

Growing Child Deprivation in India



(Source - <http://childreducationdevelp.blogspot.in/2015/09/children-of-road-workers-in-india.html>)

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Lead Essay

Growing Child Deprivation in India

Today, on World Day Against Child Labour, 2017, this article calls attention to the plight of children at risk due to different deprivational characteristics in India. On first June 2017, International Children's Day was commemorated across the globe to celebrate childhood with events that focused on the issues affecting children and how to solve them. The same day also saw the release of two important reports exploring childhood deprivation – namely, the Report of “Children's Multidimensional Poverty: Disaggregating the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)” prepared by Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and the “End of Childhood Index” report prepared by Save the Children, an international non-profit organization based in the United States. Both the reports paint a dismal scenario for children in India in key areas, which shows that the nation is a long way from realizing the vision of eradicating child poverty, identifying within Goal 1 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty in all its forms by 2030 and to protect the planet for future generations.

Child Poverty and End of Childhood

Nearly half of all multidimensionally poor people around the world are less than 18 years old according to the Global MPI of OPHI. In Child Multidimensional Poverty Index, anyone less than 18 years of age is identified as poor or non-poor based on the age-specific overlapping deprivations he or she experiences personally. Child MPI is the age-disaggregated form of Global MPI. It is an index of acute multidimensional poverty that measures overlapping deprivation in health, education and living standard at household level. The health dimension comprises indicators such as nutrition, child mortality, and education comprises school attendance and year of schooling. Under standard of living are indicators such as access to cooking fuel, improved sanitation, safe drinking water, electricity, flooring, and asset ownership. According to this report, in 36 countries including India, at least half of all children are MPI poor. In terms of the number of such multidimensionally poor children as a proportion of the total population, India stood 37th among 103 countries. Out of India's 217 million children, 49.9 percent are multidimensionally poor.

Moreover, the End of Childhood Report 2017 defines child deprivation in terms of events that rob children of their childhoods. Focusing on a set of life-changing events that signal the disruption of childhood, the report ranks 172 countries to provide conditions that nurture and protect their youngest citizens based on an index called Stolen End of Childhood Index. According to the index, children in India (ranked 116th) are more deprived than those in countries like Sri Lanka (61st), Bhutan (93rd) and Myanmar (112th). The indicators used to measure the end of childhood are: under-5 mortality, malnutrition that stunts growth, out of school children, child labour, early marriage, adolescent pregnancies, and displacement by conflict and child homicide. According to the report, India has the highest number of children stunted due to malnutrition at 48.2 million, equivalent to the population of Colombia. At 31 million India also has the highest numbers of children who are a part of its workforce.

Childhood Deprivation in India

Although, the findings of the recent reports are being regarded as a wake-up call to eradicate child poverty, the incidence of child poverty in India is not new. India was among the worst places in the world for a child according to the Child Development Index (CDI) 2012 of Save the Children. Although, one has to appreciate the progress of the country in halving the number of poor, but beyond a certain threshold there has been virtually no upward mobility in India. With the backdrop of these two recent reports on

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childhood deprivation, it is important to highlight the deprivation characteristics of childhood in India.

Child Health

According to World Bank data of 2015, India has the third highest child mortality rate among SAARC countries with 48 deaths reported per 1000 live births¹. The increasing number of malnutrition in India as seen in the End of Childhood report is also an important indicator of child health in India. An estimated 48.2 million children, i.e. 39 percent of all Indian children are stunted. The report also mentions that the cultural factor of preferring the eldest son in Indian families also results in deprivation of nutritional status of older girls. In India, the one-third of girls aged 15-19 are stunted. Second is the effect of lack of sanitation on child health. According to WaterAid, an international non-profit organization, more children die of diseases related to sanitation than from AIDS, malaria and measles put together. In India, every year, four lakh children die of diarrhea and 88 percent of the diarrheal deaths are linked to incomplete water and sanitation services including gastro-intestinal disorders, worm-related diseases are all linked to poor sanitation facilities².

