

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSEHOLDS

This chapter presents a profile of the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of NFHS-2 households and describes facilities and services that are available in villages in India. The chapter also includes some comparisons of NFHS-2 results with results from NFHS-1, the Census of India, and the Sample Registration System (SRS).

2.1 Age-Sex Distribution of the Household Population

The NFHS-2 household population can be tabulated in two ways: *de facto* (the place each person stayed the night before the survey interview) or *de jure* (the place of usual residence). The *de facto* and *de jure* populations in India may differ because of temporary population movements within or between states. Table 2.1 shows the *de facto* population in the NFHS-2 household sample for India, classified by age, residence, and sex. The total *de facto* sample population is 486,011. The sample is 27 percent urban and 73 percent rural.

The age distribution of the population in India is typical of populations in which fertility has fallen recently, with relatively low proportions of the population in the younger and older age groups (Figure 2.1). Thirty-six percent are below 15 years of age and 5 percent are age 65 or older. The proportion below age 15 is slightly higher in rural areas (38 percent) than in urban areas (32 percent).

The single-year age distributions by sex in the *de facto* population (see Appendix Table D.1) indicate that there is some misreporting of ages, including considerable preference for ages ending in particular digits, especially 0, 2, and 5. One of the most commonly used measures of digit preference in age reporting is Myers' Index (United Nations, 1955). This index provides an overall summary of preferences for, or avoidance of, each of the 10 digits, from 0 to 9. Values of Myers' Index computed for the age range 10–69 in the household sample population in India are 23 for males and 18 for females. The index is often used as one indicator of survey quality. The lower estimate for females is probably due to the emphasis during the interviewer training on obtaining accurate age information for women to correctly determine the eligibility of women for the individual interview. The values of Myers' Index from NFHS-2 are almost the same as from NFHS-1 (revised from the published NFHS-1 estimates). This indicates that age reporting on the household questionnaire is of the same quality in NFHS-2 and NFHS-1.

Table 2.2 compares the age distributions by sex from the NFHS-2 *de jure* sample with the age distributions by sex from the Sample Registration System for 1997. The SRS baseline survey, which is *de jure*, counts all usual residents in a sample area (Office of the Registrar General, 1999a). The NFHS-2 and SRS age distributions are similar for broad age groups, despite the misreporting of age that is evident in the NFHS-2 single-year age data.

Table 2.1 Household population by age and sex

Percent distribution of the household population by age, according to residence and sex, India, 1998–99

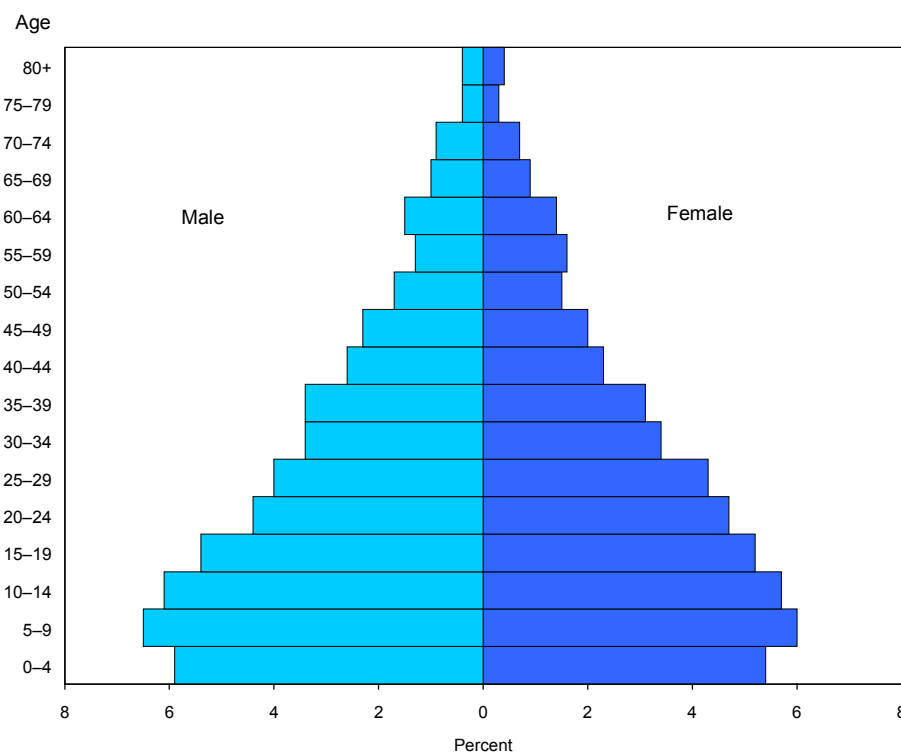
| Age | Urban | | | Rural | | | Total | | |
|------------------------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| < 1 | 2.0 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 2.6 | 2.4 | 2.5 | 2.4 | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| 1–4 | 7.7 | 7.8 | 7.8 | 9.7 | 9.5 | 9.6 | 9.2 | 9.0 | 9.1 |
| 5–9 | 10.7 | 10.6 | 10.6 | 13.8 | 13.0 | 13.4 | 13.0 | 12.4 | 12.7 |
| 10–14 | 11.5 | 11.1 | 11.3 | 12.5 | 11.9 | 12.2 | 12.2 | 11.7 | 12.0 |
| 15–19 | 11.1 | 10.8 | 11.0 | 10.0 | 10.3 | 10.1 | 10.3 | 10.4 | 10.4 |
| 20–24 | 9.8 | 10.3 | 10.0 | 7.8 | 9.2 | 8.5 | 8.4 | 9.5 | 8.9 |
| 25–29 | 8.7 | 9.1 | 8.9 | 7.4 | 8.6 | 8.0 | 7.7 | 8.7 | 8.2 |
| 30–34 | 7.2 | 7.5 | 7.3 | 6.4 | 6.9 | 6.6 | 6.6 | 7.0 | 6.8 |
| 35–39 | 7.0 | 7.2 | 7.1 | 6.4 | 6.0 | 6.2 | 6.5 | 6.3 | 6.4 |
| 40–44 | 5.7 | 5.3 | 5.5 | 4.8 | 4.4 | 4.6 | 5.1 | 4.7 | 4.9 |
| 45–49 | 5.1 | 4.6 | 4.8 | 4.2 | 3.9 | 4.1 | 4.4 | 4.1 | 4.3 |
| 50–54 | 3.6 | 3.4 | 3.5 | 3.3 | 2.9 | 3.1 | 3.4 | 3.0 | 3.2 |
| 55–59 | 2.8 | 3.1 | 3.0 | 2.6 | 3.2 | 2.9 | 2.6 | 3.2 | 2.9 |
| 60–64 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 3.0 | 3.1 | 3.1 | 2.9 | 3.0 | 2.9 |
| 65–69 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 1.9 | 2.1 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 |
| 70–74 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.8 | 1.4 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 1.4 | 1.6 |
| 75–79 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.6 |
| 80+ | 0.6 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 |
| Total percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Number of persons | 66,790 | 62,520 | 129,310 | 181,223 | 175,477 | 356,700 | 248,014 | 237,997 | 486,011 |
| Sex ratio ¹ | NA | NA | 936 | NA | NA | 968 | NA | NA | 960 |

Note: Table is based on the *de facto* population, i.e., persons who stayed in the household the night before the interview (including both usual residents and visitors).

NA: Not applicable

¹Females per 1,000 males

**Figure 2.1
Population Pyramid**



NFHS-2, India, 1998–99

Table 2.2 Population by age and sex from the SRS and NFHS-2

Percent distribution of population by age and sex from the SRS and NFHS-2, India, 1997–99

| Age | SRS (1997) | | NFHS-2 (1998–99) | | |
|--------------|------------|--------|------------------|--------|------------------------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Sex ratio ¹ |
| URBAN | | | | | |
| 0–4 | 9.9 | 9.8 | 9.4 | 9.5 | 931 |
| 5–9 | 10.7 | 10.6 | 10.6 | 10.5 | 920 |
| 10–14 | 11.2 | 11.2 | 11.5 | 11.2 | 902 |
| 15–19 | 10.1 | 10.0 | 11.1 | 10.7 | 893 |
| 20–24 | 10.0 | 10.5 | 9.8 | 10.2 | 958 |
| 25–29 | 9.3 | 9.4 | 8.6 | 9.0 | 966 |
| 30–34 | 8.3 | 8.6 | 7.2 | 7.5 | 968 |
| 35–39 | 7.3 | 6.9 | 7.1 | 7.3 | 951 |
| 40–44 | 6.2 | 5.9 | 5.8 | 5.3 | 857 |
| 45–49 | 4.9 | 4.4 | 5.1 | 4.7 | 856 |
| 50–54 | 3.8 | 3.7 | 3.6 | 3.4 | 869 |
| 55–59 | 2.7 | 2.7 | 2.8 | 3.2 | 1,055 |
| 60–64 | 2.3 | 2.5 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 950 |
| 65–69 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 1,010 |
| 70+ | 1.9 | 2.1 | 2.7 | 2.9 | 972 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 928 |
| Median age | U | U | 23.6 | 23.8 | NA |
| RURAL | | | | | |
| 0–4 | 11.8 | 11.5 | 11.9 | 11.7 | 948 |
| 5–9 | 13.5 | 13.2 | 13.6 | 13.0 | 915 |
| 10–14 | 12.4 | 11.9 | 12.3 | 12.0 | 929 |
| 15–19 | 10.1 | 9.3 | 10.2 | 10.1 | 953 |
| 20–24 | 8.9 | 9.0 | 8.0 | 9.0 | 1,075 |
| 25–29 | 8.1 | 8.4 | 7.5 | 8.6 | 1,096 |
| 30–34 | 7.0 | 7.6 | 6.5 | 6.9 | 1,022 |
| 35–39 | 6.3 | 6.0 | 6.5 | 6.0 | 891 |
| 40–44 | 5.1 | 5.3 | 4.9 | 4.5 | 890 |
| 45–49 | 4.2 | 4.0 | 4.2 | 4.0 | 891 |
| 50–54 | 3.6 | 3.7 | 3.3 | 2.9 | 850 |
| 55–59 | 2.6 | 2.8 | 2.6 | 3.3 | 1,221 |
| 60–64 | 2.6 | 2.9 | 3.0 | 3.2 | 996 |
| 65–69 | 1.7 | 1.9 | 2.1 | 2.0 | 928 |
| 70+ | 2.2 | 2.6 | 3.4 | 2.7 | 755 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 957 |
| Median age | U | U | 20.8 | 21.2 | NA |

| Table 2.2 Population by age and sex from the SRS and NFHS-2 (contd.) | | | | | |
|---|------------|--------|------------------|--------|------------------------|
| Percent distribution of population by age and sex from the SRS and NFHS-2, India, 1997–99 | | | | | |
| Age | SRS (1997) | | NFHS-2 (1998–99) | | |
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Sex ratio ¹ |
| TOTAL | | | | | |
| 0–4 | 11.4 | 11.1 | 11.2 | 11.1 | 944 |
| 5–9 | 12.8 | 12.6 | 12.8 | 12.4 | 916 |
| 10–14 | 12.1 | 11.7 | 12.1 | 11.8 | 922 |
| 15–19 | 10.1 | 9.5 | 10.4 | 10.3 | 936 |
| 20–24 | 9.2 | 9.4 | 8.5 | 9.3 | 1,039 |
| 25–29 | 8.3 | 8.6 | 7.8 | 8.7 | 1,057 |
| 30–34 | 7.3 | 7.8 | 6.7 | 7.1 | 1,007 |
| 35–39 | 6.5 | 6.2 | 6.6 | 6.4 | 908 |
| 40–44 | 5.4 | 5.4 | 5.1 | 4.7 | 880 |
| 45–49 | 4.3 | 4.1 | 4.5 | 4.2 | 880 |
| 50–54 | 3.6 | 3.7 | 3.4 | 3.1 | 855 |
| 55–59 | 2.6 | 2.8 | 2.6 | 3.3 | 1,173 |
| 60–64 | 2.5 | 2.8 | 2.9 | 3.0 | 985 |
| 65–69 | 1.7 | 1.9 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 948 |
| 70+ | 2.2 | 2.5 | 3.3 | 2.8 | 803 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 949 |
| Median age | U | U | 21.8 | 22.1 | NA |
| Note: Table is based on the <i>de jure</i> population, i.e., usual residents. NA: Not applicable U: Not available ¹ Females per 1,000 males Source for SRS: Office of the Registrar General, 1999a | | | | | |

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 also present sex ratios (females per 1,000 males) in India from NFHS-2. The sex ratio for the *de facto* population (960) in Table 2.1 is slightly higher than the sex ratio of the *de jure* population (949) in Table 2.2. The sex ratio for the *de facto* sample is 936 in urban areas and 968 in rural areas, suggesting that rural-urban migration has been dominated by males in India.

2.2 Marital Status

NFHS-2 includes information on the marital status of all household members age six and above. Table 2.3 shows the marital status distribution of the *de facto* household population, classified by age, residence, and sex. Among females age six and above, 53 percent are currently married and 36 percent have never been married. The proportion never married is higher for males (48 percent) than for females (36 percent) and slightly higher in urban areas (49 percent for males and 38 percent for females) than in rural areas (47 percent for males and 35 percent for females). The proportion divorced, separated, or deserted is small and widowhood is quite limited until the older ages. Forty-three percent of women age 50 or older are widowed, but only 12 percent of men in that age group are widowed.

