Chapter-2
CONTEXTUALISING CHILD WELFARE

The idea of child and child welfare are complex issues consisting of an intricate web of dimensions that range from the proper definition of child to the problems and challenges faced by children and the governmental initiatives to protect and promote the rights of the children. For instance, due to lack of a uniform definition of the child, the concept of childhood in India has been confusing. Presently, it ranges from, not less than 14 years to not less than 18 years, and yet to not less than 21 years under different legislations and policies. However, as per the National Policy for Children, adopted in 2013, a child is any person below the age of 18 years. Nevertheless, the most important asset of a nation is child. It needs to be nurtured and cared for in its tender and vulnerable age to enable him or her to become a healthy and productive citizen. Child welfare was not on the agenda of the governments all over the world for a very long time. Not long ago the idea of statesmen sitting at a conference table to discuss the well being of children would have been greeted with amazement, if not derision. Over the past few years, a child’s emergence as a topic of public and political concern has been striking. At the national and international levels, leaders and statesman in all parts of the world have begun to identify themselves with family and children’s issues. That way, the issues of child welfare seem to have come on the centre stage of the development discourse in the present times. This chapter seeks to present the theoretical dimensions of child and child welfare by looking at the idea of a child, delineating the notion of child welfare, conceptualisation of child and child welfare in both western and Indian traditions, issues and challenges of child welfare in India and status and dimensions of child welfare in the country.

2.1 Idea of a Child

The idea of child is a typical conceptualisation of a human being on the basis of his or her age. In the words, the idea of child a concept in whose conceptualisation, the basic parameter relates to that of age. Based on this criticality of age, three interrelated issues are usually discerned with regard to the idea of a child. Firstly, child is generally of a person who belongs to the age below his age of adolescent. To put is differently, a child is characterised a child on account of his age which is much below the age where he or she reaches the age of adolescent. Secondly, the tenderness of his
or her age makes a child distinguished by other human being on a number of counts. But in this context the most important basis of distinction between a child and other human beings is that while the other human beings are able to protect themselves and fend for themselves in times of any untoward things, a child could never be in such a position where he or she could be able to protect themselves from external as well as internal threats or dangers.¹ As a result, therefore, a child always in the need of protection and care of his or her parents. Thirdly, given the vulnerable age in which a child lives his or her life, he or she may need special kind of support and assistance on the part of his or her parent or society in terms of adequate protection and nutritious food and other essentials. In the absence of these, the child may suffer from a number of disabilities and diseases in the later part of his or her life. Thus the life of child is premised on the basis of age. Whether or not, the premise underlying this is correct or not, the childhood ‘reality’ on the whole is questionable, demanding critical evaluation.

In view of the fact that a child undergoes numerous kinds of physical and mental transformations at a rapid pace on different counts, the life cycle of a child has generally been divided into three distinct phases. Of this, the first phase is referred to as the early phase of childhood. This phase of the life of a child starts from the time of his or her birth and continues till the age of three or sometimes four. During this stage of his life, a child remains dependent upon his mother for most part of his life and sustenance. Unable to even walk, talk, understand and express his or her opinions in distinct terms or words, the child has to be pampered by his or her mother based upon the understanding of the needs, aspirations and imperatives of the child by his or her mother. As a matter of fact, the mother of the child helps the child develop such a life style whereby the mother is very well able to make out what the child needs at what points of time. Above all the mother provides a protective shelter to the child apart from taking care of his or her emotional growth and development.² Thus, this stage in the life of a child is very critical during which he or she remains totally dependent upon his or her mother. In certain cases where a child is abandoned and is not able to get the love and care of his or her mother, such children are kept in orphanage centers and the responsibility for taking care of them lies with the caretakers of such centers who are generally women with the bent of mind for the care and love of the child.³
The middle phase in the life of a child begins by the time a child is able to stand and mutter certain words in order to be able to express his or her feelings as well as their needs and desires. This phase usually starts with the age of three to four and continues till the child enters the age of puberty. This is in fact the most crucial stage of the life of a child as he or she is understood have known the basic issues and challenges of life even if the child does not have any substantive or serious knowledge or exposures to the things of life. During this phase a child needs to begin to go to school and learn the basic and desirable manners and habits of life in such a way that he or she is able to become a good citizen of a country and also knows how to shoulder his or her responsibilities if ordained on him or her. This is also the age when the child becomes face to face with the realities of the life for the first time and all the impressions and impacts created on the mind and body of the child remains with him throughout his or her life whether such impacts or influences are positive or negative.

The last developmental stage of a child is considered to be the span of time when he or she enters the teenage and this phase continues till the child completes his teenage and attains the stage of maturity when he or she is started to be looked upon as an adult. During this stage of their life, the children are sought to be imparted basic education and skills of life that may help him or her to be a productive asset for the society and engage in productive and meaningful activities. During this stage, the child is also trained into the loftier values and imperatives of social life. As a matter of fact, the basic course of the life of a person to be lived for the rest of his or her life is ordained during this stage of life itself. Thus, the life of a child is very complex and enduring during which the child has to undergo a lot of transformations that could be given a positive or negative overtone. However, the most important aspect of the life of a child which has become the concerns of most of the societies is the need for the balanced and nutritious food and intakes of a child that may allow him or her to grow as a healthy child instead of suffering from a number of diseases and deformities in his body and personality. But such things are also quite often visible in the world. As a result, childhood sometimes also can go haywire and the child could suffer from a number of problems such as exploitation, oppression, cruelty and abuse.

Conceptually, children may be considered as one of the marginalised groups in the Indian society. Marginalized groups refer to those categories of people in a society who remain in a state of deprivation and subjugation for centuries as a result of which
they are not able to attain a position of parity with the other sections of society in contemporary times. Denied of their equal share in the social, economic and political rights, privileges and resources of the country for obvious reasons over the years, such groups continue to remain in a vulnerable position even after country gains independence and marches ahead on the path of progress and development. In India, for instance, such groups of people included the vulnerable sections of the society like dalits, adivasis, women, minorities, unorganized workers etc. The discourse of human rights for such groups of people differs from the discourse of human rights for other sections of society for at least two reasons. First, owing to their long drawn social, economic and political deprivation, these groups become some sort of marginalized lot in the society in comparison to the mainstream sections as a result of which the notion, standards and exercise of the general human rights do not remain valid and meaningful for such groups. Second, each of the marginalized groups carries certain distinct physiological, social, economic, cultural, religious and related traits which distinguish them from the rest of the people in society whose obvious result is that the norms of human rights for latter could not be applied uniformly to the former. Hence, a discussion on the issue of the human rights of the marginalized groups becomes an exercise in diagnosing the ills and evaluating the remedies in action for the time being with a view to evolve a holistic perspective on the human rights of these groups. Thus, the idea of a child is such that it requires special measures on the part of the government through a fine tuned framework of child welfare in the country.

