

The Situation facing Children at Risk in Patna

July 2015



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In the end we pray and believe this Situation Analysis Document will contribute to the welfare and wellbeing of children in the district of Patna.

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Executive Summary

This is a study of the present situation of children at risk in the district of Patna, the capital of the state of Bihar, India. It attempts to examine the responses of Governments, Multilateral agencies and that of church and Christian charities. The document also places its recommendations by identifying gaps in the services and by highlighting the inherent capacities of Christian establishments engaged with children at risk. The information contained in this report is collected through personal interviews, Focus Group Discussion from children, workers, Mission and NGO leaders, teachers and parents

THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN AT RISK IN THE DISTRICT OF PATNA

The Causes

POVERTY

- Bihar is the poorest state in India.
- 33.7% people are below poverty line in Bihar.
- 75% households earn less than Rs5.000 a month.
- 90% of the population are dependent on agriculture for income.
- Majority depend upon inefficient State health & educational facilities.



MIGRATION

- There are 99 notified slums In Patna.
- 63.5% people live in slums.
- Lack of job opportunities.
- Unhygienic living conditions lack of clean water and large open defecation.
- 250000 street children in the city.



DISCRIMINATION

- Girls not welcome in families.
- 45.9 % of girls marry before the legal age of 18 years.
- Increase in incidents sexual abuse.
- 70% girls suffer from anaemia.
- Low female literacy & large school dropout rate for girls.



Issues facing Children

CHILD LABOUR

- 9 % of children are working.
- Children work in road side eateries & tea stalls.
- A large number of children are engaged in domestic servitude

POOR WATER & SANITATION

- Only 4.4 % of households have access to piped water.
- Only about 23 per cent of households have access to a toilet.
- Open drains, heaps of garbage and high pollution

ABUSE

- Lack of security for girls.
- Increasing complains of sexual abuse.
- Girls have to face regular verbal abuse on road and community even from elderly people.

MALNUTRITION

- 50% children under five years of age are underweight or stunted.
- Percentage of children with birth weight less than 2.5kg is 22 %.
- Anaemia prevalence is highest amongst adolescent girls at 92 %.



LACK OF QUALITY EDUCATION

- Children complain that teachers do not teach them properly in Government School.
- Dropout rate in class I -VIII was as high as 83 per cent in Bihar
- Mass cheating by students in Board exams widely reported by Visual Media.



RESPONSE TO CHILDREN AT RISK

GOVERNMENT:

Government has legislated Acts like Right to Education Act 2010, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012 and several other legislation and act to protect the interest of Children. Through these legislations Government has created a wide and integrated structure for the welfare of children, but sadly those who are responsible for implementation , lack volunteerism and dedication so the benefits are not reaching to those in need .

ORGANIZATIONS:

Multilateral Organizations like UNICEF and WHO and international organizations like CARE and SAVE THE CHILDREN are operating in Patna district. There are numerous National and local level NGOs working on education, protection, child labour and other such issues of children in Patna and in whole of Bihar.

CHRISTIAN:

National level Christian organizations like World Vision, EFICOR, JVI, CARITAS, YMCA, EFICAR and Viva are working on various issues of children in Patna. A number of local churches and church based organizations and missions are also working on education, literacy, orphans etc. Parents crave to send their children to Christian Schools because of their higher teaching standards and hope of holistic development of their children.



GAPS

Communities in slums and in poor localities are normally divided on caste lines, where lower caste (dalits) people have no voice. Community leaders are not concerned with the welfare of children at risk and children, especially girl children report that they feel unsafe.

Discrimination against girl children and Dalit children is an obstacle for the development of children in poor and marginalized communities. In particular, they are often denied access to good quality education, which can be seen as a way out of social deprivation. Social and cultural practices and deep biases against girl children is the reason for high rate of child marriages, resulting in child abuse and also poor comparative health status of girl children.

Education Though there are good private schools in the district both secular and Christian, they are beyond the means of poorer and marginalised sections. Educational institutions are defying the provisions of RTE by not giving 25% seats to children of poor and marginalized sections of the society. Children as well as parents have expressed their unhappiness over nonchalance of teachers in government schools and about the lack basic infrastructure like toilets and classroom maintenance.

There is lack of sensitivity on the part of law enforcing agencies and general awareness when it comes to response to children at risk. Invariably every road-side eatery uses child labour, children are involved in construction work, rag-picking or as domestic servants or roam neglected on the streets or in public places.

There are a large number of NGOs in existence but collective initiatives and advocacy for children is missing.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Improving access to Quality Education for Slum Children - Viva network to implement a program for the benefit of children in slum communities have access to quality education giving them dignity, self-esteem and opportunities to pursue their aspirations. This will not only aim to enhance learning outcomes for children in numeracy and literacy, but also develop life skills in children including helping them to understand their rights, make good life choices develop good hygiene practices etc.

Sensitising the community to value, protect and safeguard children in Patna – Viva network to increase awareness about child abuse for Churches, Communities and children in Patna

Increasing capacity of network members to providing good holistic care for children including reaching quality standards in 6 key areas of work with children.

Initiating collaborative initiatives for children in Patna through the Patna network, like good treatment campaign, collective celebration for children on special days and advocacy for children.

Develop an effective network, which can positively impact the lives of 10% of children in the city through collective action.

Bihar State



Bihar is an important East Indian State of India situated in the Indo Gangetic Plane. It is often also referred to as the Cow Belt. Bihar was part of larger Bengal when the British ruled India. **On 1st April 1912**, a state called Bihar and Orissa Province was carved out of Bengal with Patna as its Capital. In **1936**, these two were separated and a formed as two separate provinces Bihar and Orissa.

More recently, in the year **2000**, in order to fulfil the aspiration to tribal population of Chottanagpur and Santhal Pargana, Bihar was further bifurcated to give birth to a new state called Jharkhand.

The present state of Bihar is a land locked piece of landmass with Nepal, Uttar Pradesh, Bengal and Jharkhand as its neighbours. The total land area left with the present day Bihar is 94,163 sq. km, which makes it 13 largest state of India.

The creation of Jharkhand was a severe blow to Bihar as it lost all its mineral rich and industrial rich landmass leaving behind a flood prone agricultural area with practically no industrial infrastructure. As a result, Bihar has become home to a huge unemployed force of labourers, who have no choice but to migrate to other states of India to look for livelihood as manual labourers and daily wage earners. Visit any construction site in India you are sure to find labourers from Bihar.

According to the Official Census Report of 2011, **the population of Bihar is 104,099,452 making it the third most populous state in India.** Bihar's population is 8.6 % of the total population of India. Out of which the population of males and females are 54,278,157 and 49,821,295 respectively. Density of Bihar is 1,106 per sq km which is higher than national average 382 per sq km. Sex Ratio in Bihar is 918 females for every 1000 males, which is below national average of 940 as per the census of 2011. **Bihar has a child population of 19.13 million in the 0-6 year's age group, the second highest child population among all Indian states and accounting for 12 per cent of the total child population of India in this age group.** Almost 46 per cent of Bihar's population is aged less than 18 years. The child sex ratio is 933 females per 1000 males and has increased as compared to 908 in the 2001 census. Only 61.8% of population is literate whereas the figure at the National level is 74.5%. The literacy rate for the male population is 71.2 % whereas female literacy rate is merely 46.40 %. Nearly 79% of the population profess Hindu Religion whereas Christians according to the official Census constitute to 0.63% of the total population.

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Patna District

Patna District is one of the 38 districts of Bihar but it assumes significance because it is the capital of Bihar and can be described as the only district in the state, which has a town which can be defined as having true urban character - the town of Patna.

Patna district was the seat of power and capital of Ancient India. It is said that Patna was founded in 490 BCE by the king of Magadha. Ancient Patna, known as Pataliputra, was the capital of the Magadha Empire under the ruling dynasties like Haryana, Nanda, Mauryan, Sunga, Gupta and Pala.

Over the centuries Patna was also known by the names like Kusumpura, Azimabad etc. Patna in the ancient times was a seat of learning, fine arts, rich culture and tradition. In the period of Mughal India, to be addressed as Azimabadi (a resident of Azimabad) was a matter of Pride.

Patna produced one of the most eminent kings of India known as Ashoka. It also gave the world some eminent scholars and people with great acumen like Aryabhata the famous mathematician and astronomer, Ashvaghosha poet and influential Buddhist writer, Chanakya or Kautilya the master of statecraft and author of the ancient text on statecraft, Arthashastra and famous writers and scholars like Vastayayna, Panini etc.

The district of Patna has an area of 3,202 square kilometres which is equivalent to 1,236 sq. miles. For Administrative purposes, is divided into six subdivisions, twenty-three blocks, 344 Panchayats and 1433 villages. Patna district is rich in water resources as it is surrounded by three rivers namely Ganges, Sone and Punpun.

The district of Patna has an area of 3,202 square kilometres, which is equivalent to 1,236 sq. miles.

Patna is the most populous district in Bihar.

According to the Census of 2011, Patna district had a population of 5,838,465 of which male and female were 3,078,512 and 2,759,953 respectively. The data released by census India 2011, showed that density of Patna district for 2011 is 1,823 people per sq. km. The average literacy rate of Patna in 2011 was 70.7%. Gender wise, male and female literacy were 78.5% and 61.9%. Sex Ratio in Patna in year 2011, stood at 897 per 1000 male as compared to the average national sex ratio in India of 940 In 2011, Children under 0-6 formed 16.16% of Patna District and the child sex ratio in Patna, came out to be 909 girls per 1000 boys.

According to Census of 2011, 43% of the total Patna population of Patna District live in urban parts. A total of 2,514,590 people live in urban areas of which males are 1,332,487 and females are 1,182,103. The Sex Ratio is 887. Average literacy rate in Patna district is 81 % of which males and females are 85.7 % and 75.6 % literate respectively. In actual number 1,769,307 people are literate in urban region of which males and females are 992,574 and 776,733 respectively

The Child population (0-6) in urban region was 329,592 of which males and females were 175,005 and 154,587 respectively. The Sex Ratio is 883. The child population figure of Patna district is 13.1 % of total urban population .



Patna District



The rural population of Patna District according to the Census of 2011, was 56.93 % of the total population of the district which means that more people were living in villages than urban areas. The total Patna district population living in rural areas is 3,323,875 of which males and females are 1,746,025 and 1,577,850 respectively.

In rural areas the sex ratio was 904 females per 1000 males. Child population in the age 0-6 is 613,960 in rural areas of which males were 319,223 and females were 294,737.

The child population was 18.28 % of total rural population of Patna district. Literacy rate in rural areas of Patna district was 62.38 % as per census data 2011. Gender wise, male and female literacy stood at 72.57 and 51.04% respectively. In total, 1,690,372 people were literate of which males and females were 1,035,473 and 654,899 respectively.

The City of Patna

Patna is headquarters of Patna District, which is the capital of Bihar State. It is the largest city in the state of Bihar and second largest city in the eastern India. According to the Census of 2011, the population of Patna City was 1.68 million, making it the 19th largest city in India, with 894,158 men and 789,042 women. The city is approximately 35 km long and 16 km to 18 km wide situated on the southern bank of Holy river Ganges. Besides, the Ganges, the city is surrounded by rivers Sone, Punpun and Gandak making it the largest riverine city in the world. According to 2011 Census Report, around 11.32 per cent of the population was under six years of age, with 102,208 boys while 88,288 were girls.

The majority of people living in Patna are Hindus. This city also has large communities of Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Jains. The main language spoken in Patna is Hindi. The overall literacy rate is 84.7%, with the male literacy rate being 87.7% and the female literacy rate being 81.3%.

Patna is a very congested city with narrow and overcrowded roads and lanes. The city population has to brave hours of traffic jams every day. If there is any political rally or religious festival, then traffic is normally at standstill for hours and nothing moves. The number of vehicles is increasing day by day. The increasing number of vehicles coupled with thousands of slow moving cycle rickshaw and numerous unruly and polluting auto rickshaws create a muddle of traffic during the day.

The city administration has failed to properly serve the city dwellers as Patna Municipal Corporation and other civic bodies are plagued with many controversies, infighting and lack of professionalism. A visitor to the city can see heaps of stinking garbage in the colonies, roadside and market place. Free and massive use of polythene bags have choked city drains causing water logging in the rainy season. One can find stray animals like old cows, buffaloes and dogs roaming freely in the street. There is no policy to curb their number or regulate them in any manner. Despite repeated instructions of Patna High Court, cow sheds exist in many parts and locality of the city.

Although there is spate of construction activities around the city to make it on par with the other modern cities in India, building bylaws are flouted by everyone. The city of Patna can also be termed as a city of slums. PRIA, an NGO along with its local partner Nav Manas Kalyan Samitti (NMKS) conducted the listing of slums in Patna. Summary of findings says a total of 99 slums are listed in Patna

Municipal Corporation. According to a study conducted in July 2006 63.5% of Patna's population resides in slums.



Children at Risk Network Patna

The history of Christianity in Bihar can be traced to Mughal period when Emperor Jehangir appointed Mukkarram as the Governor of Bihar. Before he arrived in Bihar he converted to Roman Catholic faith. After his arrival, he requested the Society of Jesus to send some priests to Patna. The first Jesuit Priest to come to Patna was Father Simon Figueredo. They built a small church in 1713 at a place now known as "**Padri-ki-Haveli**" (or "mansion of the padre") in east Patna or Patna City.

Later during 19th and 20th Century, many Christian Missions like CMS, SPG, Region Beyond Mission-ary Union, Lutheran, Mennonite, Baptist, Methodist and Assembly of God missionaries came to Bihar. They established many missions' stations, churches, orphanages and hospitals. Most of these missions got far better response in Southern Bihar (among tribal population) in comparison with the plains of North Bihar. In the year 2000, a separate state of Jharkhand was carved out of Bihar to meet the aspiration of tribal population in what was formerly Southern Bihar. Areas under North and Central Bihar which form the current state of Bihar, used to be labelled as the 'Graveyard of Missions' signifying the poor response to mission initiatives.

After India became an independent nation in the year 1947, European missionaries left India but since they had not cultivated indigenous Christian leadership, most of the mission structure they created crumbled and disappeared. Mission properties were usurped and sold by local people. There was a long silent period when mission activities and growth was dormant. It was only in early eighties that missions and churches from South India started reaching North India including Bihar. Missions like GEMS, FMPB, IPC, GFA and AG Church. Bihar became a choice destination for mission initiatives.