Table 2.3 Marital status of the household population

Percent distribution of the household population age 6 and above by marital status, according to age, residence, and sex, India, 1998–99

| Age | Marital status | | | | | | | Total percent |
|--------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|----------|-----------|----------|---------------|
| | Never married | Currently married | Married, <i>gauna</i> not performed | Widowed | Divorced | Separated | Deserted | |
| URBAN | | | | | | | | |
| Male | | | | | | | | |
| 6–12 | 99.7 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| 13–14 | 99.6 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| 15–19 | 97.5 | 2.0 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| 20–24 | 78.4 | 20.7 | 0.5 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 100.0 |
| 25–29 | 39.1 | 59.7 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 100.0 |
| 30–49 | 5.7 | 92.4 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 100.0 |
| 50+ | 1.3 | 89.0 | 0.0 | 9.3 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 100.0 |
| Total | 49.4 | 48.3 | 0.2 | 1.8 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 100.0 |
| Female | | | | | | | | |
| 6–12 | 99.6 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| 13–14 | 99.0 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| 15–19 | 82.2 | 16.4 | 1.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 100.0 |
| 20–24 | 36.3 | 61.8 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.5 | 0.2 | 0.5 | 100.0 |
| 25–29 | 9.8 | 87.4 | 0.0 | 1.1 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.7 | 100.0 |
| 30–49 | 2.3 | 88.9 | 0.1 | 6.8 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.9 | 100.0 |
| 50+ | 1.0 | 52.8 | 0.0 | 45.2 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 38.2 | 51.3 | 0.3 | 9.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.5 | 100.0 |
| RURAL | | | | | | | | |
| Male | | | | | | | | |
| 6–12 | 99.3 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| 13–14 | 98.7 | 0.4 | 0.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| 15–19 | 92.2 | 4.9 | 2.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 100.0 |
| 20–24 | 59.6 | 37.6 | 2.1 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 100.0 |
| 25–29 | 23.1 | 74.9 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| 30–49 | 3.3 | 94.2 | 0.1 | 1.7 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| 50+ | 1.3 | 85.0 | 0.0 | 13.3 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 100.0 |
| Total | 46.8 | 49.4 | 0.7 | 2.8 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 100.0 |
| Female | | | | | | | | |
| 6–12 | 98.8 | 0.4 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| 13–14 | 95.0 | 1.6 | 3.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| 15–19 | 60.4 | 34.4 | 4.5 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 100.0 |
| 20–24 | 15.1 | 81.7 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.6 | 0.3 | 0.6 | 100.0 |
| 25–29 | 3.9 | 92.7 | 0.1 | 1.7 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 100.0 |
| 30–49 | 1.0 | 90.0 | 0.0 | 6.9 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 100.0 |
| 50+ | 0.5 | 55.7 | 0.0 | 42.8 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 35.1 | 53.9 | 1.0 | 9.0 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.5 | 100.0 |

Table 2.3 Marital status of the household population (contd.)

Percent distribution of the household population age 6 and above by marital status, according to age, residence, and sex, India, 1998–99

| Age | Marital status | | | | | | | Total percent |
|--------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|----------|-----------|----------|---------------|
| | Never married | Currently married | Married, <i>gauna</i> not performed | Widowed | Divorced | Separated | Deserted | |
| TOTAL | | | | | | | | |
| Male | | | | | | | | |
| 6–12 | 99.4 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| 13–14 | 98.9 | 0.4 | 0.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| 15–19 | 93.7 | 4.0 | 2.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 100.0 |
| 20–24 | 65.6 | 32.3 | 1.6 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 100.0 |
| 25–29 | 27.9 | 70.3 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| 30–49 | 4.0 | 93.7 | 0.1 | 1.5 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| 50+ | 1.3 | 86.0 | 0.0 | 12.3 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 100.0 |
| Total | 47.5 | 49.1 | 0.6 | 2.5 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 100.0 |
| Female | | | | | | | | |
| 6–12 | 99.0 | 0.3 | 0.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| 13–14 | 96.1 | 1.3 | 2.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| 15–19 | 66.4 | 29.5 | 3.6 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 100.0 |
| 20–24 | 21.2 | 76.0 | 0.8 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.3 | 0.6 | 100.0 |
| 25–29 | 5.5 | 91.3 | 0.1 | 1.5 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.7 | 100.0 |
| 30–49 | 1.4 | 89.7 | 0.1 | 6.9 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 100.0 |
| 50+ | 0.6 | 55.0 | 0.0 | 43.4 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 35.9 | 53.2 | 0.8 | 9.0 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.5 | 100.0 |

Note: Table is based on the *de facto* population, i.e., persons who stayed in the household the night before the interview (including both usual residents and visitors). The marital status distribution for females by age cannot be directly compared with the published distribution for NFHS-1 because the ages in the current table are based entirely on the reports of the household respondents, whereas in NFHS-1 the ages of ever-married women age 13–49 were taken from the Woman's Questionnaire.

Also of interest is the proportion of persons who marry young. At age 15–19, the proportions ever married are 3 percent for males and 18 percent for females in urban areas, 8 percent for males and 40 percent for females in rural areas, and 6 percent for males and 34 percent for females in the country as a whole. By age 25–29, almost all women (95 percent) have ever been married. Only 72 percent of males in this age group have ever been married (61 percent in urban areas and 77 percent in rural areas). Overall, the table shows that women in India marry at much younger ages than men, and that both men and women marry at younger ages in rural areas than in urban areas.

Table 2.4 shows estimates of the singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM), which can be calculated from age-specific proportions single in a census or household survey. SMAM is calculated from the *de jure* population in NFHS-2 in order to arrive at estimates that are more comparable to those derived from the censuses, which are modified *de jure* counts. According to the SMAM measure, men in India tend to marry women who are five years younger than themselves. The census and NFHS-2 data indicate that the age at marriage has been rising for both men and women at approximately the same rate (about two and one-half years between 1971 and 1998–99). Marriage ages are higher in urban areas, with urban men and women marrying about two and one-half years later than their rural counterparts. The SMAM for

Table 2.4 Singulate mean age at marriage by state

Singulate mean age at marriage from selected sources by sex and state, India, 1971–1998/99

| State | NFHS-2 (1998–99) | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|
| | 1971 Census | | 1981 Census | | 1991 Census | | Urban | | Rural | | Total | |
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| India | 22.6 | 17.2 | 23.5 | 18.4 | 24.0 | 19.3 | 26.5 | 21.5 | 24.2 | 19.0 | 24.9 | 19.7 |
| North | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Delhi | 24.0 | 20.0 | 24.3 | 20.5 | 24.2 | 20.6 | 26.0 | 22.1 | 24.1 | 19.9 | 25.8 | 21.9 |
| Haryana | 20.9 | 17.7 | 25.2 | 17.9 | 22.8 | 18.8 | 25.2 | 21.4 | 24.3 | 19.2 | 24.6 | 19.8 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 23.5 | 17.7 | 24.2 | 19.2 | 24.5 | 20.3 | 27.2 | 23.7 | 26.6 | 21.9 | 26.7 | 22.1 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | U | U | U | U | U | U | 29.1 | 24.5 | 26.5 | 21.9 | 27.1 | 22.5 |
| Punjab | 24.1 | 20.1 | 25.0 | 21.1 | 24.3 | 21.0 | 26.4 | 23.2 | 25.5 | 21.6 | 25.7 | 22.1 |
| Rajasthan | 19.9 | 15.1 | 20.6 | 16.1 | 21.3 | 17.5 | 24.1 | 19.9 | 21.6 | 17.8 | 22.3 | 18.3 |
| Central | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Madhya Pradesh | 19.5 | 15.0 | 20.8 | 16.6 | 21.7 | 17.8 | 26.0 | 20.9 | 22.4 | 18.2 | 23.5 | 18.9 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 19.8 | 15.5 | 21.3 | 16.7 | 21.9 | 18.0 | 26.2 | 21.5 | 22.4 | 18.3 | 23.3 | 19.0 |
| East | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bihar | 20.0 | 15.3 | 21.6 | 16.6 | 22.1 | 17.5 | 26.3 | 20.9 | 23.5 | 18.5 | 23.8 | 18.8 |
| Orissa | 22.7 | 17.3 | 24.3 | 19.1 | 25.0 | 20.2 | 27.7 | 22.8 | 26.4 | 21.0 | 26.6 | 21.2 |
| West Bengal | 24.6 | 18.0 | 26.0 | 19.3 | 25.9 | 19.7 | 29.0 | 22.4 | 25.2 | 18.7 | 26.2 | 19.6 |
| Northeast | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 25.6 | 19.6 | U | U | 25.1 | 20.1 | 23.9 | 21.9 | 25.3 | 21.6 | 25.1 | 21.6 |
| Assam | 25.8 | 18.7 | U | U | U | U | 29.3 | 23.6 | 27.7 | 21.5 | 27.8 | 21.7 |
| Manipur | 26.4 | 22.2 | 27.3 | 23.4 | 28.1 | 24.7 | 28.7 | 25.9 | 28.6 | 25.0 | 28.6 | 25.4 |
| Meghalaya | 25.5 | 20.2 | 26.0 | 21.0 | 25.8 | 21.4 | 27.8 | 25.0 | 26.7 | 22.2 | 27.0 | 23.0 |
| Mizoram | U | U | U | U | 26.7 | 22.4 | 27.5 | 24.7 | 26.3 | 23.2 | 27.0 | 24.1 |
| Nagaland | 27.8 | 24.0 | 29.0 | 24.8 | 28.9 | 24.9 | 28.4 | 23.4 | 27.3 | 22.9 | 27.6 | 23.0 |
| Sikkim | U | U | U | U | 25.8 | 21.4 | 24.7 | 23.0 | 26.5 | 21.7 | 26.2 | 21.9 |
| West | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Goa | U | U | 28.5 | 23.0 | 29.4 | 24.2 | 30.3 | 25.2 | 30.1 | 24.4 | 30.2 | 24.8 |
| Gujarat | 22.4 | 18.5 | 23.3 | 19.6 | 23.4 | 19.9 | 25.0 | 21.1 | 23.8 | 19.6 | 24.4 | 20.2 |
| Maharashtra | 23.8 | 17.6 | 24.4 | 18.8 | 24.8 | 19.7 | 26.0 | 21.3 | 24.6 | 18.6 | 25.3 | 19.8 |
| South | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Andhra Pradesh | 22.8 | 16.3 | 23.1 | 17.3 | 23.5 | 18.3 | 25.8 | 20.3 | 23.1 | 17.6 | 23.9 | 18.3 |
| Karnataka | 25.2 | 17.9 | 26.0 | 19.3 | 26.2 | 20.1 | 27.8 | 21.5 | 26.1 | 19.4 | 26.7 | 20.1 |
| Kerala | 27.0 | 21.3 | 27.5 | 22.1 | 27.7 | 22.2 | 28.9 | 22.7 | 27.6 | 21.2 | 27.9 | 21.5 |
| Tamil Nadu | 26.1 | 19.6 | 26.1 | 20.3 | 26.4 | 20.9 | 27.1 | 21.7 | 26.4 | 20.4 | 26.6 | 20.9 |

Note: Table is based on the *de jure* population.
U: Not available

females in India as estimated in NFHS-2 is 21.5 years in urban areas, 19.0 years in rural areas, and 19.7 years for the country as a whole. SMAM varies substantially across states. The female SMAM is lowest in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh (18.3 years) and highest in Manipur (25.4 years), followed by Goa (24.8 years). The mean age at marriage for females is also below the national average in the Central Region, and in Bihar and West Bengal. In addition to Goa, the SMAM is higher than 21 years in all of the northeastern states, most states in the North Region, Kerala and Orissa. Similar differences across the states are also found for the SMAM for males.

2.3 Household Composition

Table 2.5 shows the percent distribution of households by various characteristics of the household head (sex, age, religion, and caste/tribe), as well as by household type and the number of usual household members. The table is based on the *de jure* population because household type and the number of usual household members pertain to the usual-resident population. The table shows that 89–90 percent of household heads are male, regardless of area of residence (rural or urban). More than two-thirds of household heads are 30–59 years of age and the median age of household heads is 45 years in both urban and rural areas. Eighty-two percent of household heads are Hindu, 12 percent are Muslim, 3 percent are Christian, 2 percent are Sikh, 1 percent are Buddhist or Neo-Buddhist, and less than 0.5 percent are Jain. The percent distribution of household heads by religion is almost identical in NFHS-2 and NFHS-1, and is very close to the religious distribution of the population enumerated in the 1991 Census. Muslims constitute 15 percent of urban households, but only 10 percent of rural households. Christians, Jains, and Buddhists are also more concentrated in urban areas than in rural areas. Nineteen percent of household heads belong to scheduled castes and 9 percent belong to scheduled tribes. Both of these groups, but especially scheduled tribes, constitute higher proportions of households in rural areas than in urban areas. Almost one-third of household heads belong to other backward classes (OBC)¹. The largest proportion of household heads (39 percent) belong to the ‘other’ caste category. Fifty-seven percent of all households are nuclear family households (consisting of an unmarried adult living alone or a married person or couple and their unmarried children, if any). Mean household size (5.4 persons per household in India as a whole) is slightly higher in rural areas (5.5) than in urban areas (5.2).

States differ substantially in terms of the distribution of household heads by religion and caste/tribe (Table 2.6). In 18 of the 25 states, a large majority of household heads are Hindu. More than half of household heads in Jammu and Kashmir, more than one-quarter in Assam and Kerala, and more than one-fifth in West Bengal are Muslim. Other states with at least 15 percent of Muslim household heads are Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and with at least 10 percent of Muslim household heads are Karnataka and Maharashtra. The largest percentages of households headed by Christians are in Mizoram (96 percent), Nagaland (82 percent), Meghalaya (73 percent), Manipur (37 percent), and Goa (33 percent). Sikhs are concentrated primarily in Punjab, where they constitute 54 percent of households. One-third of household heads in Sikkim are Buddhist or Neo-Buddhist. Eleven percent of household heads in Arunachal Pradesh and 7 percent in Maharashtra are also Buddhist or Neo-Buddhist. The proportion of household heads who come from ‘other religions’ is 36 percent in Arunachal Pradesh (almost all of whom are from the Donipolo religion) and 11 percent in Manipur (almost all of whom are from the Sanamahi religion).

¹Other backward classes are castes and communities that have been designated by the Government of India as socially and educationally backward and in need of protection from social injustice.