2.2 Notion of Child Welfare

Child welfare is a continuum of services designed to ensure that children are safe and that families have the necessary support to care for their children successfully. India is known for ethical and moral values where spirit of truth is adored.\(^7\) Child welfare agencies typically support or coordinate services to prevent child abuse and neglect and receive and investigate reports of possible child abuse and neglect; caring for their children. Arrangement for children to live with kin or with foster families when safety cannot be ensured at home and support the well-being of children living with relatives or foster families, including ensuring that their educational needs are addressed are also vital to child welfare. Each State or locality has a public child welfare agency responsible for receiving and investigating reports of child abuse and
neglect and assessing child and family needs; however, the child welfare system is not a single entity. If we look in the gravity of matter we will find our leaders’ lackadaisical approaches for solving this king of problems. Public child welfare agencies often collaborate with private child welfare agencies, community-based organizations, and other public agencies to ensure that families receive the services they need, such as supportive child care, parenting classes, in-home family preservation services, mental health services, and substance abuse treatment.\(^8\)

As far as the concept of child welfare is concerned, there has been marked contrast between the western and Indian understanding. In the western countries the idea of child welfare is considered as a negative notion in the main as a result of which disproportionate emphasis is laid on the rights and privileges of a child with respect to both his or her family as well as the society. In such circumstance, the basic duty of the parents as well as the society or the government is that of providing the basic needs of the child and leave he or she alone to take care of the things pertains to their personal life. Moreover, in the parents or the society do not mind much of the business of the child and leave them to learn from their own experiences rather than teaching and training them for the most of the things of life. In contrast to this, the Indian concept of child welfare is quite restrictive and possessive than the western concept.\(^9\) For instance, in India, there has been very much emphasis on the cultural and value laden development of the child in such a way that the moral values and social responsibilities of the child remain a strong perspective of the child. Nevertheless, the idea of child welfare remains a greater concern for the people, society as well as the government in almost all the societies and they cannot simply shirk such a onerous responsibility for the discharge of a comprehensive framework of laws and institutions have been created in almost all of the societies.\(^10\)

The scope of child welfare in generally understood in terms of two vital activities with regard to the child: promotional and protective. Promotional activities constitute the core of child welfare in any society. Conceptually, promotional activities consist of all those activities or interventions that seek to provide all the essential supplies, inputs and support to the children in order to make sure that the child does not suffer from any kind of inadequacies. In fact, the basic components of the promotional activities vary from time to time in the development of the personality of a child.\(^11\) For instance, in the earliest phase of the life of a child, the most important requirement is that of the
basic food full of nutrients so that the child does not suffer from any kind of bodily or mental disability. As a matter of fact, it is well recognised and scientifically proved fact now that from the very beginning the physical and mental growth of a child becomes of critical importance. During the earliest phases of his or her life, a child has no other requirement than the fulfillment of basic needs of his or her life so that they are able to make a balanced development of their personality. In this regard, the basic requirement that a child needs the nutritious food and other supplements that do not allow any kind of scope for the germination or growth of any kind of disease or deficiency that may result into the physical or mental retardation of a child. The issues of malnourishment and stunted growth in the children attain alarming proportions due to the non availability of nutritious and balanced died for the child and his or her mother. Hence, in most of the developing countries, the basic conceptualisation of the idea of child welfare by and large remained confined to the domains of provision of nutritious and balanced diet to the child.\(^{12}\)

Another important aspect of the idea of child welfare relates to the health of the lactating mothers or the mothers who have given birth to a baby. As a matter of fact, it is now well recognised fact that the health of a baby depends very much on the health of his or her mother right from the time the baby gets conceived in the womb of the mother. From that time onwards, the baby becomes in need of the basic nutrients of life such as minerals, vitamins, iron, and other which are provided to the child through the intake of these materials by the mother. Hence, in almost all the schemes of child welfare schemes and programmes the special components are carved for the health of the lactating mother or the mother that has given birth to a baby. Through these provisions, it is tried to be ensured that the child keeps on getting all the basic nutrients and other essentials of life from the supplies to the mother.\(^{13}\) In the contemporary times, the child welfare schemes and programmes also have special emphasis on the tendency on the part of the mother to make sure she feeds the baby from her breast milk at least for the six months of the birth of the baby. It is medically proved now that the mother breast milk is the most critical food or nutrient that a child can depend on for the balanced and nutrient diet.\(^{14}\) Thus the promotional aspects of the welfare of the child have come out to be a multidimensional activity that not only consists of a number of vital aspects but go beyond the realm of the child and involves the marked improvement in the health of the mother as well.\(^{15}\)
Apart from the promotional aspects of the idea of child welfare, another aspect is equally, if not more important, in terms of the protective framework. Its true that a child needs to be provided with all the supplies and essential things in order to make sure that his or her growth does not become stunted. But once a child grows as a healthy child, at the different occasions he or she is subjected to a number of exploitations or oppressions including abuses. It therefore becomes very important for the state or the government to ensure the protection of a child from all kinds of exploitation, oppression and abuses. For this, a number of governments have put in place a vast network of legal and administrative frameworks through which the exploitation and abuses of the child is sought to be eradicated. Thus, child welfare in contemporary times has become quite comprehensive and in turn consists of both promotional as well as protective frameworks and measures.

