

**Report-Presenting Demand Charter 2023**

**State Meet:**

***“Children and Adolescent Participation in Democracy”***

**Presenting Demand Charter to Political Parties for the Upcoming State Assembly Election 2023**

**Bal Adhikar Sarkshan Sajha Abhiyan Alliance (DASHAM)**

**17<sup>th</sup> October 2023**



## **Preamble**

Children are the future of the nation. Rajasthan has 43.6% of the population below 18 years of age. As per the State Child Policy, 2008, the State has the responsibility of providing quality education, health, nutrition, clean water, and sanitation services to every child. However, despite the state and community's efforts the present scenario is unsatisfactory to show the significant improvement in the status of children and young people in the state.

Rajasthan Bal Adhikar Sarkshan Sajha Abhiyan Alliance (DASHAM) is a strong network of NGOs, child rights activists, and individuals working under the umbrella. Since 2008 it has been raising the collective voices and influencing the policies related to issues of children and adolescents' rights, care, and protection at the state level.

Network in association with UNFPA, UNICEF, and its partner NGOs organizing a series of discussions, meetings, and workshops across the state for collating the grassroots voices of children and young.

## **Background**

The election is certainly a vital pillar of democracy and the process through which people can express their political opinions. People express their opinions by public voting to choose a political leader. Furthermore, the winning political leader would have the authority and responsibility to fulfill the promises declared in the manifesto during the election campaigning.

During the 14<sup>th</sup> Vidhan Sabha Election 2013 and 14<sup>th</sup> Vidhan Sabha Election 2018, Rajasthan Bal Adhikar Sarkshan Sajha Abhiyan Alliance (DASHAM) took responsibility for collating the voices of young people in the form of a Demand Charter and handed over the same to all the political parties.

Envisioning the importance of collating the grassroots voices of children and young people for the state election 2023 and the necessity of influencing the political parties' manifesto, the network in association with its partner NGOs organized block and district level meetings which were followed by two-day workshops at all the seven divisions of the state.

The seven divisional workshops were organized with representation from all the geographical districts with the support of 217 partner NGOs. In the entire process from village field level meetings to the divisional workshops, more than 12000 adolescents and young people participated. They represented all walks of society including school students, forest communities, nomadic families, differently abled, orphans, etc. from rural, slum, and urban areas of the divisions.

In the divisional workshops, with the help of creative activities and group discussions, issues of adolescents and young people were collated. The young participants had fruitful discussions with the representatives of political parties including Congress, BJP, AAP, Bahujan Samaj Party, Republic Party, etc which followed by presenting the demand charter.

## State Meet for Presenting Demand Charter with Political Parties

With the aim of influencing the political parties to include the grassroots voices of children and young people in the election manifesto of the state assembly election 2023, the state meet: “Children and Adolescent Participation in Democracy” was organized on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at Rajasthan International Centre, Jaipur. A total of 184 including 121 adolescent & young people, 57 adults from 43 NGOs and stakeholders from across Rajasthan, and 6 political parties participated in the program. The young participants represented schools, differently abled, and non-formal setups from rural and urban areas. The political parties' representation was from CPI, CPIM, Congress, AAP, BJP, CPIM Male.

The entire program was hosted and led by young people, that demonstrated their active involvement from the beginning of this campaign of DASHAM.

### 1. Welcome and Introduction

The hosts welcomed all the participants and representatives of different political parties in the program. Brief about Bal Adhikar Sarkshan Sajha Abhiyan Alliance (DASHAM) initiation from 3 NGOs to become a state level network of more than 200 NGOs representation from different and difficult geographies. Continues efforts of advocating for the policies and programs for children and young people. Also, the endeavours of influencing the political parties' manifesto for including the issues of children and young people in the state assembly election from the year 2013. In the year 2018, Vidhan Sabha election the Congress party included 16 demands in their manifesto, while BJP included 6 demands raised by children and young people. The winning Congress party was able to make efforts and execute about 15 demands of the total demands raised.



## **2. Showcasing Seven Divisional Workshops through Video**

A video was played that showcased the highlights of all the seven divisional workshops held in August-September 2023 across Rajasthan. The sessions were facilitated with the aim of enhancing joyful learning, providing a conducive environment, learning from the environment, enriching joyful learning, and, developing an empathizing attitude.

