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Capability Approach to the Analysis of Child Deprivation in India: Focus on Inter-State Variation

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Abstract

As per UNDP's definition, human development is a process of enlarging human's choices. The essence of sustainable human development is that everyone should have equal access to development opportunities now and in future. Amartya Sen in his book 'Development as Freedom' (2000, oxford university press) established a relationship between human capital and human capabilities as an expression of freedom. The role of human capabilities manifests in three ways: a) their direct relevance to the wellbeing and freedom of people (generation of income); b) their indirect role through influencing social changes (ensuring better health and education) and c) their indirect role through influencing economic productivity (skilled contribution to economic development). The relevance of the capability perspective incorporates each of these contributions. Child deprivation is a global problem that persists both in developed and less developed countries but in different forms. This paper is an attempt to study the child deprivation in terms of capability approach focusing on mainly health and education. Depriving children of access to basic health may adversely affects the socio-economic conditions which usually stunts their growth, makes them physically weak, exposes them to high level of mortality. Children living in poverty are unable to fulfill their basic need-education. Financial deprivation compels them to perform as child labour, involve them in activities, such as to collect fuel, fodder, water away from home that abducts their schooling opportunities. If quality education, skill and expertise through proper training are not imparted to them, then future human capital may not be adequate for the sustainability requirements of an economy. Because today's children are future performers as productive capital in diverse fields. Therefore, proper care of children should be taken to have their skilled contribution to a country's development.

Keywords: Deprivation, IMR, MMR, Immunization, Stunting, Wasting, Underweight, Nutrition, low BMI, full ANC, institutional delivery, Sanitation facilities.

1. Introduction

The Capability approach for assessing the quality of life was developed by Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen. According to him, (1999) "The freedom that a person has in terms of the choice of functioning, given his personal features and his command over commodities"...can be termed as capabilities. This approach has been used in the context of poverty measurement, gender issues, political freedom, and standard of living