

National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 2019-20

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In news

Recently, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 2019-20 report

Key findings of the survey

- As per the phase-I of the survey, several states across the country have reversed course and recorded worsening levels of child malnutrition despite dramatic improvements in sanitation and better access to fuel and drinking water
- It marks a shift since the last NFHS in 2015-16.
- **The NFHS 2019-20 data of first phase pertains to 17 states** including Maharashtra, Bihar, and West Bengal and five Union Territories (including J&K)
- The survey captures the state of health in these states before the Covid pandemic
- **Phase 2 of the survey**, which will cover other states such as Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Madhya Pradesh, was delayed due to the pandemic and its results are expected to be made available in May 2021.
- **Meagre improvements:** The new survey shows that several states have either witnessed meagre improvements or sustained reversals on child (under 5 years of age) malnutrition parameters such as child stunting; child wasting; share of children underweight and child mortality rate.

Child stunting: child stunting reflects chronic undernutrition and refers to the percentage of children who have low height for their age.

Child wasting: Child wasting reflects acute undernutrition and refers to children having low weight for their height.

Infant mortality rate: It is the number of deaths per 1000 live births for children under the age of 1

- **Child wasting:** States such as Telangana, Kerala, Bihar, and Assam as well as the UT of J&K have witnessed an increase in **Child wasting. Others like Maharashtra and West Bengal have been stagnant on this**
- **Underweight children:** Several big states, Gujarat, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Telangana, Assam and Kerala, have seen an increase.
- **Child stunting:** Telangana, Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra, and West Bengal – all saw increased levels of child stunting
- **Infant Mortality Rate:** Under 5 mortality was observed to be 74 deaths per 1,000 births in NFHS-3, and 50 deaths per 1,000 births in NFHS-4, a decline of about 33% over 10 years. NFHS-5 and NFHS-4 are about five years apart, but we are seeing very little progress in many states.
- In Maharashtra, the under-5 mortality rate is basically the same in NFHS-4 and 5, and in Bihar, it reduced by just 3% over five years
- According to a senior research fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute, over 60 per cent of child mortality is explained by poor nutrition. In other words, child malnutrition is the central problem.
- According to the Ministry, the contents of NFHS-5 are similar to NFHS-4 to allow comparisons over time. The NFHS-5, however, 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.

About National Family Health Survey

- The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) is a large-scale, multi-round survey conducted in a representative sample of households throughout India.
- The NFHS is a **collaborative project of the International Institute for Population Sciences(IIPS), Mumbai, India; ORC Macro, Calverton, Maryland, USA and the East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA.**
- **The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW), Government of India, designated IIPS as the nodal agency,** responsible for providing coordination and technical guidance for the NFHS.
- NFHS was **funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** with supplementary support from United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).
- The survey provides state and national information for India on fertility, infant and child mortality, the practice of family planning, maternal and child health, reproductive health, nutrition, anaemia, utilization and quality of health and family planning services.
- List of NHFS:
 1. NHFS-1 (1992-93)
 2. NHFS-2 (1998-99)
 3. NHFS-3 (2005-06)-
 4. NHFS-4(2015-16)
 5. NHFS-5 (2019-20)

Government's efforts to fight malnutrition

POSHAN ABHIYAN, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), the National Health Mission, the Janani Suraksha Yojana, the Matritva Sahyog Yojana, the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, and the National Food Security Mission, among others