



National Family Health Survey-5

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Why in News

Recently, the **first-phase data** of the **National Family Health Survey-5** (NFHS-5) 2019-20 has been released by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.

- NFHS is a **large-scale, multi-round survey conducted in a representative sample of households throughout India**.
- All NFHSs have been conducted under the stewardship of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, with the **International Institute for Population Sciences** (IIPS) Mumbai, serving as the nodal agency.
Established in 1956 under the joint sponsorship of Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, the Government of India and the **United Nations** (UN), IIPS has established itself as the premier institute for **training and research in population studies for developing countries in the Asia and Pacific region**.
- **Phase 2** of the survey (covering remaining states) was **delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic** and its results are expected to be made available in **May 2021**.

Key Points

- **About the Survey:**
 - The NFHS-5 captured data **during 2014-19** and its **content is similar to NFHS-4** (2015-16) to allow comparisons over time and also **marks a shift** from it.
 - It provides an **indicator for tracking 30 Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) that the country **aims to achieve by 2030**.
 - However, **NFHS-5 includes some new topics**, such as preschool education, disability, access to a toilet facility, death registration, bathing practices during menstruation, and methods and reasons for abortion.
 - In **2019**, for the **first time**, the NFHS-5 sought details on the **percentage of women and men who have ever used the Internet**.

- **Data Analysis:**
 - Several states across the country have **reversed course and recorded worsening levels of child malnutrition despite improvements** in sanitation and better access to fuel and drinking water.
 - The latest data captures the state of health in the states before the **pandemic**.
 - Several states have either witnessed **meagre improvements** or **sustained reversals** on **four key metrics** of child (under 5 years of age) malnutrition parameters.
 - These four key metrics are **child stunting, child wasting, share of children underweight** and **child mortality rate**.
 - The data from these metrics is also used in several global indices such as the **Global Hunger Index**.
- **Child Stunting:**
 - The **most surprising reversals** have happened in child stunting, which reflects **chronic undernutrition**, and refers to the **percentage of children who have low height for their age**.
 - Stunting, more than any other factor, is likely to have **long-lasting adverse effects on the cognitive and physical development** of a child.
 - **Telangana, Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra, and West Bengal** saw increased levels of child stunting.
 - The reversals in child stunting are “hugely troubling” as normally, stunting levels do not increase because all the things that affect child growth tend to improve as stable democracies and economies move ahead.
- **Child Wasting:**
 - It reflects **acute undernutrition** and refers to **children having low weight for their height**.
 - **India has always had a high level of child wasting**.
 - Instead of reducing it, **Telangana, Kerala, Bihar, Assam and Jammu-Kashmir** witnessed an **increase** and **Maharashtra and West Bengal** have been **stagnant**.
- **Share of Children Underweight:**

In the proportion of underweight children, big states like **Gujarat, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Telangana, Assam and Kerala** have seen an **increase**.

- **Child Mortality Rate:**

- **Infant Mortality Rate** (the number of deaths per 1000 live births for children under the age of 1) and **Under 5 Mortality Rate** data is mostly **stagnant**.
- **Between NFHS-3** (2005-05) and **NFHS-4**, there was **progress on mortality reduction** but **NFHS-5 and NFHS-4** are about five years apart still there is **very little progress** in many states.
- In **Maharashtra**, the under-5 mortality rate is basically the same in NFHS-4 and in **Bihar**, it **reduced by just 3%** over five years.
- Over 60% of child mortality is explained by child malnutrition, which is the central problem and needs to be addressed.

- **Urban-rural Gender Gaps in Internet Use:**

- There is an **urban-rural gap** as well as **gender divide** with respect to the use of the Internet in several states and union territories.

On average, **less than 3 out of 10 women in rural India and 4 out of 10 women in urban India** ever used the Internet.

- **General Data:** An average 42.6% of women ever used the Internet as against an average of 62.16% among the men.
- **In Urban India:** An average of 56.81% of women ever used the Internet compared to an average of 73.76% among the men.
- **In Rural India:** A dismal 33.94% women in rural India ever used the Internet as against 55.6% among men.

The **percentage of women**, who ever used the Internet, **significantly dropped in rural India**.

Source: IE