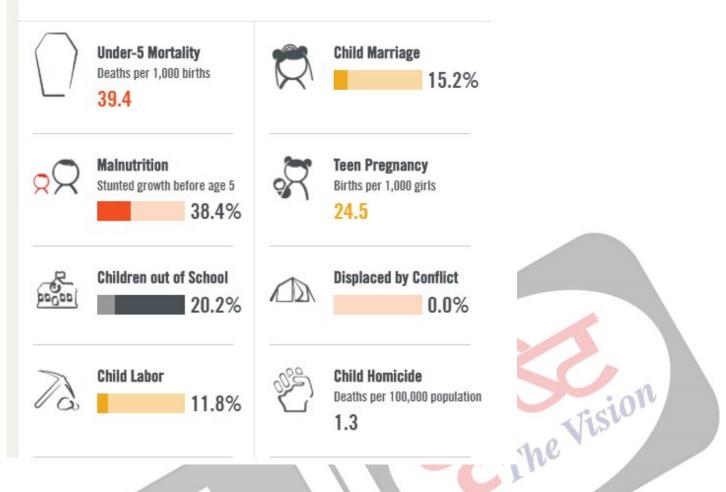# Childhood Index

India ranks 113 of 176 countries on an index that evaluates countries on the wellbeing of children. The End of Childhood Index is part of the **Global Childhood Report** released by UK-based **Save the Children,** a non-profit organisation that works for child rights.

- The index evaluates countries on **eight indicators** to determine the wellbeing of children and teenagers (0-19 years):

  - Mortality among children under five years of age
  - Malnutrition that stunts growth
  - Lack of education
  - Child labour
  - Early marriage
  - Adolescent Births
  - Displacement by conflict
  - Child homicide
- A final score out of 1,000 is derived, and countries are ranked accordingly.

Performance of India //

India

Under-5 Mortality
Deaths per 1,000 births
39.4

Child Marriage
15.2%

Malnutrition
Stunted growth before age 5
38.4%

Teen Pregnancy
Births per 1,000 girls
24.5

Children out of School
20.2%

Displaced by Conflict
0.0%

Child Labor
11.8%

Child Homicide
Deaths per 100,000 population
1.3

- **Child mortality:** India has reduced its child mortality rate by 55% in the last two decades, from 88 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 39 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2017.

    - Among neighbouring countries, India's performance on **under-five mortality** was better only than that of Pakistan (74.9). Sri Lanka (8.8), China (9.3), Bhutan (30.8), Nepal (33.7) and Bangladesh (32.4) have all outperformed India.
    - These deaths are mostly attributed to preventable infectious diseases, followed by injuries, meningitis, measles and malaria.
- **Stunting of children:** low height for age, among children below age five, fell 25% globally from 198 million children to 149 million between 2000 and 2019.

    - In India about 38% of children under five were stunted, the second-worst performance compared to its neighbours after Pakistan (40.8%). China (6%) had the lowest rate in the region, followed by Nepal (13.8%), Sri Lanka (17.3%), Bangladesh (17.4%) and Bhutan (19.1%).
    - There are wide **disparities between states in India** – while 48.3% children are stunted in Bihar, 45.3% in Jharkhand and 37.6% in Chhattisgarh, Kerala has the least at 19%, followed by Tamil Nadu (27.1%)
- **Free universal education:** despite India's advances at giving free universal education to its children, about 20% of them (aged 8-16) were still out of school as of 2018.

    - Compared to its neighbours, India performed better only than Pakistan (40.8%), while Sri Lanka (6.4%), Nepal (13.8%), Bangladesh (17.4%), Bhutan (19.1%) and China (7.6%) did better.
- **Child marriages:** India halved its number of child marriages in 18 years to 2018, while marriage rates for the poorest girls fell at least as much as for everyone else.

- The decline has been fastest among girls younger than 15.
- India had raised the minimum age of marriage from 15 to 18 for girls and from 18 to 21 for boys.
- **Adolescent births:** India has managed to reduce adolescent births by 63% since 2000, which has resulted in 2 million fewer young mothers.

    - India alone accounts for nearly three-quarters of the global reduction in adolescent births – from 16 million to 13 million.
    - **Adolescent birth rate** (births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19 years)- In India, it was 24.5 %, higher than that in China (6.5 %), Sri Lanka (14.8 %) and Bhutan (22.1%), and better than that in Pakistan (37.7%), Nepal (62.1%) and Bangladesh (84.4%) as of 2018.

Conclusion

- Much of India's progress has been the result of its **social welfare programmes** that have enabled more girls to stay in school and increased access to **sexual and reproductive health services**.
- India has worked to curb **child marriage** through legislation such as the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006**.

    - **Community-based interventions** such as empowerment counselling, sexual and reproductive health information, vocational training and life-skills development for girls have also been important factors.
    - Schemes such as **conditional cash transfers** to educate the girl child have also helped reduce child marriage
- Schemes such as the **Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (called SABLA), Kishori Shakti Yojana and Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls** have led to the improvement in the health of Adolescent Girls.
- An increase in public investments, and intervention through programmes targeted at marginalised children to ensure universal healthcare and education are further needed to improve the wellbeing of children.