Creative activities such as garden games to understand the issues of the disabled, bonding games with partners, depicting personal feelings through drawing, portraying personal dreams on charts, illustrating their dream house, group work on doodling the school of dreams, action based activity comprised of performing different funny physical actions.

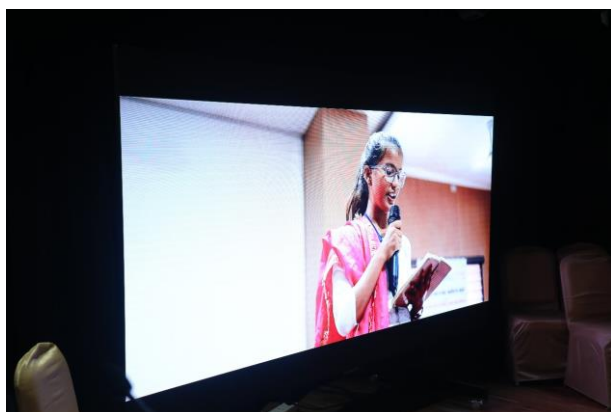
In all seven workshops, the participants performed group songs, dances, musical acts, dramas, and puppet shows that created a more energetic and vibrant environment.

The state team of UNICEF interacted with the participants of the Udaipur workshop. The participants were encouraged to share their views, experiences, and concerns, for the immediate and long-term actions with the local and state government to provide a healthy, safe, and learning environment to each child at their schools.

The group activities were conducted to identify the existing problems related to their assigned topics including education, health, child rights, participation, safety & and protection with actionable solutions. They were engaged in collaborative brainstorming sessions, guided by their coordinators and program facilitators. Further, each group collectively presented their recommendations and experience with the larger group.

Toward the end of each workshop, the group representatives collectively prepared and presented their voices and demands to the chief guests representing the Rajasthan State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Jaipur (RSCPCR), District Child Protection Committee, Juvenile Justice Board, Child Welfare Committee and different political parties in all seven divisions.

The participants shared that they are always disregarded by everyone saying they are a child, however in the workshop, we got equal chances to express our views without biases and discrimination. They appreciated the forum as got to know about different children, geography and were also able to make new friends.



### **3. Experience Sharing by Young People**

The few participants of the divisional workshop shared their experience as an individual that has a direct impact on the overall growth and development of adolescents and young people of the state.

An adolescent from Salumber, Udaipur studying in 12<sup>th</sup> standard in the government senior secondary school shared that their school does not have a mathematics teacher for many years. Therefore, the teacher from outside is called and the fees are paid by the students.

A student of 12<sup>th</sup> standard from a government school in Tonk revealed that the trucks and tractors pass by their school to collect gravel for construction work. The drivers of these vehicles drink and abuse the children, especially the girls, which leads to dropping out of their school.

A youth pursuing B.Ed. 1<sup>st</sup> year in Jaipur shared her experience of participation and conviction level of students enrolled from the government schools to their college. The students from private schools present and speak confidently as compared to the students from government schools and they face personal challenges. Thus, she suggested that the government should provide exposure to public speaking, debates, and personality development programs for their students on a regular basis.

A young resident from the village of Tonk presented his personal experience. The villagers collectively requested Sarpanch and District Collector for government health services by opening a sub-centre. Later, the sub-centre was opened but in a rented building which led to many challenges including tantrums with the landlord, inability to provide services for adolescent girls, inability to cater to ANC and PNC services, etc. Hence, requesting to shift the sub-centre to the independent government infrastructure for smooth and timely health services.

A girl from Givana village studying in the government higher secondary school said that their school did not have a library and sports classes, thus all the students requested and submitted applications to include them in their timetable. The school authority scheduled extra classes for the subjects to cover their curriculum. However, the extra classes have been converted to nonteaching classes as teachers do not want to stay back in the schools for these classes, which is impacting the students' studies.

Two care leaver youth expressed their pain and challenges of unavailability of finance, lack of vocational training, and inability to bear the daily expenses and rented shelter after leaving the orphanages and shelter homes of the government. They requested the state government to support them with shelter, vocational training, and food services until they completed their higher education and job placement.

