, nutrition, shelter, an adequate living standard, and access to medical services.

Right to education, play, leisure, cultural activities, access to information, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Right to be 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.

Right and freedom to express opinions, to have a say in matters affecting their own lives, to join associations and to assemble peacefully.

Right to participation in the activities of society, in preparation for adulthood.





PREFACE

2019 is a special year. It is the 150th birth anniversary year of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi and Save the Children enters 100th year in its efforts to safeguard rights of children across the world. The first Declaration of Children's Rights drafted by our founder, Eglantine Jebb, was signed by Mahatma Gandhi on behalf of India in 1931 and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989.

As we commemorate the great statesman and humanist's selfless life, we must remember what he said about children. Gandhiji said, "the greatest lessons in life, if we would but stoop and humble ourselves, we would learn not from the grown-up learned men, but from the so-called ignorant children".

2019 is also the year when India holds its General Elections in order to elect a new Central Government for the next five years. It is our fervent hope that while preparing their respective election manifestos, political parties will heed Gandhiji's words on learning from children. Children are inheritors of the consequences of our actions and omissions today. Save the Children believes that for the overall welfare of people all government planning must be centred on children and their concerns; and that children must be active stakeholders in the process of creation of manifestos.

We believe that children are not simply passive recipients of elderly kindness and government benefits and schemes but are holders of rights as enshrined in the UNCRC. Children, if meaningfully engaged with, can shape government policies and programmes for an equitable and sustainable development of all sections of society. It is for this reason that we work with children across India to amplify their voices and fulfil our constitutional commitment to children's holistic development and well-being. Nearly every government in the world has promised to protect, respect and fulfil these rights, yet they are still violated worldwide. And, despite evidence contrary to it, governments rarely prioritise children, and fail to recognise that they have rights. In India, children's issues dominate the mainstream discourse only as macabre headlines about sexual violence and deprivation.

India has achieved a lot on several fronts related to children's health and education. We have brought down neonatal mortality and have nearly achieved universal primary school enrolment, including for girl children. But we still have a very long way to go. Our under-five mortality rate is still one of the highest in world; one in three children remain malnourished; nearly 80 lakh children are still out of school; and millions of children are engaged in child labour. Children constitute nearly 40% or a third of India's population but these statistics reflect that we as a nation are not investing enough for them in our country. In fact, in the last few years the health spending has failed to rise to 2.5% of the GDP as is desirable for middle-income group countries like India. Worse still, our education budget at 3.5% of the total Union Budget (2018-19) is the lowest in a decade.

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 realise inclusive development and growth, we must commit ourselves to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with a special focus on children related SDGs (Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 13, and 16.2). We must collectively pledge to ensure that issues concerning children emerge high on political agenda and translate into specific commitments for children. 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, and thus ensure that children have a Safe, Healthy, and Happy childhood, enabling them to be engaged and productive citizens of the future.

Bidisha Pillai
CEO, Save the Children

10 States

99 Districts

392 Consultations

12198 Children

OUR METHODOLOGY

Save the Children has followed a two-pronged approach in formulating the demands both on behalf of children and from children themselves through a series of consultations held across 10 states in India.

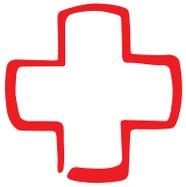
Keeping children at the centre of the demands, Save the Children has looked at evidence on ground, key policies and implementation gaps to arrive at and propose recommendations that will ensure children survive, learn, and are protected from harm and abuse.

In a parallel process across 10 states, children representing various social groups were consulted. This included children from different castes, tribes, gender and other vulnerable groups. The aim was to listen to, understand and include children's voices and views on the India they want.

The combined demands formulated by Save the Children and by children themselves will help influence and inform the political leaders and manifesto committees of various political parties.



CHARTER OF DEMANDS FOR CHILDREN



Every Child's Right to Health and Nutrition

- Increase health budget to 2.5% of GDP by 2021 and to 5% of GDP by 2025 in line with WHO guidelines.
- End all forms of malnutrition and achieve the internationally and nationally agreed nutrition targets for children under 5 years of age, adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women.
- End preventable deaths of children under 5 due to Pneumonia and Diarrhoea by at least 50% by 2025 as per the India Action Plan for Pneumonia and Diarrhoea (IAPPD).
- Focus on the water and sanitation needs of women and girls in vulnerable situations and sustain Open Defecation Free (ODF) communities developed under Swachh Bharat Mission.
- Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all, prioritizing the most marginalised and vulnerable populations.
- Enforce stringent measures to curb environmental pollution which is adversely affecting the health of children.



Early Childhood Care and Education

- Declare Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for children from 3 - 6 years of age as a legal right.
- Make age 6 as school entry age to Grade 1 across Indian states.
- Amend Right to Education Act (RTE Act) to ensure upward and downward extension (children between 3 - 6 years and 14 - 18 years of age).
- Provide separate budget for curriculum development, building capacities of exclusive ECCE providers at ICDS and pre-school grades across all government schools.
- Implement the Right to Education (RTE) provision for learning in the mother tongue in the early years of school.
- Ensure all schools are 100% Right to Education (RTE) compliant.
- Ensure all schools are free of violence and abuse.





