

Parliamentary Watch Budget Session, Monsoon Session & Winter Session 2015



HAQ: CENTRE FOR CHILD RIGHTS
B1/2, Ground Floor, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi – 110017
Phone: 011-26673599, 26677412; Fax: 011-26674688
Website: www.haqcrc.org; E-mail: info@haqcrc.org

Dear Parliamentarian

Since 2003 we at HAQ: Centre for Child Rights have been holding before you a mirror on how much time and energy all of you have spent on discussing issues related to children.

We always hear it being said by many of you that children are the future of the country (*desh ke bahvishya hain*).

But we want to remind you that **children are citizens today** and their rights and needs to be protected and addressed today. There are 444 million children in India. They make up almost one third of this country's population. And even if they do not vote, as citizens of this country they have the right to be represented by you. And yet only 5% of the questions in the 2 houses in Parliament is about them.

Relate this to the small share of the budget that children receive (only 3.32 % of the total budget), and we will realise how little finances and time we invest on them. And yet we all know that the situation of children in India has remained a cause for concern. Poor learning scores, poor health indicators and large number of children who are victims of violence and education remain the reality of this country. How do we propose to march into a "developed India" if these realities remain?

These children are also adults in the making and hence as a country – As we sow, so shall we reap!

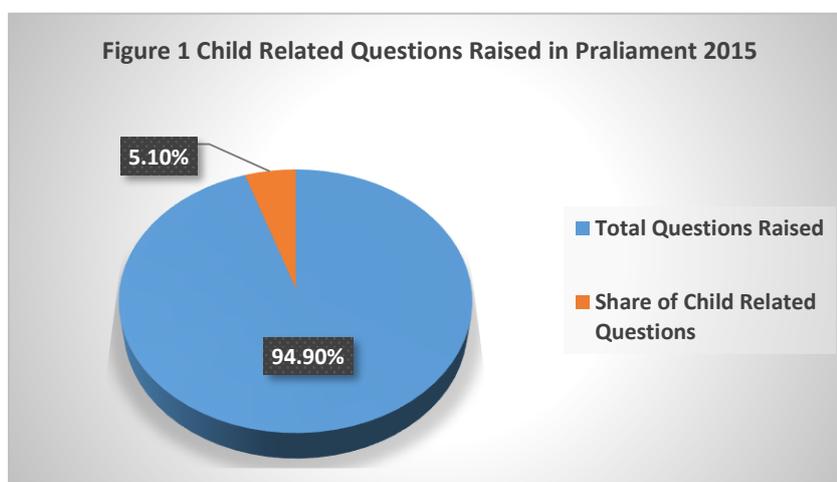
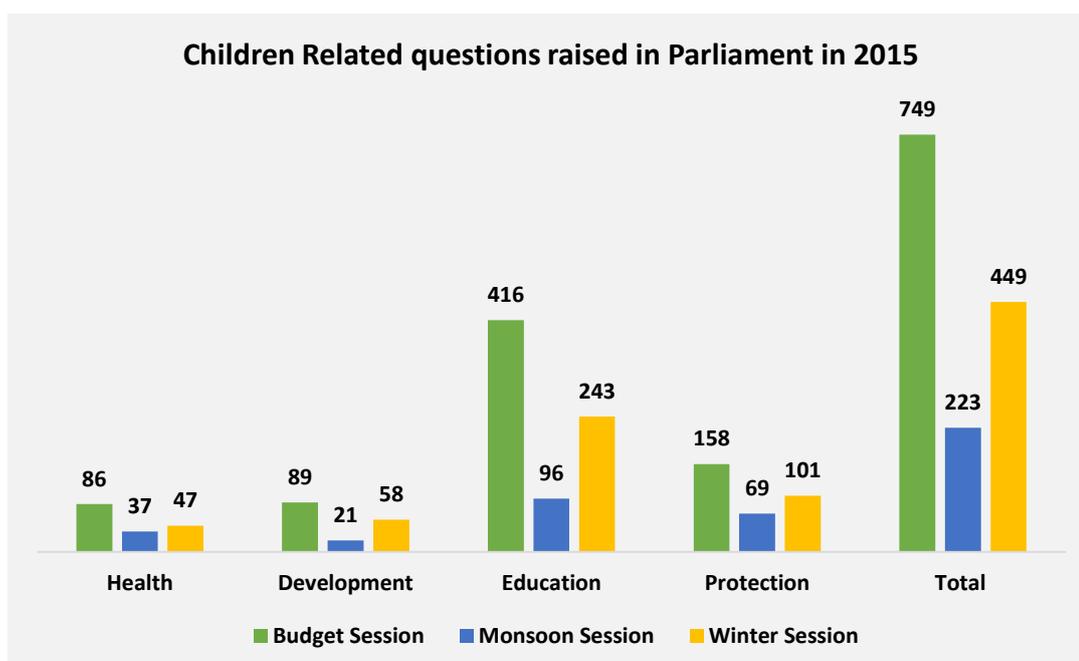


