

Child Care and Local Government

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Abstract:

This paper is based on secondary sources and those are collected by different sources. The first few years of a child's life present a critical opportunity to shape development, to ensure that children become healthy, positive young people and then adults who achieve their full potential. Child care is the caring for and supervision of a child or children, usually from newborn to age thirteen. Child care is a broad topic covering a wide spectrum of contexts, activities, social and cultural conventions, and institutions. Approximately six out of every ten children, or almost 12 million children, age five and younger, are being jointly cared for by parents and early childhood educators, relatives or other child-care providers. A problem of children leads to and is further created by the socio-cultural, socio political and socio-religious situations they are in. A child who is forced or born into a situation or discriminated group is at risk for abuse, neglect and exploitation. The lack of a protection system either due to miss-implementation of national laws and programmes or the absence of protection policies and legislation also renders children problems. Following is a discussion of various protection issues concerning children. Abuse and Violence, Child Sexual Abuse, Street Children, Children Living with, AIDS, Child in Armed Conflict, Girl Child, Child Marriage, Children with Disabilities, Children affected by Substance Abuse, Birth Registration, Missing Children, Children in Conflict with Law, Child Labour, Child Trafficking, Children without Parental

care, Child Health and Nutrition, Early Childhood (Children below six), Children of Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe Families, Children in Poverty.

The local authorities need to play a much greater role in provision of prevention service, early intervention services and promotion of the welfare of children in India. Access to quality childcare service contributes to the social, emotional and educational development of children. Government policy on childcare is to increase the number of childcare places and facilities available and to improve the quality of childcare services for the community.

Key words- Local Governance, Child care, Abuse, Violence.

Introduction:

Childcare is when children are supervised and cared for by a person other than a parent or caregiver. Obtaining affordable, quality child daycare, especially for children under age 5, is a major concern for many parents. Childcare can range from single-night babysitting to daily childcare for working parents. Child daycare needs are met in many different ways. Care in a child's home, care in an organized child daycare facility, or care in a provider's home are all common arrangements for preschool-age children. Older children may receive child daycare services when they are not in school, generally through before-school and after-school programs or private summer school programs. With the increasing number of women in the workforce, child daycare services has been one of the most talked about and fastest growing industries in the economy. Formal child daycare centers include nursery schools, preschool centers, Head Start centers, and group daycare centers. Self-employed workers often provide care in their home for a fee. Others provide care for children in the child's home. Childcare can also be provided by occasional babysitters or people who provide unpaid care in their homes for the children of relatives or friends.

By childcare, we mean all types of early childhood education and care provided by a registered childcare professional, approved childcare professional and through informal arrangements. Registered childcare includes those providers who are providing both early education and care services and who are registered with the appropriate monitoring body for each of the devolved administrations in the United Kingdom. Within these registered services, early education represents services providing the free, government-funded, early education entitlement for three and four year-olds offered by nursery schools, nursery classes, reception classes, preschools, playgroups and child-minders who have completed the necessary training. In addition registered childcare also

represents providers who are registered to provide care services such as daycare, child-minding and out-of-school provision (before and after school and in school holidays) including those who have registered as part of the voluntary (approved) registration scheme. Where necessary, a distinction is made in relation to the provision of early childhood education and care according to how it is funded.

Definitions of child care:

Childcare refers to arrangements for the care of children that have been variously categorized as non-maternal or non-parental care and include long day care in centers; home-based care in the child's own home or a caregiver's home; and, to an extent limited by lack of research, care by friends or relatives (sometimes called 'kith and kin' care). Many children now experience out of school hours care, but it serves separate considerations as its history and purposes differ from pre-school care and its quality has thus far been less intensively researched.

Definition on local government:

Local government is a form of public administration which in a majority of contexts, exists as the lowest tier of administration within a given state. The term is used to contrast with offices at state level, which are referred to as the central government, national government, or (where appropriate) federal government and also to supranational government which deals with governing institutions between states. Local governments generally act within powers delegated to them by legislation or directives of the higher level of government. In federal states, local government generally comprises the third (or sometimes fourth) tier of government, whereas in unitary states, local government usually occupies the second or third tier of government, often with greater powers than higher-level administrative divisions.

