

Child Survival and Development Report Card

India

Though there has been a significant improvement in the survival and development of children over the decades, however, lot more needs to be done. Let's see the situation in the state of India! . The crude birth rate (CBR) is 25.8, infant mortality rate (IMR) is 63, under 5 mortality rate (U5MR) is 93 and the percentage of under weight children under the age 3 is 47. Extrapolating this information in numbers; of 27,078,364 live births each year, **1,705,936 children die before they reach their first birthday**. After taking into account the infant mortality each year, number of survivors at one year will be 25,372,427. Also taking into account the under 5-mortality rate (U5MR) to be 93, the number of survivors under the age 3 and 5 will be 77,632,925 and 127,432,012 respectively. Now calculating the number of underweight children under the age 3, that is 47 percent of the survivors, it comes to be 36,487,474 **Thus, more than 3 crores 64 lakh children under the age 3 in India are underdeveloped and malnourished and are not likely to achieve their full growth and development potential.** Table 1 also provides this data.

Table 1: Status of Child Health and Development in India

Population (Source- MOHFW, 2001)	1,049,549,000
Crude Birth Rate (Source- MOHFW, 2001)	25.8
Infant Mortality Rate (Source- MOHFW, 2001)	63
Under 5 Mortality Rate (Source- MOHFW, 2001)	93
Percentage of Under Weight Children (-2SD) (Source- NFHS-1998-1999)	47
Calculations in Numbers¹	
Approx. No. of Children Born per Year	27,078,364
Approx. No of Survivors Under the Age 3	77,632,925
Approx. No. of Underweight Children Under the Age 3	36,487,474

Link of Malnutrition and Inappropriate Infant Feeding Practices

Optimal infant and young child feeding includes exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and continued breastfeeding for two years or beyond along with adequate and appropriate complementary feeding starting after six months, this is critical for their health, development and survival.

Undernutrition during first two years impairs cognitive development, intelligence, strength, energy and productivity. Child malnutrition occurs entirely during the first two years and is virtually

¹ Calculations done by Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India

irreversible after that. Optimal feeding practices during first year of life are critical to prevent malnutrition and to ensure optimal health and development of infants and young children.

According to the W.H.O., 60 percent of all deaths under the age of 5 are related to malnutrition. **Inappropriate feeding practices are related to 2/3rd of all under five deaths.** According to the most recent estimates published in the *Lancet* 2003, 13-16 percent of all child deaths can be avoided if exclusive breastfeeding was 90 percent during first six months and continued breastfeeding was practiced. Another 6 % deaths can be avoided if adequate and appropriate complementary feeding after six months for two years of beyond was provided. Table 2, depicts the status of infant feeding practices in the state of India, which needs serious efforts to improve for achieving the GOI's Tenth Five Year Plan Goals.

Table 2: Infant Feeding Practices in India

	NFHS-1 1992-93	NFHS-2 1998-99	GOI's 10 th Five year Plan goals for 2007
% Initiation of Breastfeeding within 1 hour	9.5	15.8	50
% of Exclusive Breastfeeding 0-3 months	51	55.2	80
% of Exclusive Breastfeeding 0-6 months			
% of Complementary Feeding (6-9 months)	31.4	33.5	75

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