Table 2.5 Household characteristics

Percent distribution of households by selected characteristics of the household head, household type, and household size, according to residence, India, 1998–99

| Characteristic | Urban | Rural | Total |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Sex of household head | | | |
| Male | 88.9 | 90.0 | 89.7 |
| Female | 11.1 | 10.0 | 10.3 |
| Age of household head | | | |
| < 30 | 9.7 | 11.4 | 10.9 |
| 30–44 | 39.1 | 38.2 | 38.4 |
| 45–59 | 32.1 | 28.1 | 29.2 |
| 60+ | 19.2 | 22.4 | 21.5 |
| Median age | 45.2 | 45.1 | 45.1 |
| Religion of household head | | | |
| Hindu | 77.2 | 83.7 | 81.9 |
| Muslim | 15.0 | 10.4 | 11.7 |
| Christian | 3.6 | 2.7 | 3.0 |
| Sikh | 1.6 | 1.8 | 1.7 |
| Jain | 0.9 | 0.2 | 0.4 |
| Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist | 1.4 | 0.6 | 0.8 |
| Other | 0.1 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| No religion | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Missing | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Caste/tribe of household head | | | |
| Scheduled caste | 14.7 | 20.2 | 18.7 |
| Scheduled tribe | 3.7 | 11.2 | 9.1 |
| Other backward class | 29.6 | 33.5 | 32.4 |
| Other | 51.5 | 33.9 | 38.8 |
| Don't know/missing | 0.5 | 1.1 | 1.0 |
| Household type | | | |
| Nuclear household | 59.3 | 55.6 | 56.6 |
| Non-nuclear household | 40.7 | 44.3 | 43.3 |
| Number of usual members | | | |
| 1 | 3.2 | 3.1 | 3.1 |
| 2 | 7.6 | 7.9 | 7.8 |
| 3 | 13.1 | 10.9 | 11.5 |
| 4 | 21.4 | 17.5 | 18.6 |
| 5 | 19.3 | 18.4 | 18.7 |
| 6 | 13.7 | 14.9 | 14.5 |
| 7 | 7.9 | 10.0 | 9.4 |
| 8 | 4.9 | 6.3 | 5.9 |
| 9+ | 8.8 | 11.0 | 10.4 |
| Mean household size | 5.2 | 5.5 | 5.4 |
| Total percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Number of households | 25,243 | 65,953 | 91,196 |

Note: Table is based on the *de jure* population.

Table 2.6 Religion and caste/tribe of household head by state

Percent distribution of households by religion and caste/tribe of the household head, according to state, India, 1998–99

| State | Religion of household head | | | | | | | | | | Caste/tribe of household head | | | | | Total percent |
|-------------------|----------------------------|--------|-----------|------|------|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|---------|---------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------|---------|---------------|
| | Hindu | Muslim | Christian | Sikh | Jain | Buddhist/ Neo- Buddhist | Other ¹ | No religion | Missing | Total percent | Sched- uled caste | Sched- uled tribe | Other back- ward class | Other | Missing | |
| India | 81.9 | 11.7 | 3.0 | 1.7 | 0.4 | 0.8 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 18.7 | 9.1 | 32.4 | 38.8 | 1.0 | 100.0 |
| North | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Delhi | 84.3 | 8.3 | 1.2 | 4.6 | 0.8 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.3 | 100.0 | 17.7 | 0.9 | 14.9 | 66.4 | 0.1 | 100.0 |
| Haryana | 88.5 | 4.1 | 0.1 | 7.1 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 21.3 | 0.1 | 21.4 | 57.2 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 93.1 | 3.1 | 0.1 | 1.3 | 0.1 | 2.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 22.4 | 0.6 | 17.3 | 59.7 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 45.2 | 52.8 | 0.3 | 1.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 14.8 | 2.5 | 11.3 | 71.5 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| Punjab | 41.9 | 2.1 | 2.0 | 53.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 29.8 | 0.1 | 16.8 | 53.4 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| Rajasthan | 88.6 | 9.1 | 0.1 | 1.0 | 1.2 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 18.6 | 12.0 | 23.2 | 46.1 | 0.1 | 100.0 |
| Central | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Madhya Pradesh | 92.2 | 5.0 | 1.4 | 0.2 | 1.0 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 16.1 | 23.7 | 39.8 | 20.2 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 82.6 | 16.3 | 0.1 | 0.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 100.0 | 20.2 | 2.2 | 26.2 | 46.2 | 5.1 | 100.0 |
| East | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bihar | 83.2 | 14.8 | 1.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 20.8 | 9.9 | 49.9 | 19.3 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| Orissa | 96.5 | 1.6 | 1.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 21.6 | 21.7 | 29.6 | 27.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| West Bengal | 75.8 | 21.8 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.4 | 1.3 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 100.0 | 22.8 | 7.2 | 4.5 | 65.1 | 0.5 | 100.0 |
| Northeast | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 37.5 | 1.3 | 13.0 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 11.0 | 35.8 | 1.1 | 0.2 | 100.0 | 13.7 | 68.0 | 12.4 | 5.9 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| Assam | 66.9 | 29.4 | 2.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.7 | 100.0 | 9.9 | 21.3 | 12.5 | 54.0 | 2.4 | 100.0 |
| Manipur | 49.5 | 3.0 | 36.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 10.6 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 5.0 | 38.0 | 4.5 | 52.2 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| Meghalaya | 9.6 | 3.4 | 73.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2.1 | 11.6 | 0.2 | 100.0 | 2.1 | 89.5 | 1.2 | 7.1 | 0.2 | 100.0 |
| Mizoram | 2.5 | 0.4 | 95.6 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 1.2 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 100.0 | 0.4 | 98.4 | 0.2 | 1.1 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| Nagaland | 10.3 | 6.3 | 81.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.9 | 100.0 | 5.7 | 83.5 | 3.4 | 6.8 | 0.6 | 100.0 |
| Sikkim | 59.9 | 1.3 | 5.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 32.9 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 100.0 | 7.1 | 27.9 | 33.3 | 31.5 | 0.2 | 100.0 |
| West | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Goa | 63.0 | 3.8 | 32.9 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 6.2 | 0.3 | 6.4 | 86.8 | 0.2 | 100.0 |
| Gujarat | 89.8 | 8.1 | 0.7 | 0.2 | 1.2 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 14.7 | 19.7 | 23.6 | 42.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| Maharashtra | 79.7 | 9.8 | 1.3 | 0.2 | 1.4 | 7.1 | 0.5 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 13.4 | 10.2 | 22.6 | 53.3 | 0.5 | 100.0 |
| South | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Andhra Pradesh | 87.8 | 6.1 | 6.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 20.1 | 5.0 | 43.5 | 31.1 | 0.2 | 100.0 |
| Karnataka | 85.4 | 10.6 | 3.2 | 0.0 | 0.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 16.7 | 5.6 | 40.3 | 36.3 | 1.0 | 100.0 |
| Kerala | 55.0 | 25.6 | 19.3 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 9.3 | 1.1 | 40.5 | 49.2 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| Tamil Nadu | 89.1 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 23.5 | 0.9 | 73.4 | 2.2 | 0.0 | 100.0 |

¹Includes 34.2 percent belonging to the Doni-polo religion in Arunachal Pradesh and 9.9 percent belonging to the Sanamahi religion in Manipur

Thirty percent of households in Punjab, and more than one-fifth in Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and the East Region, belong to scheduled castes. Between 10 and 20 percent of households belong to scheduled castes in Rajasthan, Delhi, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat, Arunachal Pradesh, and Maharashtra. Scheduled tribes are more concentrated in the northeastern states, particularly Mizoram (where 98 percent of household heads belong to scheduled tribes), Meghalaya (90 percent), Nagaland (84 percent), and Arunachal Pradesh (68 percent). Scheduled tribes constitute 38 percent of the household heads in Manipur, 28 percent in Sikkim, 24 percent in Madhya Pradesh, 22 percent in Orissa, and 21 percent in Assam. The percentage of scheduled tribes is negligible (3 percent or less) in the North Region (except for Rajasthan), and in Goa, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Uttar Pradesh.

Other backward classes (OBCs) are particularly prominent in the South Region (where 40–73 percent of household heads belongs to OBCs), and in Bihar (50 percent), Madhya Pradesh (40 percent), and Sikkim (33 percent). The highest proportions of household heads who do not belong to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and OBCs are in Goa (87 percent), Jammu and Kashmir (72 percent), Delhi (66 percent), West Bengal (65 percent), and Himachal Pradesh (60 percent).

2.4 Educational Attainment

The level of education of household members may affect reproductive behaviour, contraceptive use, the health of children, and proper hygienic practices. Table 2.7 shows the percent distribution of the *de facto* household population by literacy and educational level, according to age, residence, and sex. (This table and all subsequent tables and figures in this report are based on the *de facto* sample, unless otherwise specified.)

Table 2.7 shows that in India 49 percent of females and 26 percent of males age six and above are illiterate. Comparable figures from NFHS-1 are 57 percent of females and 31 percent of males, indicating a substantial decline in illiteracy in only six and one-half years. Cohort differences in literacy also suggest that there has been considerable progress over time (Table 2.7 and Figure 2.2). For example, while only 21 percent of women age 50 and over are literate, the literacy rate doubles for those age 30–39, and steadily increases to 76 percent for women age 10–14. The literacy gap between males and females has narrowed over time, but even at age 10–14 there is still a gap of 11 percentage points (although the gap has decreased from 18 percentage points in NFHS-1).

Changes over time in educational attainment can be seen by examining the differences in educational levels by age. For example, the proportion of males completing at least high school rises from 18 percent at age 50 and above to 40 percent at ages 20–29. For females, the proportion completing at least high school is almost negligible (only 4 percent) at age 50 and above but reaches a level of 23 percent at age 20–29.

A higher percentage of males than of females have completed each level of schooling. The median number of years of schooling is 5.5 for males and 1.6 for females. The proportion illiterate is lowest at age 10–14 for both males and females and is highest at age 50 and above.

Table 2.7 Educational level of the household population

Percent distribution of the household population age 6 and above by literacy and level of education, and median number of completed years of schooling, according to age, residence, and sex, India, 1998–99

| Age | Educational level ¹ | | | | | | | Total percent | Number of persons | Median number of years of schooling |
|--------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Illiterate | Literate, < primary school complete | Primary school complete | Middle school complete | High school complete | Higher secondary complete and above | Missing | | | |
| URBAN | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6–9 | 16.2 | 83.1 | 0.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 5,648 | 1.8 |
| 10–14 | 7.0 | 30.0 | 48.9 | 13.6 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 7,714 | 5.7 |
| 15–19 | 8.8 | 5.4 | 18.1 | 31.0 | 24.7 | 12.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 7,418 | 9.3 |
| 20–29 | 9.1 | 4.4 | 13.1 | 17.3 | 19.4 | 36.6 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 12,338 | 10.4 |
| 30–39 | 12.8 | 5.8 | 14.4 | 13.9 | 18.6 | 34.5 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 9,504 | 10.2 |
| 40–49 | 14.4 | 6.8 | 15.1 | 12.7 | 20.3 | 30.7 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 7,193 | 10.1 |
| 50+ | 20.6 | 12.6 | 16.7 | 9.5 | 18.6 | 22.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 8,987 | 8.1 |
| Total | 12.5 | 17.2 | 18.2 | 14.6 | 15.6 | 21.9 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 58,804 | 8.3 |
| Female | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6–9 | 19.7 | 79.5 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 5,293 | 1.9 |
| 10–14 | 9.6 | 28.4 | 46.2 | 15.2 | 0.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 6,926 | 5.7 |
| 15–19 | 13.4 | 5.3 | 17.3 | 26.0 | 24.1 | 13.9 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 6,770 | 9.3 |
| 20–29 | 21.6 | 4.7 | 14.1 | 13.3 | 15.4 | 30.9 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 12,107 | 9.4 |
| 30–39 | 32.5 | 5.6 | 16.0 | 11.5 | 14.3 | 20.1 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 9,153 | 7.3 |
| 40–49 | 36.7 | 7.7 | 17.0 | 9.5 | 14.6 | 14.4 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 6,178 | 5.7 |
| 50+ | 55.9 | 10.8 | 14.4 | 6.3 | 6.9 | 5.6 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 8,721 | 0.0 |
| Total | 27.8 | 16.4 | 17.9 | 12.0 | 11.5 | 14.3 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 55,156 | 5.8 |
| Total | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6–9 | 17.9 | 81.3 | 0.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 10,942 | 1.9 |
| 10–14 | 8.2 | 29.3 | 47.6 | 14.4 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 14,640 | 5.7 |
| 15–19 | 11.0 | 5.4 | 17.7 | 28.6 | 24.4 | 12.9 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 14,187 | 9.3 |
| 20–29 | 15.3 | 4.6 | 13.6 | 15.3 | 17.4 | 33.8 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 24,445 | 10.1 |
| 30–39 | 22.4 | 5.7 | 15.2 | 12.7 | 16.5 | 27.4 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 18,656 | 9.0 |
| 40–49 | 24.7 | 7.2 | 16.0 | 11.2 | 17.7 | 23.2 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 13,371 | 8.3 |
| 50+ | 38.0 | 11.7 | 15.6 | 7.9 | 12.8 | 14.0 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 17,708 | 5.1 |
| Total | 19.9 | 16.8 | 18.1 | 13.3 | 13.6 | 18.2 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 113,959 | 7.3 |

Table 2.7 Educational level of the household population (contd.)

