

Children in India: Key Concerns & Priority Areas

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Demographic Status:

- India is a young country with 472 million children.
- Children in the age group 0-18 years constitute 39 per cent of the country's total population.
- An analysis of age-wise distribution reveals that 29.5 per cent of children are aged 0-5 years, 33 per cent are aged 6-11 years, 16.4 per cent are 12-14 years and 21 per cent are 15-18 years respectively.
- The majority of India's children (73 per cent) live in rural areas.

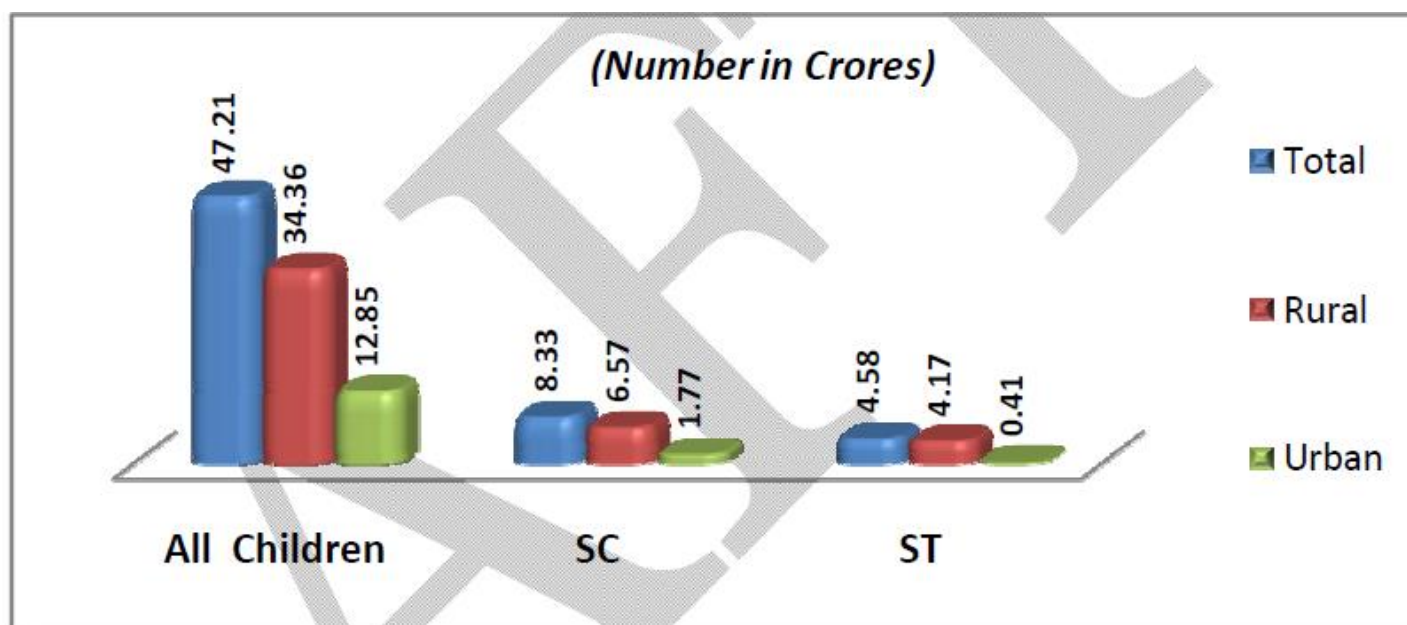


Figure 1: Children in India; Census 2011

Socio-economic Status:

- Approximately 27.5 percent children belong to traditionally marginalised and disadvantaged communities (17.6 percent belong to scheduled caste and 9.7 percent to the scheduled tribes).
- According to the Socioeconomic and caste Census 2011 published by Government of India, 38 percent household in rural areas of the country are landless and are engaged in manual casual labour.
- The average monthly income of highest earning members in 75 percent of rural households is less than Rupees 5000.00 per month.
- The percentage is noticeably higher for SC and ST households depicting higher level of economic vulnerability for these communities in terms of conditions of economic exploitation and social discrimination.
- This adversely affects children of these households who live in abject poverty and are prone to malnutrition, health risks, migration, trafficking and many other risks which threaten their right to survival, development, protection and meaningful participation.
- There are more than 449 thousand households recorded as houseless in the Census 2011. Of these, 43 per cent were in rural areas, 57 per cent were in urban locations .

