

National policy for children 2013

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On April 18th, 2013 the Union Cabinet approved the National Policy for Children to help in the implementation of programmes and schemes for children all over the country. The policy acknowledges the child as an individual and the subject of his/her own development, displays a quiet assurance and sense of purpose. The Policy lays down the guiding principles that must be followed by National, State and Local governments in their actions and initiatives for affecting children.

goals

- ▶ The Policy reaffirms the Government's commitment to the realisation of the rights of all children in the country.
- ▶ It recognizes every person below the age of eighteen years as a child and that childhood is an integral part of life with a value of its own, and a long term, sustainable, multi-sectoral, integrated and inclusive approach is necessary for the harmonious development and protection of children.
- ▶ The policy identified Survival, Health, Nutrition, Education, Development, Protection and Participation as the undeniable rights of every child, and has also declared these as key priority areas.
- ▶ the policy aims at purposeful convergence and strong coordination across different sectors and levels of governance; active engagement and partnerships with all stakeholders; setting up of a comprehensive and reliable knowledge base; provision of adequate resources; and sensitization and capacity development of all those who work for and with children.

Goals

- ▶ Through this policy the State is committed to take affirmative measures - legislative, policy or otherwise -to promote and safeguard the right of all children.
- ▶ to live and grow with equity, dignity, security and freedom, to ensure that all children have equal opportunities; and that no custom, tradition, cultural or religious practice is allowed to violate or restrict or prevent children from enjoying their rights.

▶

Principles

- (i) every child has universal, inalienable and indivisible human rights
- (ii) the rights of children are interrelated and interdependent, and each one of them is equally important and fundamental to the well-being and dignity of the child
- (iii) every child has the right to life, survival, development, education, protection and participation
- (iv) right to life, survival and development goes beyond the physical existence of the child and also encompasses the right to identity and nationality
- (v) mental, emotional, cognitive, social and cultural development of the child is to be addressed in totality
- (vi) all children have equal rights and no child shall be discriminated against on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, class, language, and disability, social, economic or any other status
- (vii) the best interest of the child is a primary concern in all decisions and actions affecting the child, whether taken by legislative bodies, courts of law, administrative authorities, public, private, social, religious or cultural institutions
- (viii) family or family environment is most conducive for the all-round development of children and they are not to be separated from their parents, except where such separation is necessary in their best interest

Principles

- ▶ (ix) every child has the right to a dignified life, free from exploitation
- ▶ (x) safety and security of all children is integral to their well-being and children are to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, violence, maltreatment and exploitation in all settings including care institutions, schools, hospitals, crèches, families and communities
- ▶ (xi) children are capable of forming views and must be provided a conducive environment and the opportunity to express their views in any way they are able to communicate, in matters affecting them
- ▶ (xii) children's views are to be heard in all matters affecting them, in particular judicial and administrative proceedings and interactions, and their views given due consideration in accordance with their age, maturity and evolving capacities

Features of National Policy for Children 2013

- ▶ a child is any person below the age of eighteen years
- ▶ childhood is an integral part of life with a value of its own
- ▶ children are not a homogenous group and their different needs need different responses, especially the multi-dimensional vulnerabilities experienced by children in different circumstances
- ▶ a long term, sustainable, multi-sectoral, integrated and inclusive approach is necessary for the overall and harmonious development and protection of children
- ▶ *Reaffirms that:*
- ▶ every child is unique and a supremely important national asset
- ▶ special measures and affirmative action are required to diminish or eliminate conditions that cause discrimination
- ▶ all children have the right to grow in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding
- ▶ families are to be supported by a strong social safety net in caring for and nurturing their children

Operation and Supervision of the Policy

- ▶ The Ministry of Women and Child Development will be the nodal ministry for overseeing and coordinating the implementation of the policy and will lead the review process for the policy.
- ▶ A National Coordination and Action Group (NCAG) for Children under the Minister in charge of the Ministry of Women and Child Development will monitor the progress with other concerned Ministries as its members. Similar Coordination and Actions Groups will be established at the State and District level.
- ▶ The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights are to ascertain that the principles of the policy are valued in all sectors at all levels. There is a provision for comprehensive review of this policy every five years in consultation with all stakeholders, including children.
- ▶ The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights will ensure that the principles of this Policy are respected in all sectors at all levels in formulating laws, policies and programmes affecting children.

SIGNIFICANCE

- ▶ The Policy comprehensively and scrupulously details out children related aspects within each broad category i.e. Survival, Health Nutrition, Development, Protection and Participation.
- ▶ Survival Health and Nutrition category in NPC 2013 also talk about additional three points of *pertaining to attention to adolescents, prevention of HIV infection transmission to children, care of children living with HIV and child safe product and services.*
- ▶ under the category of Education the first and foremost addition is mention of 6 to 14 years age group of children to be in school and to be able to enjoy the fundamental right to education enshrined by the Constitution of India.
- ▶ *promote affordable and accessible quality education up to secondary level for all children’.*
- ▶ *Ensure that all out of school children such as child laborers, migrant children trafficked children, children of migrant labor, street children, child victims of alcohol and substance abuse, children in areas of civil unrest, orphans, children with disability (mental and physical), children with chronic ailments, married children, children of manual scavengers, children of sex workers, children of prisoners, etc. are tracked, rescued, rehabilitated and have access to their right to education*

significance

- ▶ *The NPC also sees certain small add-ons such as ensuring all teaching and learning processes are child friendly and respect of children's culture and roots.*
- ▶ *Aspect of children's health monitoring in school and special attention for children with special needs.*
- ▶ *The State shall create a caring, protective and safe environment for all children, to reduce their vulnerability in all situations and to keep them safe at all places, especially public spaces.*
- ▶ *enforcement of punitive legislative and administrative measures against all forms of child abuse and neglect.*
- ▶ *to raise public awareness on child rights and entitlements among all stakeholders like parents, care-givers/guardians, functionaries and duty bearers.*