Nevertheless a new angle of child deprivation is the alarmingly increasing numbers of Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes among the children and adolescent in India. Although related to urban middle class lifestyle, this problem is adversely impacting the childhood of many children and also impacting the life expectancy in India.

Child marriage

Marriage before age 18 is a violation of children's rights and illegal in most countries of the world. Child marriage not only affects girls but also boys though, with a lesser degree. According to a report by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR), during the years 2001-2011, there were 1.1 million boys and 1.8 million girls in the age group of 10-14 years, who were reported to be married. The report also mentions that the states of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have higher instances of child marriage.

The report also mentions that in India, 21.1 percent of all girls between 15 to 19 years are married while 103 million girls were married before they turned 18. The devastating consequences of forcing a child into adulthood and motherhood before she is physically and mentally ready are the disempowerment and deprivation of rights of health, education and safety.

Further, the report mentions that as many as 23.3 girls per 1000 gave birth at the age group of 15 to 19 years, which impacts not only the life of the young girl children but also it has a long lasting impact on the nation's economy and communities. The report states that if adolescents in India waited till their 20s to become mothers, economic productivity would improve by up to \$ 7.7 billion or Rs. 49,600 crore.

Child Labour

According to Census 2011, 33 million children in the age group 0-18 years are categorized as child labour in India, which at an average is one in eleven children who are working to fulfill the economic role that should be played by adults. The End of Childhood report, states that the children working to support their families don't just miss out on education, they also miss out on

¹<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/indias-child-mortality-rate-48-deaths-per-1000-live-births/articleshow/51140270.cms>

²<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/bIG8FQgXD3ssMhCWXZm3J/Children-bear-the-brunt-as-sanitation-facilities-fall-short.html>

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rest, play and recreation. They lose opportunities to engage with their community, and participate in cultural, religious and sports activities. This effectively means missing out on childhood. Among Indian children in the 4-14 years age group, 11.8 percent are working, which means 31 million working children, the highest in the world!

Child Education

The Report of End of Childhood 2017 also brings out the fact that children who are excluded from primary education will earn significantly less over their lifetimes than their educated peers. The reports calculates the economic cost of not educating these out-of-school children, estimated at 0.3 to 15.2 percent of GDP in these countries which is far greater than what it would cost to achieve universal primary education. In India, 18.6 percent of children are out of school in primary and secondary age group and 47 million youth of upper secondary are not in school.

Implication and Way Forward

India has a number of legislations and policies for children including the rights based perspective based on international summits and conventions. The Children Act, 1960 to provide for the care, protection, maintenance, welfare, training, education and rehabilitation of neglected or delinquent children and the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) was set up in March 2007 under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005, an Act of Parliament (December 2005).

However, India lacks a Government level initiative like the Child Poverty Act 2010 in United Kingdom, which targets eradicating child poverty in the United Kingdom by 2020. Another praiseworthy initiative taken by National Statistical Bureau (NSB) of Royal Government of Bhutan and UNICEF to construct a national level Child Multidimensional Poverty Index (C-MPI) in 2016, which is the first such step taken internationally. If India is genuine about its commitment to the SDG goal of eradicating child poverty by 2030, then the government will need to make some key changes in policies to target the deprivation characteristics of the children of the country and develop policy responses like those taken by the UK and even Bhutan.

Prepared By

Nijara Deka

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Headlines

Millions of Children Labor in India, Some in Sweltering Heat

(Vaishnavee Sharma, *abcNEWS*, June 12, 2017)

There are evidences of numbers of children selling different things in every 100 meters (330 feet) or so along the busy expressway on the outskirts of New Delhi. These children are too young to be working legally. According to Census 2011, in India, there are 8.3 million child laborers and in Uttar Pradesh state, where alone accounted for 1.8 million of that total. UNICEF says there has been an overall decline in child labor in India, but that urban areas have seen an increase.