### 2.3 Child and Child Welfare in Western Traditions

The ideas of child and child welfare are contextual in nature and therefore vary from place to place. In other words, it would not be possible to find a single and simple conceptualisation of the ideas of child and child welfare that may be acceptable to all the countries of the world with the same degree of concurrence. The basic reason behind such contextual differentiations in the ideas of child and child welfare have been the fact that in most of the countries the child is considered as the creation of god that needs to be taken care of despite the fact that the child comes out of the mating of the male and female. But in many of the cultures, there exist a lot of differences in the ways the child is conceptualised along with the varying acceptability of different kinds of child in the society. For instance, in the traditional societies like India and many other such societies in Africa and other continents, the acceptability of the male and female as the same kind of child is not accepted in the main. On the contrary, the birth of a male child is more accepted than the birth of a female child. But in the western societies such differences do not exist. The birth of a child is considered as the creation of the god whereby all the parameters of humanly life cycle applies. That way, the child is considered as the other members of the family with respect to the different aspects of the human nature including life and death as for all the other persons. As a result, the idea of the child welfare in the
western traditions pertains to the looking after the basic needs of the child as long as it remains dependent on the parents.\textsuperscript{19}

One of the basic theoretical postulates on the child and child welfare has been offered by the renowned French social scientist Philippe Aries. His ideas on the concept of child and childhood had shaped the western conceptions on the child and childhood to a large extent and for a long period of time. He began his discussion on the issues of child and childhood by contending that the idea of a child and childhood as an analytical category did not have a chequered history in the western countries. The basic reason for such contention has been that the child in the western societies is considered as a biological construct that gets the real shape once a mother delivers the baby.\textsuperscript{20} But the baby remains in that condition for a very short period of time and as and as he or she started growing up, the child moves out of the biological dependency of his or her parents as a result of which the elements of childhood in his or her personality starts getting eroded. Soon, the child is on the verge of losing his or her childhood and is poised to make his or her entry into the domain of the adult society.\textsuperscript{21} Thus, a child's childhood happens to be a very short lived phase of his or her life and once it enters the domain of adulthood, the identity of the person as a child erodes fully and the child becomes an adult.

The idea of child welfare in the western societies is a very simple notion that defines the role of the family as well as the state in taking care of the child for all practical purposes. Generally, in the western countries, a child gets overwhelming acceptability in the family for two distinct reasons. One, the affective or codling dimension of the child tend to make him or her as the loveable member of the family for which the parents of the child are ready to afford the expenses in taking care of the child despite all the odds. They tend to take care of the child for the sake of their personal likes and happiness as much as they love the child for the sake of child itself. Two, once the parents take leave from the care of the child, the fulfillment of the basic requirements of the child becomes the responsibility of the state that promotes the wellbeing of the child as part of its responsibility as the welfare state.\textsuperscript{22} At the same time, Aries argue that in the course of time, the two aspects of the personality of the child get diffused and the personality of the child becomes institutionalised after the passage of certain period of time. Thus, the idea of child and child welfare in the western societies become a very complex idea whose empirical manifestation is considered as driven by
the selfish interests or the likings of the different stake holders in the project of the child welfare. This idea of the western societies appears to be in marked contrast to the ideas of the traditional societies like India.

The basic contribution of Aries in the conceptualisation of the ideas of child and childhood lies in the fact that he presented a psychological perspective on the understanding of a profoundly sociological concept. Thus, he tried to rescue the ideas of child and child welfare from the populist and mechanical understanding that would have done more harm to the issues faced by the child in the different stages of his or her life. The historical account of the rise of child and childhood in the works of Aries has been refined further by many other historians who had tried to present a trajectory for the evolution of the ideas of child in the framework of the rise and growth of the human beings. In this regard, the rise of the ideas of child as inalienable part and parcel of the human beings has been argued to have moved through six phases. At the outset, the first stage referred as the Infanticidal age that had probably lasted from the antiquity to the fourth century AD to reflect the primary stages through which the human race had progressed and the child had also been part and parcel of the same growth. This has been followed by the next stage called the age of abandonment lasting the fourth to the thirteenth century. During this century also the child's growth and conceptualisation was marked by the human perception of the child in the society.

The next stage in the evolution of the child is called the age of ambivalence. This stage continued form the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries and is characterised by such an orientation towards the issues of the child welfare that had a profound impact on the overall conceptualisation of the people in the society. During this period, the people were not able to evolve a definite kind of opinions towards the child as a result of which the child remained the free lancers in the society so as to be conceived by different people differently. This is followed by the state of intrusiveness during the eighteenth century. It was during this period that the idea of child as a part of the intrusive nature of the human life was conceptualised. The penultimate in the evolutionary framework of the idea of the child could be seen in the form of the socialisation stage that had been dominant paradigm during the nineteenth till the mid twentieth century. At this time, the child was considered as the product of his times and that the basic traits of his personality could be discerned
by looking at the basic issues he faced. Finally, came the contemporary stage of the childhood conceptualisation during which the child is considered as the innocent and hapless entity needing distinct support and assistance from the different sections of society. But in certain societies, the conceptualisation of the idea of child welfare is also taken to the extent of making the state as the guardian of the child. Thus, the ideas of the child and childhood in the western conceptualisation have been varying depending on the dynamics of the given period of time.

Another important perspective on the western conceptualisation of the ideas of child and the childhood has also been provided by the eminent social scientist Freeman. In his opinion, the idea of the child and childhood is a dynamic one and its changing nature could be discerned from the fact that the societies could not be able to evolve a definite or agreeable conception of the ideas of the child and the child welfare. The ideational intervention of Freeman coincides with the creative ideas of Neil Postman who has given the famous concept of the 'disappearance of the child' from the discourse of the welfare measures that had been visualised by different countries in the early nineteenth century. But the later interventions led to the redemption of the idea of the child in which the child is known as the moral agent whose arrival in the society is just like the arrival of an innocent creature in need of love and care. Thus, the western conceptualisation of the ideas of child, childhood and child welfare are quite complex and have been changing with the changing dynamics of the society. Further, the mutual relations between the society and the state had also been an important determinant factor in the conceptualisation of the ideas of the child as the societal parameters with regard to the welfare of the child had to a large extent been conditioned by the changing nature of the state on the matter. For instance, the idea of child welfare entered the lexicon of the western societies only when the idea of the welfare state became a reality and the state appeared ready for taking care of the economic burdens in the protection and promotion of the welfare of the child.

