

Issues of Children and Food Security in Lok Sabha Elections

Coverage of Child Nutrition, Protection, Education and Food Security issues in Election Manifestos

A Desk Review in the context of 16th Lok Sabha Elections



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Title	<i>Issues of Children and Food Security in Lok Sabha Elections</i> Coverage of Child Nutrition, Protection, Education and Food Security in Election Manifestos A Desk Review in the context of 16 th Lok Sabha Elections
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Published by	Food Rights Resource Centre, Vikas Samvad
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Perceptions and Priorities of Political Parties as are Centred on Issues across the Spectrum of Child Nutrition, Protection, Education and Food Security

A Desk Review of Election Manifestos for 16th Lok Sabha Polls

Background

Election manifestos of the political parties set out the path of development that they promise to pursue. A manifesto whilst setting consensus on internal expectations within a political party becomes an instrument of influence in addressing the target audiences. These audiences include the influencers (as the special interest groups) at one end of the spectrum and the voters at large, on the other. The kind of commitments and their expressions leave an imprint on the minds of the electorate with regard to their significance, value and palatability. It is during the electioneering that the promises and their rationale are expected to be communicated to the electorate so that it can apply its mind on what appeals to it most, both in terms of ideology as well as capability to take it to the point of logical conclusions. However, one sees that the election manifestos (on what next and how) in India have yet to become a vital force in shaping the quality of governance and national development.

This desk review looks at the child-centric perceptions and priorities of some of the political parties pertaining to issues on nutrition, protection, education and food security and seeks to offer broad and objective commentary on the same. The review also brings out a conclusion that the political parties in India are yet to come of age in appreciating what social development is and what it is not. Further, whilst reviewing the manifestos, it was observed that women have to be considered along with the children, as the dyadic relationship of mother and child is rather inseparable. Rightly so, the political parties too have used the term 'women and children' as an integral string.

The Commentary

Whilst the commentaries flow from one political party to another in alphabetical order, the conclusions seek to summarise the analytic observations beyond the boundaries of the political parties. The review is based upon the readings of the manifestos as were available in the web and that the assembled excerpts from the same have been **annexed**. The review is on two counts, one, whether the issue has been captured and secondly, whether it is reflected from a strategic standpoint or it is only in operational or lip-service terms.

The commentary below in a matrix may please be viewed in conjunction with the excerpts of manifesto as are placed in the **Annexure**:

How do the Political Parties compare on the Child-centric Criteria?

Deriving from an in-depth review of the respective manifestos to trace the content and language (tone/expression) in terms of the 4 child-centric criteria, scores have been assigned using a scale of 0-10 to reflect the performance (reflection of focus in terms of alignment) as per the following bands:

0 to 3 score: Low

4 to 6 score: Medium

7 to 10 score: High

The criteria are as follows:

- ✚ The extent to which the issue has been captured. It can be superficial or just mentioned or stated in broader terms or articulated in terms of its definition, causative factors, past remedial actions/report card in conjunction with or without other influencing factors and policy/strategy options/choices/prescriptions.
- ✚ Does it provide for or promise budgetary allocations?
- ✚ Does it recognise or is it in sync with human rights perspectives?
- ✚ Is the proposed action plan founded upon evidence-based rationale?
- ✚ Are the proposals strategic in nature or only addressing the tactical aspects of the concerned plan? For example, one political party speaks of enhancing the functional competence of Anganwadi Workers whilst the other refers to the issue of output of the Workers within the precincts of definition of 'workers' as per the recommendation of the 45 ILC!
- ✚ How well the issue has been addressed in relation to inter and intra-sector determinants?

The overall scores accordingly set apart the select political parties as per the following scores:

S. No.	Party/Issue	Nutrition	Protection	Education	Food Security	Overall Score
1	Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)	4	4	4	5	4.25
2	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK)	2	2	1	2	1.75

3	Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)	6	5	8	4	5.75
4	Communist Party (CPI)	3	6	8	6	5.75
5	Communist Party-Marxist- (CPIM)	4	7	8	8	6.75
6	Indian National Congress (INC)	8	6	8	8	7.50
7	Samajwadi Party	1	0	4	0	1.66

Review of Manifestos

S. No.	Party/Issues	Nutrition	Protection	Education	Food Security	Highlights/Comments
1	Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	<p>Nutrition & Health Reference to nutrition only with regard to Adivasis. Promises Anganwadis MNREGA workers. Right to healthcare specially provided for.</p> <p>Protection Gender discrimination and girl child highlighted. Persons with disability receives a special mention.</p> <p>Education Governance (Gram Sabhas and Social Justice Ombudsman role in monitoring the functioning of schools and primary health centres). Thrust on equitable access and outcome of education.</p> <p>Food Security Direct transfer of ration materials to the families and will include <i>dal</i> and oil in the public distribution system. The party will end corruption in the Public Distribution System (PDS) with the involvement of Mohalla Sabhas.</p>
2	All India Anna	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Seeks to build on Tamil Nadu vision model. The Vision Tamil Nadu 2023 document aims at raising the living standards of the people of Tamil Nadu to

S. No.	Party/Issues	Nutrition	Protection	Education	Food Security	Highlights/Comments
	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK)					<p>the standards of developed countries, creating infrastructure to enable speedy industrial growth, and making Tamil Nadu the Numero Uno State in India.</p> <p>Strategic/policy framework has not been defined in the manifesto for the national elections.</p>
3	Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	<p>Nutrition & Health</p> <p>Address the issue of under-nutrition and malnutrition.</p> <p>Looks at convergence between health and nutrition related ministries.</p> <p>Will adopt mission mode.</p> <p>Differentiated focus on SC/ST/OBC.</p> <p>The last healthcare policy dates back to 2002. India now needs a comprehensive healthcare policy to address the complex healthcare challenges, keeping in view the developments in the healthcare sector and the changing demographics. BJP will initiate the New Health Policy.</p> <p>Initiate the 'National Health Assurance Mission', with a clear mandate to provide universal healthcare that is not only accessible and affordable, but also effective, and reduces the Out of Pocket (OOP) spending for the common man.</p> <p>Move to pre-emptive care model where the focus</p>

