



Social Protection for Children: ILO-UNICEF

Prelims: Social Protection for Children, ILO, UNICEF, Covid-19, Poverty, SDG, PM CARES for Children.

Mains: Social Protection for Children: ILO-UNICEF.

Why in News?

Recently, [ILO \(International Labour Organization\)](#) and [UNICEF \(United Nations Children's Fund\)](#) has released a report titled- “**More than a billion reasons: The urgent need to build universal social protection for children**”, which states that just 1 in 4 children are shielded by social protection, leaving others exposed to poverty, exclusion and multidimensional deprivations.

What is the Need for Social Protection?

- Social protection is a universal human right and a precondition for a world **free from poverty**.
- It is also a vital foundation **to help the world’s most vulnerable children fulfill their potential**.
- Social protection **helps increase access to food, nutrition, education and healthcare**.
- It can help prevent [child labour](#) and [child marriage](#) and address the drivers of gender inequality and exclusion.
- It can also **reduce stress and even domestic violence**, while supporting household livelihoods.
- And by tackling monetary poverty directly, it can also **mitigate the stigma and exclusion so many children living in poverty experience** - and the pain that a childhood feeling “less than” can produce.

What are the Findings of the Report?

- **Global Scenario:**
 - 1.77 billion children aged 0-18 years lack access to a child or family cash benefit, a fundamental pillar of a social protection system.
 - Children are **twice as likely to live in extreme poverty as adults**.
 - Approximately 800 million children are subsisting below the poverty line of USD 3.20 a day, and 1 billion children are experiencing multidimensional poverty.
 - Only 26.4% of children aged 0-15 years are shielded by social protection, leaving the remaining 73.6% exposed to poverty, exclusion and multidimensional deprivations.
 - Globally, all 2.4 billion children need social protection to be healthy and happy.
- **Social Protection Coverage:**
 - Child and family social protection coverage **rates fell or stagnated in every region in the world** between 2016 and 2020, leaving no country on track to achieve the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\)](#) of achieving substantial social protection coverage by 2030.
 - In Latin America and the Caribbean, **coverage fell significantly from approximately 51% to 42 %**.
 - In many other regions, coverage has stalled and remains low.

- **Risk:**
 - Multiple crises are likely **to push more children into poverty**, necessitating an immediate increase in social protection measures.
 - The impacts of lack of social protection for children are **both immediate and lifelong**, heightening **rights violations such as child labour and child marriage**, and diminishing children's aspirations and opportunities.
 - And this unrealized human potential **has inevitable adverse and long-term implications for communities**, societies and economies more broadly.
- **Significance of Social Protection:**
 - Before the [Covid-19 pandemic](#), children were more than twice as likely to be living in extreme poverty than adults.
 - One billion children **live in multidimensional poverty without access to education, health**, housing, nutrition, sanitation or water.
 - The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted that **social protection is a critical response in times of crisis**.
 - Nearly every government in the world either rapidly adapted existing schemes or introduced **new social protection programmes** to support children and families.
 - In 2022, South Africa introduced a welfare scheme, Child Support Grant (CSG) Top-Up, aiming to increase the **CSG amount for orphans and children heading or living in child-headed households**.
 - **31 states in India had implemented the national 'PM CARES for Children'** scheme, a package of measures for 10,793 full orphans and 151,322 half-orphans. So far, **4,302 children have received support from the scheme**.

What are the Recommendations?

- Policymakers should **take action towards universal social protection for all children**, including investments in benefits that offer proven and cost-effective ways to combat child poverty.
- Authorities are also advised **to provide child benefits through national social protection systems** that also connect families to crucial health and social services, such as free or affordable quality childcare.
- There is a need for securing **sustainable financing for schemes by mobilizing domestic resources**, increasing budget allocation for children, strengthening social protection for parents and caregivers and guaranteeing access to decent work and adequate employee benefits.

UPSC Civil Services Exam, Previous Year Questions (PYQ)

Q. International Labour Organization's Conventions 138 and 182 are related to (2018)

- (a) Child Labour
- (b) Adaptation of agricultural practices to global climate change
- (c) Regulation of food prices and food security
- (d) Gender parity at the workplace

Ans: (a)

Source: DTE