Table 1: Child Related Questions asked in Parliament

HOUSE	Budget Session		Monsoon Session		Winter Session	
	Starred+ Unstarred	Children Related	Starred+Unstarred	Children Related	Starred+Unstarred	Children Related
Lok Sabha	7584	432(5.7%)	4383	115(2.6%)	4421	261(5.9%)
Rajya Sabha	5193	317(6.1%)	3150	108(3.4%)	3148	188(6.0%)
TOTAL	12777	749(5.9%)	7533	223(3.0%)	7569	449(5.9%)

HIGHLIGHTS

- Almost 5 % of the questions raised in parliament (both houses) are child related.
- Parliamentarians are becoming more child friendly as the share of attention paid to children (in terms of the questions raised) has increased over the years. When we began this analysis it was only 3% of the questions raised- some years even lower.
- The Lok Sabha has many more question related to children discussed (57 % of all the child related questions in all the three session) than Rajya Sabha. Wonder why is that so?
- Education continues to be the issue that draws most attention. 652 questions or 46% of the child related question were on education. It is as if address education sector is addressed, all rights related issues for children are covered All other issues take a back seat.
- The issues that have drawn attention are the drop-out rates and out of school children, drinking water and toilet facilities in schools.
- 42 questions concerning children with disability were raised in the Budget Session (28) and one in the winter session. They were related to education and infrastructural facilities and services. Only one question in the whole year related to mental disability.



- 328 questions or 23% questions related to various child protection issues.
 - 24 questions were raised regarding child abuse/ sexual abuse and the POCSO act. One question pertained to victim compensation.
 - Given that 2015 was the year of “Juvenile Justice” with heated debates on the amendment to the law, it is not surprising that 24 questions were on this issue- a number of them relating to crimes committed and the law.
 - 2015 was also the year when the amendment of the child labour law was being discussed. 63 question were raised on child labour. 6 of these questions related to employment of children in Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME). The rest related to bonded child labour, children employed in hazardous occupations, rescue and rehabilitation.
 - 26 questions were raised on missing children and tracking systems to find them.
 - 24 questions were raised on child trafficking.
- 12 % questions or 170 questions related to health of children – these included questions related to malnutrition, immunisation and diseases such as Polio and TB.

HOW INTERESTED ARE OUR MPs ON CHILDREN RELATED ISSUES?

In 2015, all the three sessions – Budget, Monsoon and Winter were held, a total of 27879 questions were raised in the 2 houses of Parliament, of which only 1421 questions were child related. Is this the total time the 444 million citizens of India deserve?

What is positive is the growing interest that we are seeing in children’s issues even if it is only a 2 percentage point increase in the number of questions raised.

This is also the year in which many flagship schemes related to children like Integrated Child Development Scheme(ICDS), SABLA, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan(SSA) etc. saw major cuts in the allocation. Regarding this many questions and concerns were raised by our Parliamentarians on reduced allocations in the schemes.