Percent distribution of the household population age 6 and above by literacy and level of education, and median number of completed years of schooling, according to age, residence, and sex, India, 1998–99

| Age | Educational level ¹ | | | | | | | Total percent | Number of persons | Median number of years of schooling |
|--------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Illiterate | Literate, < primary school complete | Primary school complete | Middle school complete | High school complete | Higher secondary complete and above | Missing | | | |
| RURAL | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6–9 | 30.0 | 69.1 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 19,420 | 1.4 |
| 10–14 | 15.0 | 39.3 | 37.3 | 8.1 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 22,646 | 4.7 |
| 15–19 | 17.0 | 9.0 | 22.7 | 30.0 | 16.1 | 5.1 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 18,196 | 8.1 |
| 20–29 | 23.7 | 8.0 | 16.7 | 18.3 | 15.9 | 17.3 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 27,623 | 8.2 |
| 30–39 | 35.1 | 10.5 | 16.9 | 13.9 | 11.6 | 11.9 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 23,153 | 5.6 |
| 40–49 | 37.9 | 12.2 | 17.8 | 11.7 | 11.8 | 8.7 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 16,339 | 5.0 |
| 50+ | 52.3 | 15.8 | 15.6 | 6.1 | 6.4 | 3.7 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 25,973 | 0.0 |
| Total | 30.5 | 22.6 | 18.4 | 12.5 | 8.9 | 7.1 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 153,381 | 4.6 |
| Female | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6–9 | 36.4 | 63.1 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 17,951 | 1.2 |
| 10–14 | 28.6 | 32.8 | 31.5 | 7.0 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 20,958 | 4.1 |
| 15–19 | 38.7 | 8.2 | 18.6 | 19.8 | 11.0 | 3.7 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 17,992 | 5.5 |
| 20–29 | 55.2 | 6.8 | 13.9 | 9.8 | 7.7 | 6.5 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 31,136 | 0.0 |
| 30–39 | 68.4 | 7.2 | 12.4 | 5.3 | 4.2 | 2.5 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 22,533 | 0.0 |
| 40–49 | 74.3 | 7.9 | 10.2 | 3.5 | 2.8 | 1.3 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 14,662 | 0.0 |
| 50+ | 87.1 | 6.0 | 4.8 | 1.0 | 0.7 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 24,452 | 0.0 |
| Total | 56.3 | 17.4 | 13.2 | 6.7 | 4.0 | 2.4 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 149,714 | 0.0 |
| Total | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6–9 | 33.1 | 66.2 | 0.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 37,371 | 1.3 |
| 10–14 | 21.5 | 36.2 | 34.5 | 7.6 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 43,604 | 4.5 |
| 15–19 | 27.8 | 8.6 | 20.7 | 24.9 | 13.6 | 4.4 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 36,188 | 7.1 |
| 20–29 | 40.4 | 7.4 | 15.3 | 13.8 | 11.5 | 11.6 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 58,759 | 5.4 |
| 30–39 | 51.5 | 8.9 | 14.7 | 9.7 | 8.0 | 7.3 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 45,687 | 2.1 |
| 40–49 | 55.1 | 10.2 | 14.2 | 7.8 | 7.5 | 5.2 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 31,001 | 0.0 |
| 50+ | 69.2 | 11.1 | 10.4 | 3.6 | 3.7 | 2.1 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 50,425 | 0.0 |
| Total | 43.3 | 20.0 | 15.9 | 9.6 | 6.5 | 4.7 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 303,095 | 2.6 |

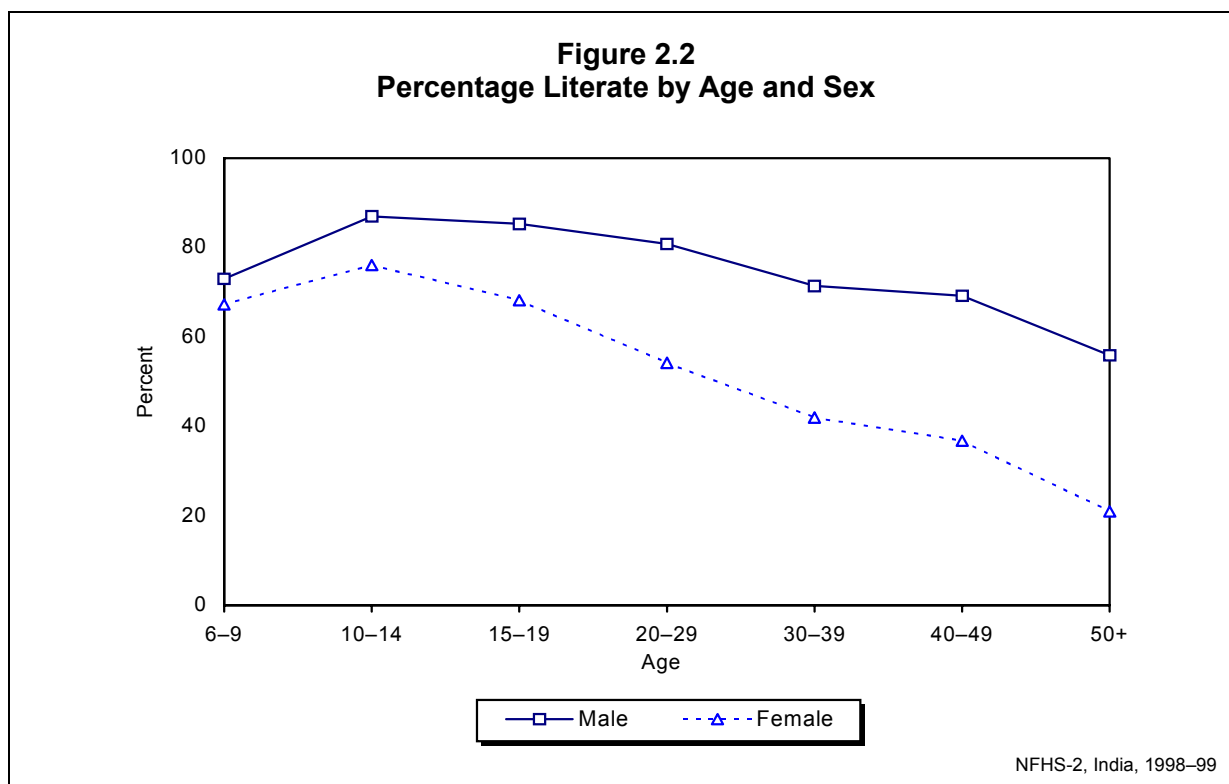
Table 2.7 Educational level of the household population (contd.)

Percent distribution of the household population age 6 and above by literacy and level of education, and median number of completed years of schooling, according to age, residence, and sex, India, 1998–99

| Age | Educational level ¹ | | | | | | | Total percent | Number of persons | Median number of years of schooling |
|--------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Illiterate | Literate, < primary school complete | Primary school complete | Middle school complete | High school complete | Higher secondary complete and above | Missing | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6–9 | 26.9 | 72.3 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 25,068 | 1.5 |
| 10–14 | 13.0 | 37.0 | 40.3 | 9.5 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 30,359 | 5.0 |
| 15–19 | 14.7 | 8.0 | 21.4 | 30.3 | 18.6 | 7.1 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 25,614 | 8.5 |
| 20–29 | 19.2 | 6.9 | 15.6 | 18.0 | 17.0 | 23.3 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 39,961 | 9.0 |
| 30–39 | 28.6 | 9.1 | 16.2 | 13.9 | 13.7 | 18.5 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 32,657 | 7.3 |
| 40–49 | 30.8 | 10.5 | 17.0 | 12.0 | 14.4 | 15.4 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 23,532 | 6.2 |
| 50+ | 44.1 | 15.0 | 15.9 | 7.0 | 9.5 | 8.4 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 34,960 | 3.5 |
| Total | 25.5 | 21.1 | 18.4 | 13.0 | 10.7 | 11.2 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 212,185 | 5.5 |
| Female | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6–9 | 32.6 | 66.8 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 23,244 | 1.4 |
| 10–14 | 23.9 | 31.7 | 35.1 | 9.0 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 27,885 | 4.6 |
| 15–19 | 31.8 | 7.4 | 18.2 | 21.5 | 14.6 | 6.5 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 24,762 | 7.0 |
| 20–29 | 45.8 | 6.2 | 14.0 | 10.8 | 9.9 | 13.3 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 43,243 | 4.5 |
| 30–39 | 58.0 | 6.8 | 13.4 | 7.1 | 7.1 | 7.6 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 31,686 | 0.0 |
| 40–49 | 63.2 | 7.9 | 12.2 | 5.3 | 6.3 | 5.2 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 20,840 | 0.0 |
| 50+ | 78.9 | 7.2 | 7.3 | 2.4 | 2.3 | 1.7 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 33,173 | 0.0 |
| Total | 48.6 | 17.1 | 14.5 | 8.1 | 6.0 | 5.6 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 204,870 | 1.6 |
| Total | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6–9 | 29.6 | 69.6 | 0.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 48,312 | 1.5 |
| 10–14 | 18.2 | 34.4 | 37.8 | 9.3 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 58,244 | 4.8 |
| 15–19 | 23.1 | 7.7 | 19.8 | 26.0 | 16.6 | 6.8 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 50,376 | 7.9 |
| 20–29 | 33.0 | 6.5 | 14.8 | 14.3 | 13.3 | 18.1 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 83,204 | 7.2 |
| 30–39 | 43.1 | 8.0 | 14.8 | 10.6 | 10.4 | 13.1 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 64,343 | 4.8 |
| 40–49 | 46.0 | 9.3 | 14.7 | 8.8 | 10.6 | 10.6 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 44,372 | 3.9 |
| 50+ | 61.1 | 11.2 | 11.7 | 4.7 | 6.0 | 5.2 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 68,133 | 0.0 |
| Total | 36.9 | 19.2 | 16.5 | 10.6 | 8.4 | 8.4 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 417,055 | 4.0 |

Note: This table and all the subsequent tables (unless otherwise indicated) are based on the *de facto* population. Illiterate persons may have been to school, but they cannot read and write. Total includes persons with missing information on age, who are not shown separately.

¹In this report, 'primary school complete' means 5–7 completed years of education, 'middle school complete' means 8–9 completed years of education, 'high school complete' means 10–11 completed years of education, and 'higher secondary complete and above' means 12 or more completed years of education.



Education levels are much higher in urban areas than in rural areas for both males and females. The proportion illiterate is twice as high for rural females (56 percent) as for urban females (28 percent), and is more than twice as high for rural males (31 percent) as for urban males (13 percent).

There are large interstate variations in the level of female and male literacy and educational attainment (Table 2.8 and Figure 2.3). At least three-quarters of females age six and above are literate in Mizoram (89 percent), Kerala (85 percent), Delhi (78 percent), and Goa (75 percent). At the other extreme, less than half of females age six and over are literate in Bihar (35 percent), Rajasthan (37 percent), Uttar Pradesh (43 percent), Madhya Pradesh (45 percent), Jammu and Kashmir (45 percent), and Andhra Pradesh (46 percent). The percentage of females who have a high school level of education or above is highest in Delhi (33 percent, up from 29 percent in NFHS-1), followed by Kerala (31 percent, up from 19 percent in NFHS-1), Goa (28 percent, up from 23 percent in NFHS-1), and Punjab (23 percent, up from 15 percent in NFHS-1).

Table 2.8 Educational level of the household population by state

Percent distribution of the *de facto* household population age 6 and above by literacy and level of education, and median number of completed years of schooling, according to sex and state, India, 1998–99

| State | Educational level | | | | | | | Total percent | Median number of years of schooling |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Illiterate | Literate, < primary school complete | Primary school complete | Middle school complete | High school complete | Higher secondary complete and above | Missing | | |
| MALE | | | | | | | | | |
| India | 25.5 | 21.1 | 18.4 | 13.0 | 10.7 | 11.2 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 5.5 |
| North | | | | | | | | | |
| Delhi | 8.5 | 15.4 | 15.9 | 14.6 | 16.9 | 28.7 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 9.3 |
| Haryana | 21.2 | 19.6 | 17.8 | 13.1 | 16.0 | 12.3 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 6.2 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 14.6 | 17.8 | 21.0 | 14.8 | 19.7 | 12.1 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 7.5 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 31.2 | 15.0 | 14.9 | 18.1 | 11.6 | 9.1 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 5.7 |
| Punjab | 22.1 | 18.0 | 17.3 | 12.9 | 17.4 | 12.3 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 6.4 |
| Rajasthan | 28.2 | 22.0 | 18.4 | 13.2 | 9.3 | 8.9 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 5.0 |
| Central | | | | | | | | | |
| Madhya Pradesh | 27.9 | 24.0 | 20.4 | 11.4 | 5.6 | 10.7 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 4.8 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 28.2 | 22.0 | 15.9 | 13.8 | 8.9 | 11.2 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 5.0 |
| East | | | | | | | | | |
| Bihar | 36.8 | 19.7 | 14.2 | 9.7 | 10.4 | 9.2 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 3.6 |
| Orissa | 24.0 | 24.8 | 20.8 | 13.2 | 8.5 | 8.6 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 5.1 |
| West Bengal | 24.0 | 29.0 | 16.7 | 12.5 | 7.6 | 10.2 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 4.7 |
| Northeast | | | | | | | | | |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 27.0 | 26.6 | 16.5 | 13.2 | 7.4 | 9.2 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 4.4 |
| Assam | 25.4 | 27.2 | 15.7 | 15.8 | 6.9 | 8.9 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 4.7 |
| Manipur | 20.3 | 15.0 | 14.7 | 20.5 | 12.3 | 17.3 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 8.0 |
| Meghalaya | 28.3 | 35.1 | 14.0 | 11.2 | 5.5 | 5.8 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 3.2 |
| Mizoram | 6.4 | 31.9 | 24.4 | 19.7 | 7.6 | 9.9 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 6.4 |
| Nagaland | 19.4 | 27.6 | 20.3 | 15.3 | 8.7 | 8.5 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 5.4 |
| Sikkim | 20.7 | 32.0 | 20.2 | 11.2 | 7.2 | 8.6 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 4.7 |
| West | | | | | | | | | |
| Goa | 11.3 | 19.3 | 17.4 | 15.8 | 17.7 | 18.5 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 8.3 |
| Gujarat | 23.3 | 18.3 | 20.3 | 13.4 | 12.2 | 12.4 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 6.3 |
| Maharashtra | 17.3 | 21.6 | 19.0 | 16.0 | 12.8 | 13.3 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 7.1 |
| South | | | | | | | | | |
| Andhra Pradesh | 33.1 | 18.1 | 19.8 | 8.9 | 10.5 | 9.6 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 4.9 |
| Karnataka | 25.7 | 17.6 | 19.6 | 10.9 | 12.8 | 13.4 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 6.0 |
| Kerala | 7.2 | 18.4 | 23.4 | 17.4 | 21.2 | 12.4 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 8.1 |
| Tamil Nadu | 20.3 | 15.2 | 24.2 | 16.4 | 12.8 | 11.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 6.4 |

The states with the highest literacy rates for males are the same states that have the highest literacy rates for females (Mizoram, Kerala, Delhi, and Goa). Literacy rates for males are lowest in Bihar (63 percent), Andhra Pradesh (67 percent), and Jammu and Kashmir (69 percent). In every state, the percentage of the population that is literate is higher for males than for females, and a higher percentage of males than females have completed at least high school. The literacy gap between males and females is highest in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, and the differences are least pronounced in Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Kerala.

Table 2.8 Educational level of the household population by state (contd.)