S. No.	Party/Issues	Nutrition	Protection	Education	Food Security	Highlights/Comments
						<p>and thrust will be on child health and prevention. School health program would be a major focus area, and health and hygiene will be made a part of the school curriculum.</p> <p>Focus on Rural Health care delivery.</p> <p>Protection</p> <p>Appropriate measures would be taken to check female foeticide, dowry, child marriage, trafficking, sexual harassment, rape and family violence.</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Public spending on education would be raised to 6% of the GDP, and involving the private sector would further enhance this.</p> <p>The content and process of school education shall be thoroughly reviewed to make it dynamic, stress-free, attractive and responsive to the emerging national needs.</p> <p>Launch a national campaign for saving the girl child and educating her - Beti Bachao - Beti Padhao.</p> <p>Food Security</p> <p>Review the successful PDS models, and incorporate the best practices to revise the existing PDS, for benefitting the common man.</p> <p>Encourage the production of cereals, pulses and oils.</p>

S. No.	Party/Issues	Nutrition	Protection	Education	Food Security	Highlights/Comments
						Seek the participation of voluntary organizations in running community kitchens. The BJP manifesto avoids the word 'subsidy'.
4	Communist Party of India (CPI)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Nutrition & Health Ensure spending of 5% of GDP on public health care system. Healthcare should be made one of the fundamental rights. Quality day-care service. Education and care rights for children from zero to six years of age. Provide crèches at work places. End malnutrition. Arrest declining child sex ratios. Three per cent of GDP to be spent on child care. Protection Gender equality, equal rights for women in all spheres Establish strong mechanism to ensure women safety and strict implementation of the existing laws protecting the interest of women and children Ensure fast track courts for justice to women victims of violence. Bring legislation to provide 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and assemblies; 50 per

S. No.	Party/Issues	Nutrition	Protection	Education	Food Security	Highlights/Comments
						<p>cent reservation in local bodies</p> <p>Implement the legal provisions strictly to end the practice of child labour and bonded labour.</p> <p>Transparency and accountability of gender budget.</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Free and universal education from primary to secondary level be guaranteed by the government.</p> <p>Increase the spending on education to at least 10 per cent of GDP.</p> <p>No to commercialisation of education, equal quality education to all; common school system.</p> <p>Strengthening government educational system at all level by filling all vacancies in government educational institutions from primary to higher education.</p> <p>Change in syllabus to promote rationalism and scientific temper. Secularism to be guarded as ordained by Constitution.</p> <p>Guarantee of all democratic rights to students.</p> <p>Abolish illiteracy in next five years.</p> <p>Food Security</p> <p>Provision of 35 kg of food grain per month to all</p>

S. No.	Party/Issues	Nutrition	Protection	Education	Food Security	Highlights/Comments
						<p>families at a maximum price of Rs 2 per kg.</p> <p>Establish and expand Universal Public Distribution System (PDS).</p> <p>Stringent legal measures against hoarding of essential commodities.</p> <p>Makes all vital mentions in a succinct manner, albeit without an action plan.</p>
5	Communist Party-Marxist-(CPIM)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	<p>Nutrition & Health</p> <p>Universalization of the ICDS to cover all children from the age of 0- 6 years. It will reverse all measures towards privatization of the ICDS; more allocations per child to ensure nutritious meals for children in Anganwadis and in schools.</p> <p>Public expenditure on health to be raised to at least 5% of GDP, which would include a significantly enhanced allocation from the centre.</p> <p>Complete coverage of basic services, such as supplementary nutrition, immunization, pre-school non-formal education, regular health check-ups and quick referral services.</p> <p>Expanding drinking water and sanitation facilities, health centres, schools and hostels in the tribal areas.</p> <p>Strengthening, expanding and reorienting the public health system so that it is accountable to local communities and guarantees free and easy</p>

S. No.	Party/Issues	Nutrition	Protection	Education	Food Security	Highlights/Comments
						<p>access to a range of comprehensive health care services.</p> <p>Immediately and effectively reversing the trend of privatisation of health care services and outsourcing of services through PPPs.</p> <p>Extending and recasting the ESI scheme to effectively protect workers' health.</p> <p>Regulating the private health care sector, especially the corporate owned hospital sector through urgent and stringent measures.</p> <p>Ensuring uninterrupted supply of all medicines, free of cost, in all public health facilities; Hazardous formulations of medicines to be weeded out from the market</p> <p>Controlling price of essential drugs</p> <p>Protection</p> <p>Putting in place a series of measures to prevent, curb and punish those responsible for the horrific increase in violence against women and children.</p> <p>Ensuring equal remuneration for women workers in all areas of work; adopting social security measures for working women including maternity benefits, pension and health insurance for women workers in the unorganized sector including home based workers; crèche facilities for all women workers.</p> <p>Recognising all workers employed in different</p>

S. No.	Party/Issues	Nutrition	Protection	Education	Food Security	Highlights/Comments
						<p>central and state government schemes like the Anganwadi workers and helpers, ASHAs, mid-day meal workers, para teachers, NCLP staff etc. as 'workers' as per the recommendation of the 45 ILC and providing them with all attendant benefits including statutory minimum wages, social security benefits like pension etc. and ensuring their trade union rights.</p> <p>Promoting and fighting for social reform against prevalent anti- women, anti-girl child practices including those which occur in the name of religion or tradition and against the cultures of violence against women both in public and domestic spheres.</p> <p>Amendments in the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation Act) to remove the distinction between hazardous and non-hazardous work in order to ban all forms of child labour and to ensure implementation of schemes with additional allocations for the rehabilitation of all working children.</p> <p>Take effective steps to trace missing children ensuring public reporting of the status of search</p> <p>Strict implementation of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act</p> <p>Delegation of finances and powers to the National and State Commissions for the Protection of</p>