Table 2: Child-focussed questions in Parliament (Rajya Sabha & Lok Sabha)										
YEAR	BUDGET			MONSOON			WINTER			Percentage of child-focussed questions
	TOTAL	Child		TOTAL	Child		TOTAL	Child		
		Total	%		Total	%		Total	%	
2003	13602	401	2.95	8246	235	2.84	6379	207	3.2	3.00
2004	7326	232	3.16	NA	NA	NA	6929	213	3.07	3.12
2005	14913	423	2.84	8753	202	2.31	9054	177	1.95	2.45
2006	10182	270	2.65	7787	240	3.08	7925	141	1.78	2.51
2007	11882	471	4.00	7462	280	3.75	6113	185	3.02	3.67
2008	10856	441	4.06	6423	331	5.15	NA	NA	NA	4.47
2010	13528	355	2.62	10057	276	2.74	10420	244	2.34	2.57
2012	14025	585	4.17	8499	253	2.97	9153	271	2.96	3.50
2014	10307	399	3.87	NA	NA	NA	9283	358	3.85	3.86
2015	27879	749	5.86	7533	223	2.96	7569	449	5.95	5.10

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES THAT HAVE CONCERNED OUR MPs?

Various child related issues were raised by the parliamentarians in both the houses in 2015. Some of the Issues that are often presented and discussed are related to lack of toilet and drinking water facility, high dropout rate, New education Policy, quality of school Education, Juvenile Justice Act, POCSO Act, Missing Children, Adoption, Child Labour, Crime against children including child sexual abuse. During the winter Session the Juvenile Justice Bill was debated in the lower house on lowering the age of the juvenile offenders and the bill was passed amidst a lot of protest.

It is important to see the impact of agricultural policies on children. As has been stated in the answer to a specific question raised on neo-natal death:

*Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers (Deptt. of Fertilizers) have informed that they have not conducted any research to study neonatal mortality rate due to exposure of fertilizer chemicals in water. However, a paper published in the Journal of Development Economics examined the impact of fertilizers/agrichemicals in water on infant and child health using water quality data combined with data on child health outcomes using the demographic and health survey data from India. **The study concluded that children exposed to high concentration of agrichemicals, during the first month, experience worse health outcomes in terms of neonatal and infant mortality rates (emphasis added).** (LOK SABHA UNSTARRED Q.NO.749. 27.02.2015)*

Low allocations for health has remained a matter of concern in the country, especially in the context of privatisation of health care. In this context the reply of the Minister to a question on expenditure on health is significant and also a matter of concern-

As per World Health Statistics 2014 published by World Health Organization, 'Out of Pocket' expenditure accounts for 60 percent of total expenditure on health in India in

2011. Public expenditure on health as percentage of total expenditure on health in India in 2011 stands at 30.5%. (LOK SABHA UNSTARRED Q.NO.2872. 13.03.2015)

On a question related to the implementation of POCSO Act, the Minister replied:

As per the information provided by National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, data on number of translator, interpreters and special educators deployed in the special courts are not maintained. Based on the information collected from the States/UTs, 478 Special Public Prosecutors (SPPs) have been appointed in 651 districts under the POCSO Act, 2012 from November, 2012 till March, 2015. (LOK SABHA UNSTARRED Q. NO.3689. 22.12.2015)

Budget Session 2015

Budget Session is critical for children and the investment in them. It is the session when we see political priorities reflected in the questions and the answers¹. A total number of 12777 question were raised during the budget session 2015 of which only 749 were child focussed (just 5.86 %) of which 318 questions were in Rajya Sabha and 432 questions in Lok Sabha.

Mostly questions were education related and to specify the questions were on Scholarship Schemes, Vacant Positions and Shortage of Teacher, Quality of Teaching and learning, literacy rate, Mid-Day Meal in Schools etc.

The following Tables (**Table 3 and Table 4**) show a break-up of the sector-wise questions that have been raised by our honourable Parliamentarians in the three sessions held in 2015.