2.4 Child and Child Welfare in Indian Traditions

The western conceptualisation of the ideas of child and child welfare provide a refreshing perspective on the understanding of the issues of child welfare from a different perspective, its contextualised understanding in the case of India presents a different vision. In other words, the Indian perspective on the ideas of child and child
welfare are quite different from the western ideas. However, before one goes to the
deep history in order to have a glimpse of the portrayal of the ideas of the child and
child welfare in the Indian perspective, it seems interesting to have a look at the
explanation offered by noted psychologist Sudhir Kakar on different aspects of the
life of a child in India.\textsuperscript{27} He begins by pointing out that in the Indian traditions; the
life cycle of a child begins just from the time it takes seed in the womb of the mother.
The Indian sages have made a very insightful study of the different life stages through
which a child passes through in the womb of his mother. Thus, he called these stages
as that of garbha, ksheerda, ksheernanda, bala and kumara. In other words, the period
of the early conception of the child is known as the garbha. But very soon the child
enters the stage of ksheerda when he or she attains the age of six months after coming
out of womb of the mother. Next, the stage of the ksheerda comes when the child
starts relying on the different diets from outside the world that does not necessarily
include only the milk.\textsuperscript{28}

In the later years, Kakar opines that the child attains the age beyond two years and
become face to face with the realities of life. This stage, called the stage of bala in the
lexicon of the Indian system of life, continues till the age of five years when the child
is considered to be ready for entering the domains of life that would entail the
learning of both the formal as well as the informal knowledge from the society.\textsuperscript{29}

During these stages, the child also undergoes the teaching and training at the hands of
the able teachers that help him learn a number of samskaras in the course of his life.
These samskaras eventually become the basic building block of the personality of
the child and is reflected in almost all the aspects of his life that necessitates him to
follow the basic norms of society and prove his worth as the valuable asset for the
society.\textsuperscript{30} Further, the Indian perspectives on the issues of child and child welfare
have also been facilitated by the conceptualisation presented in the epics like
Ramayana and Mahabharata. The basic argument of these epics has been that the
child is the product of his times and family and keep on growing with the traits
inherited from his ancestors.\textsuperscript{31} Thus, in the Indian traditions, the ideas of child and
childhood are considered as the comprehensive part of the package through which a
child comes into being and takes shape in the later parts of his life. There is no need to
accept the independent identity of the child as the child gets a name and identity of his
parents to be recognised and called in the world along with all his habits and traits that reflect his status in the society.\textsuperscript{32} 

In the Indian traditions, there has been greater stress on the manners and good habits that a child represents through his or her conduct in society. The central argument of this perspective reveals that the mutual relationship between the child and his parents are unique. While child's basic needs and requirements are met by the parents, the child is also expected to make sure that he or she does not bring bad name to the family. The Indian perspective on the child is also reflected in different systems through which the upbringing of a boy or a girl is undertaken.\textsuperscript{33} For instance, while a boy is considered to be the external aspect of the family, the girl is trained to act as the internal face of the family by conducting herself as the good women of both the families, the family from where she comes and the house where she goes and spends the rest of her life.\textsuperscript{1} In the Indian traditions, the welfare of the child is considered as the bastion of the family and the changing fortunes of the family also cast aspersion on the overall personality of the child. For instance, any variation in the economic conditions of the child seriously affects the facilities and privileges available to the child in this time of his life. But such a situation did not affect the girls and the boys identically. The facilities extended to the boys many a times continued to be given but the girls support in terms of her education and other activities could generally not be carried on. Thus, the Indian traditions provide a distinct framework within which the ideas of the child and child welfare have been conceptualised and presented to the people to be carried on in the times to come with all the traits and virtues carried on by the child.

The uniqueness of the Indian perspective on child and child welfare is that the idea of child rights could have been seen in the Indian society well before the same became a reality in the western societies. But the notion of rights in even the Indian society also kept on changing with the changing times and contexts.\textsuperscript{34} For instance, the turbulent situations created by the waves of industrialisation and urbanisation did have a negative impact on the wellbeing and the happiness of the child. As a result, the entire discourse of child welfare in the country underwent a subtle transformation with the negative traits of these issues becoming more apparent than the positive traits. Thus,
the nature of child welfare also suffered and the child had to face a lot of problems. But after the independence, the drafting of the Indian constitution offered a ray of hope to the status of child as it secured a number of negative as well as positive rights to the children in the Indian society.

2.5 Issues and Challenges of Child Welfare in India

Conceptually, the idea of child welfare is a multidimensional theoretical construct which needs to be conceptualized in such a way that the overall development of the personality of child is ensured in order to make him or her decent citizen of the country. In spite of the multi dimensions of the idea of child welfare, two interrelated aspects seem to be critical in the proper understanding of the notion of child welfare. On the one hand, the notion of child welfare inherently involves a deeper and comprehensive understanding of the issues and challenges that lay at the root of creating so much problems and troubles in the proper development of the personality of a child. By which our posterity can face the brunt of these kinds of evil practices. Furthermore, on the other hand, once the major issues and challenges facing the child are clearly spelt out, there emerges the need for initiation of relevant policies and programmes and creation of appropriate structures to uproot those problems on the one side and provide positive inputs in the overall development of the personality of the child. Hence, what has been presented ahead is a detailed discussion on the different aspects of the problems and challenges facing the child. But along with there are some institutions also located for solving these eradicable situations.

The major issues of facing the children in the country could be classified into a number of broad categories for the sake of better understanding and remedial course of action. These categories can be three in the main: economic, social and behavioural. Such a classification of the issues and challenges in the protection and promotion of the rights of the children and their welfare can be based on the considerations that their remedial courses can be found in the efforts rooted in those particular spheres of life. For instance, there are a number of such issues and challenges that can be eradicated through the concerted measures having a lot of economic implications for the government. The basic problems falling in this category can be the ones that may related to the health, nutrition, education and likewise for the children. But there are a lot of other problems that cannot be eradicated by the
economic efforts only and there need to be sufficient level of the social awareness amongst the children as well as their parents and guardians so that they can be saved from the vagaries of the social practices of the tyrannies. Finally, there are also a number of the issues and challenges in the protection and promotion of the rights of the children and their welfare that relate to the personal issues of the children and for the eradication of such problems there need to be sufficient support from the society as well as the social groups so that the threats to the children could be eliminated.

2.6 Issues of Health and Nutrition

In the developing countries like India, the issues that remain critical in the growth and development of the children are mainly if not entirely the ones relating to the health and nutrition of the children. These issues are such that they act as a kind of trap in which the entanglement of a child makes him or her captive forever in his or her life. The story of this vicious circle begins with the time a child gets germinated in the womb of the mother. Given the low levels of the social and economic development accompanied with the lack of the health and other nutritional facilities for the ladies, the mother remains very much deficient on a number of the basic nutrients that needed to have been provided to her at the time of her conception of the baby and afterwards for a period of at least nine months or till the time she gives birth to the baby. What is most startling in this context is the response of the society as well as the family members of the lactating mother. Given the safety mechanism inherent in the natural processes associated with the body of the human beings, the lactating mother's body gets a lot of pertinent signals from the natural processes of her body in terms of pain, anxiety or other discomforts that needed to be understood as the signals calling for medical attention. But when a lady reports these things to her family members or to her husband, there a general tendency amongst them to either overlook her reports or to get her treated for the normal ailments such as stomach ache or likewise. In such a situation, the health of the lactating mother as well as the baby get to face a lot of risk that many times result into the various kinds of deformities or other problems for the baby.