The Church in Bihar is still emerging but it's definitely making inroads into communities. This is evident from the publication of a religious survey of Government of India, which says that Christian community growth in Bihar in the last decade is **143%**. However Christians are still a very miniscule portion of the **104 million people of Bihar**. The total Christian population according to this report was only **129,000** in the year 2011. Out of the total population of Patna district which stood as **5,838,465** the Christian population according to the official figure is a mere **12,651**

Viva Children at Risk Network Patna

There are about 100 churches and Christian organizations working in the district of Patna, and 75 of them are members of Viva Children at Risk Network Patna. All participating members are working in one way or another with children. Some of the organizations are big and work in the entire state of Bihar while others are very small with very limited programs and reach. Churches and organisations in the network comprising of paid staff and volunteers reach a total of 34087 children.

• Viva Children at Risk Network Members

- Church.....37
- Organizations.....38
- Staff members..... 387
- Volunteers..... 1268
- Children reached.....34087

The Children at Risk Network, Patna, Bihar was formed in 2011 initially with the desire to make a difference in the lives of girl children of the economically and socially marginalized community living in slums and marginalized caste communities. Its focus is to understand the problems faced by girl children in the city and to build the capacity of the member organizations and Churches to respond to those issues.

The network has focussed on adolescents in the city of Patna who live in slums and marginalized caste colonies through the implementation of a mentoring programme called 'Dare to be different'. This programme aims to make adolescents aware of issues they face to help them to make wise life choices and avoid high-risk activities. The network has trained 39 Christian child-care workers in life skill training who are equipped to mentor adolescents. The network has also developed expertise in building bridges between parents and children by engaging with parents on the issues of raising adolescents through parent seminars and by listening to them through child parliaments. In addition a pool of child trauma counsellors from the network have been trained,

Currently 18 members of the network are participating in the Viva Quality Improvement System (QIS), an organisational development tool which enables projects to meet quality standards in provision of care for children

Methodology



According to the 2011 census, there are there are a total 943,552 children under 6 years old in Patna. The issues facing children in the city are numerous and it is those who are living in the slums of who face the biggest problems. These slums lack basic infrastructure and any support from the Government. This means that children are often living in overcrowded and dilapidated conditions with lack of sanitation, access to clean water and little or no access to a good education.

The population of the slums in Patna consist mainly of unskilled migrant workers and families from the lower castes. It is not uncommon for these families and the children from them to face discrimination and exclusion from basic amenities and for children to be working to enable their families to survive. As a result, poverty and deprivation found in the slum areas can lead to the breakdown of families. Violence, neglect of or abuse of children is not uncommon.

To identify the key issues facing children in Patna and prioritise them, secondary data was collected from The UNICEF State profile for Bihar, documentation on Government priorities for the State and documentation from Key NGO's working in Patna and Bihar.

Primary data was collected from **5 Key Informant interviews**, which were held with representatives from

- *Reputed secular NGO working with Children at risk*
- *Representative of CWC or Department of Women and children*
- *Representative of reputed Christian NGO working with Children at risk*
- *Representative of Training organisation*
- *Key City Church Leader outside the network*

Key informants were asked to prioritise the **3 main issues facing children at risk in their locality**. In addition **20 network members** were asked the same question through a structured survey questionnaire.

4 Focus Group Discussions were also held with **83 children** where they were asked '**What makes you sad and what would make you happy?**' Data was gathered from 22 children in two groups at the beginning of 2015. These children were from an Orphanage and a Dalit slum community. Two more focus groups were held with children in June 2015. One was with 30 slum children of Bans Kothi attending a Supplementary Education Project and the other Focus Group Discussion was with

Research: Issues facing Children

Desk Research: Key Issues Facing Children in Patna

From documentation of UNICEF

1. **Malnutrition,**
2. **Child Marriage**
3. **School dropouts**

State or District Government priorities,

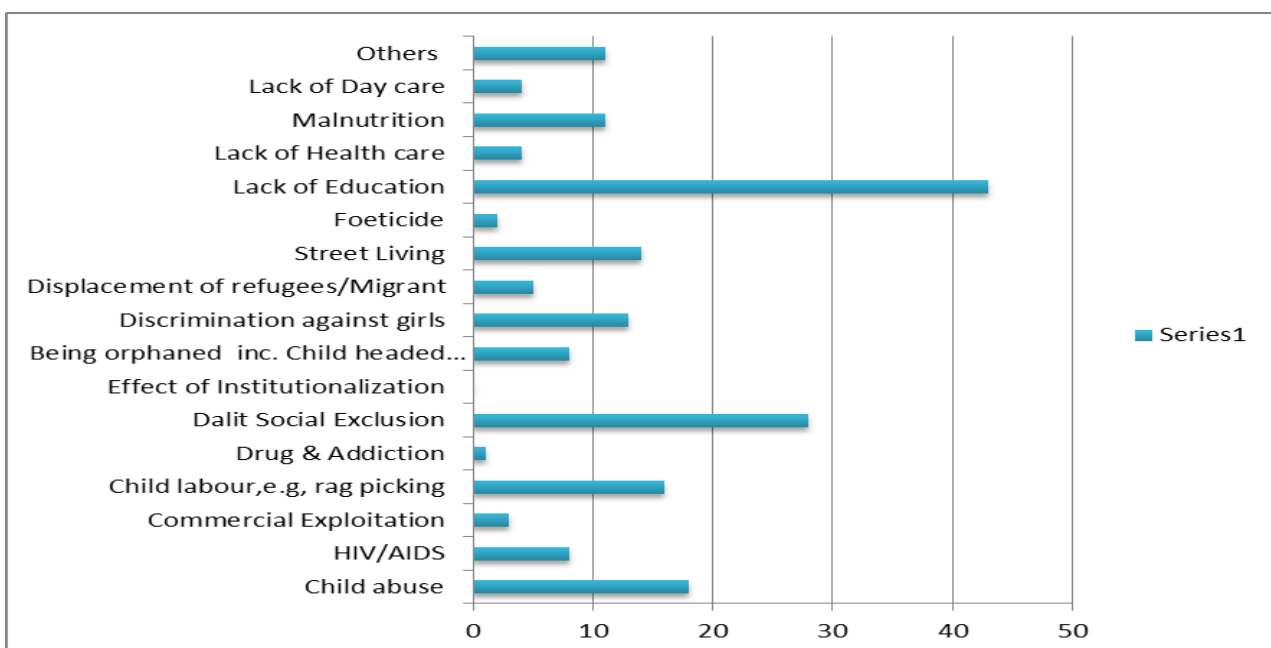
1. **Malnutrition**
2. **Child Marriage**
3. **Child trafficking.**

Key agency working with children (World Vision)

1. **Malnutrition**
2. **Dalit Social Exclusion**
3. **Lack of services to children with special needs**

Mapped organisations and Churches

For this study, 100 Churches and organisations were contacted and 75 responded on their understanding on what are the major issues of children at risk in the district of Patna. Their feedback is exhibited in the chart given below. Some of the respondents quoted more than one issue as a priority



Most thought that lack of quality education is the priority issue being faced by children in the city. The majority of children attending school in the district go to government schools because through Right To Education legislation, education is compulsory and free for children up to the age of 14. However the education system has failed to deliver good quality education. Another major issue outlined is Dalit Social Exclusion. A significant number of participants considered child abuse and child labour as two major issues. Street living was also identified followed closely by discrimination against the girl child. Migration was also considered as a significant issue facing children through slum dwelling or child labour. Malnutrition as an issue also had a number of responses.

Research: Issues facing Children

Key Informants: What are the three top issues facing children in Patna?

Key Informant 1

(Reputed secular NGO working with Children at risk).

1. Street Living,
2. Child Abuse
3. Malnutrition

Mrs. Neelu, Mahila Jagaran Kendra

Key Informant 2

(Representative of CWC or Department of Women and children)

1. Child Abuse
2. Drug & addiction.
3. Malnutrition

Mr. Deepak Kumar, CWC Chairman

Key Informant 3

(Representative of reputed Christian NGO working with Children at risk),

1. Lack of quality Education.
2. Discrimination against girls
3. Displacement

Sr. Veena - Educational & Social Welfare Society

Key Informant 4

(Representative of Training organisation)

1. Commercial exploitation
2. Lack of quality education.
3. Drug and addiction

Bin Chako, Child restoration project

Key Informant 5 (Key City Church Leader outside the network).

1. Lack of quality education.
2. Dalit social exclusion
3. Discrimination against girl child.

Bishop Lallachan M.A. Believers Church

Data gathered from 20 Network members

1. Lack of quality education,
2. Displacement,
3. Dalit social exclusion

Children: What makes you Sad?

Group I (Children from orphanage)

Malnutrition.

Child labour.

Lack of quality education.

Group II (Children from slum and Dalit communities)

Discrimination against girl child

Child abuse,

Dalit social exclusion

Group III (Children from Bans Kothi Slum)

Child abuse

Water and Sanitation

Lack of quality education.

Group IV (Children from Digha locality)

Child Labour

Lack of quality education.

Water and Sanitation

Research Issues facing Children

Children's Voices I: An interface with 30 slum children of Bans Kothi attending Supplementary Education Project

Thirty children aged 9 to 14 years and mostly girls in Bans Kothi Locality of Patna were invited to share about their issues. The children live in the hutments and slums near the bank of river Ganges and gathered in the Urdu Primary School near gate no 97. Observation of these children would suggest that around 90% of them were malnourished.

Water and Sanitation Out of thirty children, ten children said that there are no lavatories in their homes and they have to go to the banks of river Ganges to defecate. Except for a handful of children all other children informed us that their families have to fetch water to drink, bathe, cooking, cleaning and other purposes from community hand pipe

Abuse Girls complained that they cannot go near the river bank when it is dark or during the afternoon because of the presence of "local drunkards and antisocial elements." They reported that when they went to the river bank during these times, they were often abused or molested by elderly as well as younger men. As a result they refrained from going to the toilet during these hours.

Malnutrition Children admitted that they did not eat well and those that receive a mid day meal in the Government run schools said they were not interested in eating there because the food 'is not prepared well and with cleanliness. They find 'kankad' small stone pieces in their food"

Education All of the children wanted to study. Only one of the thirty children said she was going to a private school. Four children reported they are not going to school. The rest said they are attending government school but there is hardly any teaching as teachers seldom come to classes but they sit in the office. There are no recreational facilities or games facilities in the school premises. School authorities do not enforce any discipline for students so they are free to enter or leave school at their will at any time.

Discrimination: All the children felt that boys get favourable treatment from parents, family members and community members. They said that girls are married at a young age. When asked why an eleven year old boy Chotu said in a loud voice "Ladki Ki shadi jaldi ho joni chahiye kyonki ladki bojha hai" Girls should be married as early as possible because they are liabilities". The reason for early marriage of girls they said is because parents have to give a dowry, which is less if the girls are married off early.

Children are also asked to fetch water, which means standing in a long queue, fighting with neighbours and also the fear of community goons or strong men who often bar them from taking water by taking away the handle of the hand-pipe or harassing them because they are poor or belong to marginalized castes

What makes you sad?

- When scolded or beaten in home of school
- When Papa beats my mother and fighting in the community
- Girls: When people pass filthy remarks and attempt to abuse
- Heaps of garbage around us and our dirty homes
- Roads not safe and excessive pollution
- No space and equipment to play in locality and school

What would make you happy?

- A place to play and playing equipment
- No environmental pollution
- Secure locality where children especially girls have no fear
- When people in homes and community live in peace and are not fighting
- Good school and better education facilities
- Clean tasty and sufficient food
- No noise pollution
- Own tap and lavatory in our

Research: Issues facing Children

Children's voices 2: An interface with 31 migrant workers children in Digha locality



31 children gathered in a church's children project in Digha locality. Out of 31 children 14 children belonged to the workers of one of the Brick Kiln at the bank of Ganges. These children live with their families in temporary sheds in the kiln. Five children belonged to parents who are making and selling illicit country liquor.

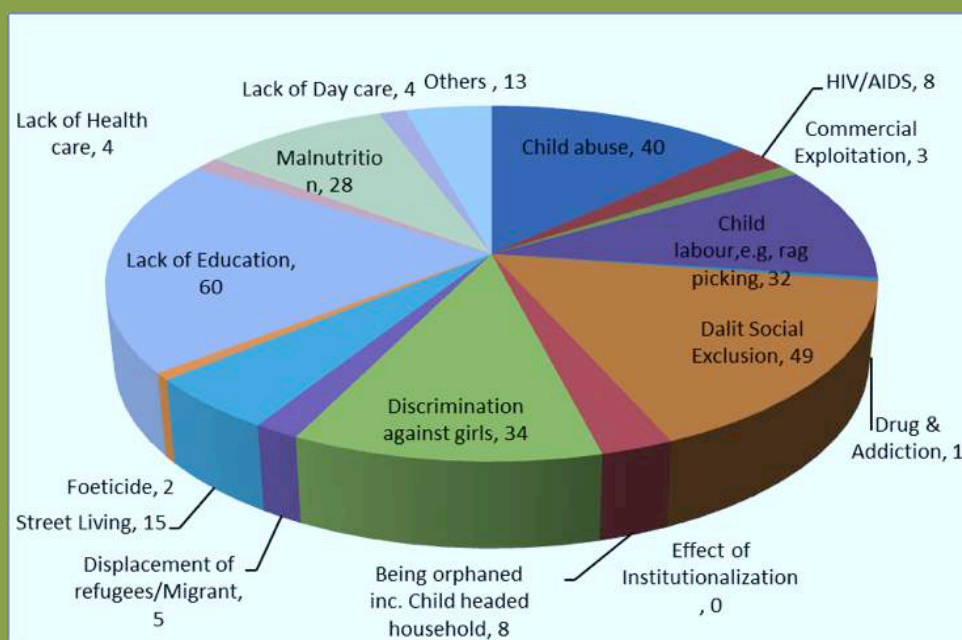
Child Labour: 19 of the children were working. All the children of the brick kiln reported that they have to work along with their parents and other adult family members from morning to evening. Families working in the kiln get Rs.1200/- (US\$20) per week as payment. One 14 year old girl child reported that her family has ten members and all of them including her work every day from 6am in the morning to 5pm in the evening to survive. They also get Rs.1200/- per week.. The children of liquor sellers said that they also help their parents to make liquor and then sell it on the road side. . As the children are working they cannot go to school.

Education: Of the 12 children going to school, two went to private school and the others attended a government run municipality school. These children reported that they were not getting a good education in school as teachers do not teach them and there was no facility or equipment for games and recreation in the school. In addition the schools had no drinking water or toilet on site. The mid day meal served at school was 'not worth eating'.