S. No.	Party/Issues	Nutrition	Protection	Education	Food Security	Highlights/Comments
						<p>Children</p> <p>Provision of shelter and social services to street children.</p> <p>Ensuring a total re-haul and reform of the juvenile justice system and institutions to sensitize them towards helping them reintegrate into society as responsible citizens.</p> <p>Accepting the Verma Committee recommendations which have been left out of the present amended law; changes in educational curricula to include subjects related to gender equality; steps to make public spaces safer for women; ensuring safe access to all public places for women with disability; increasing punishment for caste based crimes against scheduled caste and scheduled tribe women; penalties on any personnel including police personnel who sabotage or delay cases; setting up of fast track courts; support to victims of sexual violence and acid attacks through a fully funded rehabilitation scheme especially for children who are victims of sexual violence; adequate budgetary allocations for implementation of the laws against domestic violence and against sexual harassment. Strict implementation of the PCPNDT Act (against sex determination tests and female foeticide) and the activation of defunct monitoring committees.</p> <p>Enacting a standalone law against so-called</p>

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						<p>honour crimes, a law against trafficking of women and children; a law for joint matrimonial property rights; strengthening the law for maintenance of women and children including a scheme such as the one initiated by the Left front in Tripura for an allowance for deserted women; special schemes for single women including widows and female headed families; a law to ensure linkages between SHGs and banking institutions and guarantee of subsidized interest rates of not more than 4 per cent with special concessions for SHGs of SC/ST women, protective legislation for domestic workers and for home-based workers.</p> <p>Special measures to close the continuing gap between Adivasis, dalit children and socially vulnerable groups and communities and others through specific measures including additional allocations for setting up residential schools and hostels with modern facilities for scheduled tribe and scheduled caste children; stringent action against discrimination at any level</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Public expenditure on education to be 6% of GDP</p> <p>Implementing the Right to Education Act to provide free and compulsory elementary education;</p> <p>Expansion of The Right to Education Act to include all children from the age of 3-18 years.</p>

S. No.	Party/Issues	Nutrition	Protection	Education	Food Security	Highlights/Comments
						<p>Special provisions for the inclusion of children with disability,</p> <p>Amending the RTE to institutionalize the concept of neighbourhood schooling,</p> <p>Extending it beyond the elementary level and providing free education for all continuing students;</p> <p>Stringent action against private schools and elite institutions who fail to provide admission to children from economically weaker sections</p> <p>Improving quality of schools and teachers.</p> <p>Central Government to assume the major part of the financial commitment for its implementation</p> <p>Expanding secondary education to reduce dropouts</p> <p>Improving quality of education and infrastructure in SSA schools</p> <p>Allowing flexibility of rules, timing and other aspects to ensure retention of pupils in backward areas and for otherwise marginalized groups.</p> <p>Enacting legislation to regulate fees, admissions and curricula in private educational institutions</p> <p>Formulating progressive and democratic curriculum and syllabi at all levels of education in a way that recognizes India's social and cultural diversity</p>

S. No.	Party/Issues	Nutrition	Protection	Education	Food Security	Highlights/Comments
						<p>Regularise teachers currently employed as contract or para teachers.</p> <p>Ensuring democratic rights of students, teachers and non-teaching staff in all educational institutions; Students' union elections to be made mandatory in all higher educational institutions.</p> <p>Food Security</p> <p>Enact a Right To Food law with the following features:</p> <p>Elimination of the present targeted system and establishment of a reformed and strengthened universal public distribution system excluding only income tax payees</p> <p>Provision of a minimum of 35 Kg of foodgrains for a family or 7 Kg of foodgrains per individual, whichever amount is higher, at a maximum price of two rupees per kg of foodgrains</p> <p>Along with foodgrains, the PDS will supply essential commodities such as pulses, edible oil, sugar, kerosene at controlled prices.</p> <p>The food supplies through ICDS and Mid-Day Meal Schemes will get higher allocations to ensure hot cooked nutritious meals and be brought under the Food Security law as a legal right.</p> <p>Entitlements for food and nutrition for pregnant women and lactating mothers will be included in the law.</p>

S. No.	Party/Issues	Nutrition	Protection	Education	Food Security	Highlights/Comments
						<p>Special measures like free kitchens for vulnerable sections of the population such as migrant workers, destitute, widows, disabled persons</p> <p>Strengthen the rationing system in remote and hilly areas to ensure that the Adivasis and other vulnerable sections in those areas have easy access to food security</p> <p>Oppose cash transfers in lieu of foodgrains</p> <p>Including all tribals in the Food Security Act entitled to subsidized foodgrains.</p> <p>Quite comprehensive whilst addressing policy and implementation gaps.</p>
6	Indian National Congress (INC)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	<p>Nutrition & Health</p> <p>The party has included Right to Health in the charter of minimum socio-economic rights. To support the Right to Health, the Indian National Congress will increase health expenditure to 3% of GDP and provide universal and quality healthcare for all Indians (including free medicines).</p> <p>Almost 56% of adolescent girls in India are anaemic. Anaemia and malnutrition among mothers endanger the mother's health and causes growth retardation and vulnerability to diseases in children.</p> <p>It will provide 5 state-of-the-art mobile health vans in every district, equipped with x-ray and other equipment, to provide healthcare check-ups</p>