Percent distribution of the *de facto* household population age 6 and above by literacy and level of education, and median number of completed years of schooling, according to sex and state, India, 1998–99

| State | Educational level | | | | | | | Total percent | Median number of years of schooling |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Illiterate | Literate, < primary school complete | Primary school complete | Middle school complete | High school complete | Higher secondary complete and above | Missing | | |
| FEMALE | | | | | | | | | |
| India | 48.6 | 17.1 | 14.5 | 8.1 | 6.0 | 5.6 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 1.6 |
| North | | | | | | | | | |
| Delhi | 21.7 | 15.3 | 17.6 | 12.3 | 12.4 | 20.6 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 7.0 |
| Haryana | 42.7 | 17.4 | 16.5 | 8.4 | 7.8 | 7.2 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 2.4 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 31.3 | 16.0 | 21.7 | 12.1 | 11.8 | 7.1 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 5.2 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 55.3 | 12.1 | 11.6 | 10.8 | 5.6 | 4.7 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 0.0 |
| Punjab | 35.1 | 14.7 | 17.3 | 9.5 | 13.3 | 10.1 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 5.0 |
| Rajasthan | 62.9 | 15.7 | 9.9 | 5.3 | 3.2 | 2.9 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 0.0 |
| Central | | | | | | | | | |
| Madhya Pradesh | 55.5 | 18.7 | 12.7 | 5.6 | 2.7 | 4.8 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 0.0 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 57.3 | 16.2 | 11.4 | 6.3 | 3.6 | 5.1 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 0.0 |
| East | | | | | | | | | |
| Bihar | 65.2 | 14.5 | 9.3 | 4.8 | 4.1 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 0.0 |
| Orissa | 48.7 | 20.4 | 15.8 | 7.8 | 4.1 | 3.2 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 1.2 |
| West Bengal | 42.6 | 26.4 | 13.9 | 8.4 | 4.1 | 4.6 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 2.1 |
| Northeast | | | | | | | | | |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 43.0 | 22.0 | 14.5 | 11.3 | 5.2 | 4.0 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 2.1 |
| Assam | 40.9 | 24.0 | 12.5 | 13.7 | 4.9 | 3.8 | 0.2 | 100.0 | 2.5 |
| Manipur | 41.3 | 13.1 | 11.6 | 15.5 | 7.4 | 11.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 4.3 |
| Meghalaya | 33.2 | 35.9 | 13.0 | 9.4 | 4.6 | 3.9 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 2.3 |
| Mizoram | 10.6 | 36.3 | 21.7 | 17.9 | 7.5 | 6.0 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 5.5 |
| Nagaland | 31.7 | 26.3 | 19.1 | 13.2 | 5.4 | 4.3 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 3.7 |
| Sikkim | 35.6 | 26.4 | 18.0 | 10.3 | 5.2 | 4.5 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 3.3 |
| West | | | | | | | | | |
| Goa | 25.2 | 17.6 | 15.8 | 13.5 | 13.6 | 14.2 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 6.7 |
| Gujarat | 46.4 | 13.7 | 16.5 | 8.4 | 7.0 | 8.1 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 3.2 |
| Maharashtra | 38.6 | 18.1 | 17.8 | 10.8 | 7.9 | 6.9 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 4.1 |
| South | | | | | | | | | |
| Andhra Pradesh | 54.0 | 15.2 | 16.3 | 5.4 | 5.5 | 3.6 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 0.0 |
| Karnataka | 44.5 | 15.1 | 16.6 | 7.9 | 8.9 | 7.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 3.2 |
| Kerala | 14.9 | 16.9 | 21.4 | 16.0 | 18.5 | 12.3 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 7.6 |
| Tamil Nadu | 41.7 | 12.6 | 19.4 | 12.5 | 7.2 | 6.5 | 0.1 | 100.0 | 4.5 |

The median years of schooling for males and females also vary substantially over the states. All states in the West Region, all states in the South Region except Andhra Pradesh, and all states in the North Region except Rajasthan have median years of schooling above the national average for males. In the Central and East Regions, all states are below the national average. Among the northeastern states, only Manipur and Mizoram have a median number of years of schooling higher than the national average. For females, the median number of years of schooling ranges from a high of 7–8 years in Kerala, Delhi, and Goa to a low of zero years in six states where the majority of women have never been to school.

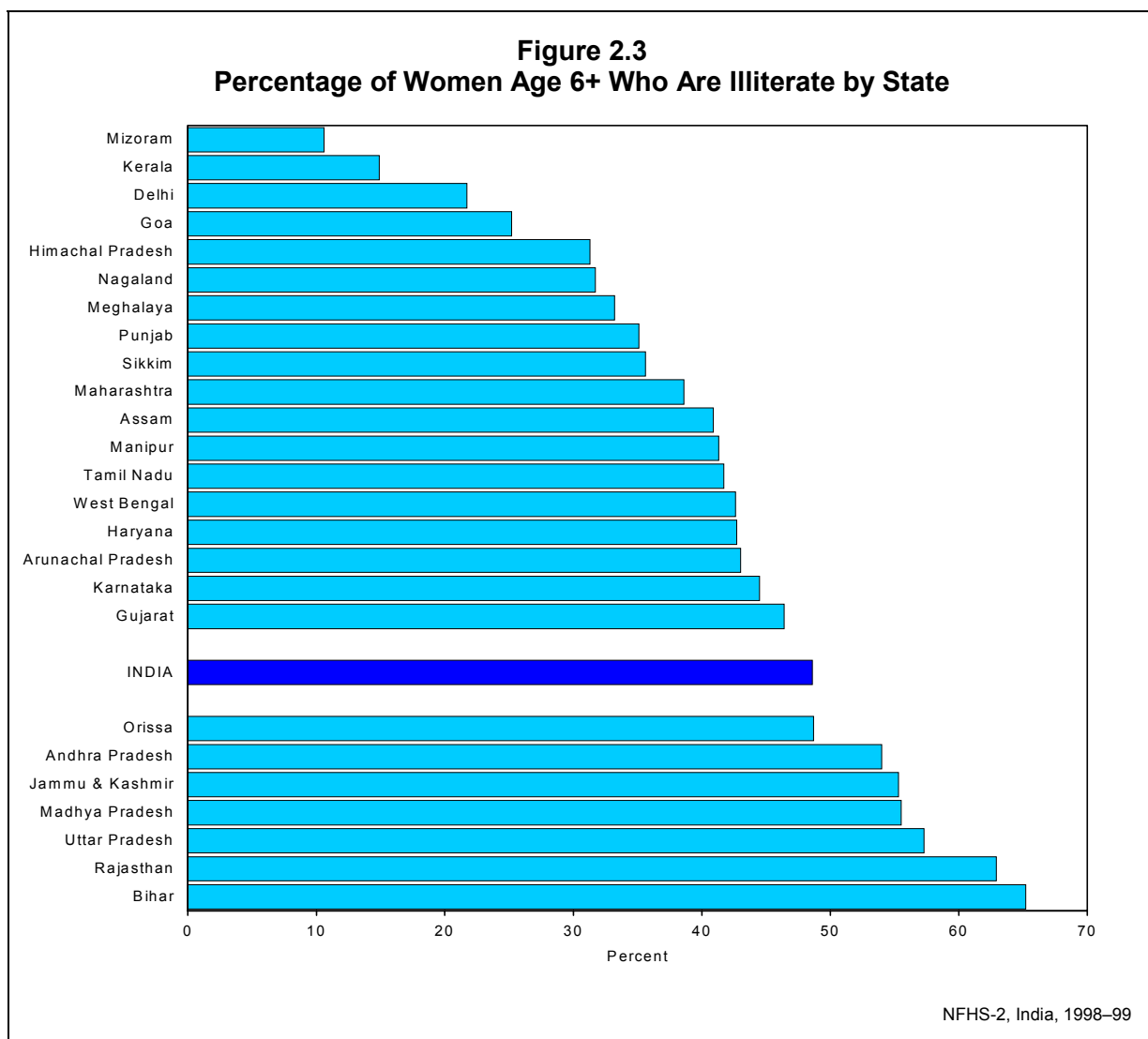


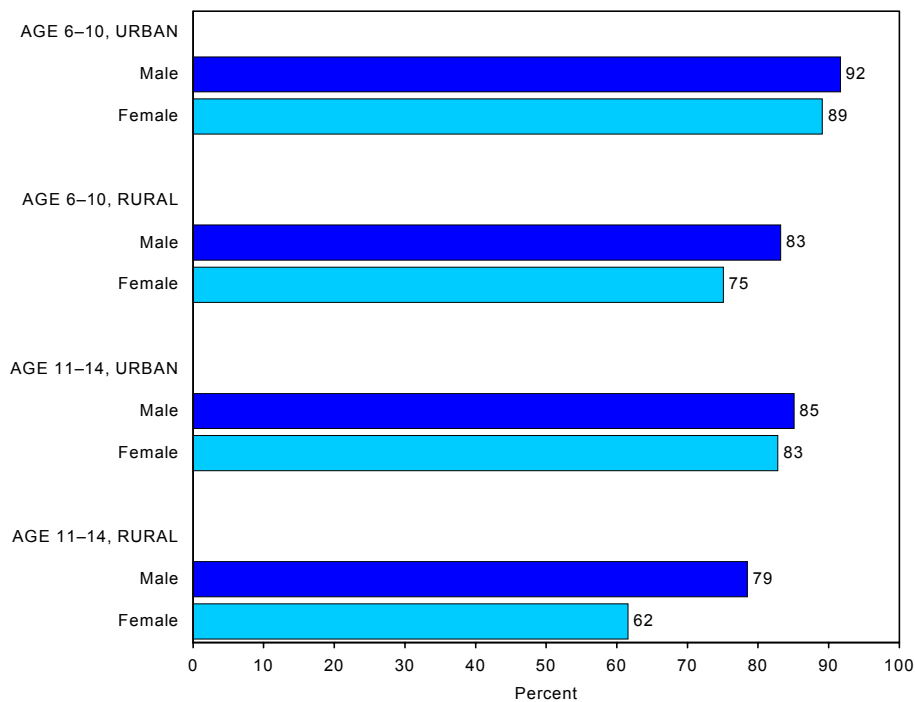
Table 2.9 and Figure 2.4 show school attendance rates for the school-age household population by age, sex, and residence in different states. In the country as a whole, 79 percent of children age 6–14 are attending school, up from 68 percent in NFHS-1. The attendance rate drops off sharply to 49 percent at age 15–17. For the age group 6–17, the attendance rate is 78 percent for males, 66 percent for females, and 72 percent for India as a whole. In urban areas, attendance rates for males and females differ by less than 5 percentage points for every age group. In rural areas, however, attendance rates are considerably higher for males than for females at every age, and the gap widens with increasing age. For both males and females, school attendance rates are much higher in urban areas than in rural areas in every age group.

School attendance at age 6–17 years is more than 90 percent in Himachal Pradesh and Kerala, and 85–90 percent in Goa, Delhi, Manipur, Mizoram, and Punjab. Overall, school attendance is lowest in Bihar (only 60 percent), and it is also 70 percent or lower in the Central Region, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh. Generally, the lower the overall attendance rate, the higher the difference in children’s school attendance by residence and sex.

| Table 2.9 School attendance by state | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Percentage of the household population age 6–17 years attending school by sex, residence, age, and state, India, 1998–99 | | | | | | | | | |
| State | Male | | | Female | | | Total | | |
| | Urban | Rural | Total | Urban | Rural | Total | Urban | Rural | Total |
| India | | | | | | | | | |
| Age | | | | | | | | | |
| 6–10 years | 91.7 | 83.2 | 85.2 | 89.1 | 75.1 | 78.3 | 90.4 | 79.3 | 81.9 |
| 11–14 years | 85.1 | 78.5 | 80.2 | 82.8 | 61.6 | 67.0 | 84.0 | 70.4 | 73.9 |
| 15–17 years | 65.3 | 54.8 | 57.7 | 60.5 | 32.8 | 40.3 | 63.0 | 44.0 | 49.3 |
| 6–14 years | 88.7 | 81.4 | 83.1 | 86.3 | 69.7 | 73.7 | 87.6 | 75.7 | 78.6 |
| 6–17 years | 83.0 | 75.8 | 77.6 | 80.0 | 61.7 | 66.2 | 81.5 | 69.0 | 72.1 |
| North | | | | | | | | | |
| Delhi | 86.0 | 89.2 | 86.2 | 87.6 | 83.2 | 87.2 | 86.7 | 86.2 | 86.7 |
| Haryana | 87.1 | 85.4 | 85.9 | 86.1 | 74.7 | 77.8 | 86.7 | 80.5 | 82.2 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 96.4 | 95.4 | 95.5 | 96.3 | 92.8 | 93.0 | 96.3 | 94.1 | 94.3 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 83.0 | 85.8 | 85.3 | 85.2 | 67.6 | 70.4 | 84.0 | 76.6 | 77.8 |
| Punjab | 93.0 | 84.1 | 86.7 | 92.7 | 78.1 | 82.7 | 92.8 | 81.5 | 84.9 |
| Rajasthan | 83.9 | 80.4 | 81.3 | 73.5 | 49.9 | 55.6 | 79.0 | 66.0 | 69.1 |
| Central | | | | | | | | | |
| Madhya Pradesh | 84.0 | 73.1 | 75.9 | 77.9 | 58.0 | 62.8 | 81.2 | 65.7 | 69.6 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 77.7 | 77.3 | 77.3 | 77.0 | 57.3 | 61.4 | 77.3 | 68.0 | 69.9 |
| East | | | | | | | | | |
| Bihar | 79.1 | 66.8 | 68.2 | 72.1 | 47.5 | 50.5 | 75.5 | 57.4 | 59.6 |
| Orissa | 78.2 | 77.1 | 77.2 | 75.4 | 65.8 | 66.8 | 76.9 | 71.5 | 72.1 |
| West Bengal | 78.5 | 72.5 | 73.7 | 76.1 | 65.9 | 68.0 | 77.3 | 69.3 | 70.9 |
| Northeast | | | | | | | | | |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 96.7 | 82.3 | 84.2 | 87.3 | 74.3 | 75.9 | 92.2 | 78.3 | 80.1 |
| Assam | 86.8 | 73.3 | 74.2 | 81.1 | 69.0 | 69.9 | 83.8 | 71.2 | 72.1 |
| Manipur | 91.8 | 87.8 | 89.1 | 89.3 | 82.0 | 84.4 | 90.5 | 84.7 | 86.6 |
| Meghalaya | 91.4 | 75.3 | 78.5 | 91.3 | 76.8 | 79.9 | 91.3 | 76.0 | 79.2 |
| Mizoram | 92.6 | 78.6 | 85.5 | 89.8 | 79.8 | 85.3 | 91.0 | 79.2 | 85.4 |
| Nagaland | 87.3 | 84.5 | 85.1 | 84.8 | 78.0 | 79.4 | 86.0 | 81.1 | 82.2 |
| Sikkim | 88.0 | 82.7 | 83.2 | 73.4 | 83.6 | 82.6 | 80.6 | 83.2 | 82.9 |
| West | | | | | | | | | |
| Goa | 91.2 | 88.5 | 89.6 | 87.2 | 86.5 | 86.8 | 89.2 | 87.5 | 88.1 |
| Gujarat | 82.8 | 69.6 | 74.8 | 73.4 | 56.7 | 63.1 | 78.3 | 63.2 | 69.1 |
| Maharashtra | 86.3 | 82.6 | 84.1 | 84.6 | 75.7 | 79.1 | 85.5 | 79.3 | 81.8 |
| South | | | | | | | | | |
| Andhra Pradesh | 80.1 | 71.3 | 73.5 | 78.5 | 56.0 | 61.5 | 79.4 | 63.9 | 67.7 |
| Karnataka | 81.9 | 71.4 | 74.9 | 79.7 | 62.4 | 68.0 | 80.8 | 66.9 | 71.4 |
| Kerala | 95.6 | 89.7 | 91.0 | 94.5 | 89.8 | 90.8 | 95.0 | 89.8 | 90.9 |
| Tamil Nadu | 84.4 | 81.6 | 82.6 | 84.7 | 73.3 | 76.9 | 84.5 | 77.4 | 79.7 |

Fifty percent of school-age girls in Bihar are not attending school. School attendance for school-age girls is also low in Rajasthan (56 percent), Uttar Pradesh (61 percent), Andhra Pradesh (62 percent), and Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat (63 percent each). Among females age 6–14 years, less than three-quarters attend school in 5 states compared with 11 states in NFHS-1. Similarly, for males age 6–14 years, less than 75 percent attend school only in Bihar, whereas there were eight such states in NFHS-1 (data not shown).