An adolescent girl associated with Smile Centre shared her journey of positive changes in her personality and life. She joined DASHAM network in 2020 and participated in many workshops, that helped to develop confidence which resulted in hosting child rights related workshops at the level. She shared that such programs developed her sensitivity towards



disabled children and people, and now she would like to extend her support whenever possible in her capacity.



#### 4. Launch of a booklet on Demand Charter of Young People

After the successful organization of these seven divisional workshops, the demands raised by young people and NGOs were collated with continued online discussions for 15 days and formed a booklet. DASHAM network led this entire process of identifying issues and collating the voices in the form of a booklet for four months.

The network is hopeful not only for the inclusion of adolescents and young people's demands in the political parties' manifesto but also to continue the parties' efforts to make Rajasthan a children friendly state.

On 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023, a booklet on demand charter of young people was launched by the guests including the Chairman of the District Child Protection Committee and the representatives of different political parties. The young participants also joined them on the stage to signify "of the young people, by the young people, for the young people" of democracy.



## **5. Presentation of Demand Charter by Young People**

On the basis of group activities, and voices raised by adolescents and young people in all seven divisional workshops the demand charter was collated were presented to the chief guests of the program by the young participants. The guests included Ms. Sheela Saini-Chairman of the District Child Protection Committee and representatives of the political parties' CPI, CPIM, Congress, AAP, BJP, and CPIM Maale.

### **5.1. Health:**

1. Free health check-ups of all children every month in the schools.
2. Medicine, other expenses, and free treatment for children suffering from congenital heart diseases and other chronic diseases.
3. Health counseling centre at Panchayat level for solutions related to health & development and counseling services for adolescents.
4. For early detection of deafness among infants, Brainstem Evoked Response Audiometry (BERA) hearing test at the district level.
5. At the state level availability of HIV testing among infants and virus load testing facility at the divisional level.
6. To increase the immunity among HIV-positive children, the availability of ART drugs and supplementary food.
7. Free sanitary napkins and health checkups at all primary health centres.
8. Ensuring specialty doctors for children's and women's health at all the community health centres.
9. Deploying interpreters at all health centres to coordinate the health services for deaf and dumb people.
10. Recruiting trained and skilled teachers/counselors in reproductive, sexual, and mental health at schools.
11. Provide a fully equipped first aid box in each school.
12. Work plan for children's mental health and focus on prevention of mental health problems.
13. Including disability detection-genetic testing in the Chief Minister Chiranjeevi Swathya Bima Yojana.

### **5.2 Education:**

1. Extending State Right to Education Act 2009 up to 12<sup>th</sup> standard and having provision of free and compulsory education.
2. Same education system for all schooling education in the State.
3. Action plan and strengthening school management committees under the State Right to Education Act 2009 for all government and private schools of the State.
4. Recruiting psychological counselors in all Secondary and Higher Secondary schools.
5. Providing vocational training and career counselling services in all the schools.
6. Establishment of library, E-library, computer education and smart classes in all the government schools.

7. Imparting POCSO, adolescents' legal law, and positive discipline under the Teacher's Training Module and student curriculum.
8. For enhancing the girl's education, establishing government colleges at the block level.
9. Specialized teachers for all subjects including science, mathematics, physical education, geography, and commerce in all senior secondary schools at the gram panchayat level.
10. Implementing life skills education and self-defence training in all government schools.
11. Issuing the guidelines for proper and effective implementation of the No Bag Day.
12. On No Bag Day the awareness sessions on positive & negative aspects of media and cybercrime by the experts should be organized.
13. To control the additional fees taken by private and government schools establish the standing committee and develop an assessment policy.
14. Providing all basic amenities in all government schools including building, electricity, fans, water, educational materials, cleanliness services, laboratory, library, playground, sports material, separate functional toilets for girls & boys, and clean drinking water facilities.
15. Installing CCTV in all the school premises (inside and outside) with proper maintenance facilities.
16. Providing an online education system with devices for children unable to attend school.
17. Ensure the availability of sanitary napkins, specific places, proper distribution, and disposal machines at schools.
18. Ensuring scholarships for economically poor children to continue their education.