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						<p>including mammography, blood tests, etc.</p> <p>Maternal and child healthcare will continue to be a major focus so as to drastically reduce Infant Mortality Rate and Maternal Mortality Ratio.</p> <p>Almost 60% of open defecation in the world takes place in India. Poor sanitation is a serious health hazard. The party will endeavour to provide a functional toilet in every school and every household.</p> <p>The quality of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) will be vastly improved and special incentives will be given to Anganwadi workers.</p> <p>Protection</p> <p>The INC will ensure that all laws for the welfare of children including the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 will be strictly enforced.</p> <p>It will further strengthen and expand the scope of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, set up in 2007.</p> <p>The party will also ensure that the strongest possible action is taken to prevent child trafficking.</p> <p>Education</p> <p>We will move our focus from 'Sarva Shiksha</p>

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						<p>Abhiyan' to 'Shreshth Shiksha Abhiyan', making "quality" the centre of our agenda.</p> <p>Strengthen the implementation of the Right to Education Act, ensure universal enrolment in secondary education, and reduce drop-out rates in middle and secondary levels.</p> <p>Establish an independent regulatory mechanism to oversee State and private institutions to ensure standardisation and quality of education.</p> <p>Support regional and context-specific curricula and focus on developing life skills including leadership building.</p> <p>Strengthen facilities for children with special needs and disabilities. Give priority to developing infrastructure for differently-abled persons.</p> <p>Food Security</p> <p>Continuing with the vigorous and strengthened implementation of the National Food Security Act, the party promises to expand the focus of the current food security schemes to include subsidised pulses and cooking oil for beneficiaries of Antyodaya Ann Yojana.</p> <p>The manifesto renders an articulated insight in to child health, nutrition and protection issues and seeks to address them from strategic perspective whilst enlisting key actions as part</p>

S. No.	Party/Issues	Nutrition	Protection	Education	Food Security	Highlights/Comments
						of a plan.
7	Samajwadi Party	Yes	No	Yes	No	<p>Nutrition & Health</p> <p>Allocation of 6% of budget to be provided for health.</p> <p>Open mini-AIIMS in rural areas in every state in large numbers.</p> <p>X-ray, MRI, dialysis and CT scan will be made free.</p> <p>The government to take care of treatments for serious illnesses like cardiac, kidney, liver, cirrhosis, thalassemia.</p> <p>Presently, MNREGA includes 60% labour and 40% material component. It will be reversed so as to mitigate corruption in the labour component.</p> <p>Joint Secretary level officers of the Government of India will monitor the Mid-Day Meal and Nutritious food schemes.</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Entire education to be made free.</p> <p>Provision of 7% of budget for education.</p> <p>The manifesto appears to be rather sketchy.</p>

Conclusion

The national political parties, namely the BJP, INC, CPI and CPI (M) appear to have accorded a significant consideration to the issue of child survival, development and protection. The manifestos define their respective ideologies and concerns for reforms in the ongoing schemes. Whilst the BJP and the INC show up quite some degree of 'convergence' in their approach, the CPI and CPIM appear to favour more revolutionary (some may consider it as 'drastic') measures like NO to private sector involvement, both in infrastructure and development. Interestingly however, on food security, there appears to be broader consensus on including oil and pulses within the remit of the National Food Security Act. Notably, the BJP has chosen to talk of 'increasing production of pulses and oils' instead of its inclusion in the Public Distribution System whilst it sought to address the food security!

On the whole, the exercise of formulating the manifestos should get keener, comprehensive and policy attention in the ensuing times as part of creating a structured response to peoples' expectations.

Excerpts from the Manifestos of Some of the Political Parties

1. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)

- Builds on the preamble to the Constitution of India with regard to promise for a just society.
- Centres on devolution of powers (Swaraj) to Gram Sabhas.
 - Gram Sabhas (or Mohalla Sabhas would monitor and supervise the functioning of the schools and primary health centres.
 - Creation of the institution of a Social Justice Ombudsman
- Universal health access to all citizens via 'Right to Healthcare'.
 - Special provisions to improve health and nutrition indicators of Adivasis (tribal population)
 - Focus on policies and measures that can prevent disabilities (such as polio, blindness and some cognitive disabilities), public provision of ongoing healthcare support and subsidies for specific equipments needed for different forms of disabilities.
- Equitable access to high quality of education for all children.
 - Special provision for girls, first-generation learners, students from poor families and socially disadvantaged communities so as to ensure total enrolment, check drop outs, high quality learning and non-discrimination within schools and access to higher education facilities.
 - Focus of education on learning outcomes and not on inputs.
 - Improve the standard of government schools so that the common man can send their children to government schools with assurance about quality.
 - Ensuring access to education to tribal population.
 - Special provisions for Persons with Disabilities (PwD) in education and employment.
- Ensuring access to education and healthcare, including mobile schools and dispensaries for nomadic and de-notified communities.
- Ensure direct transfer of ration materials to the families and will include *dal* and oil in the public distribution system. The party will end corruption in the Public Distribution System (PDS) with the involvement of Mohalla Sabhas.
- Implement comprehensive and long-term public education programmes to end the culture of gender-based discrimination and violence.
 - Adopt a zero-tolerance approach towards sex-selective abortion and work towards its complete elimination by strengthening legislation against its practice and implementation of strict punishments, if violated.
 - Provide Anganwadis to MNREGA workers.
 - Secure equal pay for equal work in all sectors.
- PESA and the Forest Rights Act to be effectively implemented to ensure that there is no land acquisition and extraction from forest areas without the permission of Gram

Sabhas, and their right to manage, sustainably use and protect all natural resources are fully protected.

