

For Immediate Press Release

4th September 2020

Vice President Releases State of the Young Child in India Report

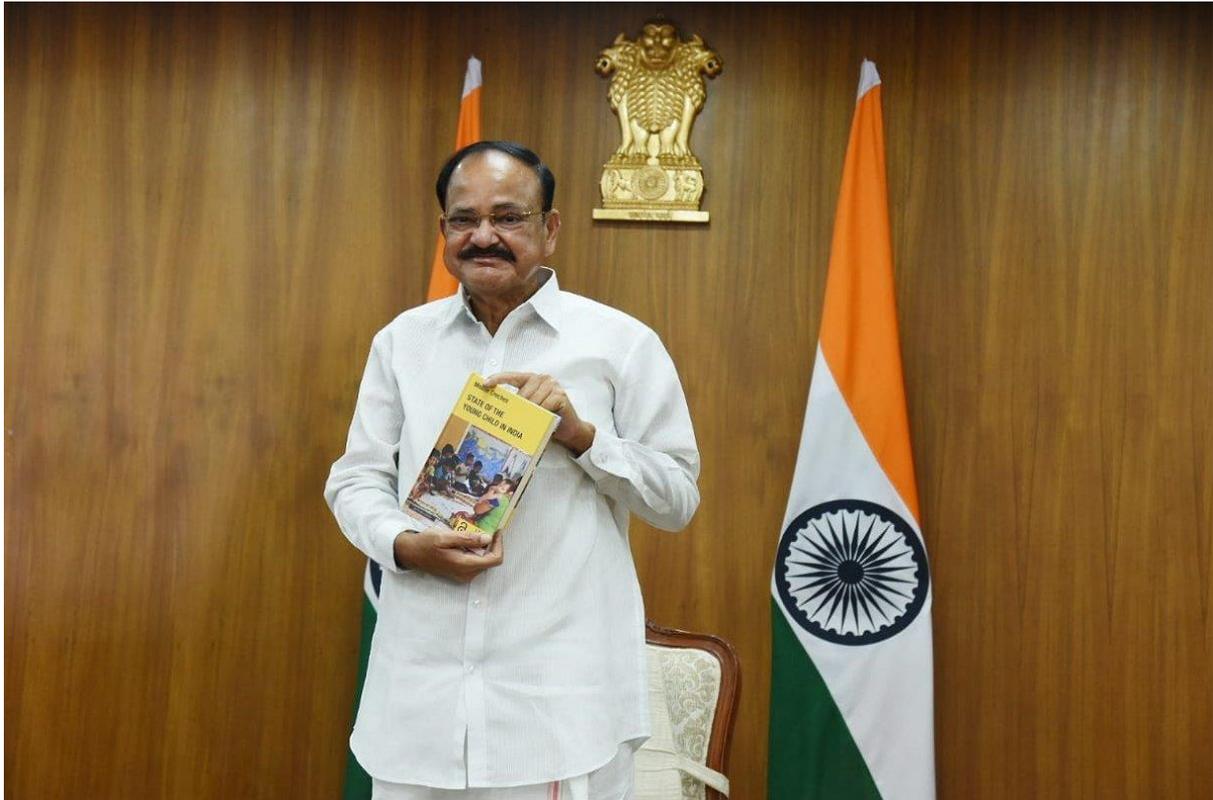
Shri Venkaiah Naidu, Hon'ble Vice President of India, released the *State of the Young Child in India* Report at a widely attended webinar event on 4th September 2020. Brought out by Mobile Creches, a leading NGO, and published by Routledge, the release was done simultaneously for the South Asia and International editions of the Report. The development and publication of this Report has been supported by BVLF, The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy, TATA Trusts, HCL Foundation, and NCML.

India contributes the highest number of neonatal, infant, and under-5 deaths in the world. The Report highlights the issues of poverty, neglect, gendered discrimination, availability and accessibility of services, and violence that severely impact child well-being. The Report makes several recommendations to strengthen the resource and capacities in the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS). It also suggests strategies to address the relative neglect of Early Childhood Children Education (ECCE), and the lack of professionalisation and remuneration of childcare workers that limit the effectiveness of child development programmes. The *State of the Young Child in India* Report points out that India spends a meagre Rs. 1,723 per child annually and calls for a quadrupling of the annual child budget to Rs. 1.25 crore.

Young Child Indices

A unique feature of the Report is the development and release of two complementary Young Child Indices, the Young Child Outcomes Index (YCOI) that uses indicators of health, nutrition, and cognitive growth, and the Young Child Environment Index (YCEI) that builds on the components of poverty, primary health care, education, gender equity, and water supply to assess the circumstances in which the young child grows. In both the indices, Kerala and Goa are the top performers while Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh are among the bottom five.

Addressing the participants, **Shri Venkaiah Naidu** emphasized the need for the country to accord importance to India's youngest children, especially the poorest and the most vulnerable. He stated that if India is to take advantage of its demographic dividend child development should be the foundation of our development architecture. There should be well strategised collective action and it should be made into a Jan Andholan (a people's movement).



In her opening remarks, Amrita Jain, Chairperson of Mobile Creches, said, "The Release of this Report is part of the long journey of Mobile Creches to ensure that each child grows in a caring environment, where all her holistic needs are fully taken care of."

A special feature of the Report is its open access format in order to reach policymakers, child advocates, development practitioners, elected representatives, the media, human rights campaigners, education, health and nutrition activists, poverty alleviation architects and other actors interested in fostering a meaningful positive change for the youngest citizens of India.

The virtual launch also included the screening of a short documentary film showcasing the conception and process of the Report over the last two years. It was followed by a panel discussion involving leading personalities and experts that included N. Ram, former Editor-in-Chief of The Hindu, Pronab Sen, former Chief Statistician of India, Secretaries of State governments, Dr. Yasmin Ali Haque, UNICEF Representative in India, Dr. Vimala Ramachandran, eminent educationist, and senior officials of state governments.

The State of the Young Child in India report can be downloaded at: <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9781003026488>

About Mobile Creches

Mobile Creches is a leading organisation in India that has worked for over fifty years for Early Childhood Development (ECD) at the grassroots level for children under six years, particularly the most vulnerable.

Contact Details:

For more details, visit <https://www.mobilecreches.org/events>

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