

FACT SHEET | SITUATION OF CHILDREN IN SOUTH ASIA

RECOGNISING that the biggest challenge to work in Alternative Care in South Asia is the lack of evidence and authentic data, this fact sheet is an effort to consolidate some facts and figures that demonstrate the vulnerabilities of children living in South Asia, especially with regard to issues of child protection.

- Approximately one fourth of the world's child population lives in South Asia, which is approximately 42 million children.
- South Asia has a population of 1,616.7 million with India occupying the prime position with 1210.2 million and Sri Lanka the least - 20.3 million.
- In Afghanistan, Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, for example, over 80 percent of children living in institutions have a living parent¹ In Bangladesh and Pakistan, this number is over 50 percent²
- Across the region approximately 8% of the total population under 18 is classified as orphans, with national estimates ranging from approximately to 6.5% (Pakistan and Sri Lanka) to 13% (Afghanistan)³
- **Highest number of children who lost both parents were found in India with 3.9%, followed by Nepal and Sri Lanka with a little over 3%.**
- Birth registration was found to be as low as 37% in South Asia with a variance from 30.4% in Bangladesh to 97% in Sri Lanka.
- In Afghanistan and Nepal it was below 50%. The percentage of children who had a birth certificate was even less.

¹ Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA). 2006. National strategy for children 'at-risk'. MOLSA; New Era and ORC Macro. 2005. Study of Children in Children's Homes in Nepal. New Era and ORC Macro; Jayathilake, R. and H. Amarasuriya. 2005. Home truths: Children's rights in institutional care in Sri Lanka. Save the Children in Sri Lanka.

² Jayathilake, R. and H. Amarasuriya. 2005. Home truths: Children's rights in institutional care in Sri Lanka. Save the Children in Sri Lanka.

³ Research Study titled 'Situational Analysis of Children in South Asia' was undertaken by the South Asian Alliance of Grassroots NGOs as part of the project 'Civil Society Alliance for Child Rights in South Asia'.

- The overall literacy rate of South Asia still remains at 58.4 with Afghanistan (26%) and Bangladesh (57.5%)⁴
- Afghanistan recorded the highest mortality rates with 102 (under-5), 74 (infant) and 45 (neo-natal) deaths, respectively.
- Malnutrition is quite prominent in South Asia, with 17% to 52% of children under five moderately stunted (short for their age), 11% to 15.6% moderately wasted and 21% and 45% moderately underweight.
- Afghanistan (51.6%) followed by India (48%) have a greater proportion of moderately stunted children.
- Poverty is pervasive in the region with 42.47% living below the poverty line as per the international poverty line measurement of \$1.25 and 25.3% as per the CBN and DCI measurement. The percentage of people under poverty ranged from 8.9% in Sri Lanka (2007) to 36% in Afghanistan (2007)⁵
- According to various estimations by government or international agencies, there are 4.1% (Sri Lanka) to 7.1% (Nepal) children without care givers and 11.8% (Afghanistan) to 32% (India) of child population with disabilities.
- 53.2% of children in India and 79% of street children in Bangladesh are reported to have experienced one or the other form of sexual exploitation.
- An estimated 600,000 to 800,000 men, women and children are trafficked across international borders in Bangladesh. In Nepal, around 7,500 children are trafficked to India annually for commercial sexual exploitation.

South Asia alone has over 2,000 ethnic groups, with populations ranging from hundreds of millions to small tribal groups⁶

Compiled: December 2017 | Research and Advocacy Team | Udayan Care

⁴ SAME AS 3

⁵ SAME AS 3

⁶ 3 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Asia