2. All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK)

- The AIADMK will take necessary action to prepare a Vision Document on the lines of the document for Tamil Nadu for the all-round development of the whole of India as well. The Vision Tamil Nadu 2023 document aims at raising the living standards of the people of Tamil Nadu to the standards of developed countries, creating infrastructure to enable speedy industrial growth, and making Tamil Nadu the Numero Uno State in India.
- As a measure of Human Resource Development, the AIADMK Government has given utmost importance to the education and health sectors. At the same time, importance is also being given to social security.
- The responsibility for allocating funds for public services like education, public health, food security, nutrition and family welfare is vested with the States. To provide such services, financial resources are very essential. To deliver the basic services that the people need, State Governments are in need of resources. However, the powers to raise resources are concentrated in the Central Government. The AIADMK is of the view that the mode of distribution of these financial resources to the States needs to be revamped.
- In Tamil Nadu, a Universal Public Distribution System is in vogue. Under this system, all the rice card holders are getting rice free of cost. Besides this, Palmolein is being supplied at Rs. 25/- per litre, Toor Dal at Rs.30/- per K.G., Urad Dal at Rs.30/- per K.G. and Sugar at Rs.13.50 per K.G. This scheme guarantees total food security for the people of Tamil Nadu. On the contrary, the Food Security scheme recently introduced by the Central Government does not provide food security as being implemented now in Tamil Nadu through the Universal Public Distribution System. The AIADMK will take measures to replace the half-baked Food Security Scheme of the Government of India with a Universal Public Distribution System, which will benefit all the people of the States, which are already implementing the Universal Public Distribution System.
- The Congress led Central Government had agreed to a number of conditionalities targeted against Indian farmers in the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting held in Bali, Indonesia, in December, 2013. Subsidies provided for Public Stockholding Programmes, i.e. for food security programmes were not deleted from the list of subsidies which are not permissible. The Clause which was agreed upon under which, if the subsidies exceed the limit of 10 per cent, they would not be challenged for a period of four years and would be open to scrutiny thereafter and the fact that the subsidies would be reckoned on the basis of the 1986 market prices are clauses which are against India's interests. Similarly, a condition has been imposed that to promote trade the infrastructure in the ports needs to be improved. Such a clause only facilitates greater imports from developed countries. The AIADMK will take action to modify the clauses which are adverse to India's interests.
- Strive to extend and implement schemes like Cradle Baby Scheme, Marriage Assistance, Girl Child Protection Scheme and 13 Point Programme -- a trail-blazing scheme for the entire Country for protection of women from sexual violence – towards women's welfare.

- The AIADMK will take necessary action to introduce and enact the Women's Reservation Bill which will provide 33% reservation for women in State Legislatures and in Parliament.

3. Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)

- Food Security: The BJP will take steps to ensure that the benefits of the scheme reach the common man and that the right to food does not remain an act on paper or a political rhetoric. It will:
 - Review the successful PDS models, and incorporate the best practices to revise the existing PDS, for benefitting the common man.
 - Address the issue of under-nutrition and malnutrition.
 - Encourage the production of cereals, pulses and oils.
 - Radically transform the Food Corporation of India (FCI).
 - Ensure contingency stocks for any exigencies arising due to natural calamities or external factors.
 - Seek the participation of voluntary organizations in running community kitchens.
- Major thrust area for rural development would be to improve village level infrastructure in terms of roads, potable water, education, health, supply chain, electricity, broadband, job creation, security in rural areas and linkage to markets.
- Launch a national campaign for saving the girl child and educating her - Beti Bachao - Beti Padhao.
- Structure a comprehensive scheme, incorporating best practices from past successes like Balika Samruddhi, Ladli Laxmi and Chiranjeevi Yojana to support encourage positive attitude amongst families towards the girl child.
- Program for women healthcare in a mission mode, especially focusing on domains of Nutrition and Pregnancy - with emphasis on rural, SCs, STs and OBCs.
- Review the working conditions and enhance the remuneration of Anganwadi workers.
- Appropriate measures would be taken to check female foeticide, dowry, child marriage, trafficking, sexual harassment, rape and family violence.
- Education - Enrol and Excel: BJP believes that education is the most powerful tool for the advancement of the nation and the most potent weapon to fight poverty. Education in India needs to be revitalized and reorganized to make future generations proud of their culture, heritage and history and also for creating confidence in the vitality of India. Every effort shall be made to ensure 'equality of opportunity in access and success' to all learners; creating a harmonious, and cohesive egalitarian society that practices democratic values. This would be possible only when Education accords due emphasis on national integration, social cohesion, religious amity, national identity and patriotism. It must also be analysed how far education has contributed to moral, ethical and humanistic values in the individuals and the society. Education must create minds free from superstitions, hatred and violence and become an important vehicle to cement national unity, social cohesion and religious amity. Our endeavour should be to inculcate moral, ethical and humanistic values in the individuals and the society. India has to become a knowledge society and has to reverberate with

educated skilled manpower of high standards required to meet the challenges of 21st century. This requires a bold and visionary leadership to introduce appropriate policy and structural changes. Highest priority would be given to address the acute shortage of teachers and researchers, quality of education and research, and also the employability factor associated with most of the courses. Education should not only lead to employability but also job creation and entrepreneurship by introducing a national multi-skills orientation program.