Sector	Budget Session	Monsoon Session	Winter Session
Health	38(8.8%)	12(10.4%)	24(9.2%)
Development	43(10.0%)	9(7.8%)	31(11.9%)
Education	267(61.8%)	56(48.7%)	155(59.4%)
Protection	84(19.4%)	38(33.0%)	51(19.5%)
Total	432 (5.7%)	115 (2.6%)	261 (5.9%)

As **table 3 & 4** show, education sector received the maximum attention from our MPs and followed by development & Protection sector. Least questions were raised on Child Health.

¹ The first part for Rajya Sabha (Upper House) was held from 24th of February 2015 to 20th March 2015 and second part was held from 23th April 2015 to 13th May 2015. The first part of Lok Sabha (Lower house) was held from 24th February to 20th March, 2015 and the part was held from 20th April to 08th May, 2015.

Education related questions were on Primary Education, drop out of Children or out of school children, Girls education, basic facilities like toilet and Drinking water in school, New education policy, Mid-Day Meal etc.

Sector	Budget Session	Monsoon Session	Winter Session
Health	48(15.1%)	25(23.1%)	23 (12.2%)
Development	149(47.0%)	12(11.1%)	27(14.3%)
Education	46(14.5%)	40(37.0%)	88(46.6%)
Protection	74(23.3%)	31(28.7%)	50(26.5%)
Total	317 (6.1%)	108 (3.4%)	188 (6.0%)

Development related issues were only on Anganwadi centres, Creche facilities, SABLA etc. Under Protection sector mostly questions were raised on Missing children, Child Labour, Crime against Children, Juvenile Justice Act, etc.

Questions related to child health were on pulse polio Immunisation, Vaccinations, Malnourishment etc.

Monsoon Session 2015

The total number of questions raised during the Monsoon session² was 7533 and out of which only 223 questions were on children's issues which is just 3 % only. In Rajya Sabha out of 3150 questions, 108 questions were child related and in Lok Sabha total number of questions asking during the session was 4383 and 115 questions were child specific.

Most of the child focussed questions were related to education, questions like toilet and drinking water facilities in school, Poor teaching standards in school, Education in Madrasas and other minority institutions etc. Reduction in allocation in school education. Health related issues were mostly on Immunisation and vaccination, malnourishment of children, higher rate of infant mortality rate, Anaemia among children. Question were also raised on Integrated Child Development Scheme(ICDS), SABLA Scheme and Crèche facilities for working women. On the issue of child protection, many questions were asked on Missing children, Child labour, Crime against children etc.

Winter Session 2015

Total number of 7569 questions were raised during winter session³ and out of which only 5.9% were child related (449 questions). 261 child related question were asked in Lok Sabha and 188 in Rajya Sabha.

² The monsoon session is the second session and it was held during July- August; In both the Houses it was held from 21.07.15 to 13.08.15.

³ The winter session was held from end of November 2015 to December 2015(30.11.15 to 23.12.15).

Like the other two session similar questions were raised in the winter session, mostly on education related like dropouts from school, Amendment to RTE act 2009, Girls Educations, Scholarships etc., other issues raised were Immunisations, Vaccinations, Infant Mortality Rate, Anganwadi centres and issues like Crime Against Children, Child labour and on Adoption were also raised.

Here are some interesting questions and their answers in 2015:

Child Budgeting (Ref. LSUSQ 917, 24.07.2015)

Poonam Mahajan (BJP)

(a) whether the Government proposes to establish child budgeting cell in Central Ministries/Departments and State Governments with the main purpose of sensitizing and institutionalising child-related concerns in the country, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the Ministry also proposes to build capacities to analyse Union and State budgets and their impact on the programmes/schemes meant for children; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

Minister of Women and Child Development Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi answered –

(a): No, Madam. There is no such proposal.

(b) to (c): Does not arise.