In the recent times, the realisation of the issues and challenges in the protection and promotion of the rights of the children and their welfare has apparently led the governments to initiate concerted actions in the field of the health and nutrition of
both the mother as well as the children. In this regard, the major intervention has come in the form of the provisions for the regular checkups as well as provision of essential nutrients to the lactating mothers and the pregnant ladies from time to time. But the governmental efforts in this direction are likely to face a lot of problems rooted in the lack of the social awareness or the lack of prioritization of this matter on the part of the women. As a result, either a lot of women do not get registered with the primary health centers offering such services or the ones who are registered fail to maintain the regularity and periodicity with which they need to visit the health centre. As a result, they fail to be regularly checked up by the health workers and provided with the essential or required nutritional support as well as other medical help in case the same is found to be required by the mothers. That way, the issues and challenges in the protection and promotion of the rights of the children and their welfare become so complicated and intractable that it becomes very difficult for the government in general and the health workers in particular to ensure that all the lactating mothers and the pregnant women are provided with the required support and attention as much as they need.

The situation does not seem to look bright for the children once they are born. It must be considered a fortune for the children in the country that the mothers of the newly born babies especially in the rural areas do not shy away from breast feeding their child for a long period of time after the child is born. It has now been medically proved that the milk drunk by the newly born babies from the breast of their mothers can be the best antidote for any kind of disease as well as feeding them in times of necessity. Thus, a lot of children are able to get rid of the problems and challenges to their health and nutrition thanks to the breast feeding by their mothers. But the situation is gradually taking an ugly turn in the urban centres with the increasing number of women preferring the outside feed for their babies instead of their breast feed for certain reasons. But that cannot be taken as a right kind approach in terms of the health and physical wellbeing of the children. As a result, a lot of children are facing numerous problems in their health and physical growth. It has also been argued that previously when majority of the child were born in the house of their maternal uncle, they used to go to the house of their maternal parents more often. But now as these children are born in the hospitals they are most likely to go the hospitals quite often. What this dictum signifies is the fact that the children are nowadays falling so
unwell that their visits to the hospitals have usually outnumbered their visits to their relatives particularly their maternal uncle or parents. This tells the sad story of the health and the physical growth of the children in the country. Lack of sufficient medical support for the children has been providing to be quite costly for the social and economic wellbeing of the country. As a matter of fact, the issues and challenges in the protection and promotion of the rights of the children and their welfare have generally boiled down to the twin issues of the preventive support and help in terms of various vaccinations as well as other nutritional support. It has been argued in the developmental discourse of the country that the health of the children in the country could be stopped from going down by providing them with the preventive medical care along with the sufficient nutritional support and assistance. For instance, the appropriate doses of the nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, protein, and fat along with the preventive tablets as well as injections could provide the children with the best possible defenses against the different kinds of diseases as well as developmental disorders. In the absence of these supports and helps, the children are likely to face the problems such as polio, cholera, short height, stunted growth as well as many other such issues that could have been cured or prevented through the provision of adequate health and nutritional support.

2.7 Issues of child marriage and child labour

Child marriage is a major challenge facing the children in different parts of the world especially the developing countries like India. However, suitable measures have also been initiated to root out the problem. There is legal recognition of the fact that children must not be married before they are physically and mentally ready for it. The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 (CMRA) prescribes a minimum age of 21 years for males and 18 years for females. But sometimes we see that there are already presented some draft or charters which define a child with the different ages. As the title of the Act suggests, it is merely a law to prevent the solemnisation of child marriages, but does not address the situation of a child who has been married off before the law could prevent it. It does little to protect children who have been married off, sometimes even before they can stand on their feet. Efforts to amend the CMRA have been going on for almost four years, yet there is no consensus on the issues on which amendments are required. Child marriage in the countries like India is
considered more a social problem than the problems rooted in the patterns and standards of economic development.\textsuperscript{45}

Child labour is another problem facing a lot of children in different parts of the world including India. But after realising the problem, a number of appropriate legislations have been enacted to deal with the problem. The act for the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) was enacted in 1986, to specifically address the situation of child labour. However, this law is inadequate both in its understanding and the framework that it provides for dealing with the problem of child labour. By distinguishing between hazardous and non-hazardous forms of labour, and identifying certain processes and occupations from which children are prohibited from working, it leaves out a large range of activities that children are engaged in and thus continue to be exploited and abused.\textsuperscript{46} The large-scale exploitation and abuse of children employed in domestic work and hotels are cases in point. On August 1, 2006, the Ministry of Labour added the following occupations to the list of hazardous occupations: domestic servants, workers in dhabas, restaurants, hotels, motels, tea shops, resorts, spas or other recreational centres. The notification for this came into effect on 10 October 2006. This is a welcome step but far from adequate. Bonded child labour and other extremely exploitative forms of child labour including slavery, prostitution, drug trafficking, etc. are other grey areas which require priority attention. The ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, which is currently being examined by the Government of India from the point of view of its ratification, also seeks the immediate elimination of these types of child labour.\textsuperscript{47}

\subsection*{2.8 Discrimination against Children}

Discrimination against the children has been a fact that has long been recognised in the country. Though the basis of such discriminations may be multifarious, the most prevalent ground of discrimination against the children in the country may be seen in the form of the caste. In other words, caste has remained as one of the predominant paradigms of the Indian social system. Emerging out as the perverted off-shoot of the classical and puritan varna-system of the ancient times, it has introduced a variety of cleavages in the Indian society which in the course of time turned out to be the most cruel and inhuman traits of glorious Indian civilization. For the last many centuries, the Indian society if fragmented into hundreds of castes and sub-castes neatly ordered
into a hierarchical pyramidal form. Broadly, three distinct levels of hierarchy in the caste system can be discerned: (a) the so-called forward castes people occupying not only the superior echelon of the social hierarchy but also the power, privileges and false ego, (b) the middle order of the caste system consists of those people who own a part of the parameters of position and distinguished by their profession and vocational acumen. This category of people is generally termed as other backward castes (OBCs). (c) The lowest rung of the social order is occupied by the people who have neither social status nor economic powers and properties. Known as dalits in the contemporary political discourses and badly bereft of necessary resources and rights, these people have been suffering from various despised social stigmas like slavery, indenture and the curse of untouchability.