Read More: <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/millions-children-labor-india-sweltering-heat-47978462>

Date Accessed: 12.06.2017

Economy

How 15,080 Profitable Indian Companies Paid No Tax in 2015-16

(Rohit Parakh, *IndiaSpend*, June 12, 2017)

According to an analysis of the National Tax Data, done by IndiaSpend, it has been reported that the 'tax incentives allowed 15,080 profit-making Indian companies to have effective tax rates of zero, and in some cases less than zero, in 2015-16'.

In the late 1980s, the Central Government had introduced minimum alternate tax (MAT) to overcome the above problem. However, it is reported that the MAT in itself has exemptions which negates the original intent of the tax. In 2014-15, 52,911 companies made profits but paid no tax.

Read More: <http://www.indiaspend.com/cover-story/how-15080-profitable-indian-companies-paid-no-tax-in-2015-16-26650>

Date Accessed: 12.06.2017

Governance & Development

HEALTH

Health Secretary Inaugurates ‘Vatsalya - Maatri Amrit Kosh’

(The Press Information Bureau, June 7, 2017)

A national human milk bank and lactation counselling centre was opened at Lady Hardinge Medical College in collaboration with the Norwegian government and NIPI Newborn Project by Health Secretary Shri C.K. Mishra. Not only would this centre impact improving survival of infants by supporting breastfeeding but also be a torch bearer for other milk banks to emerge under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Read more: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

Date Accessed: 12.06.2017

Poverty and diabetes, twin burdens

(Adil Akhzer & Anuradha Mascarehnas, *The Indian Express*, June 08, 2017)

A new research on diabetics has found that the epidemic is now spreading to those who can least afford to pay for its management. Dr Sanjay Bhadada, senior faculty at the Department of Endocrinology at Chandigarh’s Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research said, “The situation is serious because the disease is expensive. You have to pay not less than Rs 40 on its treatment per day, and the government has no plan to help out as yet. Diabetes brings along many more problems, and needs to be treated properly”.

It is becoming common among people of “Low Socio-Economic Status (SES)” living in cities and towns in the more affluent states.

Read More: <http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/poverty-and-diabetes-twin-burdens-4693804/>

Date Accessed: 12.06.2017

LAW AND JUSTICE

NEET-like Test for Judicial Officers

(*The Tribune*, June 11, 2017)

It has been proposed by the government that recruitment of judges to lower judiciary be conducted on the basis of an examination on the lines of NEET. This proposal is backed by the fact that there is a vacancy of 4,452 judges in the subordinate courts (as per figures released on December 31, 2015). The proposal further highlights that a “centralised examination” may be held by a “recruitment body” for the selection under the supervision of Supreme Court.

Read more: <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/neet-like-test-for-judicial-officers/421117.html>

Date Accessed: 12.06.2017

Tele-Law for Legal Aid in Rural India

(*The Press Information Bureau*, June 11, 2017)

The Ministry of Law and Justice partnered with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to launch ‘Tele-Law.’ This initiative is aimed increase the accessibility of legal aid to marginalized communities through Common Service Centres (CSCs).

Read more: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

Date Accessed: 12.06.2017

INDIA AND THE WORLD

INDIA IN THE WORLD

China-Pakistan's dam projects in Gilgit-Baltistan should worry India

(Claude Arpi, *DailyO*, 11 June 2017)

The article is in context of President Xi Jinping's statements on the occasion of One Belt One Road (OBOR) forum, where he stated that China, in pursuit of globalization, wishes for countries to move towards a harmonious co-existence and has no intention of creating a small group detrimental to stability. The article puts forth the argument that the China-Pakistan's dam projects in Gilgit-Baltistan should be worrisome for India as they are contrary to these claims.

Read More: <http://www.dailyo.in/politics/china-obor-cpec-gilgit-baltistan-indus-water-treaty-pakistan/story/1/17750.html>.