Water and Sanitation: The children reported that they do not have toilets or water taps in their homes. For water they are dependent on the community hand pump and they have to defecate on the roadside or river bank.

Abuse: The girls in the families that sell liquor reported that bad people taunt them and misbehave with them.

Research Findings



Issues facing children in the district of Patna based on the feedback gathered from Network Partners, children in focus group discussions and individual interviews of NGOs leaders, officials and others.

Malnutrition for children featured across all the data gathered as a key issue facing children in Bihar State and the city of Patna. In addition, **Lack of Quality Education** was mentioned as a priority issue in desk research and in interviews and surveys with adults and children. Network Members also identified this as a priority issue. As a result of this further focus group discussions took place with parents and children on the subject of quality education.

This was followed by **child abuse** as a major cause of concern. Included in child abuse is child labour, trafficking and the commercial exploitation of children. But because child labour and trafficking are such a prominent feature of Bihar, **child labour and trafficking** are examined separately.

Although the adults in the survey did not identify the poor environment within the slums and water and sanitation as a major issue, the environment in which they lived concerned the children in the focus groups. They cited heaps of garbage and having no toilets in their homes as a cause of concern. Having to queue for water from community hand-pumps and having to find places outside their homes where they could defecate was a serious cause of concern for children who often had to face abuse in such circumstances. **Poor Water and Sanitation facilities** is therefore treated as an issue facing children at risk in Patna, particularly as poor sanitation is also one of the key factors in diarrhoeal diseases leading to child mortality and illness.

Adults and children quoted **Discrimination against girls and against Dalits (Low Caste)** as a key issue facing girls and low caste children. In many instances, this discrimination is the **cause** of the abuse, early marriage, child labour or lack of access to quality education experienced by these children. In addition **Poverty** in the state of Bihar causes **migration** to the city from poor rural areas, which are prone to flooding. As a result thousands of poor land labourers flock to the city in search of incomes. This results in families either living on the streets or life in the slums with little or no access to basic amenities. Children from these families are often forced to work to earn a livelihood either with or away from their families.

Malnutrition



According to the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN), Disease and malnutrition are closely linked. Sometimes disease is the result of malnutrition, sometimes it is a contributing cause. In fact, malnutrition is the largest single contributor to disease in the world. Malnutrition at an early age leads to reduced physical and mental development during childhood. Stunting, for example, affects more than 147 million pre-schoolers in developing countries, according to SCN's World Nutrition Situation 5th report. Iodine deficiency, the same report shows, is the world's greatest single cause of mental retardation and brain damage.

In India, almost 62 million children (48%) across all income groups are stunted. Stunting, or chronic malnutrition, is accompanied by a host of problems, weak immune systems, risk of sickness and disease, arrested cognitive and physical development, and a greater risk of dying before age 5. A recent story in the New York Times explored the link between high rates of child malnutrition in India and the country's poor sanitation, shedding light on a potential cause of a protracted problem. For India, the issue is not a lack of food, but rather a lack of toilets for its population—one-half of India's population, at least 620 million people, defecates outside.

According to the 2012-13 report of National Rural Health Mission, almost 80 per cent of children below five years of age in Bihar are malnourished. If one takes into account the children between the ages of 0 and 14 years, the state accounts for 58 per cent of malnourished children, against the national average of 46 per cent.

Bihar state Health secretary Sanjay Kumar told The Telegraph, "Malnutrition is a major challenge before the government as nearly 80 per cent children below five years of age are anaemic. The government, in recent times, has although initiated several measures to combat the malaise." He further added "Several factors, including unavailability of health services, absence of community, low institutional delivery and lack of access to cheap medicines, are responsible for high incidence of malnutrition in children. Social and cultural practices such as early marriage, too, contribute to Bihar's high malnutrition rate," (The Telegraph Kolkata 13 May'2014).

Malnutrition is directly responsible for 300,000 deaths per year in children younger than 5 years in developing countries and contributes indirectly to more than half of all deaths in children worldwide.

Close to 1.3 million children die every year in India because of malnutrition, according to the World Health Organization (WHO)

"It's a national shame that we continue to have so many malnourished children. This is an issue that the government is also deeply concerned about,"


(Shantha Sinha, chairperson of the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights).

"India's stunting problem represents the largest loss of human potential in any country in history, and it affects 20 times more people in India alone than H.I.V./AIDS does around the world,"

Ramanan Laxminarayan, vice president for research and policy at the Public Health Foundation of India.

A group of 15 teachers, who are working in the slum literacy project run by Assumptions sisters while sharing their views on the issues of children at risk, said many children come to study on an empty stomach.

Water and Sanitation



According to the latest estimates of the **WHO/UNICEF** Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP), 32 per cent of the world's population, 2.4 billion people, lacked improved sanitation facilities, and 663 million people still used unimproved drinking water sources.

India has a population of almost 1.2 billion people. 55% of this population has no access to toilets. An estimated 400,00 children under 5 years of age die each year due to diarrhoea. Several million more suffer from multiple episodes of diarrhoea and others fall ill on account of Hepatitis A, enteric fever, intestinal worms and eye and skin infections caused by poor hygiene and unsafe drinking water.

Poor sanitation, water and hygiene have many other serious repercussions. Children particularly girls are denied their right to education because their schools lack private and decent sanitation facilities. Women are forced to spend large parts of their day fetching water.

Bihar is the worst state in India in the use of toilets. "National average for open defecation is at 60% but in Bihar it is 77%. Only 33% homes in the state have toilets. I am telling you on the basis of data provided by the officials but the ground reality could be even worse". Upendra Kushwaha , (Union Minister of State Rural Development Panchayati Raj,

Kofi Annan, "We shall not finally defeat AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, or any of the other infectious diseases that plague the developing world until we have also won the battle for safe drinking water, sanitation and basic health care."

88% of diarrhoeal disease is attributed to unsafe water supply, inadequate sanitation and hygiene. Improved water supply reduces diarrhoea morbidity by 21%. Improved sanitation reduces diarrhoea morbidity by 37.5%. (UN Human Rights)

Out of 31 children interviewed in the FGD, 10 children said they had no toilet in their homes and had to go to the banks of the river Ganges to defecate. Children were also asked to fetch water, which means standing in a long queue, fighting with neighbours and intimidation from strong men or community goons.

Open defecation a common site In Patna. Especially in slums people are forced to defecate on the road side, beside open drains along at the railway lines. There are no systematic public toilets and the ones that exist are without proper maintenance and very dirty. Even government schools have no proper toilet facilities in-spite of Government directives. Most of the slums are without piped water and one or two hand pipes support hundreds of families. Small children have to stand in queues for hours to fetch water for families. Females and girls are forced to bathe in full public view.

Over 50% water samples taken in the state capital and tested by the Public Health Institute, Patna, have been found to be unfit for consumption due to serious bacterial contamination.

Water-borne diseases are common in the city, says a recent study of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), New Delhi. In Patna contamination takes place in two ways. About one- third of the total sewage generated in the city seeps underground, polluting the groundwater reserves. Moreover, leakages in piped water supply network also leads to contamination. The water has also been found to be high on iron and arsenic content.

Lack of Quality Education

Education is a powerful instrument of social change, and often initiates upward movement in the social structure, helping to bridge the gap between the different sections of society. Education is a key indicator in how a country is developing.

India is officially home to the most illiterate people in the world. In 2003 an estimated 60 million children were still out of schools, of which, 35 million were girls. The population of children in the age group 6-14 is 192 million.

For most students in India, the learning environment is inadequate. School consists of a one-room schoolhouse, one teacher covering multiple grades, and 40 students per teacher. Many rural public schools barely have the most basic of facilities (a closed-in building, drinking water, toilets, a blackboard). The school facilities are showing some improvements in the last few years thanks to the focus on infrastructure. However, in spite of these improvements, the issues of quality of learning have remained largely neglected over the last nine years.

Failure of government schools to deliver on basic achievements in learning means that there has been a shift nationally, so that about a third of all children in Standard I are enrolled in private schools. But in Bihar less than 20% of children are enrolled in private school.

Discussion over the quality of education received by children from Government Schools in Bihar has been a subject of debate for some time.

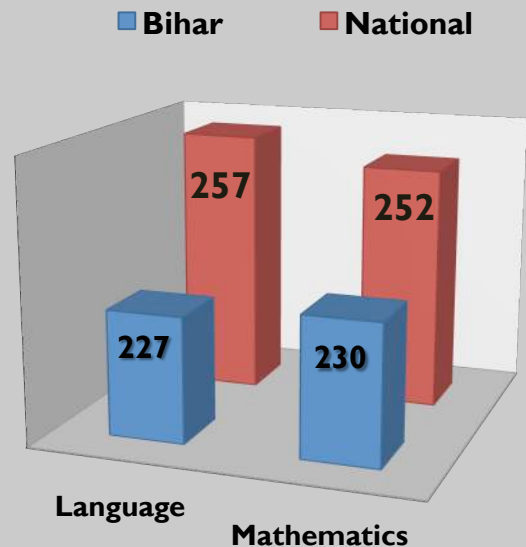
In 2012, The International Growth Centre, UK, released a paper on "Education Policies and Practices: What Have We Learnt and the Road Ahead for Bihar" The paper stressed the need to improve the quality of education in Government schools reporting that a state wide data system needs to be created to link students' performance with teacher effectiveness. The report continued by stating that much remains to be done for improving the schooling infrastructure.

Only 60% of the schools have classrooms in good condition; 10% of the primary schools still lack drinking water facility and more than 70% of the primary and upper primary schools do not have separate girls' toilets. As recently as 6th September 2014, The Times of India reported that chief minister of Patna, Jitan Ram Manjhi expressed annoyance over the deteriorating quality of education at government schools.

In India

47% of children in India in Standard V can only read at Standard II level

26% of children in Standard V can only solve arithmetic problems at Standard III level



The performance of students from Bihar is significantly below the national average in both language and numeracy and all social groups scored lower than the national average in both language and mathematics.

Why Study?

Voices of Children



- Education will make us something
- Name of mother and father will be glorified
- Education brings wisdom

Lack of Quality Education

Semi Structured Interview Parents

Semi Structured interviews were held with 36 Parents (all women) who were residents of Harijan Colony, Near Mandiri Nala. The average number of children that they had was four. Thirty two of the 36 women in the focus group were illiterate. Two were educated to class 10, one to class 4 and one to class 2.

All participant's were sending children to school and wanted them to study. Thirty five were sending their children to Government Schools and 1 was sending her children to a private unrecognised school. All children had been provided with uniforms and got a mid day meal at school. When asked why they sent their children to school, the replies were as follows:

- **29: They will be able to get jobs**
- **4: They will be good people.**
- **3: Can't say why**

However, none of the 36 women however were satisfied with the quality of education that their children were receiving at government schools.

All women wanted their children to learn, including their girl children, however the consensus was that the atmosphere in their slum was not conducive for study. They felt that for their girls' safety it was good that they were married early and this was a reason why girl children did not finish their education. The women quoted 'immorality' as being an issue. As the parents were at work for lengthy hours, it was not easy for them to keep an eye on their children. Marrying off their girls to someone who could 'protect' them was considered to be an option.

Parents expressed concerns that their children were not learning, but felt helpless to support them in their studies because they were illiterate. In addition, parents reported that their children were not learning good values and behaviour at government schools. It was also revealed that Lower caste affiliation like Dalits and Maha Dalits faced discrimination from teachers and upper caste children

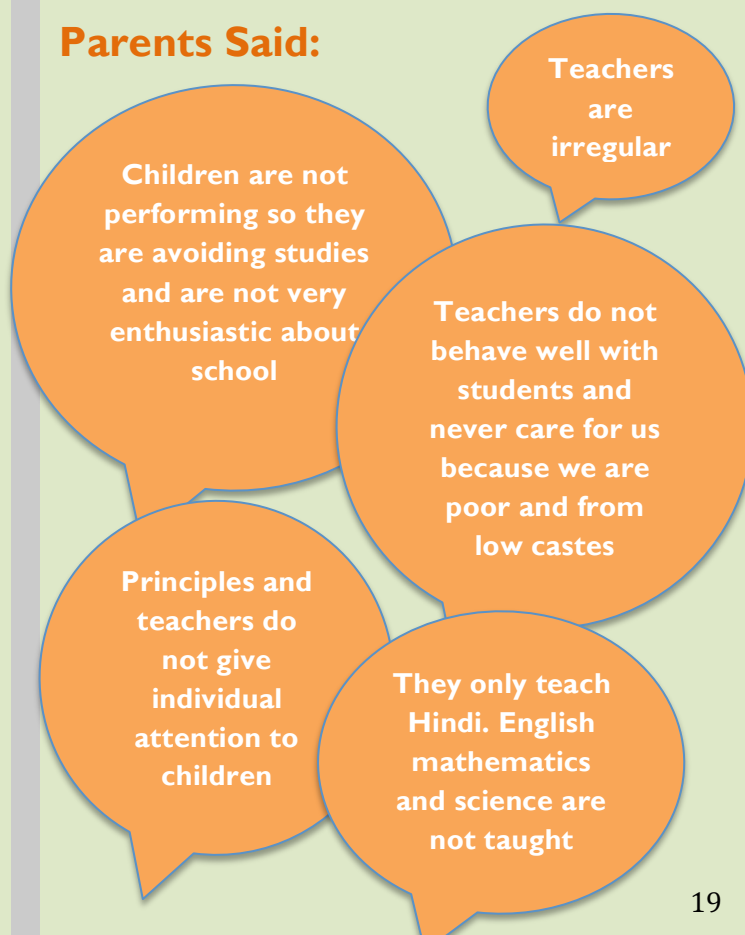
A Focus Group discussion was held with 24 Children from Stalin Nagar slum in Patna from a tutorial centre. All children were attending school, 20 went to Government Schools and 4 went to private schools. All 24 children explained that they were not satisfied with the education that they were receiving at these institutions.

All children at government schools got a meal and a uniform once a year. Seven children said that they did not have separate bathroom facilities for boys and girls at school and six children said they didn't have drinking water facilities in school. None of the children were given homework. There was no access to technology in the classrooms and children received no formal physical education. They said that they were left unsupervised to play kabbadi

Children Said

- **Teachers don't teach us. They sit in their staff rooms and do not come to classrooms**
- **They do not explain the chapters**
- **There is no discipline in the classes. Anyone can come and go as they please**

Parents Said:



Abuse

Save the children defines child abuse as “ A deliberate act of ill treatment that can harm or is likely to cause harm to a child's safety, well-being, dignity and development. Abuse includes all forms of physical, sexual, psychological or emotional ill treatment.”