Figure 2.4
School Attendance by Age, Sex, and Residence



NFHS-2, India, 1998-99

Table 2.10 shows reasons for children never attending school or not currently attending school. For both boys and girls, the cost of schooling is cited most often as the main reason for never attending school. This reason is mentioned in one-quarter of cases for both boys and girls. This reason is almost twice as likely to be mentioned for children never attending school as for children not currently attending school. The most mentioned reason for not currently attending school is that the child is not interested in studies, which was cited for 41 percent of boys and 26 percent of girls. A lack of interest in school is also frequently given as a reason for children (especially boys) never attending school. Not surprisingly, the need for children to work in the household is mentioned more for girls than for boys, and the need for children to work on the family farm, in the family business, or outside the home for payment is more frequently mentioned for boys than for girls. Education is not considered necessary for 13 percent of girls and 8 percent of boys who never attended school. The lack of accessibility of schools ('school too far away' or 'transport not available') is mentioned infrequently for both boys and girls. The pattern of the reasons for not attending school for boys and girls is similar in urban and rural areas with the exception that the cost of schooling is cited more often in urban areas and the distance from school and the need for work (in the household, on a family farm, or in a family business) are mentioned slightly less often in urban areas.

| Table 2.10 Reasons for children not attending school | | | | | | |
|--|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|
| Percent distribution of children age 6–17 years who never attended school by the main reason for never attending school and percent distribution of children age 6–17 years who have dropped out of school by the main reason for not currently attending school, according to residence and sex, India, 1998–99 | | | | | | |
| Reason | Urban | | Rural | | Total | |
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Main reason for never attending school¹ | | | | | | |
| School too far away | 1.3 | 2.8 | 3.8 | 4.5 | 3.5 | 4.3 |
| Transport not available | 0.2 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.7 |
| Education not considered necessary | 6.1 | 12.9 | 7.8 | 13.1 | 7.6 | 13.1 |
| Required for household work | 4.6 | 9.6 | 6.7 | 15.5 | 6.4 | 14.9 |
| Required for work on farm/family business | 2.8 | 1.2 | 5.2 | 3.4 | 4.9 | 3.2 |
| Required for outside work for payment in cash or kind | 4.6 | 2.9 | 4.3 | 2.6 | 4.4 | 2.6 |
| Costs too much | 28.5 | 30.1 | 25.8 | 23.8 | 26.2 | 24.5 |
| No proper school facilities for girls | 0.0 | 1.1 | 0.0 | 2.6 | 0.0 | 2.5 |
| Required for care of siblings | 0.6 | 1.7 | 0.9 | 3.0 | 0.9 | 2.9 |
| Not interested in studies | 26.5 | 15.7 | 25.7 | 15.9 | 25.8 | 15.8 |
| Other | 21.9 | 18.6 | 17.0 | 12.8 | 17.6 | 13.4 |
| Don't know | 3.0 | 2.8 | 2.0 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.2 |
| Total percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Number of children | 1,107 | 1,438 | 7,081 | 12,614 | 8,188 | 14,052 |
| Main reason for not currently attending school² | | | | | | |
| School too far away | 0.2 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 5.9 | 0.8 | 4.8 |
| Transport not available | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 1.6 | 0.3 | 1.3 |
| Further education not considered necessary | 2.4 | 5.4 | 2.3 | 4.3 | 2.4 | 4.5 |
| Required for household work | 5.7 | 14.7 | 8.7 | 17.3 | 8.0 | 16.7 |
| Required for work on farm/family business | 4.7 | 1.6 | 9.2 | 2.9 | 8.0 | 2.6 |
| Required for outside work for payment in cash or kind | 11.3 | 3.0 | 9.9 | 3.7 | 10.3 | 3.5 |
| Costs too much | 15.2 | 17.0 | 13.3 | 11.4 | 13.8 | 12.6 |
| No proper school facilities for girls | 0.0 | 1.2 | 0.0 | 3.5 | 0.0 | 3.0 |
| Required for care of siblings | 0.2 | 1.5 | 0.6 | 2.3 | 0.5 | 2.2 |
| Not interested in studies | 42.5 | 30.2 | 40.0 | 24.8 | 40.6 | 26.0 |
| Repeated failures | 6.0 | 6.1 | 5.3 | 3.7 | 5.5 | 4.2 |
| Got married | 0.1 | 4.9 | 0.2 | 8.5 | 0.2 | 7.7 |
| Other | 5.8 | 8.2 | 5.3 | 6.2 | 5.5 | 6.6 |
| Don't know | 5.7 | 5.1 | 3.8 | 4.0 | 4.2 | 4.2 |
| Total percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Number of children | 1,852 | 1,747 | 5,475 | 6,121 | 7,327 | 7,868 |
| ¹ For children who have never attended school | | | | | | |
| ² For children who have dropped out of school | | | | | | |

2.5 Housing Characteristics

Table 2.11 provides information on housing characteristics by residence. Overall, three in every five households in India have electricity (up from one in two households in NFHS-1). The proportion of households with electricity is 91 percent in urban areas and 48 percent in rural areas, an increase of 10 and 24 percent, respectively, over the NFHS-1 results.

| Table 2.11 Housing characteristics | | | |
|---|--------|--------|--------|
| Percent distribution of households by housing characteristics, according to residence, India, 1998–99 | | | |
| Housing characteristic | Urban | Rural | Total |
| Electricity | | | |
| Yes | 91.3 | 48.1 | 60.1 |
| No | 8.7 | 51.9 | 39.9 |
| Total percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Source of drinking water | | | |
| Piped | 74.5 | 25.0 | 38.7 |
| Hand pump | 18.1 | 47.3 | 39.2 |
| Well water | 6.0 | 23.5 | 18.7 |
| Surface water | 0.4 | 3.5 | 2.6 |
| Other | 1.0 | 0.7 | 0.8 |
| Total percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Time to get drinking water | | | |
| Percentage < 15 minutes | 86.4 | 69.3 | 74.1 |
| Median time (minutes) | 0.0 | 4.9 | 4.3 |
| Method of drinking water purification¹ | | | |
| Strains water by cloth | 25.1 | 16.1 | 18.6 |
| Uses alum | 1.4 | 1.2 | 1.2 |
| Uses water filter | 14.8 | 2.4 | 5.8 |
| Boils water | 13.6 | 6.1 | 8.2 |
| Uses electronic purifier | 1.2 | 0.1 | 0.4 |
| Uses other method | 0.6 | 0.8 | 0.7 |
| Does not purify water | 50.4 | 75.3 | 68.4 |
| Sanitation facility | | | |
| Flush toilet | 63.9 | 8.8 | 24.0 |
| Pit toilet/latrine | 16.8 | 10.0 | 11.9 |
| Other | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| No facility | 19.3 | 81.1 | 64.0 |
| Total percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Main type of fuel used for cooking | | | |
| Wood | 23.1 | 73.1 | 59.3 |
| Crop residues | 0.5 | 8.1 | 6.0 |
| Dung cakes | 1.4 | 8.4 | 6.5 |
| Coal/coke/lignite/charcoal | 4.9 | 1.7 | 2.6 |
| Kerosene | 21.5 | 2.7 | 7.9 |
| Electricity | 0.8 | 0.2 | 0.4 |
| Liquid petroleum gas | 46.9 | 5.1 | 16.7 |
| Biogas | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Other | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Total percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Type of house | | | |
| <i>Kachha</i> | 9.4 | 41.4 | 32.5 |
| <i>Semi-pucca</i> | 24.4 | 39.5 | 35.3 |
| <i>Pucca</i> | 66.0 | 19.0 | 32.0 |
| Missing | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Total percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Persons per room | | | |
| < 3 | 68.6 | 60.2 | 62.5 |
| 3–4 | 19.5 | 24.4 | 23.1 |
| 5–6 | 8.3 | 10.7 | 10.0 |
| 7+ | 3.5 | 4.5 | 4.2 |
| Missing | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Total percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Mean number of persons per room | 2.5 | 2.8 | 2.7 |
| Number of households | 25,243 | 65,953 | 91,196 |

¹Totals add to more than 100.0 because households may use more than one method of purification.

Water sources and sanitation facilities have an important influence on the health of household members, especially children. NFHS-1 and NFHS-2 included questions on sources of drinking water and types of sanitation facilities. NFHS-2 found that 39 percent of households in India use piped drinking water (up from 31 percent in NFHS-1), the same proportion drink water from hand pumps (also up from 31 percent in NFHS-1), 19 percent drink water from wells (down from 26 percent in NFHS-1), and 3 percent drink surface water (down from 11 percent in NFHS-1). As in the case of electricity, there are large urban-rural differences in sources of drinking water. Three-quarters of households in urban areas use piped drinking water compared with only one-quarter in rural areas. The median time to get drinking water is five minutes in rural areas, whereas in urban areas the majority of households do not have any travel time to their source of drinking water. Only one-third of households in India purify water by any method (half of households in urban areas and one-quarter of households in rural areas). The most popular methods of water purification are straining and boiling water. Water filters are used by 30 percent of urban households that purified their drinking water.

Regarding sanitation facilities, only 24 percent of households have a flush toilet that uses either piped water or bucket water for flushing (up slightly from 22 percent in NFHS-1), 12 percent have a pit toilet or latrine, and 64 percent have no facility. Again there are large urban-rural differences: 64 percent of urban households have a flush toilet compared with only 9 percent of rural households. A large majority (81 percent) of rural households have no toilet facility at all.

Several types of fuel are used for cooking in India, with wood as the most common type. Overall, 59 percent of households rely mainly on wood, 17 percent on liquid petroleum gas, 13 percent on either crop residues or dung cakes, 8 percent on kerosene, and the rest on other fuels. Sixty-eight percent of urban households rely mainly on liquid petroleum gas or kerosene, while 73 percent of rural households rely mainly on wood.

Regarding type of house construction, one-third of households in India live in houses that are *kachha* (made from mud, thatch, or other low-quality materials), one-third live in semi-*pucca* houses (using partly low-quality and partly high-quality materials), and one-third live in *pucca* houses (made with high-quality materials throughout, including the roof, walls, and floor). By residence, 66 percent of households in urban areas live in *pucca* houses compared with 19 percent of households in rural areas.

Crowded housing conditions may affect health as well as the quality of life. Thirty-seven percent of households live in houses with three or more persons per room. The mean number of persons per room is 2.5 in urban areas, 2.8 in rural areas, and 2.7 overall (only a slight decrease from 2.8 persons per room in NFHS-1).

Table 2.12 presents an interstate comparison of housing characteristics. The percentage of households with electricity is lowest in Bihar (18 percent), Assam (26 percent), Orissa (34 percent), and West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh (37 percent each). At least 90 percent of households have electricity in Delhi (98 percent), Himachal Pradesh (97 percent), Punjab (96 percent), Goa (94 percent), and Jammu and Kashmir (90 percent). In addition, over three-quarters of households have electricity in Haryana, Gujarat, Mizoram, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, and Manipur. More than 60 percent of households use piped water or water from a hand pump for drinking in every state except Kerala and a few states in the Northeast Region. In Manipur,

Table 2.12 Housing characteristics by state

Selected housing characteristics by state, India, 1998–99

| State | Percentage of households: | | | | | Mean number of persons per room |
|-------------------|---------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | With electricity | With drinking water that is piped or from a hand pump | With a toilet or latrine facility | Using biomass fuel for cooking | Living in a <i>pucca</i> house | |
| India | 60.1 | 77.9 | 35.9 | 71.7 | 32.0 | 2.7 |
| North | | | | | | |
| Delhi | 97.7 | 98.7 | 94.4 | 3.6 | 88.2 | 2.2 |
| Haryana | 89.1 | 88.0 | 39.0 | 66.9 | 46.7 | 2.4 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 97.2 | 77.4 | 26.7 | 64.0 | 28.7 | 1.8 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 90.1 | 70.6 | 51.0 | 65.8 | 36.1 | 2.2 |
| Punjab | 95.5 | 98.9 | 51.4 | 60.6 | 52.1 | 2.1 |
| Rajasthan | 64.4 | 69.8 | 27.8 | 81.0 | 41.4 | 3.0 |
| Central | | | | | | |
| Madhya Pradesh | 68.1 | 63.5 | 22.2 | 79.3 | 19.2 | 2.9 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 36.6 | 85.6 | 26.5 | 82.8 | 24.8 | 3.1 |
| East | | | | | | |
| Bihar | 18.2 | 75.4 | 16.8 | 85.9 | 15.5 | 2.9 |
| Orissa | 33.8 | 65.3 | 13.5 | 86.8 | 14.8 | 2.4 |
| West Bengal | 36.7 | 89.3 | 44.8 | 65.7 | 32.8 | 2.7 |
| Northeast | | | | | | |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 68.9 | 80.7 | 73.0 | 80.8 | 14.2 | 2.2 |
| Assam | 26.4 | 60.1 | 63.0 | 87.1 | 10.9 | 2.1 |
| Manipur | 75.3 | 48.9 | 92.0 | 69.2 | 7.1 | 2.1 |
| Meghalaya | 41.2 | 42.1 | 52.0 | 83.5 | 14.5 | 2.0 |
| Mizoram | 84.1 | 63.2 | 97.7 | 57.4 | 16.2 | 2.6 |
| Nagaland | 56.3 | 40.5 | 74.3 | 86.1 | 18.1 | 1.6 |
| Sikkim | 80.7 | 84.6 | 72.7 | 63.2 | 50.6 | 2.0 |
| West | | | | | | |
| Goa | 93.5 | 61.8 | 58.9 | 41.4 | 51.0 | 1.6 |
| Gujarat | 84.3 | 84.5 | 44.9 | 54.5 | 45.2 | 2.7 |
| Maharashtra | 82.1 | 81.9 | 45.9 | 51.9 | 28.3 | 3.0 |
| South | | | | | | |
| Andhra Pradesh | 74.4 | 78.5 | 27.3 | 74.1 | 39.9 | 2.9 |
| Karnataka | 80.9 | 87.0 | 38.6 | 67.8 | 41.2 | 2.5 |
| Kerala | 71.8 | 19.9 | 85.2 | 81.7 | 79.8 | 1.3 |
| Tamil Nadu | 78.8 | 85.0 | 34.0 | 66.5 | 27.6 | 2.2 |

Meghalaya, and Nagaland, piped water or water from a hand pump is used for drinking by 41–49 percent of households, and less than 20 percent of households use these water sources in Kerala. The majority of households in Kerala obtain their drinking water from wells.

