



Impact of COVID-19 Crisis on the Lives of Children in India



Panel Discussion
with the Media

17 November 2020

INDIA'S SHARE OF THE GLOBAL BURDEN

NEONATAL MORTALITY



590,000

NEONATAL DEATHS
PER YEAR

ACCOUNTING TO
23%
OF THE GLOBAL BURDEN

UNDER 5 MORTALITY



960,000

CHILDREN UNDER 5
DIE PER YEAR

ACCOUNTING TO
17%
OF THE GLOBAL BURDEN

STUNTING



**40.7
MILLION**

UNDER-5 CHILDREN
ARE STUNTED

(NFHS-4)

ACCOUNTING TO
27%
OF THE GLOBAL BURDEN

HOUSEHOLD TOILETS



**25
MILLION**

PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE
HOUSEHOLD TOILETS

ACCOUNTING TO
<5%
OF THE GLOBAL BURDEN

ACCESS TO IMPROVED WATER



**560
MILLION**

PEOPLE WITHOUT
HOUSEHOLD TAP
CONNECTION

ACCOUNTING TO
A HIGHER %
OF THE GLOBAL BURDEN









COVID-19 changed life everywhere. In India it triggered a negative chain reaction hurting the most disadvantaged.

- ❑ Economic condition of people , self-reporting as 'bad' in August / September is still high, increasing from 17 % in pre-lockdown period to 53%
- ❑ Who are economically vulnerable (bad), vis-à-vis pre-lockdown) NOW?
 - About half of the casual workers
 - 62 % Female headed families;
 - 64 % of the home Returnee



COVID-19 is a Child Rights Crisis

What we have achieved – our reach!

- 1)  **660 million**
children and their families reached with COVID specific message
- 2)  **3.6 million**
people across India reached with critical WASH supplies
- 3)  **2.5 million**
healthcare workers trained in Infection Prevention and Control
- 4)  **44.4 million**
children with education initiatives
- 5)  **19.7 million**
children and women receiving essential healthcare
- 6)  **61.8 million**
people have been engaged in activities that facilitate two-way communication
- 7)  **Over 333,000 children**
and their caregivers have been provided with psychosocial support as a result of UNICEF's support
- 8)  **102,400 children**
(6-59 months) have been admitted for treatment of SAM

Learning crisis

**Over 290 Million
Children
out of school**




Sending their children into labour is a way of coping for many families..



The school closed down. We used to study with a link they provided but we ran out of phone recharge. There are lessons on TV too but we don't have a TV. Our brother and father lost their jobs due to COVID-19."

**- Gaurav,
12 year old,
mechanic
Ranchi, Jharkhand**

A woman and two children are gathered around a smartphone in a dimly lit room. The woman, in the foreground, is holding the phone. A young boy is leaning over her, looking at the screen. In the background, another child is sitting on the floor, and a fire is burning in a small stove. The room has a rustic, earthy feel with a mud wall and some hanging items.

**Only 1 in 4 have
access to digital
learning –
the Divide is real!**

CBM Findings: Education & Learning

Q: Will you send your child back to school when it reopens after the COVID pandemic?

- Overall, **about one in every 4 mothers reported**, they were not sure about their child going back to school after pandemic
- In urban districts, **'do not know' response is high** (27%), vis-à-vis rural (11%)

Mode of Home study

- Around **40 percent** mothers stated, children are using smart phone
- **28 % mothers reported**, they are helping their children in studying;

Child Protection

**COVID-19 has
exacerbated
pandemics of
violence and
poverty
in India**

Families are
resorting to
negative coping
mechanisms,
including
child labour,
marriage and
institutionalization



A spike in child marriage

Child marriage is cheaper and easier during COVID-19

"My parent's financial situation became tough due to COVID-19, so they decided to get me married. I was forced but I didn't want to get married. I wanted to study,"

- Nikita
16-year old
Bhopal, India





Building systems,
referral
mechanisms and
changing social
norms
to Protect Children

120,000 functionaries and
front line workers **trained on
child protection**

333 ,000 children reached
with **psychosocial support**

Through **CHILDLINE**, **4
million** calls of children in
distress assisted

2.6 million adolescents
reached with information
on prevention of **COVID-19**

486,000 children in
alternative care supported

418,614 children supported
through kinship care

280,000 children
impacted through
improvement in standards of
care in institutions

Scale up of Alternative
Care programme to 12
States thanks to
Project Lion

- The CBM is done for UNICEF's monitoring purposes based on vulnerability and infection prevention, to get an insight into the situation of children and families.
- From a purposely selected samples in 12 districts in 7 States. These are NOT nationally representative data or trends.

Community Based Monitoring to Assess Impact of COVID-19 pandemic On Socio-economic Condition of vulnerable population

Some Key Trends – Directly and Indirectly Affecting Children

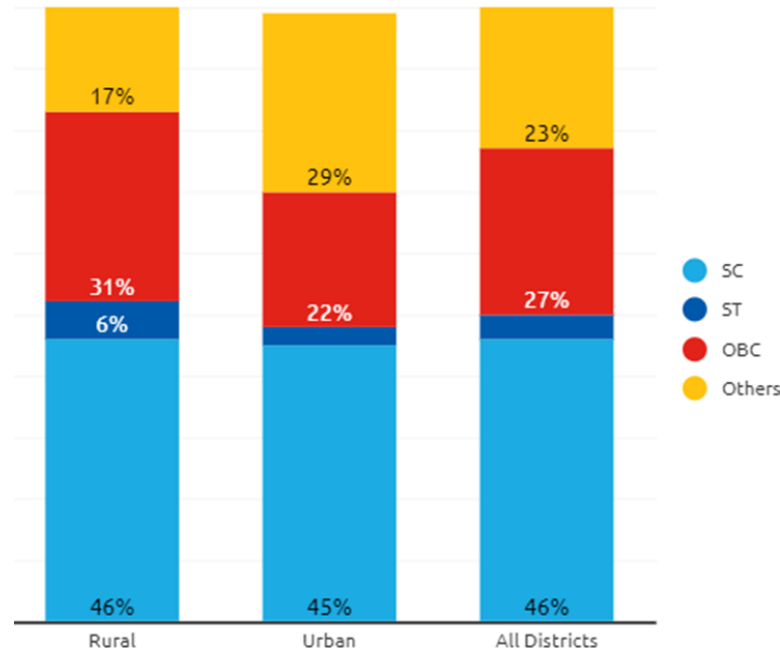
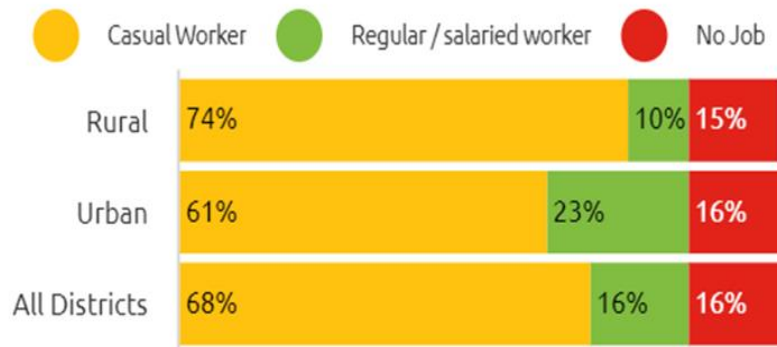
Community Based Monitoring (CBM) – Design & Coverage (wave-2)

A **cohort based longitudinal design** – thus wave-2 's communities, families are largely same , making it possible to compare results / see the trends (change) over time;

- In 7 states – spread in 300 communities, across 12 districts; 6 rural and 6 urban
- Supported by 15 CSOs, enlisting 300 community volunteers, responsible for data collection– 80 % living in the selected communities;
- Covers little more than 5700 families, including 17 % families headed by a female member plus more than 1000 home returnees

Vulnerabilities captured in the sample

Composition of sample (Wave-2)



Main Respondent:

- Main earning member
- Pregnant women in the selected family
- Lactating mother in selected family
- Mother with a child below one year
- Mother with a child aged 6-9 years
- Mother with a child aged 2-5 years

Key Findings from the CBM (August/Sept, 2020)

- Results show that while economic situation of the families under study remain challenging, selected government services have improved compared with the results of Wave-1 in June/July period
- Approximately three-quarters (74%) of the main wage earners in families reported that their **monthly income is now lower than pre-lockdown**.
- In urban areas just 64 per cent wage earners stated that their **family had enough food for the next week**. In rural areas the situation was considerably better at 79 per cent.
- About two-thirds who received cash assistance pointed out that the **assistance is not adequate** for meeting costs of food and other household requirements.
- About 75 per cent of respondents mentioned that the family has a **debt burden** due to pandemic, and nearly half of these stated that they had to sell their personal belongings.
- Out of those who were aware of the government's cash assistance scheme, **about a third** of the families received cash assistance - more families in rural areas received cash (rural 39 per cent and urban 28 per cent).
- **Cash assistance not adequate:** About two-thirds (65 per cent) who received cash assistance pointed out that the assistance is not adequate for meeting costs of food and other household requirements.
- **Debt due to lockdown:** About 75 per cent of wage earners mentioned that their family has a debt burden due to pandemic, and of this, close to half stated that they had to sell their personal belongings, significantly more in rural areas than in urban areas.

Continuation of CAB – the Key Behaviours

- Practicing COVID-19 Appropriate Behaviours is no longer a choice, but an imperative.
- With the lockdowns ending, and even after we have a vaccine, focus on sustaining the practice of the 3 CAB behaviours- wear mask, keep 6 feet distance and wash hands with soap frequently and as needed.
- Essential for resumption of essential services and building back trust such as immunization and primary health care. Parents' trust must be restored, and fears allayed for bringing children back for vaccination.
- Hand hygiene is a key condition for schools to re-open and operate safely. Safe reopening of schools includes access to hand hygiene, clean drinking water and safe sanitation. Training of teachers, staff and students in CAB is essential.
- Sustaining the CAB needs a whole of society approach and engagement. National campaigns such as the Jan Andolan with the message from the leader of the country are important as they can mobilize and influence millions.