The question of municipal autonomy is a key question of public administration and governance. The institutions of local government vary greatly between countries, and even where similar arrangements exist, the terminology often varies. Common names for local government entities include state, province, region, department, county, prefecture, district, city, township, town, borough, parish, municipality, shire and village.

Types of childcare

Type of childcare	Definition	Types of providers
Formal childcare	Registered (by the appropriate governing body) childcare (including those who have opted to be on the voluntary register) provided by a professional usually for a fee.	Child minders; children's centers; day nurseries; extended schools; out-of-school services or kids' clubs; holiday play schemes/clubs; preschools/playgroups; nursery schools and classes; and registered or approved nannies (although they are not legally required to register) some parent/career and toddler groups (although they are not legally required to register).
Informal childcare	Unregistered childcare	Care provided by family, friends and ex-partners.

Childcare by age group

Age group	Types of care
Age 0-2	Child minders, nannies, children's centers and daycare nurseries. Among 2 year-olds it can also include nursery schools, nursery classes and play groups.
Age 3-4	Free early years education is available and is provided by nursery schools, nursery classes, pre-schools, play groups, daycare nurseries, children's centers and childminders who have the appropriate registration. Childminders, nannies, children's centers and daycare nurseries can also provide additional wraparound care as can informal providers.
Age 5-11	Childminders, out-of-school provision including through extended schools, nannies and informal providers.
Age 11-14/18	Out-of-school provision provided through extended schools and/or out-of-school clubs.

Problems of children:

Vulnerability of children leads to and is further created by the socio-cultural, socio political and socio-religious situations they are in. A child who is forced or born into a situation or discriminated group is at risk for abuse, neglect and exploitation. The lack of a protection system either due to miss-implementation of national laws and programmes or the absence of protection policies and legislation also renders children vulnerable. Following is a discussion of various protection issues concerning children.

- Abuse and Violence
- Child Sexual Abuse

- Street Children
- Children Living with AIDS
- Child in Armed Conflict
- Girl Child
- Child Marriage
- Children with Disabilities
- Children affected by Substance Abuse
- Birth Registration
- Missing Children
- Children in Conflict with Law
- Child Labour
- Child Trafficking
- Children without Parental care
- Child Health and Nutrition
- Early Childhood (Children below six)
- Children of Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe Families
- Children in Poverty

Situation of children in India:

Socio-economic disparities have plagued India since time immemorial. From the exploitation of peasants by Zamindars in the Mughal era to concentration of wealth and influence today, the plight of the lower strata of society has always been in stark contrast to the affluence of the upper class. However, the changing moral zeitgeist is revolutionizing the outlook of the haves towards the have-nots.

In India, the divide between the rich and the poor is glaringly discomfoting. Little children begging at traffic signals, large stretches of slums interspersed with swanky skyscrapers, and the lugubrious circumstances of farmers bring to light the villainies of skewed development. The inequality is even more stunning if the statistics are explored. While this 3rd largest economy of Asia has grown at 9% in the last four years, 50% of the wealth is owned by only 10% of the population. A striking contrast is offered by the fact that Mumbai alone has more billionaires than all of Scandinavia, and yet about half the population of the mega polis lives in slums. India ranks 94th out of 118 nations in the Global Hunger Index. Even by 2000 (ten years after adopting economic neo-liberalism), coexisting with half the world's hungriest people on the Indian Subcontinent were more than 50 million tons of surplus grain.

Today, several charity-funded non-profit organizations are working alongside government agencies to bring some stability to the accelerating imbalance in the Indian society. Addressing issues related to under-privileged children is an important subset of such activities. Appropriate grooming in the formative years is helping empower the young generation with the skills and knowledge to take control of their lives. However, while the potential exists, with even a modest financial aid from the burgeoning upper/upper-middle class, to transform primary education, health, and sanitation among children in India, there is a concerning lack of interest, trust and urgency in the situation at hand. International aid covers only about US\$1 per primary school-age child.