Most of the states in India have inadequate toilet facilities. There are only seven states where more than 70 percent of households have any type of toilet facility. In order of decreasing proportions, these states are Mizoram, Delhi, Manipur, Kerala, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, and Sikkim. Less than 30 percent of households have a toilet or latrine facility in Central India and in Orissa, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Rajasthan. In Delhi, only 4 percent of households use biomass fuel for cooking. In every other state except Goa, a majority of households use biomass fuel for cooking.

| Table 2.13 Household ownership of agricultural land, house, and livestock | | | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
| Percent distribution of households owning agricultural land and percentage owning a house and livestock by residence, India, 1998–99 | | | |
| Asset | Urban | Rural | Total |
| No agricultural land | 80.0 | 38.6 | 50.1 |
| Irrigated land only | | | |
| < 1 acre | 1.6 | 9.4 | 7.2 |
| 1–5 acres | 5.4 | 16.1 | 13.2 |
| 6+ acres | 2.2 | 4.2 | 3.6 |
| Nonirrigated land only | | | |
| < 1 acre | 1.5 | 5.1 | 4.1 |
| 1–5 acres | 4.2 | 13.2 | 10.7 |
| 6+ acres | 1.4 | 3.6 | 3.0 |
| Both irrigated and nonirrigated land | | | |
| < 1 acre | 0.2 | 0.8 | 0.6 |
| 1–5 acres | 0.9 | 5.0 | 3.9 |
| 6+ acres | 1.1 | 3.4 | 2.8 |
| Missing | 1.4 | 0.6 | 0.8 |
| Total percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Percentage owning a house | 78.2 | 94.8 | 90.2 |
| Percentage owning livestock | 13.7 | 59.3 | 46.7 |
| Number of households | 25,243 | 65,953 | 91,196 |

The percentage of households living in *pucca* houses is quite low in most states. In Orissa, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and all the states in the Northeast Region except Sikkim, less than 20 percent of households live in *pucca* houses. Delhi (88 percent) and Kerala (80 percent) are the only states in which more than 60 percent of households live in houses classified as *pucca*. Households are least crowded in Kerala (1.3 persons per room), followed by Goa and Nagaland (where the average number of persons per room is 1.6). Households in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh have an average of around 3 persons per room, which puts them in the most crowded category.

Table 2.13 gives a number of measures related to the socioeconomic status of the household (ownership of land, a house, and livestock). Overall, half of households in India do not own any agricultural land. Thirty-nine percent of households in rural areas do not own agricultural land (up slightly from 36 percent in NFHS-1), compared with 80 percent of households in urban areas. In rural areas, among those who own land, 64 percent have at least some irrigated land. The proportion of households owning a house is 78 percent in urban areas, 95 percent in rural areas, and 90 percent overall. The proportion of households owning livestock is 14 percent in urban areas, 59 percent in rural areas, and 47 percent overall.

The possession of durable goods is another indicator of a household's socioeconomic level, although these goods may also have other benefits. For example, having access to a radio or television may expose household members to innovative ideas or important information about health and family welfare; a refrigerator prolongs the wholesomeness of food; and a means of transportation allows greater access to many services outside the local area. Table 2.14 shows that the majority of Indian households have a cot or a bed (81 percent) or a clock or watch (67

| Table 2.14 Household ownership of durable goods and standard of living | | | |
|---|--------|--------|--------|
| Percentage of households owning selected durable goods and percent distribution of households by type of kitchenware and the standard of living index, according to residence, India, 1998–99 | | | |
| Asset | Urban | Rural | Total |
| Durable goods | | | |
| Mattress | 71.7 | 38.1 | 47.4 |
| Pressure cooker | 65.2 | 16.0 | 29.6 |
| Chair | 71.3 | 35.6 | 45.5 |
| Cot/bed | 86.1 | 79.4 | 81.2 |
| Table | 64.9 | 30.0 | 39.6 |
| Clock/watch | 90.1 | 57.5 | 66.5 |
| Electric fan | 82.2 | 31.4 | 45.5 |
| Bicycle | 53.5 | 45.7 | 47.8 |
| Radio/transistor | 53.2 | 32.2 | 38.0 |
| Sewing machine | 35.5 | 11.9 | 18.4 |
| Telephone | 20.1 | 2.6 | 7.4 |
| Refrigerator | 28.8 | 3.7 | 10.6 |
| Television (black and white) | 44.8 | 17.0 | 24.7 |
| Television (colour) | 27.3 | 3.5 | 10.1 |
| Moped/scooter/motorcycle | 25.0 | 6.0 | 11.2 |
| Car | 4.4 | 0.6 | 1.6 |
| Water pump | 9.3 | 8.2 | 8.5 |
| Bullock cart | 1.4 | 9.4 | 7.2 |
| Thresher | 0.7 | 2.5 | 2.0 |
| Tractor | 0.8 | 2.0 | 1.6 |
| None of the above | 1.9 | 7.3 | 5.8 |
| Main type of kitchenware used | | | |
| Clay | 0.5 | 1.1 | 0.9 |
| Aluminium | 29.8 | 45.5 | 41.1 |
| Cast iron | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Brass/copper | 0.6 | 1.2 | 1.0 |
| Stainless steel | 68.9 | 51.9 | 56.6 |
| Total percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Standard of living index | | | |
| Low | 14.3 | 44.7 | 36.3 |
| Medium | 45.2 | 44.0 | 44.3 |
| High | 39.0 | 10.3 | 18.2 |
| Missing | 1.5 | 1.0 | 1.2 |
| Total percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Number of households | 25,243 | 65,953 | 91,196 |

percent). Other durable goods found in many households are bicycles (48 percent), mattresses (47 percent), chairs or electric fans (46 percent each), tables (40 percent), radios (38 percent), pressure cookers (30 percent), and black and white televisions (25 percent). A small proportion of households own sewing machines (18 percent), motorcycles, scooters, or mopeds (11 percent), refrigerators (11 percent), colour televisions (10 percent), water pumps (9 percent), telephones (7 percent), or cars (2 percent). Urban households are much more likely than rural households to own each of these durable goods. In rural areas, 9 percent of households own a bullock cart, 3 percent own a thresher, and 2 percent own a tractor. Six percent of households in India do not own any of the above durable goods. The majority of households (57 percent) use stainless steel kitchenware and two in every five households use aluminium kitchenware.

Table 2.14 shows a summary household measure called the standard of living index (SLI), which is calculated by adding the following scores:

House type: 4 for *pucca*, 2 for *semi-pucca*, 0 for *kachha*;

Toilet facility: 4 for own flush toilet, 2 for public or shared flush toilet or own pit toilet, 1 for shared or public pit toilet, 0 for no facility;

Source of lighting: 2 for electricity, 1 for kerosene, gas, or oil, 0 for other source of lighting;

Main fuel for cooking: 2 for electricity, liquid petroleum gas, or biogas, 1 for coal, charcoal, or kerosene, 0 for other fuel;

Source of drinking water: 2 for pipe, hand pump, or well in residence/yard/plot, 1 for public tap, hand pump, or well, 0 for other water source;

Separate room for cooking: 1 for yes, 0 for no;

Ownership of house: 2 for yes, 0 for no;

Ownership of agricultural land: 4 for 5 acres or more, 3 for 2.0–4.9 acres, 2 for less than 2 acres or acreage not known, 0 for no agricultural land;

Ownership of irrigated land: 2 if household owns at least some irrigated land, 0 for no irrigated land;

Ownership of livestock: 2 if owns livestock, 0 if does not own livestock;

Ownership of durable goods: 4 each for a car or tractor, 3 each for a moped/scooter/motorcycle, telephone, refrigerator, or colour television, 2 each for a bicycle, electric fan, radio/transistor, sewing machine, black and white television, water pump, bullock cart, or thresher, 1 each for a mattress, pressure cooker, chair, cot/bed, table, or clock/watch.

Index scores range from 0–14 for a low SLI to 15–24 for a medium SLI and 25–67 for a high SLI. By this measure, more than one-third (36 percent) of Indian households have a low standard of living, 44 percent have a medium standard of living, and 18 percent have a high standard of living. The proportion with a low standard of living is much higher in rural areas than in urban areas (45 and 14 percent, respectively), and the proportion with a high standard of living is much higher in urban areas than in rural areas (39 and 10 percent, respectively). The proportion with a medium standard of living is almost the same in urban and rural areas.

2.6 Lifestyle Indicators

The NFHS-2 Household Questionnaire asked about certain aspects of the lifestyle of household members. Table 2.15 shows the percentages of men and women age 15 and above who chew *paan masala* or tobacco, drink alcohol, or smoke. These lifestyle indicators are of considerable interest because the use of *paan masala*, tobacco, and alcohol all have detrimental effects on health.

| Table 2.15 Lifestyle indicators | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Percentage of usual household members age 15 and above who chew <i>paan masala</i> or tobacco, drink alcohol, currently smoke, or have ever smoked by selected background characteristics and sex, India, 1998–99 | | | | | |
| Background characteristic | Chew <i>paan masala</i> or tobacco | Drink alcohol | Currently smoke | Ever smoked ¹ | Number of household members |
| MALE | | | | | |
| Age | | | | | |
| 15–19 | 9.4 | 2.4 | 4.4 | 4.8 | 26,297 |
| 20–24 | 20.3 | 7.7 | 13.7 | 14.6 | 21,461 |
| 25–29 | 28.0 | 14.9 | 25.1 | 27.3 | 19,641 |
| 30–39 | 34.1 | 23.6 | 37.6 | 41.2 | 33,554 |
| 40–49 | 35.6 | 26.1 | 45.0 | 49.9 | 24,151 |
| 50–59 | 35.4 | 23.9 | 45.3 | 52.3 | 15,195 |
| 60+ | 37.6 | 18.6 | 38.2 | 46.6 | 20,571 |
| Residence | | | | | |
| Urban | 20.8 | 12.4 | 21.4 | 24.5 | 46,245 |
| Rural | 31.3 | 18.5 | 32.6 | 36.5 | 114,626 |
| Education | | | | | |
| Illiterate | 38.0 | 26.7 | 44.8 | 49.6 | 44,661 |
| Literate, < middle school complete | 31.5 | 17.8 | 33.1 | 37.5 | 43,328 |
| Middle school complete | 23.2 | 11.8 | 21.2 | 23.7 | 25,376 |
| High school complete and above | 18.9 | 8.9 | 15.9 | 18.5 | 47,485 |
| Standard of living index | | | | | |
| Low | 37.6 | 24.8 | 39.4 | 43.5 | 46,887 |
| Medium | 27.7 | 15.0 | 29.1 | 32.7 | 76,510 |
| High | 17.2 | 9.8 | 16.9 | 20.2 | 35,463 |
| Total | 28.3 | 16.7 | 29.4 | 33.1 | 160,871 |
| FEMALE | | | | | |
| Age | | | | | |
| 15–19 | 2.1 | 0.6 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 24,602 |
| 20–24 | 4.3 | 1.1 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 22,288 |
| 25–29 | 8.0 | 2.0 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 20,761 |
| 30–39 | 12.3 | 2.5 | 2.2 | 2.4 | 32,127 |
| 40–49 | 18.6 | 3.1 | 4.0 | 4.5 | 21,253 |
| 50–59 | 22.8 | 3.8 | 5.7 | 6.4 | 15,108 |
| 60+ | 25.0 | 3.1 | 5.3 | 6.0 | 18,588 |
| Residence | | | | | |
| Urban | 8.8 | 0.5 | 0.9 | 1.0 | 43,173 |
| Rural | 13.8 | 2.9 | 3.1 | 3.4 | 111,554 |
| Education | | | | | |
| Illiterate | 17.4 | 3.5 | 4.0 | 4.5 | 86,359 |
| Literate, < middle school complete | 10.2 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.9 | 30,563 |
| Middle school complete | 3.8 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 14,217 |
| High school complete and above | 1.8 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 23,529 |
| Standard of living index | | | | | |
| Low | 18.7 | 4.4 | 4.2 | 4.7 | 47,225 |
| Medium | 11.7 | 1.7 | 2.2 | 2.4 | 71,497 |
| High | 5.2 | 0.3 | 0.6 | 0.8 | 34,144 |
| Total | 12.4 | 2.2 | 2.5 | 2.8 | 154,726 |
| Total male and female | 20.5 | 9.6 | 16.2 | 18.2 | 315,598 |
| Note: Total includes 23 males and 58 females with missing information on education and 2,012 males and 1,861 females with missing information on the standard of living index, who are not shown separately. | | | | | |
| ¹ Includes household members who currently smoke | | | | | |

The respondent to the Household Questionnaire reports on these lifestyle indicators for all persons in the household, and therefore the results should be interpreted with caution because the household respondent may not be aware of use that takes place outside the household environs. In addition, to the extent that social stigma may be attached to the use of some of the substances, underreporting is likely.