According to Ark Hope for Children

- 40 million children subjected to abuse each year.
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among adolescents worldwide.
- Approximately 20% of women and 5–10% of men report being sexually abused as children, while 25–50% of all children report being physically abused.
- Statistics indicate that 3 million young girls are subjected to genital mutilation every year.

A recent UNICEF report on violence against children in India

contained some chilling statistics: Around 43% of girls in India who had been the subject of sexual violence said they first experienced it at or before they turned 19. Around 77% of adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 who have faced sexual violence in India reported that their current husband or partner was the perpetrator.

In 2007, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) released a study report on child abuse in India.

The report discusses incidence of child abuse nationwide. The study found wide spread incidence of child abuse. Children between the ages of 5-12 are at the highest risk for abuse and exploitation. The study found that 69% of children reported to have been physically abused. Out of these 54.68% were boys. 52.91% of boys and 47.09 % of girls reported having been abused in their family environment. Of the children who were abused in family situations 88.6% of them were abused by their parents. 65.99 % of boys and 67.92% of girls living on the street reported being physically abused by their family members and other people.

Nisha (name Changed): A 13 year old girl living in a hutment on the bank of Ganges Digha locality said “I cannot go for defecation when it becomes dark or even in the noon times because anti-social elements wait there to abuse us”

Every two out of three school children reported facing corporal punishment. In juvenile justice institutions 70.21 % of children in conflict with law and 52.86% of children in need of care and protection reported having been physically abused.

Child Marriage is considered to be one of the worst and visible forms of child abuse. In Bihar, 68.2% of girls get married before the legal age of 18 years. Child marriages are happening not only because of cultural reasons but also because of poverty, lack of security and families marrying girls off at a young age so that they will have to pay a smaller dowry.

The majority of girls who participated in different Focus Group Discussions shared that they are subject to constant verbal abuse on roads and public places not only by younger people but also by elderly people and that they don't feel safe.

Girls in slums and poor community are often sexually abused when they go to defecate at lonely and quiet places. Due to this reason girls reported that they often suppress their urge to go to the toilet during the night and even during the afternoons, because there are drunk men around at these times.



Child abuse in India is often a hidden phenomenon especially when it happens in the home or by family members.

70.57% of girls reported having been neglected by family members.

48.4% of girls wished they were boys.

27.33% of girls reported getting less food than their brothers.

Child Labour



ILO's Definition of Child Labour

- Child labour is work to which children are compelled, in violation of international and national regulations. The ILO claims that child labour is always illegal, because it designates:
- An economic activity practised by children below the age of twelve;
- A labour which is not light, and accomplished by twelve to fourteen year-old children;
- The worst forms of child labour, whatever the age of the children.

UNICEF's Definition of Child Labour

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) considers that child labour becomes exploitation when it implies too young full-time workers, too many hours of labour per day, immoderate physical, social and psychological constraints, dangerous and potentially health-damaging working conditions, insufficient earnings, immoderate responsibilities, and when it constitutes an hindrance to access to education and an infringement of children's dignity (examples: slavery and sexual exploitation).

In Bihar, 9% of children are engaged in Child labour.

Because child labour is a full-time activity, this is obviously incompatible with schooling. The work can take place inside or outside the house. Working children are often deprived ones, who have to participate towards their family survival by becoming a servant, packer, factory worker or by working in the streets. These children often face abusive exploitation by unscrupulous employers: low wages for long hours of work, tiring physical efforts not adapted to their young age, and trying work conditions that endanger the children's physical and psychological well-being. They might lack food and sleep, be imprisoned on their workplace, or be assaulted or abused. Sometimes, these children's lives are worthless, simply because they are poor.

The Facts

India has one of the largest number of child labourers under the age of 14 in the world

11% of the workforce of India is a child with an estimated 12.6 million children, in 2010, below 14 years engaged in hazardous occupations.

50.2% of children work all seven days of the week. 81.16% of the girl child labourers work in domestic households, while 84% of the boy child labourers worked in tea stalls or kiosks.

Out of 31 children in the Focus Group discussion in Digha locality, 19 children were working.

14 children belonged to workers of one of the Brick Kilns on the bank of the Ganges, five children belonged to parents who are making and selling illicit liquor.

Of these 19 working children, none were going to school. Instead they were working with their parents and other adult members from morning until evening. Families working in the Kiln get Rs 1200/- (US\$20) per week as payment.

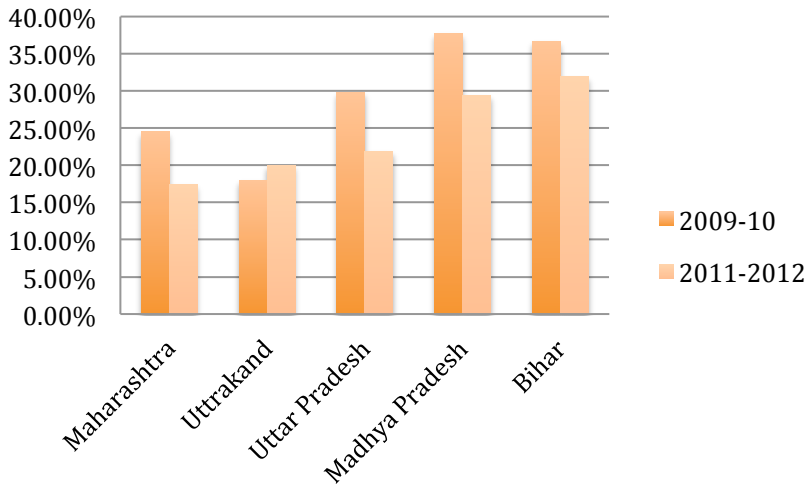
One 14 year-old girl reported that her family has 10 members and all of them work every day from 6am until 5pm in the evening to survive.

The children of liquor sellers said that they help their parents to make liquor and then sell it on the road-side.

The girls in the family were also involved in selling liquor and reported, "Bad people taunt them and misbehave with them".

Causes: Poverty

States with Highest Percentage of People Below Poverty Line 2009-10 and 2011-12



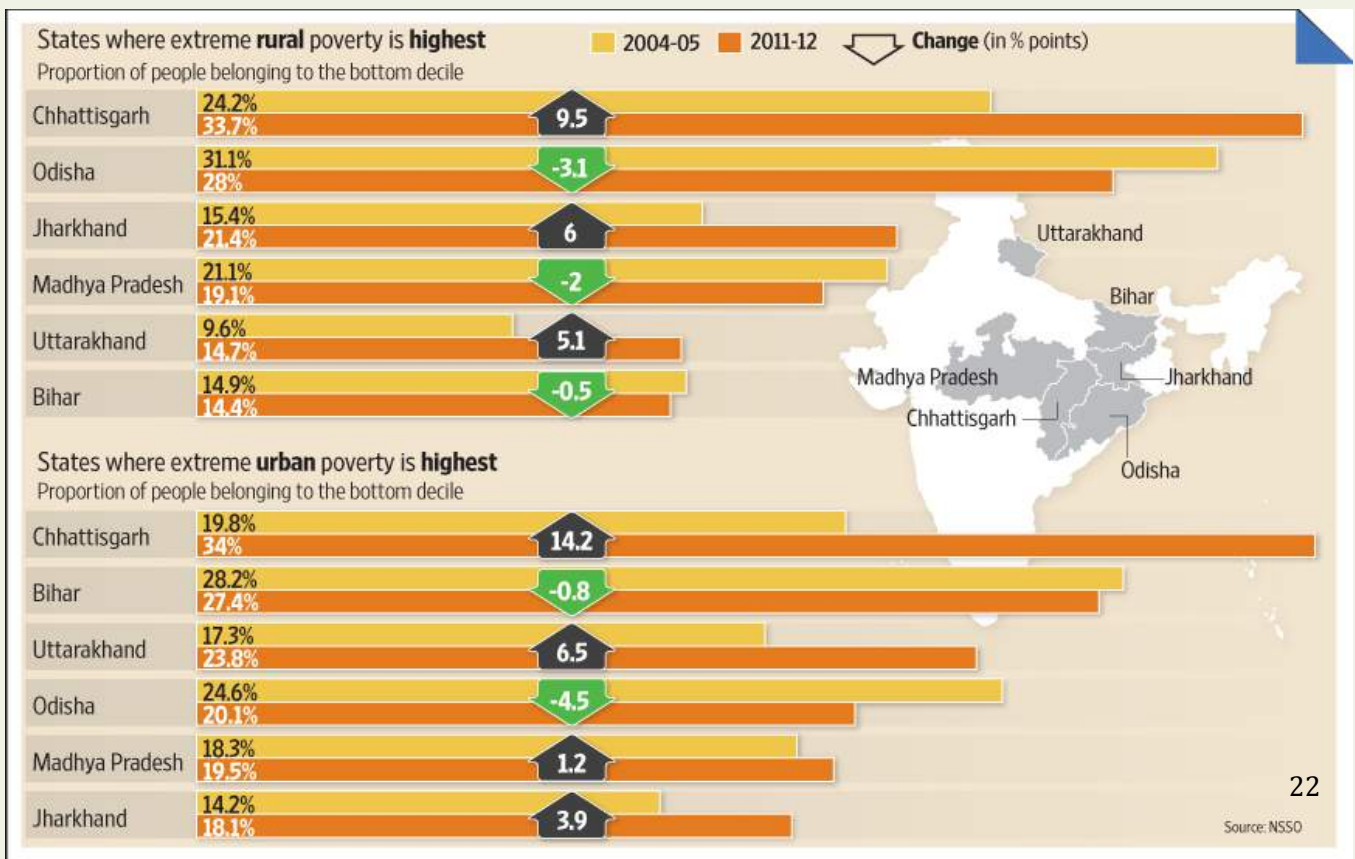
Source: Planning Commission

Bihar is the 3rd most populous states in India, with a population of 104,099,452 but it also one of the poorest States. It ranks 33 out of the 36 states and Union territories of India. **Bihar has the lowest GDP per capita in India and 33% of the population lives below the poverty line.** A recent caste based economic survey suggests that 75% of households in Bihar have a monthly income of less than 5,000 Rupees (US\$ 83).

The Bifurcation of Bihar in year 2000 is partly blamed for this. As a state heavily dependent on agriculture, there has been little or no investment in power, irrigation, health, sanitation or educational facilities.

Lack of industrial infrastructure and failed harvests causes millions of unskilled labours to migrate to the city or other states.

Bihar ranks in the top 6 poorest states in India for both rural and urban poverty, but it is in the urban areas where poverty is highest



Causes: Migration



According to UN estimates, 50 per cent of the projected increase in world's urban population is from rural to urban migration. Migrants from rural areas account for 81.26 per cent of the total migrants in India.

Poverty in the State of Bihar causes migration from the poor rural areas to cities both in Bihar and in other parts of India.

Migrant labour from Bihar constitutes around 50% of the unskilled workers employed nationally

According to the joint director of Census operations, A K Saxena, the urban population of Bihar increased by 0.8% from 2001 to 2011. The state's total population is 103 million including 92 million rural population and 1.17 million urban population. Patna district, with 58, 38,465 people, has the highest population across the state according to the final population data of Census 2011.

“Patna is the 14th largest city in India. Despite no industries, there is a high population growth. People from the rural areas of the state migrate here for job opportunities, electricity and education among other factors.”

(Ras Bihari Singh, Former Patna College principal)

Rural poor come to Patna both to settle permanently or for seasonal employment. The majority are unskilled landless labourers who work in Brick kilns, on construction sites, or as passenger or load rickshaw pullers, street vendors, domestic servants or rag pickers. Some run roadside eateries or brew and sell country liquor.

The majority of migrant workers live in poorly constructed shelters in one of the 99 slum communities in Patna

The children of these migrant labourers can be at home for long hours while their parents are away. The bigger children generally take care of the younger siblings or join their parents in their works.

Aide et Action in collaboration with Bernard van Leer Foundation (BvLF) and with support from Aide et Action Regional Office, Patna, conducted a study on Safe and Healthy Environments for Young Migrants in Bihar. A purposive sampling method was applied to generate data from 500 migrant families residing in 50 construction sites in and around Patna, which are all owned by private companies.

The families in the study had children aged between 0-14 years. The study attempts to assess the status of young migrants in selected worksites of Patna city with respect to their access to basic services like health, education, ECCE, food safe environment and decent living conditions.

Type of House	Hut	64.2%
Height of House	3 to 5 feet	62%
No of rooms	One room	82.2%
Toilet Facilities	Open Defecation	92%
Pollution at Work	Dusty	98.4%
Seasonal Migrant		92.4%
Long tern		7.60 %
No Ventilation in House		96.0%
Sewerage Facility at Home		2.6%
Special Space for Cooking		1%
BPL Card		3%

Causes: Migration



Migrant children who help their parents to brew and sell country liquor.

We have come to Patna with our parents from nearby villages.

We live in shed on the road side.

Our families sell country liquor.

We have to help our parents by fetching water so that our parents can prepare country liquor.

We also serve liquor to customers.

Many a time, overdrunk customers misbehave with us.

Our parents do not send us to school because we help them in their work.

Recently some people have started an evening school for us.

We like to study. Maybe in future our parents will allow us to go to school.



Children of Brick kiln children workers

Our whole family members work in the kiln.

For us morning starts very early at 6 am. It is time for our parents to go to work.

We live in temporary sheds in the vicinity of the brick kiln on the bank of river Ganges.

Our families get weekly food allowance from owners of brick kiln.

Bigger children help in the work of parents after the home chores are completed.

We were involved in school in the villages but in Patna we do not attend school.

Research From Aide et Action International South Asia (AEAI-SA) found:

- **The synergy between the seasonality of migration and schooling doesn't match. Hence children who migrate are unable to access the schools at their respective destination.**
- **Around 77% of the children from migrant families suffer from a number of illnesses. Fever and cold are the most common disease suffered by 57% of the children, followed by diarrhoea (15%), and skin disease (15%). Around 10% of the children complained of weakness.**
- **Around 55% parents spend a maximum of two hours with their children daily.**
- **Around 4.8% children insist their parents to go to school, 11.8% want to go home, and 3.4% of the children work as child labour and 4% feel abused.**
- **20% of the children do not play at all.**

Causes: Discrimination

"Short-changing girls is not only a matter of gender discrimination; it is bad economics and bad societal policy. Experience has shown, over and over again, that investment in girls' education translate directly and quickly into better nutrition for the whole family, better health care, declining fertility, poverty reduction and better overall economic performance"

Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary General

It is a sad but true fact that everywhere in each corner of the world, girls face discrimination. They often receive less food than boys do and are married off early or forced to stay at home to help in domestic chores. Girls are often denied the right to education and all the advantages that go with it including the right to associate freely.