It is surprising how most of the urban population is unaware of the devastating state of affairs prevalent just outside their protected cities.

Health:

Almost half of all children under the age of 5 suffer from stunted growth due to malnutrition. 46% children under the age of 3 are too small for their age,

and at least 16% show signs of wasting. Anemia affects 74% of all children under the age of three, and a shocking 90% of all adolescent girls. Preventable diseases like diarrhea and respiratory infections continue to be leading causes of death among children. HIV infects about 220,000 children with nearly 60,000 being added each year.

Every third malnourished child in the world is from India. The under-five mortality rate in the country is 78.6 deaths per 1000 live births², which is below the world average.

A country where medical tourism is opening up new avenues of prosperity, children of poor families continue to die from vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles and tetanus.

Education:

In 2006, India and Pakistan together had about 14 million out-of-school children. By the beginning of 2009, 20% of all Indian children aged between 6 and 14 were still not in school. Inadequate facilities and a severely impoverished environment at the 700,000 rural schools of the country frustrate the children's attempts to have equal access to education. Only one in six rural schools is equipped with toilets creating a severe resistance around sending girl children to school. An acute shortage of seating only exacerbates the already dismal situation. The most under-qualified and untrained teachers cater to the poorest and most deprived children, further widening the gap between the privileged and the under-privileged. Further, a shocking absenteeism rate of 27% is costing the Indian government about US\$2 billion per year.

Less than 25% of all enrolled children in India attend a grade commensurate with their age. Moreover, according to a 2007 survey, less than half of the children in grade 3 could read a text designed for grade 1. Further,

only 38% of the students in grade 4 could subtract or divide. Higher education tells a similarly dismaying story with only a 12% enrolment rate.

Child Labour:

A shocking 12.6 million children engaged in hazardous occupation make India home to the largest population of child laborers under the age of 14 in the world.

Such audacious injustices manifest themselves in various forms of social evil. Despite the disconsolate picture painted by the statistics above, the winds of change are already blowing. Between 1999 and 2006, there has been a significant improvement in the participation rate in pre-primary education. Similarly, the enrolment in higher education in the Indian Subcontinent increased from 7% in 1999 to 11% in 2006. Gender disparities have also declined making a significant stride towards gender parity in primary education. With sufficient help from the capable and responsible Indian in terms of financial aid and volunteering activities, it is possible to eradicate this social evil and help everyone on board the bus to true freedom.

High Risk Groups of Children

- ❖ Street & working children
- ❖ Children of sex workers
- ❖ Abused, tortured and exploited children
- ❖ Children indulging in substance abuse
- ❖ Children affected by natural calamities, emergencies and manmade disasters
- ❖ Children with disabilities
- ❖ Child beggars
- ❖ Children suffering from terminal/incurable disease

- ❖ Orphans, abandoned & destitute children
- ❖ Missing or run-away children
- ❖ Children with STI/ HIV/ AIDS infection

Reported Incidence of Crimes against Children:

Crime Head	Years % Variation in		% Variation in 2005 Over 2004
	2004	2005	
Rape	3542	4026	13.7
Kidnapping & Abduction	3196	3518	10.1
Procurement of Minor Girls	205	145	29.3
Selling /buying of Girls for Prostitution	40	70	95.0
Abetment of Suicide	33	43	30.3
Exposure and Abandonment	715	933	30.5
Infanticide	102	108	5.9
Feticide	86	86	0
Child Marriage	93	122	31.2
TOTAL	14423	14975	3.8

