



## Statistics of Underprivileged Children in India

Even though India's children account for more than one-third of its population, their interests have never been given priority. And their rights have been violated every single day. CRY America's partner, CRY- Child Rights and You has compiled some statistics on the [situation of children in India](#). This is based on its experience of working on a range of children's issues across all regions of India. The statistics are grim. What is worse is that very little is known of what it means to be part of such horrific numbers. The task before society is huge and we at CRY America believe that every member of our society should take responsibility to change the lives of these children permanently.

### The situation of underprivileged children in India

- 40% of India's population is below the age of 18 years which at 400 million is the world's largest child population.
- Less than half of India's children between the age 6 and 14 go to school.
- A little over one-third of all children who enroll in grade one reach grade eight.
- One in every ten children is disabled in India.
- 95 in every 1000 children born in India, do not see their fifth birthday.
- 70 in every 1000 children born in India, do not see their first birthday.
- Only 38% of India's children below the age of 2 years are immunized.
- 74% of India's children below the age of 3 months are anemic.
- More than one in three women in India and over 60% of children in India are anemic.
- Acute respiratory infections are leading causes of child mortality (30%) followed by diarrhoea (20%) in India.
- One in every 100 children in India between age group of 0-14 years suffers from acute respiratory infection.
- Almost one in every five children in India below the age of 14 suffers from diarrhoea. 30-40% of the India's population, which is largely economically deprived, spends over 70% of their total expenditure on food.
- Amongst married women in India today, 75% were under age at the time of their marriages.
- While one in every five adolescent boys is malnourished, one in every two girls in India is undernourished.
- 23% of India's children are underweight at birth.
- 58% of India's children below the age of 2 years are not fully vaccinated. And 24% of these children do not receive any form of vaccination.
- More than 50% of India's children are malnourished.

### **Education**

We believe education is most important as it enables a child to realize his or her full potential; to think, question and judge independently; develop sense of self-respect, dignity and self-confidence; learn to love and respect fellow human beings and nature; in decision making; develop civic sense, citizenship and values of participatory democracy.

- In India, only 53% of habitations have a primary school.
- In India, only 20% of habitations have a secondary school.
- On an average an upper primary school is 3 km away in 22% of areas under habitations.
- In nearly 60% of schools, there are less than two teachers to teach Classes I to V.
- On an average, there are less than three teachers per primary school. They have to manage classes from I to V every day.
- Dropout rates increase alarmingly in class III to V, its 50% for boys, 58% for girls.

- 1 in 40, primary school in India is conducted in open spaces or tents.
- More than 50 per cent of girls fail to enroll in school; those that do are likely to drop out by the age of 12.
- 50% of Indian children aged 6-18 do not go to school

*Source: 7th All India Education Survey, 2002*

### **Situation of the Girl Child**

In addition to the deaths of infants and children due to malnourishment and disease, innumerable and unrecorded numbers of girl children are killed within hours of being born while many others are killed in the womb itself. Patriarchal norms, low status of women and preference for male children are the primary reasons that threaten survival of female children in India. The alarming fact is that female infanticide or foeticide has increased over the past few decades. While in 1960 there were 976 girls born for every 1000 boys, in 2001, there are only 927 girls for every 1000 boys.

- 1 out of every 6 girls does not live to see her 15th birthday.
- Of the 12 million girls born in India, 1 million do not see their first birthday.
- Every sixth girl child's death is due to gender discrimination.
- 1 out of 4 girls is sexually abused before the age of 4.
- Female mortality exceeds male mortality in 224 out of 402 districts in India.
- Death rate among girls below the age of 4 years is higher than that of boys. Even if she escapes infanticide or foeticide, a girl child is less likely to receive immunisation, nutrition or medical treatment compared to a male child.
- 53% of girls in the age group of 5 to 9 years are illiterate.

### **Child Labor**

Children are often treated as the "property" of the very adults who are supposed to care for them; they are ordered around, threatened, coerced, silenced, with complete disregard of them as "persons" with rights and freedoms.

- 17 million children in India work as per official estimates.
- A study found that children were sent to work by compulsion and not by choice, mostly by parents, but with recruiter playing a crucial role in influencing decision.
- When working outside the family, children put in an average of 21 hours of labor per week
- 90% working children are in rural India.
- 85% of working children are in the unorganized sectors.
- About 80% of child labour is engaged in agricultural work.
- 25% of the victims of commercial sexual exploitation in India are below 18 years of age.
- Millions of children work to help their families because the adults do not have appropriate employment and income thus forfeiting schooling and opportunities to play and rest.
- Large numbers of children work simply because there is no alternative - since, they do not have access to good quality schools.
- Poor and bonded families often "sell" their children to contractors who promise lucrative jobs in the cities and the children end up being employed in brothels, hotels and domestic work. Many run away and find a life on the streets.

All children have the right to be protected from work that interferes with their normal growth and development. Abandoned children, children without families and disabled children need special care and protection.

## **Child commercial sex workers**

- There are approximately 2 million child commercial sex workers between the age of 5 and 15 years and about 3.3 million between 15 and 18 years.
- They form 40% of the total population of commercial sex workers in India.
- 80% of these are found in the 5 metros.
- 71% of them are illiterate.
- 500,000 children are forced into this trade every year.

## **Mentally/ physically challenged children**

- 3% of India's children are mentally/physically challenged.
- 20 out of every 1000 rural children are mentally/physically challenged, compared to 16 out of every 1000 urban children.
- Mentally/physially challenged girls are at a particular risk to violence and abuse.