

SUMMARY

In India, the diversity and wide range in social and economic influences impact some groups adversely; same is in the case of child. Cultural, ethnic and geographical variations also bring in different contexts. In this lesson; you learnt status of young children in India.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

- ✚ The period from birth to six years
- ✚ Period of rapid growth and development
- ✚ Need to be cared and protected with opportunities to realize their potential
- ✚ Needs supervision

IMPACT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD ON SUBSEQUENT LIFE

- ✚ Early childhood is a sensitive period in human development, shaped by the child's genes (nature) and experiences (nurture).
- ✚ Early childhood period is important as development takes place maximum during this period and foundation for holistic development is laid.
- ✚ A stimulating environment promotes holistic development comprising various domains namely, cognitive, language, social, emotional and physical competence whereas any long-term adverse circumstances negatively impact development of child

STATUS AND PROFILE OF YOUNG CHILDREN IN INDIA

Build Your Understanding

- ✓ A nation progresses when its citizens are healthy, educated, economically independent and contribute to national growth.
- ✓ India is a multi-cultural pluralistic society where people of different religions, languages, social backgrounds, and economic backgrounds co-exist in diverse social environments.
- ✓ It is a vast nation with a population of more than 1.21 billion people, the second-most populous country in the world.
- ✓ The child population data reveals that there are 158,789,287 children in the age group 0-6 years which is 13.12 percent of total population as per Census 2011.

Demographic Profile of Children in India

- The data from Fact Sheet of the Fourth National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4, 2015-2016) conducted by National Institute for Population Studies shows that Child population (0–6 years) is 158 million.
- The male to female child sex ratio has marginally gone up in ten years from 914 to 919.

Child Morbidity and Mortality

- ✓ Child mortality refers to total number of child deaths under the age of five years per 1000 live births.
- ✓ Infant mortality is the death of young children under the age of one year.
- ✓ Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) has gone down from 57 to 41 in the last ten years.

- ✓ In 2015-2016, 2.5% of new born received medical attention within 24 hours as compared to 0.3% ten years ago.
- ✓ Under Five Infant Mortality Rate (U5IMR) has also come down by 24 in ten years from as high as 74 children per 1000 live births.
- ✓ In 2015-2016, the U5IMR was 50.

Maternal Mortality and Health

- Maternal mortality refers to death that occurs due to complications during pregnancy and childbirth.
- If a woman is pregnant or dies within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, it is also referred to as maternal mortality.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) commended India's progress in reducing maternal mortality ratio (MMR) by 77% from 556 per 1000 live births in 1990 to 130 per 1000 live births in 2016.
- The NFHS (2015- 16) provides encouraging details about decrease in the number of women married under 18 years of age. It is 26.8 as compared to 47.4 in 2005-06.

Health and Nutrition

- ❖ There is a direct connection between good health and development.
- ❖ The most recent estimate in 2015-2016 from NFHS-4, indicates that 35.8% of children under five years are low in weight, while almost 38.4 do not gain height.
- ❖ This wasting (not enough weight) and stunting (not enough height) are signs of malnutrition and lack of stimulation.
- ❖ NFHS-4 data records 41.6% mothers can breast feed within one hour of delivery while 54.9% mothers breast fed babies under six months

Education

- NFHS-4 data indicates that 68.8% of children are attending school, i.e 10% more than in 2005.
- The role of Early Childhood Care and Education Policy 2013 has been phenomenal in getting recognition of age-specific needs of children under six years
- Maternity Benefit Amendment Act 2017 focuses on the need for care of children under three years

Gender

- ✚ There are many issues related to the girl child i.e., there is denial of health care facilities and nutrition, early dropout from schooling, low literacy rates in comparison to boys (girls 65.5% and boys 82.1%, Census of India, 2011) and fewer economic opportunities.
- ✚ There were 944 females to 1000 males (Census of India, 2011).

DIVERSE SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Build Your Understanding

- ✓ Diversity in India hinges on physical, social, cultural, linguistic, religious and other ethnic factors including food, clothing and customs.
- ✓ India's geography is diverse and the country can be divided into several regions viz. Himalayas, northern plains, central plateau and Deccan, Western and Eastern Ghats, Thar Desert etc.

- ✓ The differences in climate, temperature, vegetation, fauna give a unique feature to people in each region. They differ in looks, dress and the physical conditions influence the social lives
- ✓ The status of children varies in terms of demography based on opportunity and social geography (location and social position).
- ✓ The statistics and social attitudes reveal that the present state of affairs is not equal for all children

Culture, Caste and Tribes

- Caste has been a major source of diversity in Indian society and often becomes a source of discrimination.
- Economic deprivation led to other forms of discrimination such as untouchability, cultural restraints on sharing food and water and physical segregation within village communities.
- Scheduled Tribes are mostly located in forest or rural areas, with distinct socio-cultural beliefs and practices, deeply interlinked with forest ecology.