Ensuring the enjoyment of human rights for the vulnerable groups of people continues to be the biggest challenge for the Indian democratic ethos. Various disadvantages faced by these people are, though, common to both the OBCs and the dalits, it is the latter that has been at the receiving end of the inequitable Indian social order. Owing to the pollution and purity praxis, the Indian social set-up permitted the recognition and acceptance of untouchability which is probably the greatest crime against the humanity. Efforts to overcome the curse of untouchability were precious little till independence. Things started changing as a result of the strong reservations expressed by Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar whose pressure was so strong that the constitution makers had to enshrine its prevention under the chapter of the fundamental rights. Article 17 of the Constitution declared that untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is prohibited. It gave a clear mandate to the state to eliminate the practice of untouchability with all the forces at its command and with ruthless will.

Discriminations against the children are galore to stump out which a number of measures have been started. The Government has adopted a policy of affirmative action towards addressing issues of socially backward groups, such as the Scheduled Castes/Tribes and the Other Backward Classes as well as the girl child. Despite these, discrimination – overt and covert – occurs in various forms. The guiding principles underpinning the Constitution of India are equality before law, equal protection to all and non-discrimination. There is affinity between the standards set by the Constitution and the standards set by Article 2 of the CRC. Equality is a dynamic concept with
many aspects and dimensions and therefore cannot be confined within traditional limits. Articles 14, 15, 17, 25-28, 29 and 30 of the Constitution aim to secure social and economic justice to all as well as remove all kinds of biases. Yet, children born in the categories of Scheduled Castes/Tribes and Backward Classes including religious minorities start life with severe handicaps. Considering that these children account for a clear majority of India’s child population, it is necessary to look deeply into their problems from all angles rather than paying a lip-sympathy to them.

2.9 Struggle for Child Survival

Right to health is a basic human right that cascades from the right to life. The Constitution of India under Article 21 makes right to life a Fundamental Right. Health being a key factor in a nation’s growth and development, it has been a subject of national attention, public debate and Government intervention for several decades. A number of national programmes have been launched in the past to control and eradicate the major diseases. While there has been success in some areas, in general, public health services have been characterized by poor performance. The burden of disease has fallen disproportionately heavily on the poor, the worst affected being children. Frequent episodes have not only caused pain and suffering to children, but also affected their growth and development and influenced performance in school. Here, it is important to remember that child survival is not synonymous with child health, and that morbidity data are also very important. Unfortunately, the collection of morbidity data is not done systematically, particularly community based data. Also, due to the absence of standardization in the presentation of data, making a comparison of findings of different studies over time or across regions is often rendered difficult.48

The poor health and nutrition status of pregnant woman is a major contributory factor to infant mortality. Maternal malnutrition continues to be another area of concern. The health care services in the country are to be blamed for not functioning satisfactorily. The population segments worst affected are the rural and urban poor who suffer the most when the public health care system malfunctions. All this in an indirect manner impacts on the maternal health services as their reach is limited. We know that proper medical attention at delivery is a critical factor for safe motherhood and child survival.
The programme of Universal Immunisation that limped initially has now gathered some momentum and is one of the biggest preventive public child health programmes in the world. However, much still remains to be done. Similarly, the Government has visualised an elaborate primary health infrastructure in rural areas for providing preventive, primitive and curative services. However, the functioning of the primary health infrastructure has drawn flak, and its deficiencies brought out, in the evaluations by the Indian Council of Medical Research and other bodies. The poor delivery system which includes inadequate supplies, poor equipment, poor services, and malpractices has been mainly responsible for slippages in national health targets. Its impact will, however, depend upon the extent to which the health care infrastructure would bring about an improved performance.

Malnutrition has been another major public health problem in the country. It has somehow escaped public visibility despite its harmful potential. In India, about half the children less than three years of age were found by the National Family Health Survey 1998-9 to be undernourished. The worst affected are the children of the rural and urban poor. Today, the prevalence of severe under-nourishment has declined, but this should not lead to any complacency. Malnutrition is often categorized as only a medical problem, but it is the outcome of several factors – socio-cultural as well as economic factors, and has important behavioural dimensions and, therefore needs to be tackled cautiously through coordinated inter-sectoral intervention strategies that are properly executed.49

2.10 Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances

In our country today, there are a large number of children who are living in especially difficult circumstances and require attention of all stakeholders. Unfortunately, not much is known either of the nature of the problems faced by these children or of the numbers involved. It was only as an aftermath of the 1990 World Summit for Children and the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children to which India is a signatory, the Government of India through its National Plan of Action, for the first time, not only made a direct reference about this group of children but simultaneously devoted an exclusive section on them. If we see towards of entire problems then we defiantly get the lackadaisical approaches of our departmental systems. This apart, for the first time again, the section tried to spell out
and bring together at one place all the different categories of children in especially
difficult circumstances, such as the physically handicapped, mentally handicapped,
those affected by drugs, victims of natural and manmade disasters, refugee children,
street children, slum and migrant children, orphans, destitutes and beggars, children
suffering from HIV/AIDS, trafficked children, children of prostitutes and children
forced into prostitution, children in conflict with law and children whose labour is
being exploited, so that improved protection could be provided to them and the root
cause which has lead them to such situations could be deciphered. There are other
categories of vulnerable children too, like children affected by terrorism, insurgency
and riots which could be added to this long list. Girl children have been victims of
sexual abuse and are another category that needs attention.

The number of such categories of children is increasing day by day, but because of
their dispersed character, they have escaped the attention of policy makers. Response
to their needs has been ad-hoc and largely in the form of relief. It is important that
such categories of children are identified, their problems studied and programmes
developed whereby these children could be rescued and rehabilitated. We also need to
bring about improvement in the standards of service in most State run institutions and
those run by voluntary organizations. The best way to reach these children would be
through non-institutional forms of care. Legal measures to protect these children are
also necessitated.