- We intend to review and revise education system; the salary structures associated with the teaching staff and most importantly, address the shortfall of faculty and related issues in the country. The system shall be made people-friendly and the credibility of the system shall be restored.
- Investment in education yields the best dividend. Public spending on education would be raised to 6% of the GDP, and involving the private sector would further enhance this.
- Under the scheme of 'Quality education for all', BJP would take the following steps:
 - NDA's flagship program 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan', mechanism would be set up for its performance audit and to have real time information about its performance. Programme shall be strengthened and expanded with a goal to remove illiteracy.
 - Universalization of secondary school education and skills development through functional school shall be seriously pursued with particular focus on rural, tribal and difficult areas.
 - The content and process of school education shall be thoroughly reviewed to make it dynamic, stress-free, attractive and responsive to the emerging national needs.
 - Girls shall be provided all possible help to continue and complete school education.
 - The digital divide shall not be allowed to create further divisions in the learning situations of children.
 - Special pedagogy would be developed for differently-abled students.
 - On priority, a national modernization programme for madrasa's would be started.
 - Mid-day meal scheme would be revitalized in terms of management and delivery.
 - We will explore ways to reduce the daily burden of carrying books to school for children, which would also entail use of technology for education as a mission mode project.
 - Establish a national E-Library to empower school teachers and students.
 - Initiate a multi-country student exchange programme for broadening the horizon of school going children.
 - Creative talents of students will be recognized and encouraged.
- Health Services - Increase the Access, Improve the Quality, Lower the Cost: India needs a holistic care system that is universally accessible, affordable and effective and drastically reduces the out of pocket spending on health. NRHM has failed to meet the objectives and will be radically reformed. BJP accords high priority to health sector, which is crucial for securing the economy. The overarching goal of healthcare would be to provide, 'Health Assurance to all Indians and to reduce the out of pocket spending on health care', with the help of state governments. The current situation calls for radical reforms in the healthcare system with regards to national healthcare programs and delivery, medical education and

training and financing of healthcare. Our government would focus on the following reforms in healthcare:

- The last healthcare policy dates back to 2002. India now needs a comprehensive healthcare policy to address the complex healthcare challenges, keeping in view the developments in the healthcare sector and the changing demographics. BJP will initiate the New Health Policy.
- Initiate the 'National Health Assurance Mission', with a clear mandate to provide universal healthcare that is not only accessible and affordable, but also effective, and reduces the Out of Pocket (OOP) spending for the common man.
- Education and Training - Will review the role of various professional regulatory bodies in healthcare and consider setting up an overarching lean body for healthcare. High priority will be given to address the shortfall of healthcare professionals.
- Modernize Government hospitals, upgrading infrastructure and latest technologies.
- Reorganize Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in order to converge various departments dealing in healthcare, food and nutrition and pharmaceuticals, for effective delivery of healthcare services.
- Increase the number of medical and para-medical colleges to make India self-sufficient in human resources, and set up an AIIMS like institute in every state. Yoga and Ayurveda are the gifts of ancient Indian civilization to humanity and we will increase the public investment to promote Yoga and AYUSH. We will start integrated courses for Indian System of Medicine (ISM) and modern science and Ayurgenomics. We will set up institutions and launch a vigorous program to standardize and validate the Ayurvedic medicine.
- Move to pre-emptive care model where the focus and thrust will be on child health and prevention.
- School health program would be a major focus area, and health and hygiene will be made a part of the school curriculum.
- Focus on Rural Health care delivery.
- Senior Citizens healthcare would be a special focus area.
- Give high priority to chronic diseases, and will invest in research and development of solutions for chronic diseases like obesity, diabetes, cancer, CVD etc.
- Occupational health programs will be pursued aggressively.
- Utilize the ubiquitous platform of mobile phones for healthcare delivery and set up the 'National eHealth Authority' to leverage telemedicine and mobile healthcare for expanding reach and coverage and to define the standards and legal framework for technology driven care.
- Universalization of emergency medical services-108.
- Re-orientation of herbal plants board to encourage farming of herbal plants.
- Population stabilization would be a major thrust area and would be pursued as a mission mode program.
- Programme for Women Healthcare with emphasis on rural, SC, ST and OBC in a mission mode.
- Mission mode project to eradicate malnutrition.

- Launch National Mosquito Control Mission.
- Hygiene & Sanitation: Poor Hygiene and Sanitation have a far reaching, cascading impact. We will ensure a 'Swachh Bharat' by Gandhiji's 150th birth anniversary in 2019, taking it up in mission mode by converging resources and building around Jan Bhagidari:
 - Create an open defecation free India by awareness campaign and enabling people to build toilets in their home as well as in schools and public places.
 - Set up modern, scientific sewage and waste management systems.
 - We will introduce Sanitation Ratings measuring and ranking our cities and towns on 'sanitation'; and rewarding the best performers.
 - Make potable drinking water available to all thus reducing water-borne diseases, which will automatically translate into Diarrhoea-free India.

4. Communist Party of India (CPI)

The CPI Charter calls for:

- Redefine the path of development in a way that leads to economic development with equitable distribution and social justice.
 - Housing, food security, education, employment and healthcare for all, special emphasis on ending malnutrition among women and children;
 - Education policy:
 - Free and universal education from primary to secondary level be guaranteed by the government;
 - Increase the spending on education to at least 10 per cent of GDP;
 - No to commercialisation of education, equal quality education to all; common school system; more opportunities for admission in professional educational institutions including medical education;
 - Strengthening government educational system at all level by filling all vacancies in government educational institutions from primary to higher education;
 - Change in syllabus to promote rationalism and scientific temper. Secularism to be guarded as ordained by Constitution.
 - Guarantee of all democratic rights to students; and
 - Abolish illiteracy in next five years;
 - Food security:
 - Provision of 35 kg of food grain per month to all families at a maximum price of Rs 2 per kg;
 - Establish and expand Universal Public Distribution System (PDS);
 - Stringent legal measures against hoarding of essential commodities; and
 - No to forward trading in all commodities.
- Health Care:
- Ensure spending of five per cent of GDP on public health care system.

Healthcare should be made one of the fundamental rights.

For women:

- Gender equality, equal rights for women in all spheres;
- Establish strong mechanism to ensure women safety and strict implementation of the existing laws protecting the interest of women and children;
- Ensure fast track courts for justice to women victims of violence.
- Bring legislation to provide 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and assemblies; 50 per cent reservation in local bodies;
- Transparency and accountability of gender budget;
- Social security law for unorganised workers including Anganwadi, ASHA, mid-day meal workers and domestic workers.
- Implement the legal provisions strictly to end the practice of child labour and bonded labour.
- On child rights:
 - Quality day-care service;
 - Education and care rights for children from zero to six years of age;
 - Provide crèches at work places.
 - End malnutrition;
 - Arrest declining child sex ratios; and
 - Three per cent of GDP to be spent on child care.

5. Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPIM)

- Enact a Right To Food law with the following features:
 - Elimination of the present targeted system and establishment of a reformed and strengthened universal public distribution system excluding only income tax payees
 - Provision of a minimum of 35 Kg of foodgrains for a family or 7 Kg of foodgrains per individual, whichever amount is higher, at a maximum price of two rupees per kg of foodgrains
 - Along with foodgrains, the PDS will supply essential commodities such as pulses, edible oil, sugar, kerosene at controlled prices.
 - The food supplies through ICDS and Mid-Day Meal Schemes will get higher allocations to ensure hot cooked nutritious meals and be brought under the Food Security law as a legal right.
 - Entitlements for food and nutrition for pregnant women and lactating mothers will be included in the law.
 - Special measures like free kitchens for vulnerable sections of the population such as migrant workers, destitute, widows, disabled persons
 - Strengthen the rationing system in remote and hilly areas to ensure that the Adivasis and other vulnerable sections in those areas have easy access to food security
 - Oppose cash transfers in lieu of foodgrains
- Ensuring equal remuneration for women workers in all areas of work; adopting social security measures for working women including maternity benefits, pension and health insurance for women workers in the unorganized sector including home based workers; crèche facilities for all women workers.

- Recognising all workers employed in different central and state government schemes like the Anganwadi workers and helpers, ASHAs, mid-day meal workers, para teachers, NCLP staff etc. as 'workers' as per the recommendation of the 45 ILC and providing them with all attendant benefits including statutory minimum wages, social security benefits like pension etc. and ensuring their trade union rights.
- Passage and adoption in the Lok Sabha of the One Third reservation Bill for Women in Parliament and State Assemblies, which had been adopted in the Rajya Sabha as a priority.
- Putting in place a series of measures to prevent, curb and punish those responsible for the horrific increase in violence against women and children.
- Accepting the Verma Committee recommendations which have been left out of the present amended law; changes in educational curricula to include subjects related to gender equality; steps to make public spaces safer for women; ensuring safe access to all public places for women with disability; increasing punishment for caste based crimes against scheduled caste and scheduled tribe women; penalties on any personnel including police personnel who sabotage or delay cases; setting up of fast track courts; support to victims of sexual violence and acid attacks through a fully funded rehabilitation scheme especially for children who are victims of sexual violence; adequate budgetary allocations for implementation of the laws against domestic violence and against sexual harassment. Strict implementation of the PCPNDT Act (against sex determination tests and female foeticide) and the activation of defunct monitoring committees.
- Enacting the following new legislations: a standalone law against so-called honour crimes; a law against trafficking of women and children; a law for joint matrimonial property rights; strengthening the law for maintenance of women and children including a scheme such as the one initiated by the Left front in Tripura for an allowance for deserted women; special schemes for single women including widows and female headed families; a law to ensure linkages between SHGs and banking institutions and guarantee of subsidized interest rates of not more than 4 per cent with special concessions for SHGs of SC/ST women, protective legislation for domestic workers and for home-based workers.
- Promoting and fighting for social reform against prevalent anti- women, anti-girl child practices including those which occur in the name of religion or tradition and against the cultures of violence against women both in public and domestic spheres.
- The CPI (M) strongly advocates and will work for the rights of children. It is committed to:
 - Universalization of the ICDS to cover all children from the age of 0- 6 years. It will reverse all measures towards privatization of the ICDS; more allocations per child to ensure nutritious meals for children in Anganwadis and in schools
 - Expansion of The Right to Education Act to include all children from the age of 3-18 years. Special provisions for the inclusion of children with disability,
 - Amendments in the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation Act) to remove the distinction between hazardous and non-hazardous work in order to ban all forms of child labour and to ensure implementation of schemes with additional allocations for the rehabilitation of all working children
 - Special measures to close the continuing gap between Adivasis, dalit children and socially vulnerable groups and communities and others through specific measures including additional allocations for setting up residential schools and hostels with

- modern facilities for scheduled tribe and scheduled caste children; stringent action against discrimination at any level
- Complete coverage of basic services, such as supplementary nutrition, immunization, pre-school non-formal education, regular health check-ups and quick referral services.
 - Take effective steps to trace missing children ensuring public reporting of the status of search
 - Strict implementation of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act
 - Delegation of finances and powers to the National and State Commissions for the Protection of Children
 - Provision of shelter and social services to street children.
 - Ensuring a total re-haul and reform of the juvenile justice system and institutions to sensitize them towards helping them reintegrate into society as responsible citizens.
 - Including all tribals in the Food Security Act entitled to subsidized foodgrains;
 - Expanding drinking water and sanitation facilities, health centres, schools and hostels in the tribal areas.
 - Education:
 - Public expenditure on education to be 6% of GDP
 - Implementing the Right to Education Act to provide free and compulsory elementary education; Amending the RTE to institutionalize the concept of neighbourhood schooling, Extending it beyond the elementary level and providing free education for all continuing students; Stringent action against private schools and elite institutions who fail to provide admission to children from economically weaker sections, Improving quality of schools and teachers, Central Government to assume the major part of the financial commitment for its implementation
 - Expanding secondary education to reduce dropouts; Improving quality of education and infrastructure in SSA schools, allowing flexibility of rules, timing and other aspects to ensure retention of pupils in backward areas and for otherwise marginalized groups
 - Enacting legislation to regulate fees, admissions and curricula in private educational institutions
 - Formulating progressive and democratic curriculum and syllabi at all levels of education in a way that recognizes India's social and cultural diversity
 - Regularise teachers currently employed as contract or para teachers.
 - Ensuring democratic rights of students, teachers and non-teaching staff in all educational institutions; Students' union elections to be made mandatory in all higher educational institutions.
 - Health:
 - Public expenditure on health to be raised to at least 5% of GDP, which would include a significantly enhanced allocation from the centre.
 - Strengthening, expanding and reorienting the public health system so that it is accountable to local communities and guarantees free and easy access to a range of comprehensive health care services.

