



# P.L.RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

**Building Bureaucrats Since 2006**

## 2. National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-6 – Report

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has released the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-6, the most comprehensive health survey conducted across India. NFHS-6 was conducted during 2023-24 covering nearly 6.79 lakh households across 715 districts providing critical data on population health and family welfare. The survey reveals steady progress in maternal and child health alongside emerging non-communicable disease burdens.

### 1. About National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-6

#### Survey Methodology and Coverage

1. The NFHS-6 was conducted during 2023-24 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai as the nodal agency.
2. Covering nearly 6.79 lakh households across 715 districts in all States and UTs except Manipur, the survey provides evidence on population, health, nutrition, and family welfare indicators.
3. It supports evidence-based planning and programme implementation up to the district level enabling targeted interventions.

### 2. Major Findings of NFHS-6

#### Improvements in Maternal and Child Healthcare

1. 95.9% of pregnant women received antenatal care (ANC), demonstrating near-universal coverage of prenatal services.
2. Mothers receiving ANC in the first trimester increased from 70.0% to 76.2%, enabling early risk detection and intervention.
3. Early antenatal care enables identification of complications and timely management improving maternal outcomes.

#### Institutional Delivery Progress

1. Institutional deliveries increased from 88.6% to 90.6%, moving India closer toward universal coverage and safer delivery practices.
2. Births attended by skilled health personnel improved from 89.4% to 91.3%, ensuring professional management of labor and delivery complications.
3. Institutional delivery reduces maternal and neonatal mortality through access to emergency obstetric care.

#### Rising Caesarean Section Rates

1. Caesarean section deliveries have increased sharply from 21.5% to 27.2% nationally, with the C-section rate in urban areas reaching 40%.
2. This rate far exceeds the World Health Organization's optimal threshold of 10-15%, raising concerns about overuse of surgical intervention.
3. Excessive cesarean sections increase maternal morbidity, hospitalization costs, and recovery complications.

#### Maternal Nutrition Improvements

1. Mothers consuming iron folic acid supplements for 100 days or more during pregnancy increased from 44.1% to 54.9%.

2. Those consuming supplements for 180 days or more rose from 26.0% to 37.8%, improving pregnancy outcomes and reducing anaemia-related complications.
3. Adequate micronutrient supplementation reduces maternal anaemia, prevents preterm births, and improves fetal development.

### **Family Planning Progress**

1. India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) remains at 2.0, achieving replacement level fertility.
2. The Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) increased from 66.7% to 69.1%, reflecting expanding access to family planning methods.
3. Higher contraceptive use enables women to space pregnancies and plan family sizes.

### **Child Immunization Success**

1. Full vaccination coverage among children aged 12–23 months based on vaccination cards increased from 83.8% to 87.1%.
2. 95.6% of children received most vaccinations through public health facilities, demonstrating confidence in government immunization programs.
3. Any vaccine received by children aged 12–23 months remains consistently high above 96%, indicating high program coverage.

### **Child Nutrition Improvements**

1. 95.6% of children under six months of age were found to be breastfed during the survey period, promoting optimal nutrition.
2. Stunting (low height for age) among children under five years declined substantially from 35.5% to 29.3%, indicating improved nutritional status.
3. Severe wasting declined sharply from 7.7% to 5.2%, while underweight prevalence in under-five children registered marginal decline from 32.1% to 31.8%.

### **Health Protection Expansion**

1. Health insurance/financing scheme coverage has expanded significantly from 41.0% to 60.2% at the household level.
2. Expanded coverage improves access to healthcare and protects families from catastrophic health expenses.

### **Women's Empowerment and Financial Inclusion**

1. Women who had ever used the internet nearly doubled from 33.3% to 64.3%, enabling digital access and information availability.
2. Women having a bank or savings account they themselves use increased from 78.6% to 89.0%, improving financial independence.
3. Women having a mobile phone they themselves use rose from 53.9% to 63.6%, enabling communication and information access.
4. The use of hygienic methods of menstrual protection among women aged 15–24 years increased from 77.6% to 79.2%.

## **3.Way Forward**

### **Addressing Non-Communicable Disease Burden**

1. Emerging challenges such as rising non-communicable diseases and dual burden of undernutrition and rising overweight/obesity highlight the need for continued preventive healthcare focus.
2. Screening and management programs must expand for NCDs including diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease.

### **Reducing Excessive Caesarean Sections**

1. Address high cesarean section rates through guidelines promoting vaginal delivery in appropriate cases.
2. Training and mentoring programs should emphasize evidence-based delivery management.

### **Sustaining Gains Through Convergence**

1. With continued emphasis on convergence, last-mile delivery, and inclusive growth, India is well-positioned to sustain these gains and further improve health and well-being.
2. Integration of health programs ensures efficient resource use and comprehensive service coverage.

### **UPSC Mains Relevance**

1. **GS Paper 2** - Public health systems, maternal and child health, healthcare access, health equity, gender empowerment.
2. **GS Paper 3** - Healthcare infrastructure, public health spending, nutrition, communicable and non-communicable diseases.
3. Understanding NFHS findings is essential for analysing India's progress toward Sustainable Development Goals and public health performance.

**Source -** <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=2266600&reg=3&lang=1>