Every Child's Right to Care and Protection

- Undertake a Social Audit of Residential schools and Child Care Institutions in order to free them from neglect, violence and abuse.
- Increase allocation for Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) from 0.5% to 1.5% of the total budget.
- Renew and make ICPS more robust with greater emphasis on placing adequate and trained, certified child protection workforce in all districts of India.
- Fill up all the positions on child protection as mentioned in Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 and POCSO Act 2012.
- Set up special POCSO and JJA courts as per law to ensure timely justice to child victims.
- Make life skills education mandatory in schools so that the children are prepared well for various challenges of growing up.
- Ensure all government employees sign Child Protection Policy.



Every Child's Right to Participation

- Create platforms for children to participate in decision making towards planning, budgeting and implementation at all levels of governance, local and national.
- Government and Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) should build capacities of existing institutions (School Management Committee, Child Protection Committee and Gram Sabhas) to encourage participation of children and include voices of children in the development agenda.



DEMANDS BY CHILDREN



DELHI



We want more teachers in our schools and adequate number of classrooms so that there is no compromise on the quality of learning. **1**



We want access to clean drinking water in homes and schools. **2**



We want clean and adequate toilets in schools and communities. **3**



We want good quality mid-day meals in schools. **4**



We want drug de-addiction centres in the city that are accessible to children and have trained and child friendly staff. **5**



We want children who are living on the streets to be linked with social protection schemes. **6**



We want availability of health centres near every community. We also want more Mohalla clinics as hospitals are far and expensive too. **7**



We want our communities to be cleaned regularly and proper drainage systems to be maintained so that there is no water logging and flooding during monsoon. **8**



We want government to ensure we are protected from harassment and abuse through strict implementation of laws. We want strict implementation of laws to stop child marriage. **9**



We want child labour to stop and all rescued children to be rehabilitated and linked to social protection schemes and quality education. **10**



ANDHRA PRADESH AND TELANGANA



1 We want functional toilets with running water facility as well as clean drinking water in our schools.



2 We want provision of books and school uniforms to be distributed at the start of the academic year.



3 We want provision of sanitary napkins and hygienic disposal systems at all schools.



4 We want compound walls with gates to be built to ensure safety at school.



5 We want a playground within school premises for physical education, sports and recreation.



6 We want children's voices to be heard and recognised within community, at schools and by Panchayati Raj institutions.



7 We want children's participation in Gram Panchayat meetings to be made mandatory to express our concern on safety, protection and resources related to our well being.



8 We want children's groups in all villages linked to Gram Panchayat.



9 We want girl's education to be made mandatory across all villages.



10 We want a suggestion box to be made available at school and at Gram Panchayat for children to share their concerns and needs.



RAJASTHAN



We want free health check-up **1** camp to be organised quarterly in every school at Anganwadi centres and at Government Health institutions targeting children. This should include free distribution of medicines and sanitary napkins for adolescent girls.



We want provision of essential **2** health and nutrition services at Anganwadi centres – mid day meals, clean drinking water, pre-school education, regular health check-ups and clean toilet facilities.



We want mobile Anganwadi **3** centres or Maa-Badi to tackle malnutrition among tribal community such as Sahariya, Kathodi and other nomadic tribes.



We want a state action plan for **4** implementation of parameters set under the Right to Education Act 2009 in all government and non-government schools within the next 2 years.



We demand provision of a **5** counsellor in all secondary and senior secondary schools.



We want the extension of the **6** mid-day meal programme up to class 12 and provision of meals for underprivileged children on school holidays.



We want provision of a government **7** college at the block level for girls to continue their higher education.



We want all political parties to **8** have a separate Children Cell.



We want the state government to **9** set up a mechanism for Child Budgeting to be integrated in the State Budget.



We want a dedicated Child Welfare **10** Police Officer to be deputed at all Police Stations across State and a separate adolescent helpline created at the district level.



ODISHA



We want schools to be built wherever they are not present. **1**



We want children's homes to be monitored strongly to arrest cases of child abuse with the stringent implementation of POCSO Act. **2**



We want strengthening of village level Child Protection Committees to monitor child labour and child rights related issues. **3**



We want the government to speed-up recruitment and placement of teachers in vacant positions to maintain quality of education. **4**



We want financial penalty against those who promote child marriage. **5**



We want extension of Kasturba Gandhi BalikaVidyalayas till Class 12. **6**



We want a ban on the sale of alcohol in the state. **7**



We want strengthening of children's group through provision of training and skills including martial arts. **8**



We want provision and construction of separate toilets for girls in schools. **9**



We want street lights and maintenance of roads to ensure safety. **10**



JHARKHAND



1 We want teachers to maintain high quality education standards and their incentives to be linked with performance.



2 We want functional Child Protection Committees and strict financial penalty and non bailable imprisonment for the parents/caregivers/employers who promote child labour.