- Immediately and effectively reversing the trend of privatisation of health care services and outsourcing of services through PPPs.
- Extending and recasting the ESI scheme to effectively protect workers' health.
- Regulating the private health care sector, especially the corporate owned hospital sector through urgent and stringent measures.
- Ensuring uninterrupted supply of all medicines, free of cost, in all public health facilities; Hazardous formulations of medicines to be weeded out from the market
- Controlling price of essential drugs by adopting a cost-based pricing formula; Minimum Cost-MRP margin and removal of all taxes on medicines in National List of Essential Medicines(NLEM; reduce huge excise duty on medicines by reversing from MRP-based to Cost- based collection.
- Reviving the public sector pharmaceutical units to harness them for production of essential drugs and vaccines.
- Strictly controlling and regulating clinical trials and prohibiting unethical clinical trials by foreign pharmaceutical companies.
- Removing US government's drug law enforcing agency USFDA's offices and officials from India; No enforcement of US law on Indian soil
- Defend India's patent laws and ensure no dilution
- Ensure priority for the setting up of new colleges to train doctors and nurses by Government. Public funding of such colleges as a priority in underserved areas such as in the north east and in poorer States. Training institutes to be set up for health workers.

6. Indian National Congress (INC)

- We will strengthen the legal and institutional framework to protect our children. We will improve the working conditions of Anganwadi and related workers in whose care our nation entrusts our most precious asset –our youngest citizen.
- The party has included Right to Health in the charter of minimum socio-economic rights.
 - To support the Right to Health, the Indian National Congress will increase health expenditure to 3% of GDP and provide universal and quality healthcare for all Indians (including free medicines).
 - It will provide 5 state-of-the-art mobile health vans in every district, equipped with x-ray and other equipment, to provide healthcare check-ups including mammography, blood tests, etc.
 - Commitment to increase the institutional delivery rate. Maternal and child healthcare will continue to be a major focus so as to drastically reduce Infant Mortality Rate and Maternal Mortality Ratio.
 - Almost 56% of adolescent girls in India are anaemic. Anaemia and malnutrition among mothers endanger the mother's health and causes growth retardation and vulnerability to diseases in children.

- Almost 60% of open defecation in the world takes place in India. Poor sanitation is a serious health hazard. The party will endeavour to provide a functional toilet in every school and every household.
- The party will launch focused intervention to improve the Child Sex Ratio, within an overall “National Strategy for Care and Protection of the Girl Child”.
- Country’s success in becoming polio-free through vaccination will be replicated. Its goal is to ensure universal coverage of routine immunization through campaigns and effective monitoring in districts throughout the country.
- The INC will ensure the safety and security of women and children. It will seek to provide them equal access to social, economic and political opportunities.
 - The INC will ensure that all laws for the welfare of children including the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 will be strictly enforced.
 - It will further strengthen and expand the scope of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, set up in 2007.
 - The party will also ensure that the strongest possible action is taken to prevent child trafficking.
 - The quality of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) will be vastly improved and special incentives will be given to Anganwadi workers.
 - The party is committed to the enactment of the Women’s Reservation Bill to reserve 33% of all seats in the Lok Sabha, and in all State legislative assemblies for women.
 - Mandatory procedure for the rapid conclusion of cases where custody of children in involved will be put in place.
 - The INC will increase the number of girls’ hostels, particularly in tribal areas and hostels for working women, with day care to encourage women to become well-educated and earn their own livelihood.
 - The INC will earmark at least 30% of all funds flowing in to Panchayats and Nagarpalikas for development of women and children and focus on the special needs of female agricultural labour and women cultivators.
- We will move our focus from ‘Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan’ to ‘Shreshth Shiksha Abhiyan’, making “quality” the centre of our agenda.
 - Strengthen the implementation of the Right to Education Act, ensure universal enrolment in secondary education, and reduce drop-out rates in middle and secondary levels.
 - Establish an independent regulatory mechanism to oversee State and private institutions to ensure standardisation and quality of education.
 - Support regional and context-specific curricula and focus on developing life skills including leadership building.
 - Strengthen facilities for children with special needs and disabilities. Give priority to developing infrastructure for differently-abled persons.
- The INC will attempt to expand the focus of the current food security schemes to include subsidised pulses and cooking oil for beneficiaries of Antyodaya Ann Yojana.

7. Samajwadi Party

- **Education & health: Its slogans are:** खुला दाखिला सस्ती शिक्षा – लोकतंत्र की यही परीक्षा (Open admission, cheap education as the litmus test for democracy) and रोटी कपड़ा सस्ती हो – दवा पढ़ाई मुफ़्ती हो (Bread and clothing be cheap, medicines and education be free)
 - Entire education to be made free.
 - Provision of 7% of budget for education and 6% on health will be made
 - Open mini-AIIMS in rural areas in every state in large numbers
 - X-ray, MRI, dialysis and CT scan will be made free
 - The government to take care of treatments for serious illnesses like cardiac, kidney, liver, cirrhosis, thalassemia.
- **MNREGA, Mid-Day Meal and Nutritious Food Scheme**
 - Presently, MNREGA includes 60% labour and 40% material component. It will be reversed so as to mitigate corruption in the labour component.
 - Joint Secretary level officers of the Government of India will monitor the Mid-Day Meal and Nutritious food schemes.