### **5.3 Development:**

1. Construction of toilets in all the Anganwadi centres.
2. Along with quality health and food the pre-schooling education should be improved in all the Anganwadi centres.
3. Availability of sanitary napkins and regular health checkups in the Anganwadi centres.
4. The Anganwadi centres should have toys and educational materials for mental abilities.
5. Extending Mid-Day Meal services for the students till 12<sup>th</sup> standards.
6. Along with food served in the mid-day meal include seasonal fruits.
7. Regular health checkups of children at the Anganwadi centres and schools.
8. Opening open gyms and public parks in the villages.
9. To reduce malnutrition in the rural area, launch swarajya poshan Abhiyan at every Anganwadi centre.
10. Organizing sports tournaments for the physical and mental development of children at the panchayat level.
11. Opening community libraries in the rural and urban areas.



#### **5.4 Child Protection:**

1. Opening shelter homes for girls in all the districts of the State.
2. District level de-addiction programs and rehabilitation centres for adolescents in need.
3. Considering the rising usage of the internet and mobile among children, need for government programs for children's safety and cyber safety.
4. Necessity of state level work plan for effective prevention of child trafficking.
5. Develop a complaint portal, on which any complaints, and online fraud by the children can be raised and resolved.
6. The orphan children should also get free education and ensured government jobs.
7. Special arrangements for issuing crucial documents including Aadhar cards, caste certificates, original resident certificates, etc for children who are orphans, abandoned, and living in NGOs
8. Every Gram Panchayat should be developed as Bal Hiteshi Gram Panchayat.
9. Establishing One Stop Crises Management Centres at the district level for the care of children and for advocacy of children related issues.
10. Monitoring and supervisory committees for the government schools, colleges, and hostel services implemented for the children in care and protection.
11. Publicising child helpline numbers (1098, 112) through wall paintings, radio, and television in rural areas.
12. The public transport to have functional CCTV along with its maintenance for the safety of children and adolescents.
13. Special programs on education, career, and skills development for the children living in different organizations.

#### **5.5 Differently abled Children:**

1. Sensitization for the differently abled among the community, organizing camps for early identification of disabilities, and also the availability of expert team for the proper guidance.
2. Issuing identity cards, disability certificates, bus & train passes, etc to the identified disabled children.
3. Sensitizing and educating on the rights and laws of disability to the principals of primary schools, secondary schools, and higher education organizations.
4. The awareness of disability and their laws should be included in the curriculum of schools and colleges.
5. Focusing on inclusive education for all disabled children, recruiting trained and skilled special teachers.
6. Providing special teaching material as per their needs, instructions in sign language as well as in audio and school transport facilities for such children.
7. Instead of descriptive questions the multi-optional questions should be asked in the examination of autism and intellectually disabled children.

8. Despite the proper guidelines of the writer's assistance the blind students face challenges during every exam from the schools and college management. The guidelines need to be circulated prior to every exam to the management of all exam centres.
9. Deploying interpreters/buddies at all public places such as health centres, courts, police stations, schools, railway stations, bus stations, courts, and banks to enable the smooth communication and transition of blind people.
10. All public places should have instructions and directions in sign language and Braille.
11. The government should provide vocational training in sign language and interpreter ship with its proper placement services to promote careers for the disabled.
12. Vocational training and technical courses should be part of the school & college curriculum for adolescents & young people with disabilities.
13. Resource room for students with disabilities.
14. All schools, colleges, and public places have toilet and ramp facilities for the disabled.
15. Digital mobile application on disabled related laws, rules & regulations, and government schemes and which should be in the accessible format.
16. The monthly scholarship for the disabled should be at least INR1000.
17. On a regular basis organize sports tournaments for differently-abled children at schools and also provide sufficient sports material.
18. Streamline the disabled children with Special Olympics and Para Olympics sports.
19. Teaching reproductive and sexual education to disabled students specifically to female students with high sensitivity.
20. The disabled children should be attended on priority by the doctors at all the hospitals.

#### **5.6 Participation:**

1. Ensuring children's participation and conducting meetings as per rules in the schools' committees including child line club, meena manch, raju manch, and bal sabha.
2. Ensuring participation of all children in sports activities at the school and community level to enable national and international exposure.
3. Ensure the participation of children, by activating bal panchayat and bal sansad and its functions.
4. Ensuring children's participation and the parents teachers' meetings.

