

Basic Living Conditions

Household Living Conditions Need Improvement

Access to clean water, improved sanitation facilities, and safe cooking fuel prevents millions of deaths worldwide. Throughout India, unhealthy environments and poor living conditions impose a heavy burden on families and communities.

Household Sanitation

- Unsafe disposal of human waste is a major health hazard in the country. More than half (55 percent) of the households have no toilet facilities at all. Seventy-four percent of households in rural areas lack basic toilet facilities, compared with 17 percent of urban households.

More than 90% of households have toilet facilities in:

Kerala
Manipur
Mizoram
Delhi
Tripura

Fewer than 30% of households have toilet facilities in:

Bihar
Chhattisgarh
Jharkhand
Madhya Pradesh
Orissa

- Nationwide, only 29 percent of households have improved toilet facilities.
- Most families in India follow unsafe practices for disposing of children's stools. For 80 percent of mothers in rural areas, the stools of the youngest child under 5 years are thrown into the garbage or left in the open.

Access to an Improved Water Source

- Almost 9 in 10 households (88 percent) use an improved source for their drinking water. About one-fourth of households have water used for drinking piped into their homes or yards; other households rely on public taps, tube wells, or boreholes.
- Almost half of all households (49 percent) have to travel to get their drinking water. For 37 percent of households, getting water takes less than 30 minutes for a round trip, and for 12 percent of households getting water takes 30 minutes or more. The job of getting water still falls overwhelmingly on women and girls.
- About one-third of households treat their drinking water by boiling or other methods to make it safer to drink.

Cooking Fuel

- Smoke from solid cooking fuels such as wood, charcoal, and animal dung can lead to a range of serious health problems including respiratory infections, low birth weight, and eye problems. Almost half (49 percent) of households in India cook with wood, and 11 percent use dung cakes.
- Ninety percent of rural households rely on solid fuel for cooking, compared with less than one-third (31 percent) of urban households.
- Cooking indoors can increase family exposure to smoke. Seventy-four percent of households cook their meals inside the house; 32 percent of households cook inside the house without having a separate kitchen or room for cooking.

For more information about household living conditions, please see Chapter 2 in the NFHS-3 final report. For more information about disposal of children's stools, see Chapter 9.