Vital statistics on gender discrimination against girls provided by UNICEF

- Of the more than 110 million children not in school, approximately 60 per cent are girls.
- By age 18, girls have received an average of 4.4 years less than education than boys.
- Of the more than 130 million primary-school-age children worldwide who are not enrolled in school, nearly 60 per cent are girls.
- In some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, adolescent girls have HIV rates up to five times as high as adolescent boys.
- Pregnancies and childbirth-related health problems take the lives of nearly 146,000 teenage girls each year.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, a woman faces a 1 in 13 chance of dying in childbirth. In Western Europe, the risk is 1 in 3,200.
- At least one in three girls and women worldwide has been beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime.
- An estimated 450 million adult women in developing countries are stunted, a direct result of malnutrition in early life.
- Every year, two million girls and women are subjected to female genital mutilation.



Discrimination against girls is even worst in India, as Indian Society is patriarchal and male dominant. The 2011 Indian census shows that there are 914 females per 1000 males. During the last decade the number female children to male children in the youngest age group fell from 945 per 1000 males to 927 per 1000 males. According to **Mr. Amartya Sen** there are two main inequalities - educational inequality and health inequality. These are two important social indicators to measure equality between men and women.

In India, girls are given less food and health care than boys, especially in Northern India. Girls are breastfed for shorter periods, given less medical attention, fewer consultations and visits to the doctor, and are often taken very late to the hospital in an emergency.



Causes: Discrimination

Girls should be married off as early as possible because they are liabilities. An 11 year old boy in Children's Focus Group

While addressing a workshop on 'Prevention of Child Marriages' jointly organised by Women Development Corporation of Bihar and UNICEF **State Minister for Social Welfare Damodar Rawat said**

"Bihar is one of the hotspots of child marriage in the country and on average marriages of 67 per cent of girls below 18 years of age are solemnised every year."... "Child marriages are a gross injustice to children as it proves devastating for their life,"

The dowry associated with the marriage of a girl child in India is one of the main reasons that girls are discriminated against. In a study on Child Abuse undertaken by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2007, with 12,447 child respondents, the total number of girl respondents was 5981. The majority of the girl child respondents (70.57%) reported neglect of one form or the other by family members.

In Bihar, 40.43% of girl respondents said that they get less attention in family in comparison to their brothers. 42.68 % of girl respondents claimed that they get less food than their brothers. 78.2 % said that they have to more household works in comparison to their male siblings. 65.63 % of the girl respondents pointed out they are made to take care of their younger siblings. 43.69 % said even when playing games their brothers tend to dominate the games. 26.54 % of girl respondents say that they are subjected to teasing by their brothers whereas 66.67 % of girl respondents from Bihar complained that their parents never take the side of girls.

According to a joint survey conducted by the Government of Bihar and UNICEF in year 2006, anaemia prevalence is highest amongst adolescent girls at 92%.



Sarita, a nurse in Patna Medical College Hospital standing with 20 day old girl child who was abandoned by her parents. Sarita came forward to adopt her

It is upsetting to know that while the family celebrates the birth of a new male child, the birth of a girl child is treated with grief. Family members often ridicule women who give birth to a girl child and there are many examples when husbands have abandoned women if they fail to deliver a male child. Women are often directed by family members to leave the girl child on the hospital bed and come home without them. Newspapers very often print the news of such abandoned girls. The practice of female foeticide is also a common practice in Bihar.



8 year old Laxmi and her 18 months old sister Rajendri were abandoned by their mother at Patna Railway Station as reported by local newspapers on 14th June 2014.

In literacy, the female population is lagging behind. Overall male and female literacy rate is 70.32% and 53.53% respectively. Total rural literacy rate in Bihar is 53.9%. In rural areas of Bihar, male and female literacy rate is 67.1 and 49.6 respectively. Total urban literacy rate in Bihar is 81.9. In urban areas of Bihar, male and female literacy rate is 89.9 and 72.6 respectively.

According to the study conducted by Child Relief and You (CRY) and Bihar Lok Adhikar Manch (BLAM), over 8,000 children were enrolled in Class I, but the number dropped to about 6,000 in Class V with most of the dropouts being girls. **"Non-availability of toilets and preoccupation with household chores are the most common reasons why the girls choose to stay home,"** said CRY's senior manager Saradindu Bandhopadhyay.(Source TOI dated Jan 24, 2014)

Causes: Discrimination



Dalit Children from an un-notified slum in Patna

Dalit and other social groups' exclusion

Estimated at 138 million, the Dalits or Scheduled Castes (SCs) are at the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy of the caste system. They suffer discrimination, exclusion and are deprived entitlements to economic rights, education, health and housing. Their children suffer from exclusion and discrimination through forced child labour and lack of good health, access to health services and education. The SCs constitute about 17% of India's population as per the Census 2001, and almost 80% live in the rural areas spread all over the country.

In Bihar as per, 2011 Census of India, Scheduled Castes constitute 16% of Bihar's 104 million populations. The census identified 21 of 23 Dalit sub-castes as Mahadalits (Most untouchables). Out of this figure of 16%, Mahadalits constitute to 10% and two other castes notified as Dalits constitute to 6%. The majority of household in slums are Dalit families.

The Right to Education and Training

The right to education free from discrimination is not secured for Dalit children. 99% of Dalit students are enrolled in government schools, which lack basic infrastructure, classrooms, teachers, teaching aids and they face abuse from teachers and non-Dalit students, including segregation both in classrooms and in the provision of mid-day meals. The hostility of higher-caste community members toward Dalit's' education is linked to the perception that Dalit's are not meant to be educated, are incapable of being educated, or if educated, would pose a threat to village hierarchies and power relations. A report before the 67th session of the then-Commission on Human Rights (CHR) states

“Teachers have been known to declare that Dalit pupils cannot learn unless they are beaten.”

A study conducted by the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights-Dalit Arthik Adhikar Andolan and supported by UNICEF shows that discrimination of various kinds plays a big role in the high dropout of Dalit children from school in year 2009 gave the following observations besides other findings (Source- The Times of India June 25'2009): "In Bihar, teachers complain to the Dalit parents that their children wear dirty clothes and they smell in the classrooms"

Dalit children often complain of discrimination in local schools. A Dalit girl said,

“Other children don't let us sit with them. Some of the girls say, 'Yuck, you people are Dom [street sweepers] - a dirty caste....' The teachers never say anything even when we complain.”

In the class, Dalit children were made to sit at the back and in some schools of Bihar on the barren floor while mats were given to upper caste children. Even the notebooks and homework of the Dalit children, were not checked by teachers

Teachers don't give proper attention to us. We have to sit on the ground. It's very difficult..The quality of food (mid-day meal) is also very poor. We also get very little food in lunch as we are served the last, our stomach does not fill" — a Dalit girl student in Bihar.

The report says physical access to schools is the biggest problem for Dalit children. In Bihar, UP and Rajasthan, most of the schools are situated in the dominant caste localities and Dalit children have to travel on an average half-an-hour to reach school. In the case of middle and high schools, Dalit children have to travel almost 3-4 kilometres in all the states.

Another Study, Dalit, minority kids pushed out of schools by Human Right Watch suggests that “Discrimination ranges from differentiation in serving mid-day meals, and not being allowed to go to toilets, to making them clean toilets and classrooms.”

Causes: Discrimination



The report was compiled by conducting research in Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Delhi, interviewing more than 160 people, including children, parents, teachers, education experts and officials, rights activists and local authorities.

Highlighting the discrimination in serving mid-day meals, Satyendra Kumar, Bihar director for New Delhi-based Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion, said: *“If you see which children in school bring plates from home, it’s always the Dalit children.”*

“When we ask teachers why they are not given plates in school, the teachers say the other children won’t eat from the plates Dalit children eat from,”

In Kamtachak in Patna district, Dalit children complained that children from other castes call them by their caste name in a derogatory manner, and do not mingle with them or include them when they are playing.

“We were asked to massage a teacher’s legs. If we refused, he used to beat us. There was a toilet for teachers, which is the one we had to clean,” Naresh, a 12 year old boy

Labour patterns (migratory and child labour) affect Dalits’ access to education

Dalits’ labour patterns (migratory and child labour) also adversely affect access to education. These factors result in low enrolment, high drop-outs and low literacy rates of Dalit students.

Dalit parents often take their children with them while looking for labour. Older children either work with their parents or stay at home to care for younger siblings, hence depriving them of schooling. Once students miss 18 days, they are no longer allowed to advance in the same grade.

In addition, Dalit children are vulnerable to trafficking. There are an estimated 40 million bonded labourers in India, of whom 15 million are children most of whom are Dalits or tribals. Child labour laws are not sufficiently enforced due to apathy and corruption.

Dalit children, particularly girls, are also exposed to the risks of manual scavenging. The health risks for child manual scavengers are manifest. Child labour laws (in particular the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986) are generally not sufficiently enforced and rehabilitation programs accompanying the Act also fail to adequately address child labour because they suffer from a lack of political commitment, non-enforcement, and weaknesses inherent in the Act itself.

Response

Government Policies and Programmes concerning Children

India is home to the largest child population in the world. The Constitution of India guarantees Fundamental Rights to all children in the country and empowers the State to make special provisions for children.

In the National Policy for Children, 1974, the Government of India reiterated its commitment to secure the rights of its children by ratifying related international conventions and treaties.

The National Policy for Children, 1974 recognised that programmes for children should find prominent place in national plans for the development of human resources, so that children grow up to become robust citizens, physically fit, mentally alert and morally healthy, endowed with the skills and motivations provided by society.

The National Charter for children 2003, adopted on February 2004, underlined the intent for every child its inherent right to be a child and enjoy a happy and healthy childhood to address the root causes that negate the healthy growth and development of children and to awaken the conscience of the community in the wider societal context to protect children from all forms of abuse while strengthening the family, society and the nation

To affirm the Government's commitment to the rights based approach in addressing the continuing and emerging challenges in the situation of children, the Government of India adopted a **Resolution on the National Policy for Children in 2013**. Key Priorities of this policy are Survival, health, nutrition, development, education, protection and participation are the undeniable rights of every child

Integrated Child Development Services:

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) was launched on October 2, 1975, in response to the challenge of meeting the holistic needs of the child. The Programme aims to benefit children below six years, pregnant and lactating women in the reproductive age group (15-45 years). The package of services delivered by the scheme includes:

- i. Supplementary nutrition,
- ii. Immunisation,
- iii. Health check-up services,
- iv. Referral services,
- v. Pre-school non-formal education, and
- vi. Nutrition and health education.

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 and Amendment Act, 2006:

The purpose of this legislation to provide justice and opportunities for the growth and development to children and is based upon the provisions of the Indian Constitution and four principle rights of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Act prescribes that both boys and girls 18 years below are to be treated as children. The Act protects the rights of the person in case the incident occurred when he/she was a child and during the proceedings if the person ceases to be a child or in other words attains the age of 18 years. This Act makes a clear distinction between the juvenile offender and neglected child and prescribes increased accessibility to justice and opportunities to both categories of children through **Juvenile Justice Boards** and **Child Welfare Committees** and by establishment different categories of homes for children in need of care and protection. The Act has provision for a legal, rehabilitation and social reintegration package through family-based non-institutional care like adoption, foster care, sponsorship, and after care.

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 was amended in 2006

with a purpose to make the earlier act more widespread and enhance its implementation in the country. It also included child beggars, street children and working children as needing special protection.

The Response

Government and Agency Response

Malnutrition

According to the 2012-13 report of National Rural Health Mission, almost 80 per cent of children below five years of age in Bihar are malnourished. If one takes into account the children between the ages of 0 and 14 years, the state accounts for 58 per cent of malnourished children, against the national average of 46 per cent.

Government Response: The Government of Bihar is implementing Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) with the implementation of schemes related to children in the age group of 0-6 years, adolescent girls as well as pregnant and lactating women. One of the major objectives of this program is to improve the nutritional and health status of children in the age group 0-6 years.

Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for empowerment of adolescent girls (RGSEAG) – SABLA. The Scheme covers adolescent girls in the age group of 11 to 18 years under the ICDS projects in 12 Districts of Bihar including Patna. It includes nutrition provision (600 calories, 18-20 grams of protein and micro-nutrients for 300 days).

Another important initiative of Government of Bihar is a program called '**Dopahar**' mid-day meal program, which was started in 1995. The main objectives are :-

1. To provide hot cooked Mid-day Meal to each and every child attending Government/Government aided Schools, EGS and AIE centers, NCLP including Maqtabs and Madarsas.
2. To enhance enrolment, retention, attendance of the students and simultaneously to improve nutritional levels amongst children.
3. To protect children from class room hunger.
4. To motivate children belonging to disadvantaged sections to attend school on a more regular basis and also to help them to concentrate on school and class room activities.
5. To improve socialization among the castes and to enhance gender equity.

However, this important Government Scheme suffers due to inefficient implementation mechanism and lack of volunteerism at the grass root level.

Children who participated in the focus group discussions invariably complained about the quality of midday meal being served in the schools and this complaint regularly makes headlines in the newspapers. Bihar has gained notoriety over the infamous incident when 23 students died and dozens more fell ill at a primary school in the village of Dharmashati Gandaman in the Saran district of the Indian state of Bihar after eating a Midday Meal contaminated with pesticide.

Agency Response UNICEF'S Intervention on Nutrition includes the following programs.

- Supporting the development of State Nutrition Policy, incorporating the state Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) Strategy, in the Mission Manav Vikas Roadmap and Plan of Action.
- Building partnerships with academic institutions, state training institutions, other development partners and NGOs on essential nutrition interventions.
- Supporting the state in initiating supportive supervision models for various national programmes for nutrition with focus on the RMNCH+A districts
- Supporting the state in strengthening micronutrient programmes with a focus on planning and implementing two quality vitamin A supplementation rounds in the state.
- Supporting the scaling up of Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs) for facility-based management of children with severe acute malnutrition as per the national guidelines.
- Supporting the state in developing and disseminating a State Infant and Young Child Nutrition (IYCN) communication strategy and communication materials.

(Source: <http://unicef.in/StateInfo/Bihar/Unicef->

The Response

Safe Water & Hygiene

One of the major issues negatively impacting the well-being of children is lack of safe water and hygiene facilities. According to UNICEF only 4% of the population in Bihar have access to piped water. Studies suggest that about 50% of the available water sources are contaminated. Due to lack of toilet facilities nearly 70% of the population is forced to resort to open defecation.