2.11 Issues relating to sexual offences

The issues of the sexual offence are one of the major concerns facing the vast
majority of the women and the girls in the country. As a matter of fact, women have
generally been a marginalised as well as exploited lot in the country. Globally, the
issues of women and girl children are sought to be addressed through the concept of
women's human rights. In fact, women’s human right is a revolutionary notion. This
radical reclamation of humanity and the corollary insistence that women’s rights are
human rights have profound transformative potential. The incorporation of women’s
perspectives and lives into human rights standards and practices forces recognition of
the dismal failure of counties worldwide to accord women the human dignity and
respect that they deserve simply as human beings. A women’s human rights
framework equips women with a way to define and analyze and articulate their experiences of violence, degradation and marginality.\textsuperscript{51}

In the late eighties and early nineties, women in diverse countries took up the human rights framework and began developing the analytic and political tool that together constitute the ideas and practices of women’s human rights. Taking up the human rights framework has involved a double shift in thinking about human rights and talking about women’s lives. In other words, it has entailed examining the human rights framework through a gender perspective and describing women’s lives through a human rights framework. In looking at the human rights framework from women’s perspectives, women have shown how current human rights definitions and practices fail to account for the ways in which already recognized human rights abuses often affect women differently because of their gender. This approach acknowledges the importance of the existing concepts and activities, but also points out that there are dimensions within these received definitions that are gender specific and that need to be addressed if the mechanism, programs and the human rights framework itself is to include and reflect the experiences of the female half of the world’s populations. When people utilize the human rights framework to articulate the vast array of human rights abuses that women face, they bring clarifying analyses and powerful tools to bear on the women’s experiences. This strategy has been pivotal in efforts to draw attention to human rights that are specific to women and that heretofore have been seen as women’s rights but not recognized as human rights.

The genealogy of the women’s human rights originates with a need to articulate and collaborate around broad and similar concerns about the status of women in the civil and political realm of the women’s life. By the dawning of the early nineties, it was unanimously recognized that more important and basic, than the issues of status and prestige, are the issues pertaining to the personal possessions like and body of the women. Their personal possessions were subjected to the insidious endeavors of the people in general, most profound and universal reflection of which has seen in the whole range of violence’s against women as well as a negation of the reproductive rights to the women exclusively.

In contemporary times, violence against women has emerged as the cardinal issue to epitomize the human rights of the women. This is so because violence against women
takes a dismaying variety of forms, ranging from domestic abuse and rape to child marriages and female circumcision, all of which constitute the most fundamental violations of the human rights. The ambit of the violence against women is amplified in Article 2 of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women as follows:

1. Physical, sexual and psychological violence that occurs in the family including battering; sexual abuse of female children in the household; dowry-related violence; marital rape; female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women; non-spousal violence; and violence related to exploitation.

2. Physical, sexual and psychological violence that occurs within the general community including rape; sexual abuse; sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere; trafficking in women; and forced prostitution; and

3. Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the state, wherever it occurs.

In addition to these, violence against women consists also of all forms of gender biases in the administration of justice and of any conflicts arising between the rights of women and the harmful effects of certain traditional or customary practices, cultural prejudices and religious extremism. Any comprehensive endeavor to safeguard the women’s human rights must have at its centre the pre-condition of eliminating all forms of violence against women.

The pursuits of women’s emancipation in India may be traced back to the nineteenth century when various socio-religious reforms organizations persuaded and joined hands with the colonial rulers to get the prevalent heinous practices pertaining to women declared illegal on the one hand and ingrain in the social psyche the values of women’s empowerment and well being, on the other. After independence, the state, backed by the constitutional mandate, emerged as an important sphere for grasping the contentious issues concerning women. The major determinants of the role of state in relation to women included constitutional provisions, legislations and the dynamics of public policy, though the efforts of the non-governmental organizations and international agencies are no insignificant.
The constitution of India does not provide for elaborate and specific provisions pertaining to the issues of women. The general principles embodied under the rubric of the right to equality apply to women also as any discrimination only on the basis of sex is absolutely forbidden. Article 15(3) suggests state action in the interest of women and children. Rather specific provisions regarding women are placed in the Directive Principles of State Policy which includes maternity benefits, health and moral well-being of the mother and the child, equity provisions like equal pay for equal work for both men and women and a common civil code. However, even after more than fifty years of independence, a number of these provisions have remained only in the constitution.

The deficiency of the constitutional provisions regarding women was sought to be made up through a string of legislations. Though law has never been considered an adequate means of transforming social structures, institutions and attitudes, it is still considered an indispensable method of social engineering. Hence, the state, also under pressure from the women’s organizations, has brought about several legislations on the women’s issues like dowry prohibition, child marriage restraint, equal remuneration, the indecent representation of women and pre-natal diagnostic techniques etc. Two important pending bills relate to reservation of seats for women in the higher elected bodies.

Though the constitutional-legal framework affirms and promotes the principles of equity and equality of women and takes care of their special needs, the practical shape to the doctrinal pronouncements has been accorded through the successive five-year plans. Till the fifth five-year plan, the governmental approach was to provide welfare measures for the women. The sixth plan for the first time shifted this welfarist approach to the development one with the focus being on health, education and employment. The seventh plan broke new grounds with ‘beneficiary-orientated programme’ which extended direct benefits to women. The eighth plan shifted the thrust from development to empowerment. The ninth plan committed itself to empowering women as agents of social change and development to enable them to exercise their rights both within and outside the home as equal partners with men. The tenth plan refers to the need to gender sensitize the various organs of the government and proposes to continue with the strategy of women empowerment as agents of social change and development with a three fold strategy of (i) social empowerment
(ii) economic empowerment with adoption of the concept of Gender Budgeting and Auditing, and (iii) gender justice to end gender discrimination and to allow women enjoy freedom on par with men in all spheres of life.

In the wake of the renewed efforts, originating from both the governmental and non-governmental quarters aimed at women empowerment came attitudinal changes in policy and perspective resulting into legal reforms, remedial measures at the level of public policy and institutional arrangement along with greater focus on socio-economic problems. Consequently, the National Commission for Women was set up in 1992 to act as the nodal agency to look after the general well-being of the women including the protection of women’s human rights. It has been given a comprehensive mandate to tackle the issues like economic empowerment through transfer of technology and vocational training and wage equality; political empowerment through representation in the legislative and decision-making bodies from the grass roots level to parliament; legal issues such as the need for the review of laws, speedy justice, custodial justice, redressal of grievances and the need for sensitization of the police and the judiciary; health and social issues such as tackling female foeticide and infanticide, trafficking in women and children; the problem of SC and ST women; the plight of the widows, specially in religious places; women victims of domestic violence and improving the status of women in India, among others.

The performance of the Indian government on the issue of protection and promotion of human rights of the women betrays the high sounding promises made in policy pronouncements and programme formulations. The increasing incidents of violence and crime against women bear testimony to the stark reality of the wide gap between the theory and practice. The way out, definitely, seems to be a holistic approach to the problem leading to attitudinal change in policy and perspective which in turn should lead to legal reforms, remedial measures at the level of public policy and institutional arrangement along with a greater focus on socio-economic problems faced by the women.