#### **5.7 Voices of Care Leaver/Foster Care Youth:**

1. Such adolescents should be provided higher education, financial support for technical/vocational education, and provision of scholarships.
2. They are asked to leave the government shelter homes immediately after attaining 18 years of age, however, they should be supported with financial support for food and shelter till the age of 25 years and they get reservations for government jobs.
3. Ensure providing adolescents with their basic necessary documents such as identity cards, disability certificates, passports, etc.
4. Distance learning for adolescents leaving foster care services.

### **5.8 Voices of Tribal Children & Adolescents:**

1. To prevent malnutrition among the Sahariya, and Kathodi communities, linking them with Anganwadi and Ma-Body centres.
2. Ensure sports and food facilities for the tribal children of interior and remote areas.
3. Preventing the child trafficking and child labour in the bordering villages of the neighbouring states.
4. Ensuring health services for the children in the tribal areas.
5. Strict laws and action against the selling of girls in the name of Nata Partha.
6. Training centre for promoting sports among tribal children and youth.

### **5.9 Voices from Desert Areas:**

1. Considering scattered areas in the desert and long distances to the schools, providing the school transport facilities.
2. Providing residence facilities for the teachers in the school campuses for continued and smooth education for children.
3. Ensuring health services for children living in the desert areas.
4. Special government schemes on education and development by considering the geography and needs of the children.

### **5.10 Voices of Children from Nomadic/Semi-nomadic and Disadvantaged Communities:**

1. Through a special campaign identifying the children of nomadic/semi-nomadic and disadvantaged families.
2. Through an easy process, issuing the essential documents for such children (including birth certificates, original residential certificates, caste certificates, Adhar cards, Janadhar cards, etc.).
3. Streamlining the education deprived children of nomadic/semi-nomadic and disadvantaged families with the formal education system. Such children should also be provided with residential schools and mobile school education systems.
4. Including the cultural identification, culture, and contribution of nomadic/semi-nomadic in the school curriculum.
5. Providing scholarship and hostel facilities to the children of nomadic/semi-nomadic and disadvantaged families.
6. Priority in school admission to the children of nomadic/semi-nomadic and disadvantaged families in the government residential schools and Navodaya Vidyalaya.

### **5.11 NGOs Key Demands for Children and Adolescents:**

1. Providing 6% of the state GDP on the health budget for expanding health services and improving the quality of delivering health services.
2. Formulating children's cells in all the political parties to enable dialogues with children from different walks of society.
3. Every village, town, and city of the State should have adequate playgrounds, parks, Anganwadi centres, and schools. Parks should have adequate recreational activities and sports equipment, swings, etc.
4. Reviewing the implementation of State Child Policy 2008 and considering the present scenario in the state, develop a new State Child Policy.
5. Ensure state and district level child protection work plan and its execution.
6. For effective execution of child protection laws and schemes appoint the cadre for child protection services.
7. Issuing unique identity cards for the orphan children and for the children under care and protection.
8. Special provisions of property rights & protection for the children under care and protection.
9. Establish adolescent specific, systematic and resourceful police cells at the district level.
10. Strengthening the Child Rights Protection Department and Rajasthan State Child Rights Protection Commission.
11. Activating the children's participation in child protection committees at the gram panchayat level. Also, include the priority issues of children in the annual work plan of the Gram Panchayat.
12. Identifying and training talented children in the field of arts and crafts. Establishing forums at block and district levels for demonstrating their skills.
13. Developing Anganwadi centre as Crèches.
14. Launching a 3-4 digit One Stop Solution Helpline number for resolving the issues of disabled and the helpline should be integrated with all the concerned departments for quick solutions.
15. Sex education for all students and positive masculinity for boys should be part of the school curriculum.
16. Identifying the non-school going and dropout children for linking them with the formal education system.
17. For smooth education, do not involve the teachers in non-educational activities such as election duty, vaccination, etc.
18. Easing the government process of documentation for children & adolescents with disabilities, nomadic/semi-nomadic, children in care & protection including identity cards, birth certificates, caste certificates, availing government schemes benefits, etc.
19. Focusing on inclusive education by deploying trained & skilled special teachers.
20. Streamline transgender children with formal education.
21. Counselling facilities in schools for preventing children from conflicts, crimes, gender discrimination, mental trauma, etc.

