

# Child Declaration

“Sundarbans” means beautiful forest. We, the children of Sundarbans, love exploring this beautiful, water-rich land. Water is life, but it can also be life threatening. Why should our community lose 3 children to drowning, every single day? You, our leaders, need to listen and act to make sure all children are safe in their homes and in their communities.

It is 2021 – time to address superstitions around drowning and rescue. ASHA didi (Accredited Social Health Activists), local club members, and teachers can also educate and empower our parents. Only if our adults understand the dangers around water and know swimming, safe rescue techniques and CPR, can they keep us safe.

We are curious. We love to play in water. Teach us to swim. The earlier we learn swimming, the safer we will remain. Swimming skills are our vaccine against drowning. We also need school textbooks with information on drowning and drowning prevention, to help us understand the dangers from when we are young.

To keep our younger brothers and sisters safe, we ask for two key actions. First, create barriers by fencing the ponds, and ensure there is nothing colourful to tempt them near the water. Second, strengthen the arrangements to supervise them in the community. For example, they could stay longer at the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme) centre.

To our parents we say - be watchful. Put noisy anklets and squeaky shoes on our little brothers and sisters, so you can always hear where they are. Tell them folktales of danger around water.

It is World Drowning Prevention day, and on this day, we call on you, our local leaders, to not leave us behind. As children, our voices are not always heard.

That is why we are calling on you to amplify our voices and take action on drowning prevention. Please listen and end the silent epidemic of drowning. Let the children of Sundarbans live.”



Photo : Sujoy roy

#drowningprevention2021