Rescue of Trafficked Children (Ref. LSUSQ 1337, 28.07.2015)

Shri Harish Chandra Meena (BJP)

(a) the number of trafficked children rescued during the current year, State-wise;

(b) whether the Government has roped in other agencies like Indian Railways for prevention of the child trafficking and rescue and rehabilitation of the trafficked children in the country; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs Shri Haribhai Parathibhai Chaudhary answered -

(a) As per information provided by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), a total number of 1071 children (below 18 years) were rescued from trafficking during January to May, 2015. State/UT wise details is at Annexure-I.

(b) & (c): Yes, Madam. After the incident of suspected trafficking at Palakkad Railway Station, Kerala in which 578 children were rescued by the Railway police, Ministry of Railways has issued a detailed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in accordance with the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection Act) 2000 and the related rules, to ensure care and protection of children in contact with railways.

Out of school children (Ref. RSUSQ 561,03.12.2015)

Smt. Wansuk Syiem (INC)

(a) whether in its Millennium Development Goals (MDG) assessment in 2015, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has stated that India is moderately on track of universalizing primary education but cautions that a large number of children are still out of school and are not completing their primary education;

(b) whether the third and latest round of National Survey on Estimation of Out of School Children (NSEOSC) conducted in 2014 estimated a fall in number to 6 million or 2.97 per cent of the total number of children; and

(c) whether the Census 2011 figures on children (6-13) not attending educational institutions are in steep variance with NSEOSC figures for the third round for surveys conducted in 2014?

Minister of Human Resource Development Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani answered -

(a): The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report, 2015 points out that India has witnessed significant progress towards meeting the MDGs, with some targets having been met ahead of the 2015 deadline. It says that India has made significant progress in universalizing primary education, and is moderately on track to achieve this Millennium Development Goal. Enrolment and completion rates of girls in primary school have improved and are catching up with those of boys, as are elementary completion rates. It also addresses the issue of large number of children remaining out of school and failing to complete primary education, particularly in the case of girls, children in rural areas and those belonging to minority communities.

(b): The survey commissioned by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) through an independent agency in 2014 reported an overall decline in the number of out of school children in the age group of 6 to 13 years in the country. While there were 134.59 lakh out of school children in 2006, it decreased to 81.50 lakh in 2009 and the number further reduced to 60.64 lakh children in 2014 in the same age group. The latest figure accounts for 2.97 percent of the total children in the said age group.

(c): Census 2011 showed that about 32 million children aged between 6 to 13 years have never attended any educational institution, even though government estimates of out of school children show substantial lower number. This variance may be due to different criteria for identifying out of school children and the nature of data used for research study.

Allocation for ICDS (Ref. RSUSQ 2556, 19.03.2015)

Shri Ritabrata Banerjee (CPI-M)

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the allocations for the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) have been curtailed by 50 per cent, if so, the reasons therefor?

Minister of State in the Minister of Women and Child Development Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi answered -

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented by States/UTs across the country. The Central Government provides funds to States/UTs in the prescribed cost sharing ratio for implementation of ICDS Scheme. The Budget allocated for ICDS for the years 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 are given below:

Year -	Budget Allocation(BE)	Revised Allocation (RE) (Rs. in crore)
2013-14	17,700.00	16,312.00
2014-15	18195.00	16,561.60
2015-16	8335.77	0

Reduction in budget allocation of WCD (Ref. RSUSQ 96, 23.04.2015)

Shri Sanjay Raut (Shiv Sena)

(a) whether budget allocation was reduced by nearly 50 percent for the Welfare of Women and Children Development programme, if so, the reason therefor;

(b) whether the Ministry will be able to run all earlier social welfare programmes through this allocated fund;

(c) if so, the manner in which it will cover all such social schemes run for women and child welfare in the country; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor and the Ministry's plan for running all these programmes?

Minister of Women and Child Development Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi answered -

(a) to (d): The reduction in the budget allocation for the welfare of women and children development programme is primarily confined to the two children centric Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) namely Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme and Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls-SABLA. The Budgetary allocation for all plan schemes including ICDS has been made against the backdrop of substantial higher devolution of taxes of 42% to the States, decision to give more flexibility to States in implementation of schemes and expected higher share from States in implementing of the schemes.