

# Childcare needs of urban poor ignored: Experts <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS:

Childcare needs of the urban poor continue to remain ignored despite social schemes, experts said on Tuesday at the release of a micro study conducted in 28 unauthorised colonies in the national capital.

The survey, conducted by NGO Delhi Forum for Creche and Childcare Services (FORCES), spanned across 1,380 households in 28 slums.

The survey showed that nearly 60 percent women spend four to eight hours at work when they have to leave children unattended at home in absence of any care and protection - nutritional, health and social.

"Children need a lot more than just food and their needs have not been articulated. We need to be their voice and build people's pressure till there is a law that recognizes the rights of young children," said National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) chairperson Shanta Sinha.

"If we are capable of launching Agni-V, surely we are capable of providing safe and healthy arrangements for childcare," Sinha added.

In the surveyed areas, nearly 72% women said they need creche services for child's nutritional health and security. The women, dependent on anganwadi services, said the centres were functional for limited hours during the day which were not feasible for women.

Around 29% children were left to be attended by their siblings, while over 45% women left children with neighbors and elderly at home.

"It is unacceptable that basic services and childcare services are in such a poor state. All work by women inside and outside the house should be recognized for its economic contribution and its social and human impact," said Vandana Prasad, a health activist.

"Only a comprehensive strategy, which includes creches and maternity protection, along with a strengthened integrated child development services (ICDS) could respond to this situation of malnutrition and neglect," she added.

Over 800 women from 28 slums participated at the meet organised by Delhi FORCES here. A charter of demands on daycare services was also read out to the secretary of women and child development ministry.

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