



SUCCESS STORY

Creating the World's Largest Health Care Report Card

NFHS-3 Brochures



USAID/India

Three of the brochures illustrating the results of NFHS-3.

“USAID gave us access to survey expertise from around the world and infrastructure for analysis. That raised the quality of our work to a higher standard. We learned from the doing versus the teaching of population studies.”

– Dr. P. N. Mari Bhat, Director of the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), the Indian-based implementer of the survey.

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The real accomplishment of India's third National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3) has not been its findings but rather its scope and impact. NFHS-3 involved surveys of 124,385 women and 74,369 men in 3,849 villages and urban centers across India. Dissemination of the resulting data has spurred debate in the media and action by decisionmakers. For example, Health Minister Anbumani Ramadoss has referenced the NFHS-3 finding that the percentages of women and children in India who are anemic have increased to 56 percent and 79 percent, respectively, since the late 1990s. “This really is a cause of concern for the government,” Ramadoss said.

NFHS, a productive collaboration between the Government of India and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), began in the early 1990s, and public-private partner support for today's research is increasing the survey's reach and potential impact. NFHS-3's profile of the state of population and health in India as well as its tracking of progress over time have earned a “gold standard” reputation for reliability. The first NFHS (1991-92) was a landmark for collecting and analyzing health information that was previously unavailable in a usable format to a wide target audience. NFHS-2 (1998-99) increased the visibility of the research, and as a result, trends emerged.

“We know that the NFHS is the only household survey on health in India. When given the opportunity, we wanted to support it and take this chance to get rich data on HIV/AIDS,” said Ashok Alexander, Director of Avahan, the India AIDS Initiative of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Due to more robust and diverse funding from private and public sources, the third survey was significantly wider in scope and reach and covered HIV/AIDS at a crucial time in the epidemic. The expanding partnership, led by USAID and the Government of India, included the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, UNICEF, the Department for International Development (United Kingdom), and the United Nations Population Fund.