22. The children leaving government shelter homes/foster care after completing 18 years of age should be provided with higher education, shelter, vocational training, and career counseling.
23. Teachers of the government and private schools should be trained in child protection policies and laws.
24. To mitigate caste discrimination, issuing instructions for obeying the non-biased attitude while serving mid-day meal food at government schools for children with disabilities, who belong to SC/ST, nomadic, and disadvantaged families.
25. Under the Rights to Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 (Chapter-8, Article-39 (1,2) Article-47) implement mandatory awareness sessions across the state on disabled rights, laws, and 21 types of disabilities from panchayat till district level functionaries including MLAs, Judiciary, Police, Panch, Sarpanch, Anganwadi centres.
26. Distributing the teacher training toolkits in all the schools of the state developed by the National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NIEPID).
27. Under the Rights to Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 develop the sensory park in every district headquarters.
28. Genetic testing to identify the causes of disability, should be included in Chief Minister Chiranjeevi Swathya Bima Yojana.
29. The inevitable therapies for children with autism and intellectual disability should be included in Chief Minister Chiranjeevi Swathya Bima Yojana.
30. A separate budget for the tribal children's rights & protection should be provided from the allocated budget of the Tribal Development Department.
31. Provide Anganwadi and school services in the tribal areas and the Tribal Development Department should develop work plan for the development of children.
32. For the overall development of the children include the 5Cs of the first century i.e. cognitive, creative, physical, social, emotional, and curiosity skills in the education system.



## **6. Address by Political Parties**

The guests addressed the program and they acknowledged the participants, their active contribution, and sharing of their real-life experiences. They all promised to include the voices and demands in their party manifesto.

**Ms. Sheela Saini, Chairman of the District Child Protection Committee** shared her enthusiastic experience of witnessing the Jaipur workshop organized by DASHAM. She ensured for planning and execution of the regulations and services for children with disabilities and also to work towards the challenges faced by the girls in the state.

**Ms. Sumitra Chopra, CPIM** expressed her wonderful experience of listening to adolescents from different areas of the state. Also recognized the network and organizers for the commendable vision. She emphasized that their political party advocates for disadvantaged groups of society, the importance of regular health checkups in the schools and extending mid-day meal services to the students of 12<sup>th</sup> standard, the necessity of sports in academics, and the issues of disabled children. She ensured to include the demands of children in their election manifesto.

**Ms. Nisha Sindhu, CPI** thanked the network for inviting in such a vibrant program. As one of the oldest political parties working across the country, she promised to take forward the voices of the participants to the national level. When a child is born, becomes entitled to get education, health services, and benefits of government services without the requirement of identification cards and documents. Therefore, they will advocate this decision of the Supreme Court.

**Mr. Yogesh Gupta, Mr. Lal Singh Devasi, and Mr. Prakash Jaiswal, AAP** shared that today's parents focus on good schools and not good education. The children need to bring out tough learning from their education and situation. They revealed that Delhi and Panjab already implementing many of the children's demands in the schools of these states. They observed school dropout and child labour as the big challenges in the western part of Rajasthan while visiting the areas. Our focus will be including issues related to education, health, employment opportunities, and coaching centres in our election declaration. They reiterated that the demand charter of young people will be the guarantee card of their party.

**Ms. Apurva Singh Bhati, BJP** expressed her gratitude for inviting them to the program. Childhood should emphasize more on sports, exploring dreams and less education. Proper and right nutrition, awareness on child abuse, help desk, safe environment, vocational training, mental health, substance abuse, participation and youth parliament, etc are the need of today's young people. Their political party will implement just not limited to the election manifesto but to include them in the vision and policies.

**Professor Paresh Vyas, Congress** congratulated the children and network for developing an interesting vision document. He focused on the importance of education for democracy and functional democracy. As responsible persons, the young people should also contribute towards the nation's progression. He shared that many of the demands raised by the participants are part of their party vision 2030.



Further, all the political party representatives were requested to sign the oath card attached to the last page of the demand charter booklet to ascertain their commitment toward the children and young people of Rajasthan.



## 7. Closing Remarks

Ms. Pallavi Sharma, Psychologist-DASHAM expressed gratitude for the successful completion of the drive by young people from different walks of society, NGOs, guests, and the political party representatives. The young people and network look forward for the inclusion of demands in the manifesto of the political parties for Vidhan Sabha election to be held in November 2023. After five years, these young participants will experience the happiness on the successful execution of their voices by the winning political party.



## Media Coverages

The workshop was well covered in the print and electronic media.