Government Response: According to Survey Conducted by Centre for Science and Environment conducted in 2012, Patna depends on the Ganges and groundwater for drinking. Less than 10 per cent of the city's population is connected to a sewage network; which means 90 per cent of the city's excreta is discharged into open drains and eventually into river Ganges. From the drains, it also percolates into the groundwater, which is pumped up by the Patna Municipal Corporation (PMC) and supplied to houses. There are **no water treatment plants**. According to the estimates of Patna Municipal Corporation the city generates around 290 MLD of sewage, of which half flows into the Ganga directly; the rest seeps underground polluting the groundwater. It has **three sewage treatment** plants with a combined capacity of 105 MLD, but just about 50 MLD of sewage reaches these plants since the sewage system is completely dilapidated. The plants also perform poorly on account of power failures, poor maintenance and non-functional treatment zones. (Source : <http://cseindia.org/node/4217>)

Bihar State Water & Sanitation Mission (BSWSM) is responsible for implementation of Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Programme in the State and has developed a State Drinking Water and Sanitation Policy.

In order to ensure sanitation facilities in rural areas with the broader goal to eradicate the practice of open defecation, a comprehensive programme called '**Total Sanitation Campaign**' was launched by Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission, Government of India to cover all households with water and sanitation facilities and promote hygiene behaviour for overall improvement of health and sanitation in rural areas. A nominal subsidy in the form of incentive is given to the rural poor households for construction of toilets.

The key intervention areas have been identified as Individual Household Latrines (IHHL), School Sanitation & Hygiene Education, Community Sanitary Complex and Anganwadi Toilets. The Scheme laid strong emphasis on Information, Education and Communication (IEC), capacity building and hygiene education for effective behaviour change, with the involvement of PRIs, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), NGOs, etc. The Scheme has now been renamed as 'Nirmal Bharat Abiyan' (NBA) and revised guidelines have been issued by Government of India. (Source:

<http://www.bswsmpatna.org/nba.html>)

Agency Response:

UNICEF is working on

- Facilitating the establishment of knowledge sharing and learning mechanisms to improve Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in Bihar.
- Technical support to the state in formulating and operationalizing the Bihar Sanitation Hygiene Advocacy and Communication Strategy (B-SHACS) and the strategy on Panchayat Raj Institutions and leading the Rural Water Scheme (RWS) service delivery and water quality mitigation.

(Source:

<http://unicef.in/StateInfo/Bihar/Unicef-In-Action#sthash.FU8KsEHH.dpuf>)

Some other NGOs working in the field of water and sanitations are Centre for Environment Education (CEE), Integrated Development Foundation (IDF), and Positive Community Impact (PCI) etc., are working in this area.

The Response

Child Abuse

Interactions with children of different slums during Focus Group discussion have revealed that children in the district especially girls fear for their safety and are often subjected to sexual and verbal abuse not only from those from the younger generation but also from aged people. Girls from Lodipur during their FGD spoke with one voice that they are subjected to constant verbal abuse from males passer-by's. Girls from slums of Digha also complained that they have to resist their urge to defecate or urinate during night and quiet afternoon time because antisocial persons wait for the opportunity to abuse and molest them. The National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) said that 54.35% of children between the age group of 5-12 years in 2007 in Bihar reported being photographed nude. NCRB stat also suggests that in the same year 22.83% of children among the age group of 13-14 years and 22.83% of the group of 15-18 years were photographed nude. Child marriage is considered to be worst form of abuse. According to United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA) from 2011 to 2020, more than 140 million girls will become child brides.

Government Response: The Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) is a comprehensive scheme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, which aims to create a protective environment for children in the country. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme which not only brings all existing child protection schemes of the Ministry such as the scheme for street and working children, administration of juvenile justice, etc. under one window, but also proposes an increased allocation for child protection programmes in the Union Budget.

The scheme aims to significantly contribute to the realisation of Government/State responsibility for creating a system that will efficiently and effectively protect children. It is based on cardinal principles of "protection of child rights" and "best interest of the child" and the provisions of Juvenile Justice (Care and protection of Children) Act, 2000 and the Amended Act, 2006 and the rules therein. It promotes the provision of Juvenile Justice Act and the Rules with special focus on adopting child-friendly approach for holistic development, care, protection and treatment of children in need of care and protection and juveniles in conflict with law.

The objectives of ICPS are to contribute to the improvement in the well-being of children in difficult circumstances, as well as to the reduction of vulnerabilities, situations and actions that lead to abuse, neglect, exploitation, abandonment and separation of children. The ICPS aims to achieve these objectives through improved access to quality child protection services; raised public awareness on child rights situation and protection in India; enforced accountability for child protection; institutionalisation of essential services and strengthening of existing structures; establishment of functional structures at all government levels for delivery of statutory and support services to children in difficult circumstances; evidence-based monitoring and evaluation, enhancement of capacities at all levels; creation of database and knowledge base for child protection services; and strengthening child protection at family and community levels.

Childline

Childline is a 24 hour emergency phone outreach service which can be accessed by children in distress especially children in need of care and protection. It is a programme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development being implemented by Mumbai-based Childline India Foundation. The service assists to protect children by helping to rescue them from abuse and exploitative situations, direct them to shelters, medical services, counselling, and repatriation and rehabilitation services.

The service can be accessed by children in difficulty or by adults on their behalf by dialling 1098. Established by the Government of India in 1999, it is presently operational in 83 cities across the country. The main objective of the service is to respond to children in emergency situations and refer them to relevant governmental and non-governmental organisations for long-term follow-up care and rehabilitation. It helps in the networking amongst government and non-government agencies in the area of child welfare and strengthening of support services such as hospitals, police, railways etc. for rehabilitation of children.

The Response

Child Abuse

Government Legislation

The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006:

The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, replaced the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929. One of the major provisions of this new act is that every child marriage shall be declared null and void at the option of the contracting party who was a child at the time of the marriage. The Act granted special powers to the Court and empowered it to grant a decree of nullity and to issue an order directing the parties, parents and guardians to return the money, valuables, ornaments and other gifts received. Court was also empowered to direct the male contracting party to the child marriage or parents or guardian to pay maintenance to the female contracting party to the marriage and for her residence till the time of her remarriage. Act also empowered Court to appropriate order for the custody and the maintenance of the children of child marriage. Act also lay down that every child born of Child marriage before or after the enforcement of this Act, shall be deemed to be a legitimate child for all purposes. The Act prescribes punishment for anyone who promotes or permits child marriage with imprisonment, which may extend to two years and a fine, which may extend up to one lakh rupees. The act has several other important provisions.

Bihar Child Marriage Prohibition Rules, 2010: State Government has notified the Bihar Child Marriage Prohibition Rules 2010 in line with the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. As per provisions of Section 16 (1) of the Act all Sub Divisional Officers in the State have been notified as Child Marriage Prohibition Officers. As per the provisions of Section 16 (2) of the Act, all Block Development and Panchayat offices and Police Stations have been asked to support Child Marriage Prohibition Officers.

Agency Response: UNICEF work on child protection

The rollout of the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) by the Department of Social Welfare has gained momentum in the state with UNICEF's support and has resulted in setting up of child protection structures and mechanisms at state level and in all districts of Bihar. These include District Child Protection Units (DCPUs), Child Welfare Committees, (CWC), Juvenile Justice Boards, Special Juvenile Police (SJPU), Anti Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU, Child Care Institutions (CCIs) and schemes such as 'Parvarish' – a foster care scheme launched by the Government of Bihar.

- Technical support to the state government in the formation, capacity building and operationalization of Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) systems and mechanisms.
- Supporting the Bihar Police in strengthening the Special Juvenile Police Units (SJPU) at the state level (as a nodal agency) and in districts through capacity development of Juvenile / Child Welfare Officers on child protection issues.
- Facilitating the formation of Child Protection Committees at Sub-district and Gram Panchayat levels.
- Technical support in developing a communication strategy on the prevention of child marriage in two identified districts, challenging social norms and practices.
- Capacity development of all key stakeholders in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.
- Developing an institution-building process in partnership with the Department of Social Welfare and the Development Management Institute (DMI) for capacity development of mid-level functionaries to develop child protection cadre in the state.
(Source:<http://unicef.in/StateInfo/Bihar/Unicef-In-Action#sthash.gjA1lb2.dpuf>)

NGOs working on child protection include SARATHI, Save the Children, Plan International, ADITHI etc.

The Response

Child Labour

Child labour is a major issue that is the result of extreme household poverty. Since there are no industries in Bihar and dependence in agriculture is excessive, for small farmers and landless people the only option is to migrate to urban centres in search of a livelihood. Patna being the only true urban centre in the state attracts a lot of migrant families who come and take shelter in its numerous slums. The problem of child labour is difficult to remove for the reason that Parents in a need for survival, force their children into work at a very early age. Interviews of children of brick kiln workers, road side country liquor sellers, maid servants, vegetable venders and many such workers have revealed that children accompany their parents to work with them. Children help them with family income so they withhold their children from attending schools and getting an education.

Government Response:

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation)

Act, 1986: The salient features of the Act include prohibition of employment of children in certain occupations and process, regulation of conditions of work of children including fixing hours and period of work, weekly holidays, notice to inspector, provision for resolving disputes of age, and maintenance of registers and for health and safety, etc. The Act lays down penalties for contravening the provisions of the Act by employing any child or permitting any child to work.

The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1986: The Act was an amendment of the previous Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956 brought to expand the space of the law to cover both the sexes exploited sexually for commercial purposes and provided enhanced penalties for offences involving children and minors. Besides contemplating specialised machinery for its enforcement, the Act envisages a comprehensive scheme for rescue, protection and corrective treatment of prostitutes. Section 21 of the Act deals with establishment of Protective Homes by the State government. In order to prevent trafficking in person by any person, the Act prescribes punishment on first conviction with rigorous imprisonment for a term, which shall not be less than seven years and in the event of a second or subsequent conviction with imprisonment for life

Laws are in place against child labour but child labourers are in sight everywhere. In the month of July'2015 the labour department conducted a 11 day long campaign against child labour. State Child Labour Commission Chairman Chandeshwar Prasad Chandravanshi reported that during 2014-15, a total of 1,342 child labourers were freed and FIRs lodged against 910 perpetrators of this practice by the commission and its action group. He said 'The commission provided clothes and financial assistance of Rs 1,800 to every child worker freed from the bondage of drudgery'.

Scheme for Welfare of Working Children:

The objective of the Scheme is to provide opportunities for non-formal education and vocational training to working children to facilitate their entry/re-entry into mainstream education in cases where they have either not attended any learning system or where, for some reasons, their education has been discontinued. The Scheme lends support to projects only in urban areas and does not support projects in areas covered by the existing schemes of the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

Bihar Juvenile Justice (Care and

Protection of Children) Rules, 2010: In order to implement the provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act, the Government of Bihar initiated the process of formulating the Bihar Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Rules, 2010, by exercising the powers laid down by Section 68 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, amended by the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Act, 2006, which included child beggars, street and working children. The Rules provide a complete instruction to the composition, functions and powers, tenure of Child Welfare Committees, and qualifications of members and chairperson and procedures of the committee along with the institutions for children in need of care and protection.

The Response

Education

Government Response: The Government of India has committed to educating every child of the country by following free and compulsory education of children under the age of 14 years. For this it has passed legislation known as '**Right to Education**' (RTE). Following the Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002, the legislation to the Fundamental Right to free and compulsory education is introduced to bring all children in the age group of 6-14 years into schools. The proportion of schools that comply with RTE pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) norms has increased every year, from 38.9% in 2010 to 45.3% in 2013.

Some challenges in this Act are: It is the teachers' duty to complete the grade-level syllabus within the year. Children are to be placed in grades or standards according to their age

Mid-day Meal Scheme (MDMS) 1995: The National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education to give a boost to universalisation of primary education by increasing enrolment, retention and attendance, and simultaneously impacting upon nutritional status of students in primary classes.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) 2000: (Campaign on education for all), is the national umbrella programme that is spearheading the universalisation of elementary education for all children. SSA seeks to provide quality elementary education including life skills and computer education, and has a special focus on girl's education and children with special needs. It targets the most educationally backward blocks in the country, where the female literacy rate is below the national average and the gender gap is above the national average.

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)

Scheme: The scheme envisages residential schools at elementary level for girls belonging predominantly to the SC, ST, OBC and minorities in difficult area

There are several programmes of early childhood care and education which include the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services), Crèches, Balwadis, ECE centres, Pre-Primary schools run by the State and the private sector, and many experimental and innovative projects like Child to Child programmes, Child Media Lab, Mobile Crèches and Vikas Kendras.

The Government of Bihar has also made many efforts by way of providing mid-day meals, scholarships, free books and bicycles to girl students in order to promote primary and secondary education.

Agency Response Multilateral agencies like UNICEF, Plan etc., are working in this field of education. The need is not merely providing children with an education but an education, which has quality and values.

UNICEF The Education Programme, supports and strengthens government efforts to provide quality education by reducing gender and other social and economic disparities at the national and state levels. The Ministry of Human Resource Development is the nodal ministry for UNICEF's Education Programme

Care: Girls education Programme.

Care is working in partnership with the government of India, both within the formal school system and through a number of alternative approaches to schooling. Udaan school is an accelerated learning model, for older out-of-school girls, ages 9-14, which allows students to complete primary school in 11 months in a residential setting.

Plan: Approx. 250 children are tutored through smart classes using ECDC Classes, across 6 regions in and around Patna with the help of 7 different NGOs

The Response



Discrimination against Girls

Mukhya Mantri Kanya Vivah Yojana: The objective of this Scheme is to provide financial assistance to the family of the girl child at the time of her marriage, encourage registration of marriage and her education and to stop child marriage.

Under this Scheme girls belonging to below poverty line (BPL) families and those families whose income is below Rs. 60,000 per annum are provided Rs. 5000 at the time of marriage. The one-time cash transfer scheme supports the marriage of women at the right age. The Scheme also aims to prevent the practice of dowry. The beneficiary should apply to the Block Development Officer for availing the benefits of the Scheme. The following supporting documents are required: age certificate; certificate/ proof of residence; marriage registration certificate; and letter stating an oath to not take dowry.

Mukhya Mantri Kanya Suraksha Yojana: The objective of this Scheme is to prevent female foeticide, encourage birth of girl child, bring about a balance between sex ratio of girls and boys and encourage registration of birth by incentivising birth of a girl child in the family.