Sexual offenses against minors include any contact or interaction between a child and an adult in which the child is used for sexual stimulation or satisfaction by the perpetrator or another person. These acts, when committed by a person in a position of power or control over a child, are considered sex crimes. Sexual Offences against
child is a highly charged subject; so repelling that it often defies rational discussion. The real situation is obscured by the repetition of poorly documented facts and speculation. Within the debate of Sexual Offences against child there is often a prurient element, which leads to its sensational treatment. According to recent prevalence studies, the magnitude of Sexual Offences against child is massive and greater than previously acknowledged. This is a very sensitive issue as it touches the most intimate aspects of our lives and is hence difficult to work with. At the same time, a clear focus and priority against child sexual abuse and exploitation is grounded in the understanding that Sexual Offences against child offends our basic sense of dignity as human beings.52

2.12 Status and Dimensions of Child Welfare in India

India is one of the important countries in the world that has a large population of children. However, the issues and challenges of child welfare has not been part and parcel of the development discourse of the country from the early times. In other words, for a long period of time, the policy makers and the planners in the country could not realise the enormity of the problem and urgency of the initiation of concerted measures for the protection and promotion of rights of the child despite those being secured the different provisions on the fundamental rights in the Indian constitution. As a matter of fact, the discourse of the child welfare could become part and parcel of the development parlance in the country only after the international pressure that. As a result, the discourse of child rights became an integral part of the development strategy of the country with the argument that child needs to be provided with the basic needs in the country. In this regard the pivotal contribution of the Hague Convention on the protection of the children has played a significant role. Thus, it was after the international pressure only that the policy makers in the country think of looking at the issues and challenges of the rights of the children as core of the development discourse of the country. However, the international thrust towards the improvement in the conditions of the children also needed to be acknowledged to be initiated even before the start of the First World War. In fact, the major boost for the issues and challenges of the rights of the child could be well recognised only after the setting up of the League of Nations that adopted the important declaration on the welfare of the child.
The decadal census of India helps in figuring out the real position of the different sections of populations in the country. The 2011 decadal census brought out the fact that the population of the country stood at 1.2 crores representing around 17.5 of the total population of the world. Quite interestingly, out of such a vast number of people, the children go on to constitute around forty percent of the total population in such a way that the country could well be described as one of the most youthful nations in the world. Thus, the population of the children constitutes almost one third of the total population of the country. But the strange thing in this regard is the fact that the relatively poor social and economic conditions of the country leave majority of these children in an unenviable position of suffering from a number of problems relating to different aspects of their life. Further, given the lower rates of the human development index indicators, the population of the children in the country in the age group of zero to six years is likely to increase further with the expectation of higher jump in the growth of the population. The resultant increased pressure of the youthful population in the overall demographic profile of the country would have the potential of upsetting the estimates and calculations for the development targets of the country. In this regard, the other important issue is that of the growing disparities between the male and the female children in the country.

The status of the children in the country could be understood with regard to the three interrelated factors. Firstly, the rapid growth of the population in the country is likely to enhance the pressure of the demography on the development dynamics of the country. As a result, there would be greater constraints on the resources in such a way that the seemingly unnecessary expenditures such as on the welfare of the child is likely to be marginalised in the face of the increased requirements from the other sectors of the economy. Secondly, the ratio of the male and females in the overall growth of the child population of the country would also be an interesting trend to watch for as the rise in the female population needs to be maintained in corresponding figure with the males. Finally, the overall physical health and the nutritional needs of the children in all parts of the country also needs to be taken sufficient care of due to the large number of the low birth babies being born in the country over the years. As for as the data for the current plan period is concerned, the states like Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar did have large number of children with low birth weight. As a result, special measures might be needed to be initiated in these states to
make sure that not only the low birth weight babies are provided with sufficient food with full scale nutritional needs but also the lactating mothers as well as the pregnant women are also provided with rich diet along with other medical and precautionary health checkups so that they are made rid of all the probable risks of being disturbed by the diseases that may risk the life of the likely to be born babies.

As a matter of fact, the strategy for the child welfare in the country must take care that the protective measures for the child must be initiated from the time a child enters into the womb of his or her mother. Therefore, the birth of a healthy child could be ensured only when the mother of the baby is allowed to become free from all sorts of the issues and challenges facing her health as a lactating mother. In this regard, the eye opener fact is that the a vast majority of women in the country suffer from a number of health and nutritional related problems and diseases that cost them dearly not only in terms of their health but the health of the babies yet to be born out of their wombs. Though a range of preventive measures including preventive vaccination had been initiated in the country, the coverage of the scheme in different states of the country had been found to be quite low. On theses counts, the states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, etc. are found to be lacking not only the adequate coverage in all parts of their states but also in terms of the better supplies and support to the women who are found in the need of support from the state governments.

2.13 Conclusion

The idea of child and child welfare has been part of the human contemplation since ancient times. It is therefore not surprising to find that in almost all the civilisation and cultures some sort of ideational inputs on child and child welfare have always been prevalent. However, the theoretical traditions with regard to child and child welfare have not been uniform throughout the world. These have been conceptualised in accordance with the long standing convictions of society and its people with regard to the different aspects of child's personality. Moreover, the issues and dimensions of the child welfare have also not been uniform in all the countries of the world. For instance, while in the developed world, child welfare relates to the provision of congenial circumstances for the holistic development of the personality of a child, in the developing and underdeveloped countries, child welfare specifically relates to the
provision of the basic minimum needs of the child so that he or she could suffer from debilitating physical deformities and challenges. It was in this context that the schemes like ICDS in India have emerged as the flagship scheme for child welfare in the country.
Endnotes

1 Child and childhood are complex ideas that have been defined by different people differently. For an analytical overview of the issues and challenges in defining the concept of child and childhood, see, Vibha Sharma, 'Development of the Concept of Childhood and Child Welfare in India', in Vibha Sharma and Ashlie Brink (eds.), *Childhood through the Looking Glass*, Glasgow: Inter University Press, 2016, p. 72

2 'An Introduction to Child Development', available at: https://catalogue.pearsoned.ca/assets/hip/us/hip_us_pearsonhighered/samplechapter/0205959881.pdf, accessed on 27.01.2017


6 The definition of the child from the perspective the juvenile delinquency has been attempted by K. Kusum in her *Juvenile Delinquency: A Socio-Legal Study*, New Delhi: K L M Book House, 1979, p. 41


9 A fine analysis of the western concept of the child and childhood and the issues and challenges faced by the children in the western societies is very able presented in, Aries Philippe, *Centuries of Childhood*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1962, pp.22-23.


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