Date of Access: 12.6.2017

What Lies Ahead for India After Joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

(Manoj Joshi, *The Wire*, 10 June 2017)

In light of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Astana, Kazakhstan, to attend the 17th summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the article puts forth the argument that India's membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization suggests that Indian interests lie in the Indian Ocean and the Eurasian landmass equally. Further, it states that joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was a smart move by India that is going to reap long term instead of short term gains.

Read More: <https://thewire.in/145919/sco-india/>.

Date of Access: 12.6.2017

Opinions/ Books

OPINIONS

Why two judges are calling for a cow slaughter ban in India

(Kunika, *DailyO*, 11 June 2017)

The author uses pro cow slaughter ban quotes from two judges to suggest that such judicial decisions will start a movement that will marginalize certain sections of society. The first quote is by Justice Mahesh Chandra Sharma of Rajasthan High Court in the case *Jago Janta Society v State of Rajasthan & Ors* dated May 31, 2017 where he states, "Declare cow to be the national animal of the country". Similarly, Justice B Siva Sankara Rao of Andhra Pradesh High Court in *Ramavath Hanuma v State of Telangana* dated March 1, 2017 propounded his co(w)stitutional theory, calling the bovine the "sacred national wealth" and "a substitute to mother, who is a substitute to God". The article addresses that these judgments are preposterous and go against not just legal procedure but, also science.

Read More: <http://www.dailyo.in/voices/cow-slaughter-ban-peacock-judge-judiciary-hyderabad/story/1/17756.html>.

Date of Access: 12.6.2017

The Indian Farmer is Protesting About Much More Than Loan Waivers

(Gopalkrishna Gandhi, *The Wire*, 12 June 2017)

The author has tried to convey through the article that the recent protests by farmers in India may seem to be about the loan waivers by the Government but, upon taking a closer look at the issue it is about agriculture's place in the life of our country. It is about equity's place in the life of our agriculture, and farmers' place in the world of equity. The article suggests looking at demands by P.Sainath closely and that to not do so would be morally hazardous.

Read More: <https://thewire.in/146200/farmers-protest-drought-loan-agriculture-maharashtra-mp/>.

Date of Access: 12.6.2017

The Indian IT industry's future potential

(Vinod K Jain, *Live Mint*, June 08, 2017)

In a white paper report in July 2012, KPMG had broken the news of "the death of outsourcing" in India. Few months later, in January 2013, *The Economist* had reported that 'India was no longer the automatic choice for IT services and back-office work'. They had also cited a report by the consulting firm Hackett that the migration of service jobs to India (and other offshore locations) would stop entirely by 2022.

Despite such predictions, there also exists optimism about the prospects of India's IT services industry. This is because, 'the industry has gone through, and survived, trying times before, such as the dot-com crash of the early 2000s and the 2008 financial crisis'. Additionally, 'the major IT services firms devote significant resources to employee training and development, offering world-class facilities and educational programmes for new and existing employees'.

However, not all firms will do well, or even survive, in the new, hyper-competitive global business environment.

Read More: <http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/AUQsRfrfbZb8tnzto9UFBj/The-Indian-IT-industrys-future-potential.html>

Date Accessed: 12.06.2017

Beware of Beijing

(C. Raja Mohan, *The Indian Express*, June 08, 2017)

With the grant of full membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), India's prolonged quest to join it has been fulfilled. However, some significant questions which have to be answered are: 'Where should Delhi pitch its tent? In the continental or maritime domain? Should it align with the heartland powers or stitch together a rim land coalition? Must India define itself as a Eurasian or Indo-Pacific power?'

With Pakistan blocking India's access to the region, there is little that Delhi can do to decisively influence the geopolitics of inner Asia. India also believes that China's belt and road initiatives are about promoting Beijing's economic, political and strategic interests. Therefore, these will run headlong into India's territorial sovereignty and claim to regional primacy in South Asia and the Indian Ocean.

Read More: <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/beware-of-beijing-4693739/>

Date Accessed: 12.06.2017

Issue Coordinator: Ms. Nijara Deka

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