Under the Scheme, the government makes provision for issue of bond from Unit Trust of India (UTI) Rs.2000 in favour of the girl child in the Children Career Balanced Fund of UTI Mutual Fund. The Anganwadi Center has been made the nodal unit for the implementation of this Scheme.

The eligibility conditions for the benefits are that the applicant should be BPL family and the girl child is born after November 22, 2011. The benefit is provided to only two girl children born after this date. It is also essential that the birth registration of the girl child should have taken place within one a year after the birth.

Migration

The Government has launched a number of programmes on community development targeting the slums. It introduced a slum policy in 2011. It is also implementing on **Jawaharal Nehru Urban renewable mission (JNURM)** for the development of Urban Infrastructure and national slum development programmes

Agency response: Patna is a nub of NGOs and civil society groups which are engaged in a variety of community development programmes considering the needs of slum and marginalised communities. These include Asian Sahyogi Sansthan, World Vision, YMCA, NIDAAN and hundreds of other national and local NGOs

The Response



Community Response

The Community in slums and in poor localities are not organized. Communities are normally divided on caste lines, where Dalits and lower caste people do not have a voice. Even the community water hand pipes and other facilities are in the control of strong men and anti-social elements. Genuine and sensitive leadership rarely emerges, but the strong men tend to control things. They are not at all concerned with the welfare of children at risk.

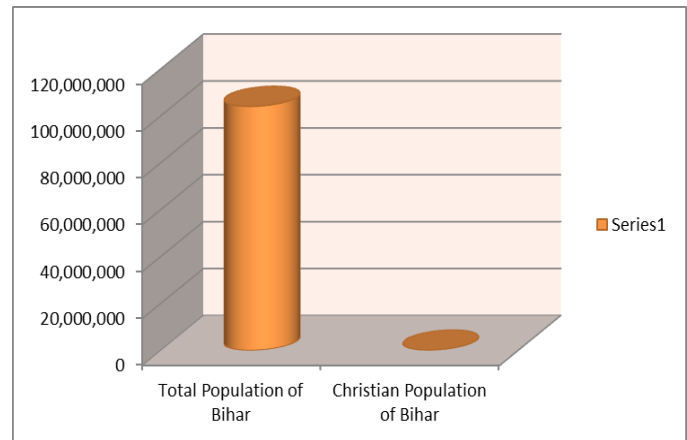
There are a large number of NGOs in existence but collective initiatives and advocacy are missing. The only positive example is of Pulse Polio drive when all the stakeholders took on a common mission that resulted in controlling and eradicating the polio virus. New polio cases are not being reported anymore. Media and courts are the only places people can turn to when they do not find solutions. Recently the Delhi High Court reprimanded the Government over missing children in Bihar. The situation is similar to the neighbouring state of Uttar Pradesh where Honourable Allahabad High Court ordered the state to improve the Government schooling system at primary and secondary level by insisting that all the children of Government officers and employees and those of legislatures and ministers in the state had to be enrolled in only Government Schools. Every day many new Public Interest Petitions are filed to take up issues of children and other social concerns. It reflects that there is disconnect in the system and NGOs have not being able to play their roles properly. Though there are some genuine interventions at smaller lever their impact is localised and limited.

The Response

Christian Response

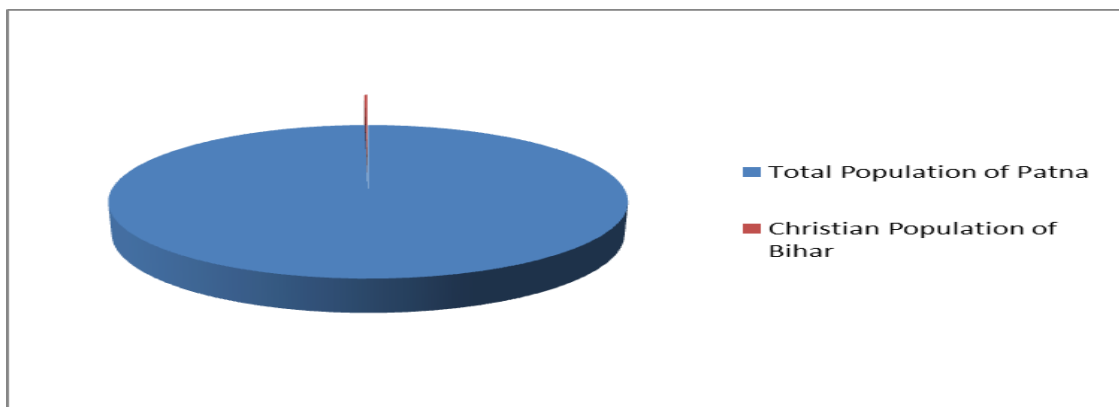
Bihar

According to the Official Census Report of 2011, the population of Bihar is **104,099,452** making it the third most populous state in India. Bihar's population is 8.6% of the total population of India. However Christians are still a very miniscule portion of the people of Bihar. The total Christian population according to this report was only **129,000** in the year 2011.



Patna

Patna is the most populous district in Bihar. According to the Census of 2011, Patna district had a population of **5,838,465**. 43% of the total Patna population of Patna District live in urban parts whereas 57% of the district population live in rural areas. The child population was 13 % of total urban population and 18.% of total rural population of Patna district. Out of the total population of Patna district that stood the Christian population according to the official figure is mere **12,651**.



It is apparent that Christian Population in the state of Bihar and in the district of Patna is very small, almost insignificant. However although Christians are a minority, their presence is felt by their contributions in the field of education, health and social services. Work in these sectors is substantial and acknowledged by the wider population.

Catholic Churches are more organized and they have well developed structures. Their history goes back to 17th century and they have a number of educational, health and social institutions working in the district. Their congregations are larger than the protestant congregations. There are a few mainline churches in the district like the Church of North India, Methodist and Baptists. Evangelical missions from South India run many of the other established churches.

In recent years there has been growth a number of indigenous missions led by leadership from Bihar. These missions run Churches, which are often evangelical house churches, that are also involved in community based social interventions reaching poor communities.

The Response

The Work of Catholic Church

The Catholic Church, which has a very long history, which, originates in 17th Century is very organized and has a strong base and structures. Patna is the head quarter of Patna Arch diocese. The territory of Patna Arch Diocese extends beyond the administrative boundary of Patna District has the following institutions.

Colleges	02
Schools	81
Technical Schools	04
Professional College	01
Orphanages	04
Hostels	27
Hospitals	25

Besides the above Institutions they have a number of Non-Governmental Organizations addressing various humanitarian issues including that of children at Risk. Catholic Institutions are institutions of choice for parents to send their children for studies. They have credible service rendering records and they work with a holistic approach to the children they cater for. Most of these institutions run programs and projects for children of poor, Dalits and other marginalised communities.

The work of Protestant Church

The Protestant Churches except for a few mainline ones have a very recent history and are still at evolving stage. Most of these churches are house churches but have strong community base and presence. They are outgoing and vibrant and have started to address community needs as well as reaching out with the Gospel. They have realized the needs of children at risk as they are trying to address it primarily through literacy programs. There are around 100 churches and organizations that are operating in the district of Patna. There are only three Protestant educational institutions in the district of Patna

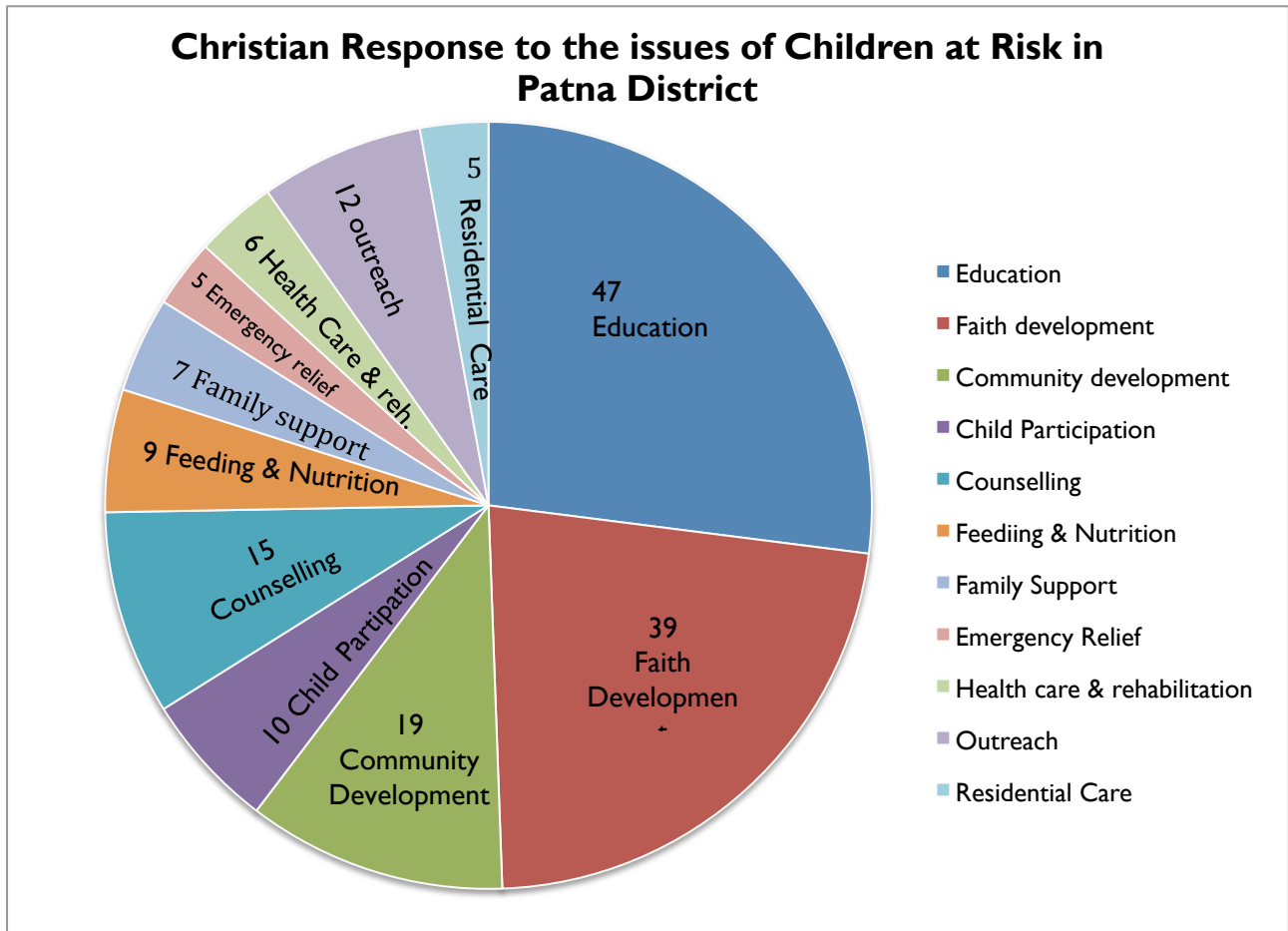
Mapped Churches and organisations

For the sake of this study most of the 100 Protestant Churches and organisations were approached but only 75 of them responded. Others were wary about sharing their information because of the recent activities of some fundamentalist groups. These responses also include some but not all of the Catholic Institutions. The study covers, missions, churches big and house churches, children homes, children projects, Sunday Schools, educational institutions and Christian NGOs.

Total numbers of Respondents	75
Number of Churches	37
Number of NGOs	38

The Response

The Main Issues of Children at risk being addressed by Churches and Christian Organizations participating in this study:



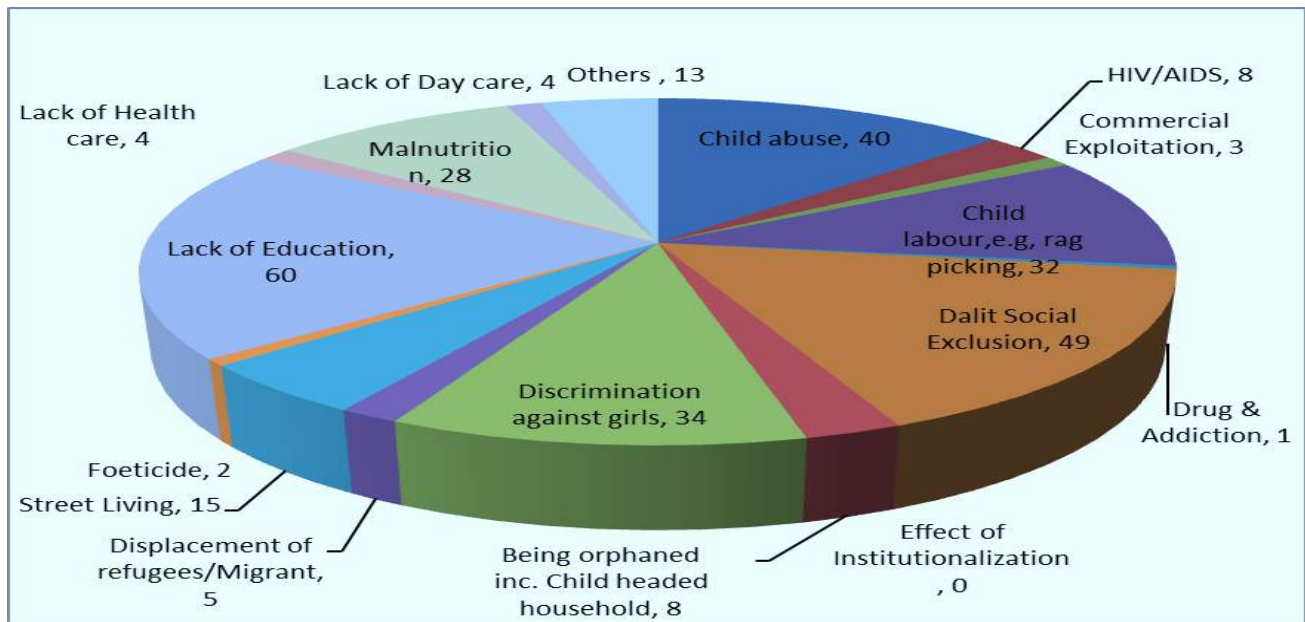
Education is the area where most of the Christian response is visible in Patna District. This is backed up by results from this study, which found that the majority of organisation and churches surveyed are involved in providing education and literacy programmes for children. Through education Christians are in position to have a positive influence on the community and are recognised for their valuable contribution.

The next important area for churches and Christian agencies is in the field of faith development mainly through churches and Vacation Bible Schools. Counselling, Outreach, community development and programmes that incorporate child participation are other areas of Christian response.