3 We want strict financial penalty to be levied against families involved in child marriage along with non-bailable imprisonment.



4 We want piped drinking water supply in the villages as is done in urban areas of Jharkhand.



5 We want free medicines and free pathological tests to be made available in all health facilities.



6 We want training of toilet user groups on community management and maintenance of toilet hygiene.



7 We want a ban on the sale of alcohol and other narcotic substances in Jharkhand.



8 We want children's groups to be provided with resilience and protection training to ensure self-security.



9 We want Gram Panchayats, Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and the School Management Committees (SMCs) to monitor and report to District Collector (DC) on a monthly basis on the regularity and wholesomeness of the mid-day meal served to children.



10 We want the government to give priority to linking children with facilities and social protection schemes.



UTTAR PRADESH



We want access to quality ¹ and affordable health services.



We want recruitment of well ² trained teachers in all schools.



We want access to clean drinking ³ water in homes and schools.



We want access to quality education ⁴ for all age groups and adequate classrooms in secondary schools.



We want a clean and healthy ⁵ living environment and surroundings in villages and cities.



We want access to all government ⁶ schemes like ration card, gas connections, housing, electricity, health services and financial inclusion towards improving quality of life.



We want access to the Right to ⁷ Play. There should be playgrounds and parks for children in schools and housing colonies/communities.



We want protection from verbal, ⁸ emotional and physical abuse through the strict enforcement of laws and punishment.



We want availability and access ⁹ to community toilets both in rural and urban areas.



We want access to affordable ¹⁰ nutritious food for all children at home and at school.



MADHYA PRADESH



We want extension of Right to Education (RTE) Act to cover children up to 18 years and ensure the basic infrastructure for quality education. **1**



We want introduction of gender education for adolescents and counselling for physical, biological and mental changes during adolescent period. **2**



We want a ban on liquor and tobacco shops near the schools and in the areas where we live. **3**



We want action from various stakeholders and effective implementation of social protection schemes to prevent child marriages in the state. **4**



We want fast track courts to trace the missing children in the state. **5**



We want increase in health budget to ensure free and quality treatment and district hospitals to be equipped with the latest technologies to ensure better treatment. **6**



We want special provision for families of malnourished children that should include an additional employment for 50 days and ration of at least 3 kg pulses and 1 kg oil to their families. **7**



We want regular monitoring of health and nutrition for newborns and children and the status report to be reviewed by Gram Sabha so that children missing out on immunisation, health check-up and other benefits can be tracked. **8**



We want toilets for every household, public toilets in community spaces and separate toilet facilities in schools for boys and girls. **9**



We want access to clean drinking water through regular water supply for households and in community, including hospitals and in schools. **10**



BIHAR



We want strict implementation **1** of laws to stop child marriage in the state.



We want strong punishment for **2** those who engage children in harmful work and in bonded labour.



We want rehabilitation of children **3** rescued from labour by linking them with key government social protection schemes.



We want a special court to fast **4** track cases of abuse and violence against children.



We want every school to have a **5** POCSO E-box for children to register complaints of violence and abuse and ensure that they are addressed.



We want the government to **6** monitor and oversee children's homes to ensure a safe space, care and protection of children.



We want government to link **7** children who are homeless, and orphaned with social protection schemes.



We want child rights committees **8** to be formed at Panchayat level and be overseen at the district and state levels for a fair and just administration of issues related to children.



We want strengthening of **9** surveillance committees set up for policies and schemes towards child protection.



We want government to allocate **10** budget towards children's welfare, protection, access to education and healthcare.



WEST BENGAL



We want strong implementation ¹ of laws to stop child marriage and create awareness about the laws and effects of child marriage.



We want rehabilitation of ² children engaged in child labour and those who are trafficked through the provision of vocational training and skill building.



We want better monitoring to track ³ children who drop out of school and economically weaker families to be linked with social security schemes.



We want formation of village vigilance ⁴ committee to control the growing issue of drug abuse and a strict ban on sale of alcohol in the area.



We want government to install and ⁵ repair street lights so that children as well as people can walk the streets safely even during late hours.



We want access to clean and safe ⁶ drinking water facilities in villages as well as in the school to end the problem of walking a long distance to fetch water.



We want construction of toilets for ⁷ every household and provision of community toilets in the village to end open defecation.



We want dustbins for garbage/⁸ waste disposal at a household level and proper drainage system for maintaining health and hygiene in the area.



We want functional Primary Health ⁹ Centre with trained health workers and better facilities. This should include visits by doctor and regular free health check ups.



We want more Anganwadi centres ¹⁰ to reach more children with proper nutrition, growth and development schemes. There should be separate areas for cooking food, adequate space for pre-school and play area.





Save the Children, Plot no 91, Sector 44, Gurgaon - 122003, Haryana, India
www.savethechildren.in | Telephone: +91 124 4752000 | Fax: +91 124 4752199

©2019 Save the Children

This publication is protected by copyright. It may be reproduced by any method without fee or prior permission for teaching purposes, but not for resale. For use in any other circumstances, prior written permission must be obtained from the publisher.