Impact on Child

Such negative social and cultural conditions deplete children's self-worth and identity and make them submissive. Low motivation impacts the individual's growth and development negatively. It limits opportunities available to them and narrows their growth prospects.

Religious Plurality

- ✓ Religion is one of the key facets of diversity, along with caste, gender, disability and age.
- ✓ Religion defines dress, food habits, customs, celebrations and festivals.
- ✓ The Constitution of India forbids any discrimination on grounds of religion like Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism.

Impact on Child

Religious differences impact everyday life of children and sense of identity. School authorities need to be aware of norms and practices of different religions.

Types of Family Configurations

- In India, there are many kinds of households ranging from a small unit of parents and child, to extended members such as families with grandparents living together
- Other family configurations include adopted children.

Impact on Child

Children living in different family set up will have a range of different experiences and different upbringing.

Children with Disabilities

- ❖ Children with disabilities are among the most marginalized and excluded groups in the society.
- ❖ Children who are not disabled often need counselling to understand the differences in ability and learn to reach out to all with empathy.

Impact on Child

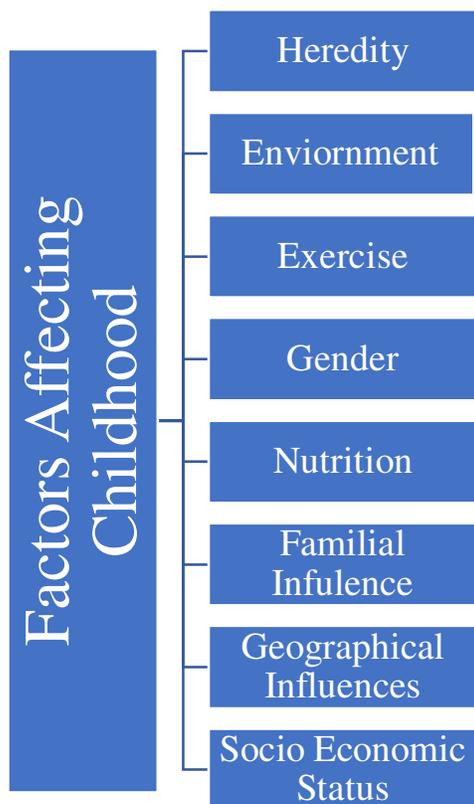
Children with Disabilities may feel neglected and rejected. Families will need to address the special requirements of children who have special conditions. Often, there is need for extra care by parents.

Migrants

- There are an estimated four to six million children who are victims of migration.
- Employed in the unorganised sector, semi-skilled and unskilled migrants are vulnerable.
- Seasonal migration is also particularly disruptive for children.

Impact on Child

Migration raises exclusion from access to basic services and livelihood support; often leading to denial of a child's right to education.



Factors Influencing Child's Health

- Hygiene (Self & Environmental)
- Sanitation Practices
- Nutrition
- Immunization
- Maternal Health

CHILD VIS-A-VIS THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION AND PROVISIONS

- The Constitution of India came into force on 26 January 1950.
- To uplift disadvantaged sections, the Constitution of India, allows affirmative action through positive discrimination (reservations) in education and employment, which is based on caste plus socio-economic backwardness.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS		DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY	
Article 14	Shall not deny to any person equality before the law	Article 39	Childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.
Article 15	No discrimination on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them	Article 42	Provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief
Article 17	“Untouchability” is abolished	Article 45	Free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years

Article 19	All citizens shall have the right <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Freedom of speech and expression; ▪ To assemble peaceably and without arms; ▪ To form associations or unions; ▪ To move freely throughout the territory of India; ▪ To reside and settle in any part of the territory of India 	Article 46	Shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes.
Article 21	No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty	Article 47	Raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health
Article 21 A	Free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years	Article 51A	Responsibility of parent/guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child between the age of six and fourteen years.
Article 24	Prohibition of employment of children (below the age 14 years) in factories		

CHILD REARING PRACTICES IN INDIA

- ✚ Child rearing practices are those practices which are grounded in cultural patterns and beliefs and are adopted by the parents and caregivers for the care and upbringing of the child.
- ✚ Child rearing practices for a given time depends to a large degree on the child's developmental age and the health and nutritional risks the child is facing.
- ✚ Generally, the mother is the primary caregiver, sometimes with considerable support from others and sometimes alone.

EVALUATE YOURSELF

- Q1.** Early childhood years are formative years in the growth and development of children when the foundation for lifelong development and learning is laid. Discuss the factors affecting early childhood
- Q2.** The first three years are crucial as children use or lose what they have, as also 'serve and return'. Comment on the statement.

PRACTICE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Explore the internet and write a report on the present status of 'Child and Childhood' in India.