The study also found that a scattering of Christian agencies are also involved in feeding and nutrition, Family Support, residential care, health and rehabilitation, and emergency relief

Analysis

SUMMARY OF ISSUES FACING CHILDREN IN BIHAR STATE AND PATNA



The Pie diagram represents a summary of feedback gathered from key informants on the priority issues facing children. In the district of Patna, **Lack of Quality Education** emerged as the single largest issue being faced by children from the deprived communities who lack to power to spend on their education and are totally dependent on free Government Schooling System. Despite various measures being taken by the government to make education free and compulsory for students up to the age of 14 years, children as well as their parents expressed their unhappiness on the quality of education being rendered. Another major issue appears to be the **Dalit Social Exclusion**. Discrimination against Dalits and backward communities is an age-old issue, which affects children from Dalit communities. **Discrimination against Girls** is another prominent issue. Feedback taken during interactions with different children groups, confirmed that girls are less priority for families and communities. The discrimination is more intense in low-income group, illiterate and none educated communities.

Child Abuse is a major concern for children at risk. Children especially girls shared their plight and told they are subjected to verbal and other kind of abuses on daily basis. **Malnutrition** is another major issue affecting children. The main reason for malnutrition is not shortage of food but open defecation and lack of availability of clean water. It is therefore surprising therefore that very few respondents quoted water and sanitation as being a priority issue that brings immense sufferings of children in the city especially for those who are living in slums and other poor localities.

Child labour is another significant issue of children that has been identified by the respondents. Child labour is a common site if you roam around in the city they are there in the tea stalls, road side eateries, near garbage dumps picking rags and at several other public places and even as domestic servants and maidservants. A significant number of respondent have identified **street living** as an important issue. It is of common knowledge that the girl children living in the street disappear around the age of 11 to 12 years. Foeticide and displacement are major issues but have failed to attract attention of respondents. Issues like drug and addiction, HIV & AIDS, Commercial Exploitation, orphans, lack of day care, lack of health care etc., have attracted attention of very few people.

Analysis

Christian Response to the key issues identified as facing children in Patna

Lack of Quality Education

The performance of students of Bihar in Government Schools is significantly below the national average in both language and numeracy and all social groups scored lower than the National average in both language and mathematics. Private education for children of people living below poverty line (BPL), Dalits and other marginalized sections of population is out of question because of their economic impoverishment. The only places they can send their children are the Government run Schools. The feedback received in the course of pursuing the present study clearly indicates a vast amount of dissatisfactions among students and their parents, which is indicative of the fact that the education system is failing to deliver despite the best intentions and efforts of Government.

Christian Institutions are known for their contributions in the field of education. 27% of Churches and Christian agencies interviewed in this study are engaged in providing education to children at risk. Their contributions are in the form of community based schools, literacy classes and free tuition to poor and needy children. 47 churches and organization are reaching out to 33,200 children with their educational initiatives. Besides them there are Catholic and Protestant Institutions and many Christian owned private institutions contributing to education to around 60,000 children in the district of Patna, which have not been covered under the preview of this study.

Analysis: Viva Children at Risk Network has identified Quality Education for Slum Children as its strategic focus it is envisioning programs for capacity building of partners and their teachers and volunteers. It has already trained a pool of 39 child care givers from 20 different churches and agencies in Life skill training. The program aims to deal with the issues of low self-esteem of children and make them value their lives and become goal achievers.

Out of school tuition centres run by network projects offer a viable way of improving learning outcomes for children and are a way that network members can immediately engage in offering quality education for slum children to enable to them pursue their hopes and aspirations. It is apparent that teachers may need more training to be able to facilitate child centred learning, specifically focusing on literacy, numeracy and technology.

Malnutrition

Christian Response: There are 9 Churches and Christian agencies that are working in the area of feeding and nutrition reaching out to 4553 children by their program. Considering the mammoth number of children who are undernourished in the district, the reach of the intervention of Christian agencies and churches seems to be very limited but it cannot be termed as insignificant.

Analysis: Churches and Christian agencies can increase this reach by encouraging their congregation members and families to contribute towards the cause. They can even educate the poor and slum population how to access Government provisions from them and about how to gain sources of nutrition from the available food.

Water and Sanitation

Christian Response: The Christian response in this area is very small. There are only 2-3 churches and organization working in the area of providing safe water to the slum population. Believer's Church of India has provided 20 bore wells to slum population.

Analysis: In the majority of the literacy programs, churches and Christian agencies are teaching children about the washing of hands and other safe hygiene practices.

Education about about safe hygiene practices could become a part of the larger quality education programme run by the network.

Analysis

Child Abuse

Christian Response: There was not a specific category on the survey that Churches could respond to in terms of addressing this issue. Though awareness of child abuse and child protection is growing through the activities of the network.

Analysis: Viva Children at Risk in Patna has launched a training program to equip churches and Christian organizations on Child Protection. It has also planned to launch 'Good Treatment Campaign' which aims to reduce harsh and violent behaviour of parents.

Child Labour

Christian Response: Although the responses from the 75 Churches and organisations did not indicate that they were involved in the responding to the issue of child labour, Christian Organizations like World Vision, Justice Venture International, ASSI and some Catholic organizations are working on this issue. EFICAR has recently started working in Patna by holding sensitization programs on the issue of Human Trafficking. It plans to start a short stay home for runaway children.

Analysis The number of child labourers in the Bihar is vast. Child labourers are found in road side eateries, tea stalls and inside homes of rich people across the state. The issue requires sustained and continuous efforts from law enforcing agencies. Society needs to be educated not to keep minor children as domestic servants or maidservants and also to oppose any such practice in shop or other establishments. There are opportunities for the network to raise the issue of child labour through the Good Treatment Campaign and for churches to educate their congregations about this issue

Discrimination

Discrimination on the basis of caste, creed and gender are deep-rooted issues, which cannot be driven away by implementing any program initiative. It is linked to Socio-religious and cultural practices that have existed for centuries. In educated communities these are gradually on the decline but when it comes to illiterate and un-educated communities it is simply deep rooted and cannot be done away with easily. This study both through direct interviews and desk research affirmed that discrimination was prevalent in educational institutions run by government not only by students but also by teachers.

Analysis The Government needs to adopt strict measures to discourage this practice and needs to develop a monitoring body to keep an eye on incidents of discrimination. Community and family sensitization and education programs need to be developed to encourage parents and community to value their girls. Life Skill training programs and counselling programs must be started for children who are victims of discrimination.

Christian institutions can play a vital role by educating children to give up these practices but it will need sustained efforts. Viva Children at Risk Network organized a number of Parent's Seminar where they encouraged parents to give equal love, care and opportunities to their girl children and also encouraged them to invest in their development as they invest in development of male children. The Network has a defined policy to provide 50% representation to female participants in all its programs. It is also encouraging its partners to adopt it in their programs and project. Since the church is playing a major role in educating people it must make a decision to impact new and younger generation with messages against these practices.

Migration

Christian response: 11% of responding organisations and Churches indicated that they are engaged in different community programs in slums and poor localities

Analysis

Other areas covered by the Christian response not identified as key issues

Faith Development

Of the responses of the organizations and churches in this study, 22% are involved in the field of faith development. Almost every church group has a Sunday school. In the study 39 churches and organizations are reaching out to **8249** children through faith development. This is expressed in different ways. Many churches like the AG church, Believers church are organizing Vocation Bible Schools for large number of their children. Churches combine efforts to come together and organize joint Vocation Bible Schools for children in the summer holidays and some Church groups have their own bible schools for Church children.

Analysis There are opportunities for Churches to address some of the issues being faced by children through Faith Development programmes. In almost all the Bible schools, emphasis is given to value education, character building and good behaviour. Viva India has developed a supplementary Sunday school curriculum to make it more relevant by including the information on child protection and other relevant topics, which will be soon introduced in Patna.

Counselling and Mentoring

Through a number of focus group discussions with children from a variety of backgrounds and parents Network gained much new learning on children particularly adolescents. It showed huge disconnect between parents and children. Parents due to time consuming engagements are mostly unable to spend quality time with their children, and children are resorting to TV, Social Media and cinema to access information. Through media, children are being encouraged to enter into sexual relationships and take up alcohol and smoking by some irresponsible commercial advertisements. Pornography and other yellow materials are easily available to them. Parental neglect or excessive parental pressures for them to perform are resulting in violent and many other behavioural disorders. Poverty has encouraged some children from slums and poor communities to resort to crime to survive.

Analysis: There is an urgent need to work with adolescents especially from slums and poor communities. Nothing much is done being done in this area either by government or Non-governmental organizations. The network can pioneer this initiative, which needs to be enlarged to benefit greater number of children.

Residential Care

Among the mapped agencies, 5 agencies are providing residential care to around 755 children. These agencies reported a lot of delay in approval of their licenses and other formalities by the authorities. There are other residential care homes but since they did not share their information, this report does not cover them. Asian Sahyogi Sansthan India is running a rescue home. Missionaries of Charity are running an adoption Centre 'Nirmala Shishu Bhawan' which is approved as a specialized adopting agency by Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA). The other specialized adoption Agency is Bihar managed by Child Welfare Committee. A third such adoption agency is being run by Prayas Bharti Trust. Quick disposal of licence applications and other formalities will help organizations to render better residential care to children where they are protected and will be able to develop in a child friendly atmosphere.

Analysis: The Viva Children at Risk Network is currently running a capacity building programme called the Viva Quality Improvement System which enables organisations to put international quality standards in place around 6 key areas of child care, which will help existing residential care homes improve their work with children and put systems and policies in place. This may help them to obtain their licences more quickly.

Analysis

Community Development

In this study, 11% of responding organisations and churches indicated that they are engaged in different community development programs in slums and poor localities.

Christian organizations and churches are engaged in different community development programs. Noted among them is Believers Church of India, which is doing a lot of community development programs and has been successful in attracting attention of both Media and political class. These include helping Children through School Supply Distribution Programs and providing water for five villages in the Diocese of Patna.

Some other Minor Responses

There are some other areas of Christian response. This is work in health care and rehabilitation, family support, HIV & AIDS, emergency relief etc.

EFICOR has a project office to respond to the issue of HIV & AIDS. They have had successes in getting court orders in favour of PLHIVs and children infected and affected by HIV & AIDS. They help provide nutritional support for affected and infected children. Bethel Mission is also running a program on providing nutrition to HIV positive children. They are sensitizing local churches and congregations to support HIV positive children. The Catholic Church is also working on this issue.



Conclusion

In the end one can deduce that the needs and issues of children at risk in the district of Patna are multifarious. Through this exercise, it is apparent that children have a multiple set of issues that they are facing in Bihar and Patna where the study took place. The underlying causes of poverty, migration and discrimination can lead children to face a number of issues in terms of abuse, child labour or access to basic services such as water and sanitation facilities or good quality education. The response to children at risk needs to be one, which looks at the holistic needs of the child.

The Government has good intentions but it is not translated into action because of lack of political will, lack of effective mechanism of implementation and lack of voluntarism and sensitiveness on the part of those who are in responsible positions. There is large number of NGOs –National level as well as local level, but there is need of combined initiatives. Multilateral agencies are doing their work and partnering with Government on many key issues. The Community response suffers from illiteracy, lack of knowledge and lack of empowerment.

Although the Christian population is small, Christian agencies and churches are also playing very significant role in some of the key areas, specifically in the area of education and community development in slums and with marginalised communities. There is potential for the Christian response to build on its good reputation by providing good holistic care for children and by reaching quality standards in key areas relating to children. This will enable it increase credibility with communities and the Government.

Communities particularly value the Church for its provision of educational initiatives. There is an opportunity for the Christian response in Patna to build on this track record by enabling Christian education to be of the highest quality and to be accessed by the most marginalised children. Education needs to look at the holistic needs of the child, which not only includes developing skills in numeracy and literacy, but also life skills and creating safe environments for children.

Child abuse appears to be a big area of concern, which was highlighted in the children's focus groups. This is at Community and family level and there is a significant lack of awareness here. Though the Christian response has not traditionally done much in this area, there is a growing awareness that child abuse is an issue. Through Faith Development activities, there is scope for Churches to engage more intentionally with children in Churches to help them to protect themselves and to learn life skills. In addition, the Church can become involved in collaborative initiatives through the Patna Children at Risk Network to raise general awareness about child abuse and children at risk in the city, including the huge number of child labourers and children on the streets.

In addition, building on the experience that many Christians have in the area of counselling and mentoring, there are opportunities to make inroads into communities and make a real difference in the lives of individual children and young people to help them make wise life choices and to interact with parents. This in turn has a positive effect with families, which has the potential to significantly impact communities in which these children live.

Conclusion

SUMMARY

Gaps

- **Communities in slums and in poor localities** are normally divided on caste lines, where lower caste (dalits) people have no voice. Community leaders are not concerned with the welfare of children at risk and children, especially girl children report that they feel unsafe.
- **Discrimination against girl children and Dalit children** is an obstacle for the development of children in poor and marginalized communities. In particular, they are often denied access to good quality education, which can be seen as a way out of social deprivation. Social and cultural practices and deep biases against girl children is the reason for high rate of child marriages, resulting in child abuse and also poor comparative health status of girl children.
- **Education** Though there are good private schools in the district both secular and Christian, they are beyond the means of poorer and marginalised sections, educational institutions are defying the provisions of RTE by not giving 25% seats to children of poor and marginalized sections of the society. Children as well as parents have expressed their unhappiness over nonchalance of teachers in government schools and about the lack basic infrastructure like toilets and classroom maintenance.
- **There is lack of sensitivity on the part of law enforcing agencies and general awareness** when it comes to response to children at risk. Invariably every road-side eatery uses child labour, children are involved in construction work, rag-picking or as domestic servants or roam neglected on the streets or in public places.
- **There are a large number of NGOs in existence but collective initiatives and advocacy for children is missing.**

Recommendations

- **Improving access to Quality Education for Slum Children** - Viva network to implement a program for the benefit of children in slum communities have access to quality education giving them dignity, self-esteem and opportunities to pursue their aspirations. This will not only aim to enhance learning outcomes for children in numeracy and literacy, but also develop life skills in children including helping them to understand their rights, make good life choices develop good hygiene practices etc.
- **Sensitising the community to value, protect and safeguard children in Patna** – Viva network to increase awareness about child abuse for Churches, Communities and children in Patna.
- **Increasing capacity of network members to providing good holistic care for children** including reaching quality standards in 6 key areas of work with children.
- **Initiating collaborative initiatives for children in Patna** through the Patna network, like good treatment campaign, collective celebration for children on special days and advocacy for children
- **Develop an effective network, which can positively impact the lives of 10% of children in the city through collective action.**