

## **Childhood Development - The Target Areas**

### **What is the issue?**

\n\n

Our policy makers need to recognize that investing in our children is indispensable for reaching our full potential.

\n\n

### **What is the case for investing in childhood development?**

\n\n

\n

- While only 85 out of every 100 children born would live to age five in 1980s, currently the number stands at 96.

\n

- Improved child survival has also helped in reducing fertility rates, as people do not have to compensate for deaths by having more children.

\n

- But mere survival is not enough as cognitively development, illnesses free life and good education are critical in realising one's full potential.

\n

- Countries that make early investments in their children are more likely to have the workforce to support economic growth over the decades.

\n

- All upper-middle income countries like "South Korea, Singapore & Thailand" have achieved sustained growth by investing in child development.

\n

- These include vaccination, good nutrition for mother and child, clean water and sanitation, and protection from vector-borne infectious diseases.

\n

\n\n

### **How important is vaccination & nutrition?**

\n\n

\n

- Vaccines are the most cost effective, life-saving interventions of all times.

\n

- It holds particular significance in child development and is usually administered when the rate of brain development is at its peak.  
\n
- On the nutrition front, protein rich supplements before 24 months of age were found to increase overall cognitive skills significantly and male wages by 46%.  
\n
- Better nourished & healthy children tend to stay longer in schools.  
\n
- As research across countries show that merely being literate raises earnings by 10%, investments in vaccines & nutrition is sure to have economic spill over.  
\n

\n\n

### **What lies ahead?**

\n\n

- \n
- The number of children born in India each year is greater than those born in any country at any point in human history.  
\n
- If we give them the right start by providing a childhood free of diseases and proper nutrition, we have the opportunity to create a strong & powerful nation.  
\n
- The cost of failure would also be high, as large number of people will be condemned to poverty & lack of livelihood.  
\n
- This would be accompanied by growth rates that will eventually drop back to under 4% as Indian children fail to become internationally competitive.  
\n

\n\n

\n\n

**Source: The Hindu**

\n\n

\n



**SHANKAR**  
**IAS PARLIAMENT**  
*Information is Empowering*