Twenty-one percent of persons age 15 and above are reported to chew *paan masala* or tobacco. This proportion rises from 9 percent of men and 2 percent of women at age 15–19 to 38 percent and 25 percent, respectively, at age 60 and above. Chewing of *paan masala* or tobacco for both men and women is about one and one-half times as common in rural areas as in urban areas. Chewing of *paan masala* or tobacco is inversely related with education. It is twice as high among illiterate men as among men who have completed at least high school. Chewing of *paan masala* or tobacco is rare among educated women, and it is much higher among men and women in households with a low standard of living than in households with a high standard of living.

Seventeen percent of men, but only 2 percent of women, age 15 and above are reported to drink alcohol. The proportion of men who drink alcohol rises with age up to age 40–49. The proportion of men who drink is one and one-half times as high in rural areas as in urban areas. Illiterate men are three times as likely to drink alcohol as men who have completed at least high school. Drinking alcohol by household members is negatively related to the household's standard of living.

Only 3 percent of women are reported to have ever smoked and to currently smoke. Among men age 15 and above, 29 percent currently smoke. The proportion of men who smoke rises from 4 percent at age 15–19 to 45 percent at age 40–59 and then falls to 38 percent at age 60 and above. As for chewing *paan masala* or tobacco and drinking alcohol, the proportion of men who smoke is one and one-half times as high in rural areas as in urban areas. It is much higher among illiterate than literate men, and more than twice as high among men with a low standard of living as among men with a high standard of living. Eighty-nine percent of men who ever smoked were still smokers at the time of the survey. The pattern of differentials for ever-smokers closely resembles the pattern for current smokers.

An interstate comparison of life style indicators is presented in Table 2.16. The percentage of men chewing *paan masala* or tobacco is quite low (7–10 percent) in Jammu and Kashmir, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, and Kerala. More than half of men in Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, and Bihar and 40–50 percent in Orissa, Assam, Nagaland, Madhya Pradesh, and Sikkim chew *paan masala* or tobacco. In the northeastern states, chewing *paan masala* or tobacco is also quite common among women, particularly in Mizoram where the proportion chewing *paan masala* or tobacco is the same for men and women. Outside of the Northeast Region, chewing *paan masala* or tobacco is most common for women in Orissa, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh.

| Table 2.16 Lifestyle indicators by state | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Percentage of usual household members age 15 and above who chew <i>paan masala</i> or tobacco, drink alcohol, currently smoke, or have ever smoked by sex and state, India, 1998–99 | | | | |
| State | Chew <i>paan masala</i> or tobacco | Drink alcohol | Currently smoke | Ever smoked ¹ |
| MALE | | | | |
| India | 28.3 | 16.7 | 29.4 | 33.1 |
| North | | | | |
| Delhi | 13.1 | 17.9 | 24.0 | 26.4 |
| Haryana | 8.0 | 20.7 | 40.6 | 42.4 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 7.9 | 24.2 | 38.8 | 42.3 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 7.2 | 10.0 | 44.5 | 49.0 |
| Punjab | 9.3 | 28.3 | 13.9 | 15.8 |
| Rajasthan | 19.1 | 10.7 | 37.9 | 41.0 |
| Central | | | | |
| Madhya Pradesh | 40.6 | 20.6 | 29.5 | 35.1 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 36.3 | 11.6 | 34.0 | 37.2 |
| East | | | | |
| Bihar | 51.7 | 22.4 | 26.3 | 32.0 |
| Orissa | 49.5 | 19.2 | 25.4 | 29.4 |
| West Bengal | 23.3 | 11.0 | 39.6 | 43.1 |
| Northeast | | | | |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 52.0 | 64.5 | 25.1 | 34.3 |
| Assam | 48.2 | 24.9 | 31.7 | 34.9 |
| Manipur | 34.4 | 30.5 | 35.2 | 39.2 |
| Meghalaya | 16.7 | 28.1 | 55.2 | 57.6 |
| Mizoram | 60.3 | 16.8 | 59.4 | 67.1 |
| Nagaland | 45.3 | 26.8 | 38.2 | 49.5 |
| Sikkim | 39.6 | 31.9 | 19.5 | 29.0 |
| West | | | | |
| Goa | 7.7 | 28.7 | 17.8 | 23.5 |
| Gujarat | 24.6 | 6.6 | 25.5 | 29.1 |
| Maharashtra | 34.7 | 12.1 | 13.4 | 15.5 |
| South | | | | |
| Andhra Pradesh | 10.8 | 26.1 | 35.7 | 39.0 |
| Karnataka | 13.9 | 16.4 | 26.0 | 29.6 |
| Kerala | 9.5 | 14.5 | 28.3 | 35.0 |
| Tamil Nadu | 13.0 | 20.5 | 27.0 | 29.8 |

Alcohol consumption is highest in Arunachal Pradesh, where 65 percent of men and 49 percent of women drink alcohol. There are only two other states, Sikkim and Assam, where more than 10 percent of women drink alcohol. In addition to Arunachal Pradesh, more than one-quarter of men drink alcohol in Sikkim, Manipur, Goa, Punjab, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Andhra Pradesh. The lowest prevalence of alcohol consumption is in Gujarat, where there is a state ban on alcohol.

| Table 2.16 Lifestyle indicators by state (contd.) | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Percentage of usual household members age 15 and above who chew <i>paan masala</i> or tobacco, drink alcohol, currently smoke, or have ever smoked by sex and state, India, 1998–99 | | | | |
| State | Chew <i>paan masala</i> or tobacco | Drink alcohol | Currently smoke | Ever smoked ¹ |
| FEMALE | | | | |
| India | 12.4 | 2.2 | 2.5 | 2.8 |
| North | | | | |
| Delhi | 2.5 | 0.1 | 1.8 | 1.9 |
| Haryana | 0.9 | 0.1 | 3.6 | 3.8 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 0.5 | 0.2 | 2.4 | 2.6 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 0.9 | 0.3 | 8.5 | 10.2 |
| Punjab | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.4 |
| Rajasthan | 3.9 | 0.2 | 4.3 | 4.4 |
| Central | | | | |
| Madhya Pradesh | 14.8 | 3.4 | 0.9 | 1.1 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 11.4 | 0.2 | 3.1 | 3.5 |
| East | | | | |
| Bihar | 6.9 | 3.3 | 6.4 | 7.2 |
| Orissa | 34.9 | 6.2 | 0.9 | 1.0 |
| West Bengal | 15.6 | 2.0 | 2.6 | 2.8 |
| Northeast | | | | |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 33.2 | 48.9 | 5.4 | 7.2 |
| Assam | 24.9 | 11.1 | 2.7 | 3.1 |
| Manipur | 19.6 | 2.0 | 12.2 | 14.4 |
| Meghalaya | 27.6 | 3.1 | 6.8 | 7.0 |
| Mizoram | 60.7 | 0.4 | 22.1 | 29.3 |
| Nagaland | 16.5 | 2.6 | 2.5 | 3.7 |
| Sikkim | 18.9 | 17.1 | 8.3 | 11.8 |
| West | | | | |
| Goa | 8.2 | 4.5 | 2.1 | 3.1 |
| Gujarat | 8.2 | 1.0 | 1.4 | 1.7 |
| Maharashtra | 18.5 | 0.5 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| South | | | | |
| Andhra Pradesh | 10.3 | 7.5 | 4.4 | 4.9 |
| Karnataka | 14.9 | 1.0 | 0.3 | 0.4 |
| Kerala | 10.5 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 0.6 |
| Tamil Nadu | 11.0 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.4 |

¹Includes household members who currently smoke

More than half of men have ever smoked in Mizoram and Meghalaya, and 41–50 percent have ever smoked in Nagaland, Jammu and Kashmir, West Bengal, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Rajasthan. Current smoking is also highest in these states. Less than 20 percent of men smoke in Maharashtra, Punjab, Goa, and Sikkim. In most states, around 90 percent of men who ever smoked currently smoke. In Mizoram, where the proportion of women who chew *paan masala* or tobacco is the highest, the proportions of women who have ever smoked and who currently smoke are also the highest. In a large majority of states, less than 5 percent of women smoke or have ever smoked. Between 5 and 15 percent of women currently smoke in Manipur, Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Bihar, and Arunachal Pradesh.

| Table 2.17 Distance from the nearest health facility | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Percent distribution of ever-married rural women age 15–49 by distance from the nearest health facility, India, 1998–99 | | | | | | |
| Distance | Health facility | | | | | |
| | Primary Health Centre | Sub-centre | Either PHC or sub-centre | Hospital ¹ | Dispensary/clinic | Any health facility |
| Within village | 13.1 | 33.0 | 36.5 | 9.7 | 28.3 | 47.4 |
| < 5 km | 28.4 | 39.7 | 40.8 | 25.0 | 32.4 | 38.9 |
| 5–9 km | 29.2 | 16.3 | 15.3 | 25.1 | 17.4 | 9.7 |
| 10+ km | 28.8 | 9.6 | 7.0 | 40.0 | 21.7 | 3.9 |
| Don't know/missing | 0.5 | 1.4 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Total percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Median distance | 4.9 | 1.3 | 1.0 | 6.7 | 2.4 | 0.0 |

Note: The category '< 5 km' excludes cases where the facility is within the village. When median distance is calculated, 'within village' cases and cases with a facility less than 1 km from the village are assigned a distance of zero.
 PHC: Primary Health Centre
¹Includes community health centre, rural hospital, government hospital, and private hospital

2.7 Availability of Facilities and Services to the Rural Population

The NFHS-2 Village Questionnaire collected information from the *sarpanch*, other village officials, or other knowledgeable persons in the village on facilities and services in the village that can affect health and family planning. One important set of questions was on the distance of the village from various types of health facilities, including Primary Health Centres (PHCs), sub-centres, hospitals, and dispensaries or clinics. Table 2.17 summarizes findings on distance from a health facility. The unit of analysis is ever-married women age 15–49 who reside in rural areas. Thirteen percent of rural women live in a village with a Primary Health Centre, 33 percent live in a village with a sub-centre, and 37 percent live in a village with either a PHC or a sub-centre. The proportions who live in a village with other health facilities are 10 percent for hospitals and 28 percent for dispensaries or clinics. Nearly half of women (47 percent) live in a village that has some kind of health facility. Median distances from particular health facilities are 4.9 km for a Primary Health Centre, 1.3 km for a sub-centre, 6.7 km for a hospital, and 2.4 km for a dispensary or a clinic. Fourteen percent of rural women need to travel at least five kilometres to reach the nearest health facility.

Table 2.18 shows the proportion of residents (the *de jure* rural population) in rural India that live in villages which have various facilities and services. Eighty percent of rural residents live in villages that have a primary school, 45 percent live in villages with a middle school, and more than one-quarter (26 percent) live in villages that have a secondary school. Higher secondary schools are available in villages where 14 percent of the rural population live. Almost two-thirds of rural residents (64 percent) live in villages that have an *anganwadi*² (a nursery school for children age 3–6 years) and nearly one-quarter (24 percent) live in villages with an adult education centre. Forty-two percent of rural residents live in villages that have a private doctor and 59 percent live in villages with a traditional birth attendant.

²*Anganwadi* workers provide integrated child development services and may also engage in the promotion of family planning among parents of preschool age children.

| Table 2.18 Availability of facilities and services | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Percentage of rural residents living in villages that have selected facilities and services, India, 1998–99 | | | |
| Facility/service | Percentage of residents | Facility/service | Percentage of residents |
| Primary school | 79.7 | At least one village household has a telephone | 61.0 |
| Middle school | 44.6 | Mill/small-scale industry | 24.8 |
| Secondary school | 26.3 | Credit cooperative society | 25.0 |
| Higher secondary school | 14.0 | Agricultural cooperative society | 27.2 |
| College | 2.8 | Fishermen's cooperative society | 5.5 |
| <i>Anganwadi</i> | 63.8 | Milk cooperative society | 21.8 |
| Adult education centre | 24.2 | <i>Kirana</i> /general market shop | 67.0 |
| Primary Health Centre | 12.9 | Weekly market | 23.1 |
| Sub-centre | 32.3 | Fair price shop | 61.1 |
| Hospital ¹ | 9.6 | <i>Paan</i> shop | 57.6 |
| Dispensary/clinic | 28.3 | Pharmacy/medical shop | 25.6 |
| Private doctor | 41.9 | <i>Mahila mandal</i> | 33.7 |
| Visiting doctor | 31.4 | Youth club | 38.8 |
| Village health guide | 33.0 | Community centre | 19.9 |
| Traditional birth attendant | 58.9 | Community television set | 17.7 |
| Mobile health unit | 12.1 | Cable connection | 28.3 |
| Electricity | 81.3 | Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) | 53.6 |
| Bank | 20.7 | National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) | 13.3 |
| Post office | 43.2 | Training Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) | 22.2 |
| Telegraph office | 10.9 | Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) | 9.5 |
| STD (Subscriber Trunk Dialling) phone booth | 13.7 | Development of Women and Children of Rural Areas (DWACRA) | 28.4 |
| | | Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) | 59.1 |
| | | Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojana (SGNY) | 27.4 |
| | | Total population | 360,764 |

Note: Table is based on the *de jure* population.
¹Includes community health centre, rural hospital, government hospital, and private hospital

Eighty-one percent of rural residents live in villages that are at least partly electrified. Although only 14 percent of rural residents live in villages with an STD booth (for telephoning within India), 61 percent live in villages that have at least one household with a private telephone. Almost one-fifth of rural Indians live in villages that have a community television set, and 28 percent of rural residents live in villages that have cable television service, providing further evidence that the exposure to electronic mass media is limited in rural India. Slightly more than one-third live in villages with a *mahila mandal*, a women's community group. Other facilities and clubs that are available in villages where more than one-third of rural residents live are *kirana* shops (small grocery stores), fair price shops, *paan* shops, post offices, and youth clubs. The most widely available rural development programmes as reported by the respondents to the Village Questionnaire are the Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) and the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP).