



## Urban Agenda Platform

The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.

# Scale and Nature of Deprivation among Children and Adolescence in Urban India

Region	Asia and the Pacific
Themes	Resilience & Risk Reduction Risk & Resilience Slum Upgrading Social Inclusion Youth & Livelihoods
Geographic scope	National
Sustainable Development Goals	Goal 1 - End poverty in all its forms everywhere Goal 3 - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages Goal 10 - Reduce inequality within and among countries Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
New Urban Agenda Commitments	Sustainable Urban Development for Social Inclusion and Ending Poverty Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Prosperity and Opportunities for All Environmentally Sustainable and Resilient Urban Development

## Summary

Urban India is home to the largest number of children and adolescents in the world. It is well known that early childhood and adolescence are significant development phases in the lifespan of an individual, forming the basis of later life outcomes.

A review of urban development programmes in India reveals that most of the programmes do not include the specific needs of children, especially those who are deprived. In particular, children and adolescents in slums are forced to live in filthy environments without proper basic services such as drinking water, improved sanitation, well developed drainage systems, adequate street lighting, quality schools and health centres with adequate healthcare facilities. These areas also lack safety and security and are more prone to crime and violence against children.

Given the severity of the problem and lack of a comprehensive analytical approach, it was important to undertake an in-depth study to assess the current situation of children and adolescents with focus on a rapidly changing urban India. The National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) undertook a research titled 'Scale and Nature of Deprivation among Children and Adolescents in Urban India: An Empirical Analysis' has been undertaken in 2019-2020.

## Background and Objective

Urban India is home to the largest number of children and adolescents in the world. Of the total urban population in 2011, 36 per cent (135.5 million) were children (in the 0-9 years age group) and adolescents (10-19 years age group). A further disaggregation shows that there were 36.57 million (9.70%) children under five years age, 26.36 million (6.99%) in the 6-9 years age group and 72.52 million (19.23%) were adolescents living in the cities.

It is believed that children in urban areas are likely to have better health outcomes and improved infrastructure for education, health and sanitation than children in rural areas, and this has been termed as 'urban advantage' (Montgomery and Hewett, 2005). At the same time, inequality and exclusion are the most criticised characteristics of urban areas. 'Urban penalty' is a term used for such inequality, where sometimes the urban poor perform worse than the rural population (Harpham, 2009; Matthews et al., 2010). In the context of India, the urban penalty outpaces the urban advantage in many facets of life. Despite the fact of a sharp decline in the level of urban poverty from 31.8 per cent in 1993-94 to 13.7 per cent in 2011-12, more than 53 million people still live below the poverty line (BPL) in urban India (Planning Commission, 2013). Of the urban population, 65.5 million (17%) live in slums, which includes 8 million children under six years of age.

It is well known that early childhood and adolescence are significant development phases in the lifespan of an individual, forming the basis of later life outcomes. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations also recognise this. In fact, SDGs on poverty (goal 1), zero hunger (goal two), good health and well-being (goal 3), quality education (goal 4), gender equality (goal 5), access to clean water and sanitation (goal 6), reduced inequality (goal 10), sustainable cities and communities (goal 11) are directly linked to the overall development of children and adolescents, and achievement of these goals would be a positive move towards implementation of the 'New Urban Agenda' leaving no one behind in the process of



## Urban Agenda Platform

*The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.*

development. However, a review of urban development programmes in India reveals that most of the programmes do not include the specific needs of children, especially those who are deprived. In particular, children and adolescents in slums are forced to live in filthy environments without proper basic services such as drinking water, improved sanitation, well developed drainage systems, adequate street lighting, quality schools and health centres with adequate healthcare facilities. These areas also lack safety and security and are more prone to crime and violence against children.

Several studies (Save the Children and PwC, 2015; UNICEF-NIUA, 2016; CRY, 2018) have tried to analyse the situation of children, but have focused mainly on a one-time period, without delving into determining factors. These studies dealt basically with issues concerning only children, taking up a few developmental dimensions like health, nutrition and education, mostly in silos.

Given the severity of the problem and lack of a comprehensive analytical approach, it was important to undertake an in-depth study to assess the current situation of children and adolescents with focus on a rapidly changing urban India. The National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) undertook a research titled 'Scale and Nature of Deprivation among Children and Adolescents in Urban India: An Empirical Analysis' has been undertaken in 2019-2020.

The research makes a departure by trying to fill the gaps by looking into the present scenario in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with reference to health and nutrition, education, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), employment, crime and violence, focusing on both children and adolescents in urban India. The way of assessing urban spatial patterns and temporal trends, along with a comparison of rural counterparts and slums within cities, with recommendations for programmatic and policy interventions for the betterment of their conditions makes this study unique. There has also been an attempt to analyse the status of violence and crime against children and adolescents which has been neglected so far in research. The analyses and findings from the research are useful for state and local government to monitor the progress made on SDG indicators and their distance to the frontiers.

## Outline of activities over the last four years

- Children and Adolescents in Urban India – Scale and Nature of Deprivation - Report
- Policy Brief - Violence and Crime Against Children and Adolescents in India - Towards Creating Safer Cities
- Policy Brief – Child Labour in India - A Potential Threat
- Policy Brief – State of Education Among Children and Adolescents in Urban India - Towards Equity and Inclusion
- Policy Brief - Health, Nutrition and WASH among Children and Adolescents in Urban India - Towards Improving Health Outcomes
- Base Paper on 'Incorporation of social sector in urban planning'
- Good practices in localizing SDGs in health, nutrition, education, WASH, employment, violence and crime with focus on children and adolescence (in progress)

## Outcomes and Impacts

The New Urban Agenda attempts to address the various opportunities and challenges that are associated with global urban development. India is among the largest urban systems in the world with a total urban population. By 2030, when we complete work of the 2030 Development Agenda, nearly 600 million Indians, or 40% of our population, will reside in urban spaces.

India has embarked upon the journey of the most ambitious and comprehensive programme of urbanisation ever undertaken in the world, by initiating a range of policy interventions. India's 'Housing for All' mission reflects commitment for ensuring 12 million affordable homes by 2022 with a component of improved quality of life. This special intervention is appropriately integrated with financial, technology and governance components, along with people centric focus. The Mission for Rejuvenation and Transformation in 500 cities aims to achieve universal coverage of water supply and augmentation of sewerage network that has a direct link to provision of better services to 60% of our population.

India is successfully implementing the largest sanitation and hygiene program in the world - the Swachh Bharat Mission, with the objective of making India open defecation free and achieve scientific waste management. Smart Cities Mission aims to realise India's promise to create inclusive and sustainable cities through innovation and data driven governance to enhance the quality of urban life in 100 Smart cities through a number of tools including National Urban Observatory and Urban Innovation Stack. This has made significant impact on reducing the carbon footprint, leveraging vertical expansion and reducing the overall burden on infrastructural resources by switching to cleaner substitutes.

## Achievements



#### Urban Agenda Platform

*The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.*

- The findings ignited a fresh public discourse and paved the path for fostering the SDGs
- It has brought to the fore progress that has taken place in the last decade in areas of survival and nutrition; health; hygiene practice and WASH facilities; educational attainment; employment and crime. The COVID-19 crisis has further exposed the vulnerability of poor urban children and adolescents thus reinforcing some of the key findings of the study.

## Partners

National Institute of Urban Affairs  
United Nations Children's Fund