

converge all of the services to the development of children so that we can dream of a better world free from exploitation and corruption. Probably the current need is for one comprehensive law to protect all the rights of children as well as to enhance their capabilities so that they too will be able to contribute to the well being of our nation and the world at large.



## Editorial

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### Children's Rights are Human Rights

Almost 19 percent of the world's children below the age of 18 live in India. India's children are the nation's future and therefore we should invest resources in order to protect children. It is estimated that 40 percent of Indian children experience difficult circumstances. The neglect of child protection results in violations of their rights and increases their vulnerability to abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The Constitution of India recognises the vulnerable position of children and their right to protection. Article 15 of the Constitution guarantees special attention to children through necessary and special laws and policies that safeguard their rights. The rights to equality, protection of life and personal liberty and the right against exploitation are enshrined in Articles 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 23 and 24.

Children's rights and welfare concerns have been addressed at a number of international conventions as well. The Government of India ratified the UN convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1992. The UNCRC outlines the fundamental rights of children including the right to be protected from economic exploitation and harmful work, from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse and from physical and mental violence.

India has adopted a number of laws and formulated a wide range of policies to ensure the protection of children, the right to free and compulsory Education Act, 2009, being the latest. Article 45 of the Indian constitution in the Directive Principles for State Policies, had already envisaged this right to education to every child below 14 in India. But it took 60 years for this Act to come into being. It will take some more months for the state governments to formulate rules to give operational structure and strategies to this Act. Despite all these Acts to protect the rights of children in our land, their plight has not been improved considerably. For this we need political will and committed bureaucracy, let alone the involvement of the passionate civil society! If we do not take care of the basic needs of every child born in this country, the future of our nation will be bleak. It is our duty to help to