



## THE HEALTH OF OUR CHILDREN

In 2013, the ministry of women and child development and Unicef conducted a survey of about 100,000 Indian households to gauge the health parameters of children and women. While a part of the report – the Rapid Survey on Children – was released by the government earlier, a large section continues to be under wraps. A part of this unreleased report that came out in *The Economist* last week shows the remarkable stride that India has made in improving its health parameters, particularly in reducing the number of underweight children. But it also highlights uneven progress among states. *Business Standard* takes a look at the key findings:

## UNDERWEIGHT CHILDREN\*

The percentage of underweight children (under 5 years) declined from 42.5 in 2005-06 to 29.4 in 2013-14. Nine states outpaced this reduction and 20 (including Delhi) worked at a slower pace. Madhya Pradesh showed the most improvement. A similar performance was seen in Bihar, which reduced the number of underweight children from 56% to 37%. Among the bigger states, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh were laggards



State/UT	2005-06	2013-14	Reduction**
Jharkhand	56.5	42.1	14.4
Bihar	55.9	37.1	18.8
Madhya Pradesh	60.0	36.1	23.9
Uttar Pradesh	42.4	34.5	7.9
Odisha	40.7	34.4	6.3
Chhattisgarh	47.1	33.9	13.2
Gujarat	44.6	33.5	11.1
Rajasthan	39.9	31.5	8.4
Meghalaya	48.8	30.9	17.9
Tripura	39.6	30.5	9.1
West Bengal	38.7	30.0	8.7
All India	42.5	29.4	13.1
Karnataka	37.6	29.0	8.6
Maharashtra	37.0	25.2	11.8
Arunachal Pradesh	32.5	24.6	7.9
Tamil Nadu	29.8	23.3	6.5
Haryana	39.6	22.7	16.9
Andhra Pradesh	32.5	22.3	10.2
Assam	36.4	22.2	14.2
Uttarakhand	38.0	20.5	17.5
Himachal Pradesh	36.5	19.5	17.0
Nagaland	25.2	19.5	5.7
Delhi	26.1	19.4	6.7
Kerala	22.9	18.5	4.4
Goa	25.0	16.2	8.8
Punjab	24.9	16.1	8.8
Sikkim	19.7	15.8	3.9
Jammu & Kashmir	25.6	15.6	10.0
Mizoram	19.9	14.8	5.1
Manipur	22.1	14.1	8.0

The states in green have better performance than the national average.

\* % of below-five-year children's population in the state; \*\* % of total number of households in the state; \*\* change in percentage points; Note: For underweight children, weight is at least two standard deviations below average; for stunted children, height is at least two standard deviations below average. Sources: *The Economist*, National Family Health Survey-3 and Census 2011

## STUNTED GROWTH\*

The percentage of children (under five years) whose growth was stunted also saw a decrease between 2005-06 and 2013-14. In 2005-06, 48% of children were stunted, while there were around 39% stunted children in 2013-14. But there are eight states (most of them large) with a higher percentage of stunted children than the national average. Half of all children in the under-five age group were stunted in both Uttar Pradesh (50.6) and Bihar (49.4)



State/UT	2005-06	2013-14	Reduction**
Uttar Pradesh	56.8	50.6	6.2
Bihar	55.6	49.4	6.2
Jharkhand	49.8	47.3	2.5
Chhattisgarh	52.9	43.0	9.9
Meghalaya	55.1	42.9	12.2
Gujarat	51.7	41.8	9.9
Madhya Pradesh	50.0	41.6	8.4
Assam	46.5	40.6	5.9
All India	48.0	38.8	9.2
Odisha	45.0	38.2	6.8
Haryana	45.7	36.5	9.2
Rajasthan	47.3	36.5	7.2
Andhra Pradesh	42.7	35.5	7.2
Maharashtra	46.3	35.4	10.9
West Bengal	44.6	34.7	9.9
Karnataka	43.7	34.7	9.0
Uttarakhand	44.4	34.2	10.2
Himachal Pradesh	38.6	34.2	4.4
Manipur	35.6	33.2	2.4
Jammu & Kashmir	35.0	31.9	3.1
Tripura	35.7	31.0	4.7
Punjab	36.7	30.5	6.2
Delhi	42.2	29.2	13.0
Nagaland	38.8	29.1	9.7
Arunachal Pradesh	43.3	28.4	14.9
Sikkim	38.3	28.0	10.3
Mizoram	39.8	26.9	12.9
Tamil Nadu	30.9	23.3	7.6
Goa	25.6	21.3	4.3
Kerala	24.5	19.5	5.0

## OPEN DEFECATION\*

The number of households whose members defecate in the open has come down from 53% in 2011 to 45% in 2013-14. With the exception of two states – Assam and Manipur – all states have increased the number of households using toilets. But even then, there still are seven states (all with large population) where members of around 60% households defecate in the open. These also are states showing poor performance in other health parameters



State	2011	2013-14	Reduction**
Odisha	78.0	77.7	0.3
Jharkhand	78.0	75.6	2.4
Bihar	76.9	74.8	2.1
Chhattisgarh	75.4	69.6	5.8
Meghalaya	71.2	63.4	7.8
Rajasthan	65.0	59.1	5.9
Uttar Pradesh	64.4	57.7	6.7
All India	53.1	44.8	8.3
Tamil Nadu	51.7	43.4	8.3
Andhra Pradesh	50.4	39.2	11.2
Gujarat	42.7	38.1	4.6
Assam	35.1	37.5	-2.4
Maharashtra	46.9	36.5	10.4
Jammu & Kashmir	48.8	33.2	15.6
Karnataka	48.8	33.0	15.8
Arunachal Pradesh	38.0	31.7	6.3
Meghalaya	37.1	30.6	6.5
West Bengal	41.2	28.3	12.9
Haryana	31.4	25.6	5.8
Himachal Pradesh	30.9	21.8	9.1
Uttarakhand	34.2	21.6	12.6
Nagaland	23.5	16.0	9.5
Goa	20.3	13.9	6.4
Manipur	10.7	12.6	-1.9
Punjab	20.7	9.7	11.0
Sikkim	12.8	4.6	8.2
Mizoram	8.1	3.8	4.3
Tripura	14.0	3.5	10.5
Delhi	10.5	2.5	8.0
Kerala	4.8	1.9	2.9