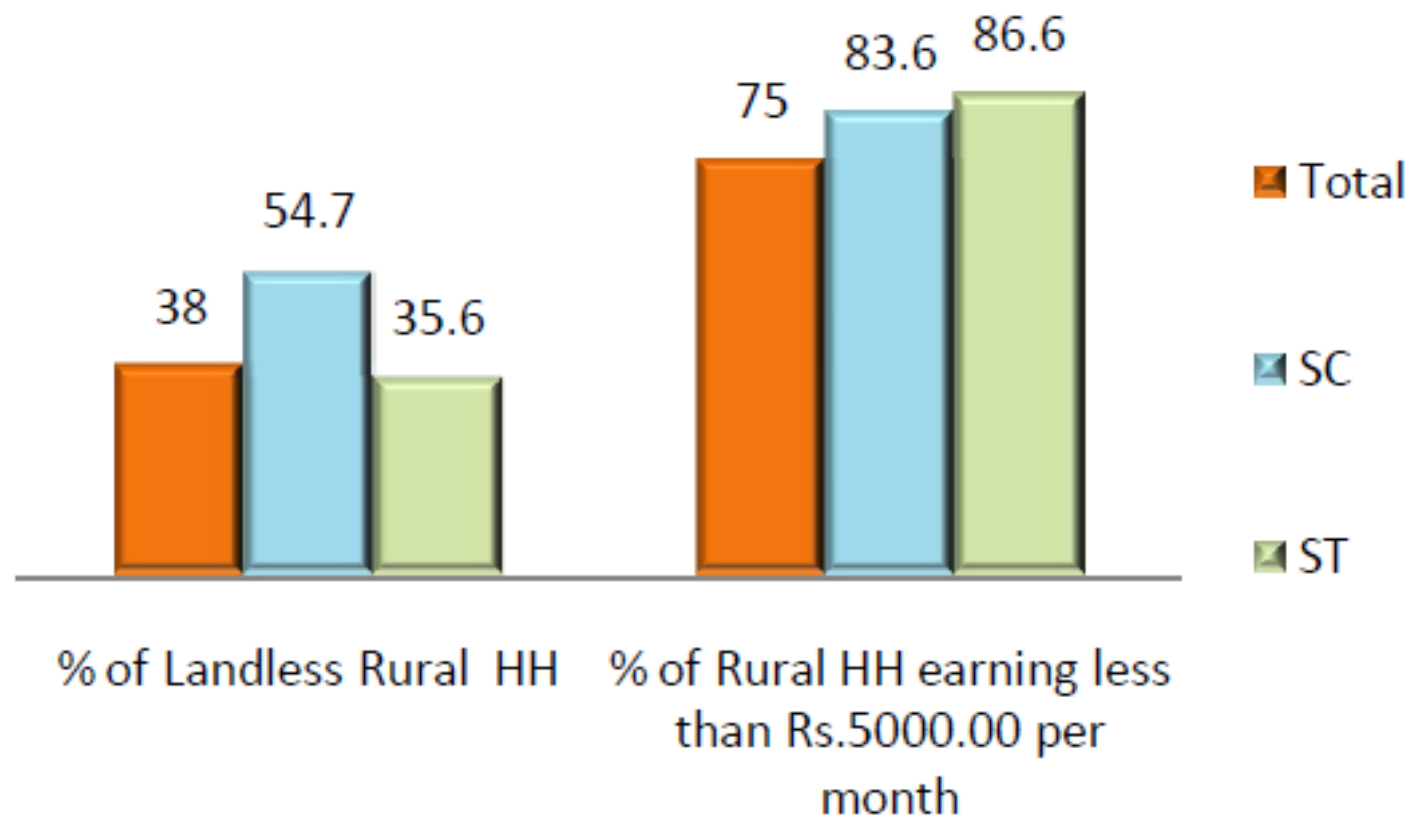


Figure 2: HH by Economic Deprivation, Socio-economic and Caste Census 2011

Child Sex Ratio: The declining child sex ratio has been a cause of concern for India, which has steeply dropped from 945 girls per 1000 boys in 1991 to 918 girls per 1000 boys in 2011. It is attributed largely to female foeticide as well as neglect of girl children. The sex ratio is slightly better in rural areas in comparison to urban areas. The child sex ratio has declined from 935 to 905 in urban areas between 1991 to 2011 whereas it has declined from 948 to 923 in rural areas (Census of India, 1991-2011).

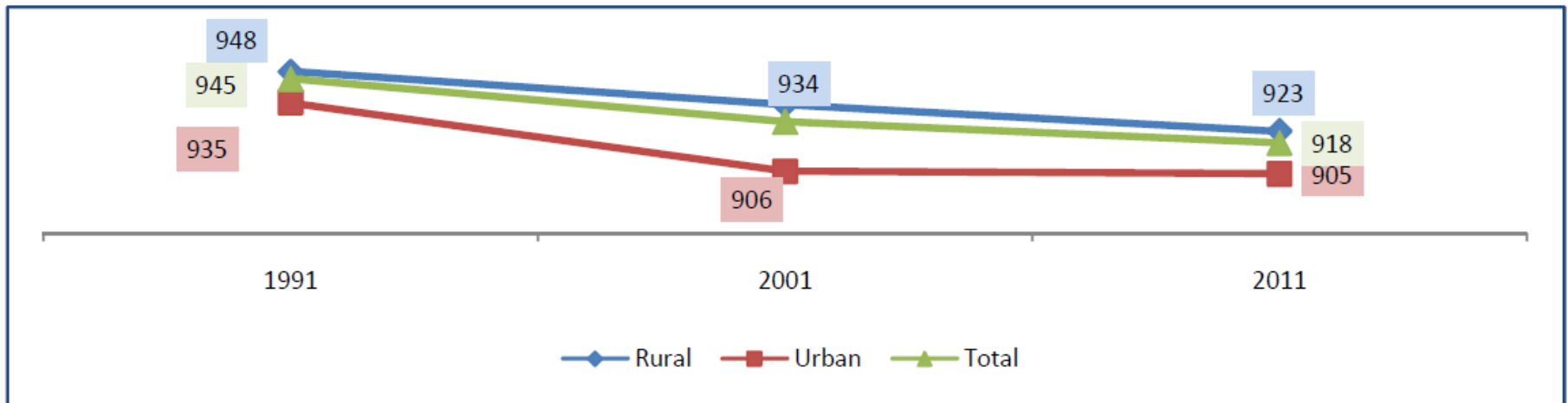


Figure 3: Child Sex ratio, Census 1991-11

Children with Disabilities:

According to Census 2011, there are more than 7.8 million children with disabilities, constituting approximately 2 per cent of the total child population. The majority of them (58 per cent) are in the 10+ age group. Out of the total number of children with disabilities (CWDs), approximately 8 per cent suffer from mental retardedness. A study carried out by Indian Council of Medical Research (2005) noted that the mental illness leading to disability frequently goes un-recorded. It also noted that services for mental illness, especially in rural areas are limited. It also noted that services for mental illness, especially in rural areas are limited. Approximately 36 per cent children in the age group of 6-13 years suffering from mental disability (of any type) do not have access to any institutional service and are out of school (National Survey of Out of School Children 2014; MOHRD, SRI-IMRB)6.

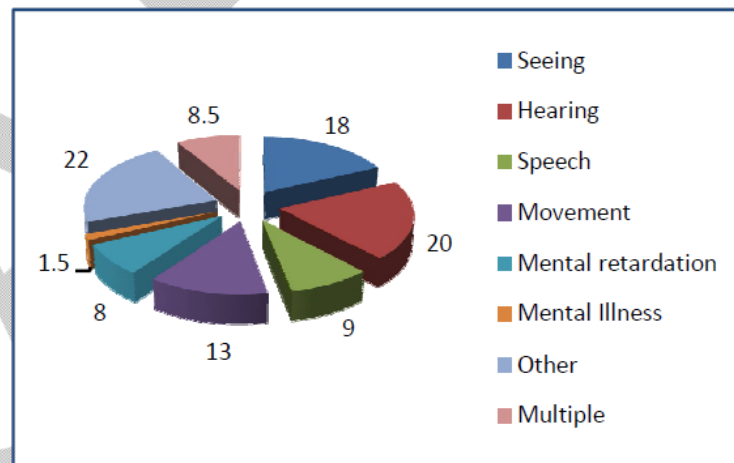


Figure 4: Types of Disability , Census 2011

Children Affected by Natural Disasters:

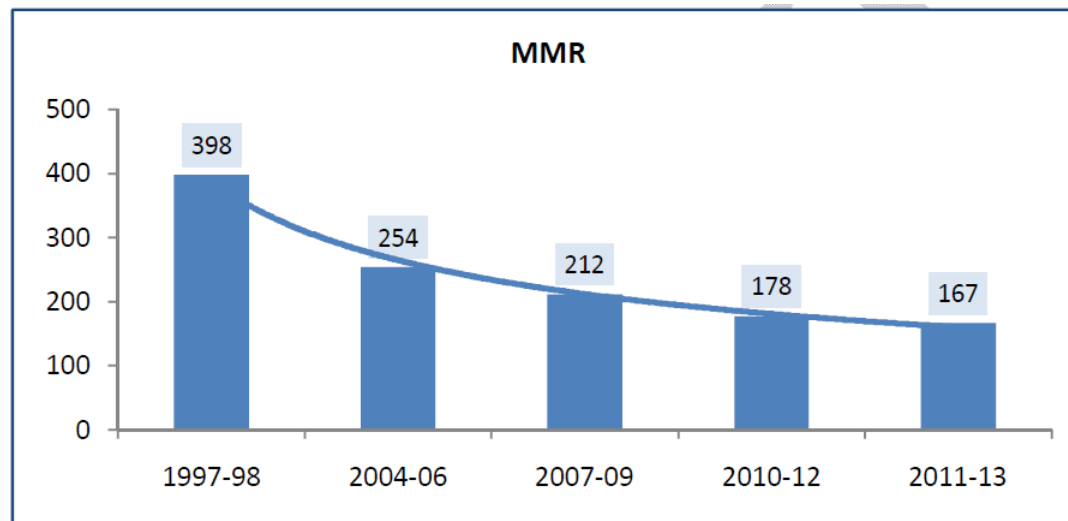
India is among countries at high risk of damage from natural hazards, and is now increasingly facing ill-effects of climate change over the last decade, China, the United States, the Philippines, Indonesia and India constitute together the top 5 countries that are most frequently hit by natural disasters. According to estimates from the Centre for Research on Epidemiology of Disaster, between 2013-15; more than 20 million people were affected by various natural disasters in India, including flood, drought, cyclone and earthquake, causing a damage of approximately 25 million US dollars⁷ (approximately 1700 million Rupees). Man-made disasters are also a serious concern in an already hazard-prone environment. It is estimated that a large proportion of the affected population would be children who are the worst affected population in emergency situations as they face multiple protection and health risks. Therefore they need to be given special focus in terms of securing their safety, security and well being.

Key Priority Area

1: Child Survival, Health and Nutrition

i. Trends in Maternal Mortality

There has been a decline in MMR from 212 per 100,000 live births in the period 2007-09 to 167 in 2011-13 but it still remains very high. An estimated 44,000 maternal deaths (death of a woman during pregnancy or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy) occur in the country every year. There is a very sharp regional disparity in levels of maternal mortality in India. Four states (Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh) have been able to reduce MMR to less than 100 while Assam still reports 300 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.