**Source: National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India
(2005): Crime in India**

Constitutional provisions for children in India

Several provisions in the Constitution of India impose on the State the primary responsibility of ensuring that all the needs of children are met and that their basic human rights are fully protected. Children enjoy equal rights as adults

as per Article 14 of the Constitution. Article 15(3) empowers the State to make special provisions for children. Article 21 A of the Constitution of India directs the State to provide free and compulsory education to all children within the ages of 6 and 14 in such manner as the State may by law determine. Article 23 prohibits trafficking of Human beings and forced labour. Article 24 on prohibition of the employment of children in factories etc, explicitly prevents children below the age of 14 years from being employed to work in any factory, mine or any other hazardous form of employment. Article 39(f) directs the State to ensure that children are given equal opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and guaranteed protection of childhood and youth against moral and material abandonment. Article 45 of the Constitution specifies that the State shall endeavor to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of 6 years. Article 51A clause (k) lays down a duty that parents or guardians provide opportunities for education to their child/ward between the age of 6 and 14 years. Article 243 G read with schedule-11 provides for institutionalizing child care to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living, as well as to improve public health and monitor the development and well-being of children in the Country.

Important Union laws Guaranteeing Rights and Entitlement to Children:

1. The Guardian and Wards Act, 1890
2. The Reformatory Schools Act, 1897
3. The prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006
4. The Apprentices Act, 1961
5. The Children (Pledging of Labour) Act, 1933.
6. The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956
7. The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956
8. The Immoral Traffic prevention Act, 1956

9. The Women's and Children's Institutions (Licensing) Act, 1956
10. The Young Person's harmful Publication's Act, 1956
11. The Probation of Offender's Act, 1958
12. Orphanages and Other Charitable Homes (Supervision and Control) Act, 1960
13. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986
14. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, repealed the Juvenile Justice Act 1986. The 2000 act also has been amended in 2006 and 2010.
15. The Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply Distribution) Act, 1992 and its amendment of 2003
16. The Pre- conception & Pre-natal Diagnostic Technique (Regulation, Prevention and Misuse) Act, 1994 and its amendment of 2002.
17. The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995
18. The factories Act 1948
19. The Commissions For Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005.

National Policies and Programmes for Children:

Further, the Nation is implementing a number of Child centric policies addressing the issues of Child Survival, Child Development and Child Protection.

The important among them are:

1. National Policy for Children 1974
2. National Policy on Education, 1986
3. National Policy on child Labour, 1987
4. National Nutrition policy, 1993
5. National Population Policy 2000

6. National Health Policy 2002
7. National Charter for children (NCC), 2003
8. National Plan Of Action For Children (NPA), 2005.

Important Schemes for Well- being of Children:

1. Integrated Child Development Service Scheme
2. Integrated Child Protection Scheme
3. National awards for child Welfare.
4. National Child Awards for Exceptional Achievements.
5. Rajiv Gandhi ManavSeva Awards for Service to Children.
6. BalikaSamriddhiYojna.
7. Nutrition Programme For Adolescent Girls
8. Early Childhood education for 3-6 age group children.
9. Welfare of working children in need of Care and Protection
10. Child line services
11. Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for children of working mothers.
12. UJJAWALA: A Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of trafficking and Resue, Rehabilitation and Re-integration of Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual exploitation
13. SarvaShikshaAbhiyan
14. National Rural Health Mission
15. Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for empowerment of Adolescent Girls – SABLA.
16. DhanaLakshami – Conditional Cash Transfer for Girl Child with insurance cover
17. National Commission for Protection of Child Rights

In spite of several focused initiatives addressing the various needs of children in India, it is very evident from the Statistics presented in the coming

chapters that, a lot need to be done to improve their condition in all realms of child survival, child development and child protection. The gender inequality is also wide in these areas, calling for special attention on girl child.

Conclusion:

The childcare landscape has changed considerably in the last decade. Much has been achieved, but there remain considerable childcare gaps, for example for disabled children, older children, out-of-school and holiday provision and childcare for those working atypical hours. Other outstanding issues include: the need to improve quality, increase affordability, and respond to parents' preferred working patterns and the needs of the mixed economy of childcare in terms of subsidy and workforce development. To date, the most successful and most well-used and popular development to come out of the childcare strategy is the free entitlement for 3 to 4 year-olds.

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