

Transformation in a billion lives

The most recent family health survey throws up a plethora of interesting data that offer a peek into the changes in a post-pandemic society, and pointers to the Centre on where it needs to step up its game. BY RAMESH CHAKRAPANI

THE chief takeaway from the fifth round of the National Family Health Survey, which comes on the heels of the end of the COVID-19 pandemic that upended a billion lives, is that an increasing number of women are empowered and making or participating in decisions that directly affect or involve them.

Among the key findings in the survey report, released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in early May, 96 per cent of households use an improved source of drinking water and 69 per cent of households use an improved sanitation facility, while 19 per cent have no choice but to practice open defecation. About 97 per cent of households are electrified, but only 59 per cent use clean fuel for cooking. Some 27 per cent of the population is under 15 years, while 12 per cent is 60 and above.

On consumption of tobacco and alcohol, the report found that 38 per cent of men and 9 per cent of women aged 15 and above use tobacco products, while 19 per cent of men and 1 per cent of women aged 15 and above drink alcohol.

In the area of women's empowerment, the survey said that women's

participation in decision making has increased since NFHS-4. It found that 85 per cent of employed women participate in decisions about the use of their own earnings, while 71 per cent of currently married women participate in decisions about their own health care and major household purchases.

According to the survey, 32 per cent of currently married women aged 15-49 are employed. About 79 per cent of women have a bank or savings account they themselves use and 54 per cent have a mobile phone they themselves use. The data also showed that 42 per cent of women own a house alone or jointly with someone, while 32 per cent of women own land alone or jointly with someone.

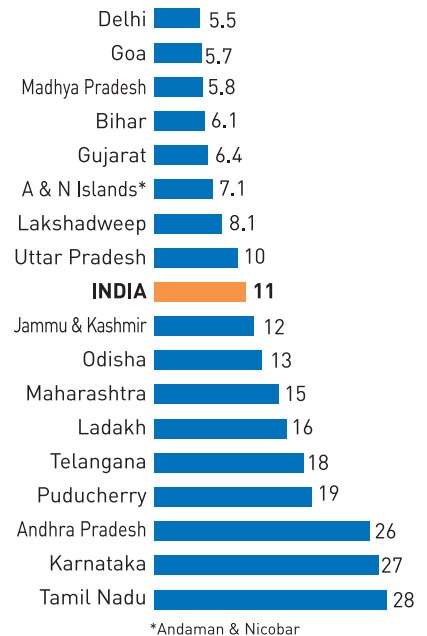
The report also showed that a remarkably high percentage of the population engaged in hand-washing, quite possibly a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the government's repeated exhortations to wash hands to prevent infections

Regarding distribution of wealth, the survey found that 46 per cent of the urban population fell in the top

quintile compared to only 8.1 per cent of the rural population, indicating the wider prosperity gap in the villages.

Consanguineous marriages by State/UT

Percentage of ever-married women age 15-49



Handwashing among public*

(percentage)

Residence	Place available	Water available	Soap available
Urban	96.9	96.7	89.0
Rural	95.9	89.8	68.2

Wealth quintile

Quintile	Place available	Water available	Soap available
Lowest	94.1	80.0	46.4
Second	95.5	88.8	64.4
Middle	96.0	93.7	77.2
Fourth	97.2	97.6	88.3
Highest	98.3	99.4	96.8
Total	96.2	92.0	74.9

*De jure population for whom place for washing hands was observed

Smoking by anyone inside the house (percentage of population)

Housing characteristic	Urban	Rural	Total
Daily	18.4	27.5	24.5
Weekly	6.5	8.8	8.1
Monthly	3.2	4.9	4.4
Less than monthly	3.1	4.2	3.8
Never	68.8	54.6	59.3

Consumption of alcohol among men (percentage of population category)

Age	Urban	Rural	Total
15-19	1.4	2.2	1.9
20-34	13.9	16.6	15.6
35-49	24.3	29.1	27.4
50-64	21.2	26.5	24.7
65 and above	13.1	18.1	16.6

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

32 per cent of currently married women aged **15-49** are employed.

Among employed women, **83 per cent** earn cash and **15 per cent** are not paid at all.

85 per cent of employed women participate in decisions about the use of their own earnings.

79 per cent of women have a bank or savings account they themselves use.

54 per cent of women have mobile phone they themselves use.

71 per cent of currently married women participate in decisions about their own health care and major household purchases.

Women's participation in decision making has **increased** since NFHS-4.

42 per cent of women own a house alone or jointly with someone.

32 per cent of women own land alone or jointly with someone.



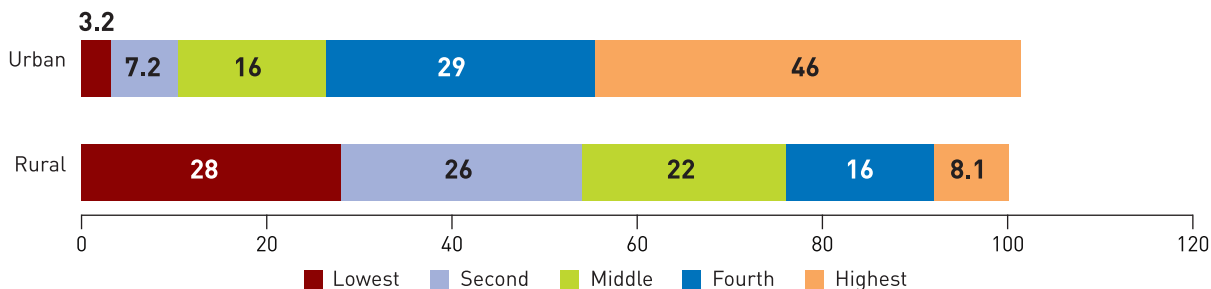
Alcohol consumption among men as % of population*

Arunachal Pradesh	52.6
Telangana	43.4
Sikkim	39.9
Manipur	37.2
Goa	36.8
Jharkhand	34.9
Chhattisgarh	34.7
Tripura	33.2
Meghalaya	32.4
Himachal Pradesh	31.9

*Age 15 years and above

Household wealth by residence

Percentage distribution of de jure population by wealth quintiles



KEY FINDINGS

96	per cent of households use an improved source of drinking water
69	per cent of households use improved sanitation facility, 19 per cent practice open defecation
97	per cent of households have electricity
59	per cent of households use clean fuel for cooking
27	per cent of population is under age 15 , 12 per cent is 60 and above
40	per cent of boys and girls age 2-4 years attend preschool.
38	per cent of men and 9 per cent of women aged 15 and above use tobacco products
19	per cent of men and 1 per cent of women aged 15 and above drink alcohol

CONTROL OVER WOMEN'S EARNINGS

% of married women with cash earnings who had a say in decisions about how the money would be used