Trends in MMR, SRS 1997-98 to 2011-13, ORGI

Key Priority Area

1: Child Survival, Health and Nutrition

ii. Neo-natal, Infant and Under-5 Mortality

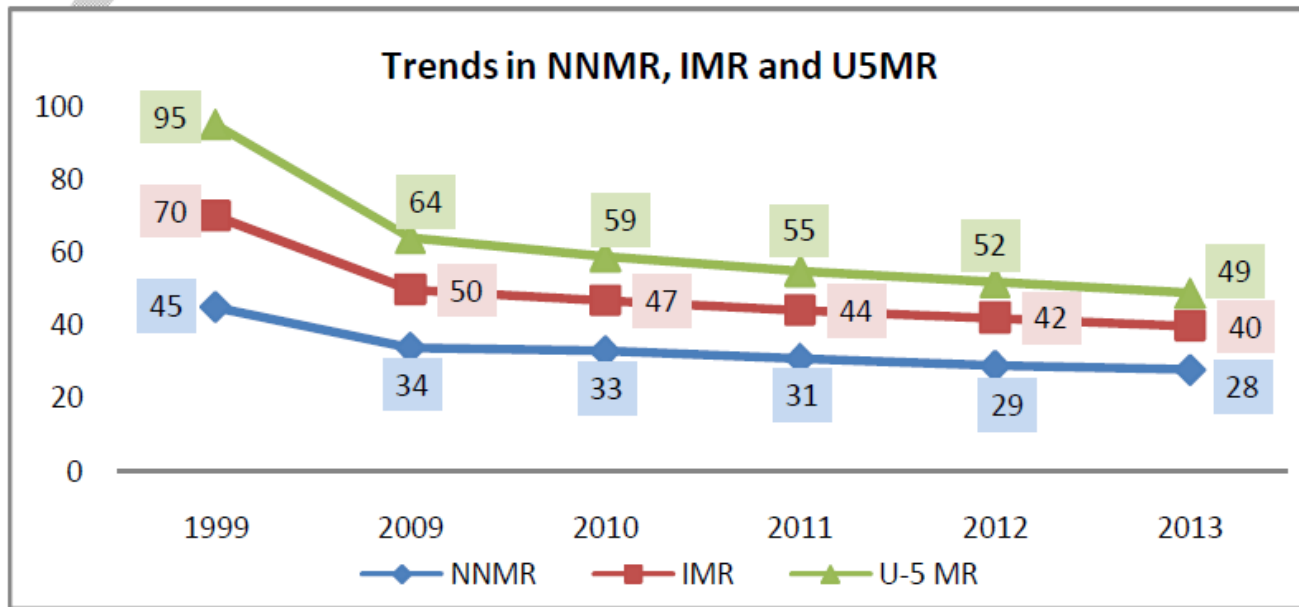


Figure 6: Trends in Child Mortality; SRS 1999-2013, ORGI

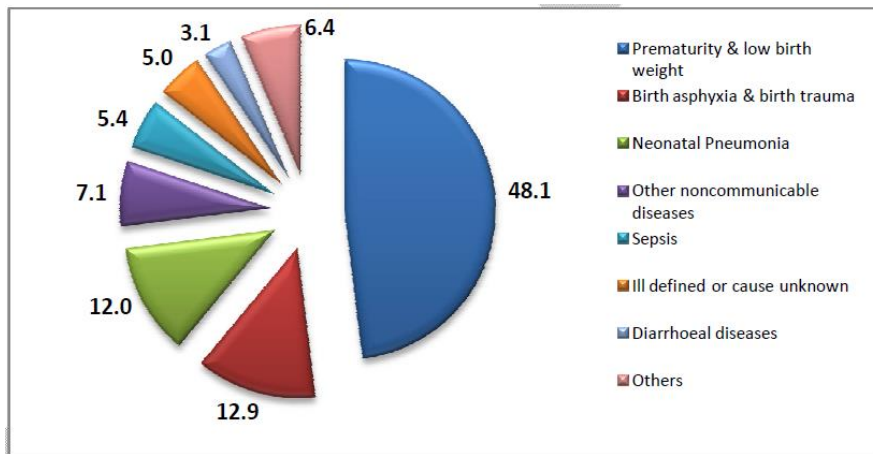


Figure 7: Causes of Neonatal Deaths, SRS 2010-13, ORGI

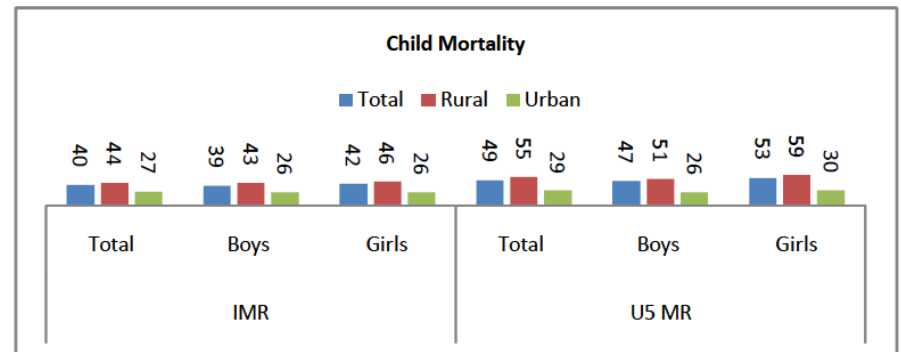


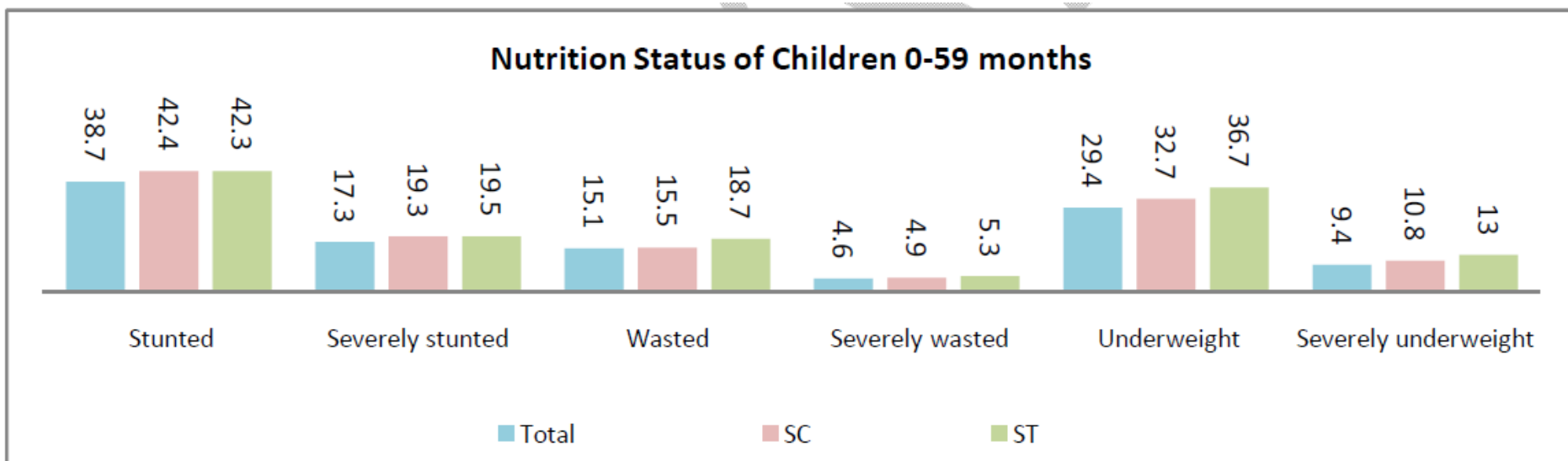
Figure 8: Child Mortality Gender/Spatial, SRS 2013, ORGI

Key Priority Area

1: Child Survival, Health and Nutrition

iii. Nutrition Status of Children

Nutritional status of children under five years of age			
Category	Stunted	Wasted	Underweight
All	48	19.8	42.5
SC	53.9	21	47.9
ST	53.9	27.6	54.5



Key Priority Areas 1: Survival Health and Nutrition

Major Concerns:

- High maternal and child mortality rates, particularly neonatal mortality
- Child mortality rates higher for girls in rural areas
- High rates of under-nutrition and anaemia among children
- Lack of adequate maternal and child care
- Poor access to water and sanitation, particularly in rural areas and urban slums
- Children from poor and marginalised communities show poor indicators for survival, health and nutrition

Key Priority Areas 2: Education and Development

Major Concerns:

- ECCE education accessed by very few children
- Poor retention and high drop –out rates at elementary level, especially for SC and ST children
- Large number of children with special needs and SC/ST children are out of school
- Lack of adequate infrastructure in primary schools
- Poor quality of education at elementary level
- All children in 15+ age group do not have access to education/vocational training
- Lack of adequately trained teachers at elementary level as per RTE norms

Key Priority Areas 3: Protection

Major Concerns:

- Large number of child labour
- Trafficking of children on the rise
- Lack of comprehensive information, research and data on child migration and child trafficking
- Large number of girls being married before legal age
- Rise in crimes against children, especially sexual offences
- Poor rates of case disposal and conviction for crimes against children
- Rise in JCL cases
- Majority of juveniles in conflict with law appear to have discontinued education after primary level and also belong to economically weaker

Key Priority Areas 4: Participation

Major Concerns:

- Children lack information on their own rights, entitlements and on policies and programmes concerning them.
- Children's voices are seldom heard and their views are seldom given due respect by adult community members
- Children's abilities and confidence to be built to enable them to express their views freely , dealing with stress and trauma and participate meaningfully