

- **Increasing Awareness among Women:** A good, but not easy, way to achieve the stated objective is to take steps to **counsel girls on early pregnancies**, and provide them the network to improve their health.
  - The focus must be on **creating social awareness about women's sexual and reproductive health and rights**, and ensuring girls are not forced to drop out of school or college.

## NFHS 5: A Women-Centric Analysis

The [National Family Health Survey \(NFHS 5\)](#), which presents a **bird's eye view of the state of the nation's health**, has **provided encouraging outcomes** on several fronts: [stabilizing population growth](#), improved family planning services and better delivery of health systems.

However, it also **highlights the need for further improvement to address gender-based violence and harmful practices against women and girls**, such as [child marriage](#) and gender-biased sex selection.

These have been exacerbated by discriminatory social norms and practices hindering the achievement of the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\) 2030 Agenda](#) and India's development goals.

### Women-Specific Findings of NFHS 5: The Positive Side

- **TFR Below Replacement Level:** India's population growth appears to be stabilising.
  - The [Total Fertility Rate \(TFR\)](#), which is the average number of children born per woman, has **declined from 2.2 to 2.0 at the national level**.
  - A total of 31 States and Union Territories (constituting **69.7% of the country's population**) have achieved fertility rates below the replacement level of 2.1.
- **Better Family Planning:** The main reasons for decline in fertility is an **increase in adoption of modern family planning methods** (from 47.8% in 2015-16 to 56.5% in 2019-21) and a **reduction in unmet need for family planning by 4% points** over the same period.
- **Improvements in Female Literacy:** Significant **improvements in female literacy** have been witnessed with **41% women having received 10 or more years of schooling** (compared to 36% in 2015-16).
  - Girls who study longer have fewer children, and are also more likely to delay marriage and find employment.

- **Improved Maternal Health Delivery:** [Maternal health services](#) are steadily improving.
  - **Antenatal care** in the first trimester has **increased by 11.4% points** (from 2015-16 to 2019-21) to reach 70%
    - The recommended four antenatal care check-ups have increased by 7% points to reach 58.1%
    - **Postnatal care visits have gone up by 15.6% points** to reach 78%.
  - [Institutional births](#) were **accessed by 88.6% of women in 2019-21**, marking an increase of 9.8% points from 2015-16.
    - There has also been an **increase in institutional deliveries in public health facilities** (52.1% to 61.9%).
- **Better Menstrual Health and Bodily Autonomy:** Evidence indicates significant **progress where women have the right to bodily autonomy and integrity** and the ability to take decisions about their lives.
  - The proportion of women (aged 15-24 years) who use [menstrual hygiene products](#) has also increased by almost 20% points between 2015-16 and 2019-21 and currently stands at 77.3%.
- **Technology and Banking Related Progress:** The proportion of women who have their **own bank accounts has gone up by 25.6% points** over the same time period to reach 78.6%.
  - Around **54% of women have their own mobile phones** and about **one in three women have used the Internet**.

EXCERPTS FROM NFHS SURVEY		
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT (WOMEN AGE 15-49 YEARS)		
	2020-21	2015-16
Participation of married women in household decisions	92%	73.8%
Women who worked in last 12 months and paid in cash	24.9%	21.1%
Women owning a house and/or land (alone or jointly)	22.7%	34.9%
Women having a bank or savings account that they use	72.5%	64.5%
Women having a mobile phone that they themselves use	73.8%	66.6%
NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF ADULTS (AGE 15-49 YEARS)		
	2020-21	2015-16
Women whose Body Mass Index (BMI) is below normal	10%	14.9%
Men whose Body Mass Index (BMI) is below normal	9.1%	17.7%
Women who are overweight or obese	41.3%	33.5%
Men who are overweight or obese	38%	24.6%
Average out-of-pocket expenditure per delivery in a public health facility (in Rs)	2,548	8,518
Women who have ever used the internet	63.8%	NA
Men who have ever used the internet	85.2%	NA
Households with any usual member covered under a health insurance/financing scheme	25%	15.7%

Note:

