CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS
OF HOUSEHOLDS AND VILLAGES

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

2.1   Age-Sex Distribution of the Household Population

The NFHS 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 Bihar may differ because of temporary population movements. Table 2.1 shows the *de facto* population in the NFHS-2 household sample for Bihar, classified by age, residence, and sex. The total *de facto* sample population is 37,713. The sample is 11 percent urban and 89 percent rural.

The age distribution of the population in Bihar is typical of populations in which the level of fertility has been high (Figure 2.1). Forty-two percent are below 15 years of age, and 4 percent are age 65 or older. The proportion below age 15 is slightly higher in rural areas (42 percent) than in urban areas (38 percent). The proportion of persons age 65 or older is also slightly higher in rural areas (4 percent) than in urban areas (3 percent).

The single-year age distributions by sex in the *de facto* population (see Appendix Table B.1) indicate substantial misreporting of ages, including considerable preference for ages ending in particular digits, especially the digits 0 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 Bihar are 18 for males and 11 for females. Comparable values from NFHS-1 are 20 for males and 12 for females[1]. The lower values of Myers' Index in NFHS-2 than in NFHS-1 (revised from the published NFHS-1 estimates) indicate that the quality of age reporting improved between the two surveys. The change in the pattern and extent of age misreporting in NFHS-1 and NFHS-2 has implications for the estimation of the trend in fertility between NFHS-1 and NFHS-2, as discussed in Chapter 4.

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[1]The ages used in the calculation of Myers' Index are those obtained in the household interview, in which the household respondent (usually the head of the household) provided the age of each person in the household. In the NFHS-1 reports, a different set of ages was used for females when calculating Myers' index, inasmuch as the ages of ever-married women age 15–49 from the women's file were copied over to the household file so that some ages were provided by the household respondents and some by the women themselves. Because of this, the value of Myers' Index for females given here for NFHS-1 differs from the value given in the NFHS-1 report. It should also be noted that the values of Myers' Index in the NFHS-1 report for both men and women are twice as large as they should be, due to failure to complete the last step of the calculation of the index, which is division by two. This error is corrected in the present report. The values of Myers' Index presented here, for both NFHS-1 and NFHS-2, are comparable and correctly incorporate the final division by two.

Table 2.1 Household population by age and sex

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

Age	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
< 1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.6
1–4	7.7	9.1	8.4	10.9	10.7	10.8	10.5	10.6	10.5
5–9	12.3	13.4	12.8	16.1	15.5	15.8	15.7	15.2	15.5
10–14	13.6	15.3	14.5	13.1	12.9	13.0	13.1	13.2	13.2
15–19	11.9	12.7	12.3	9.1	9.6	9.4	9.5	10.0	9.7
20–24	9.5	8.7	9.1	7.5	9.1	8.3	7.8	9.1	8.4
25–29	7.8	7.9	7.9	7.0	8.6	7.8	7.1	8.5	7.8
30–34	5.4	6.1	5.7	6.3	6.4	6.3	6.2	6.4	6.3
35–39	6.1	5.9	6.0	6.1	5.8	6.0	6.1	5.8	6.0
40–44	5.7	4.8	5.3	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.2
45–49	4.3	3.8	4.0	4.1	3.4	3.8	4.1	3.4	3.8
50–54	4.3	2.8	3.6	3.1	2.5	2.8	3.2	2.5	2.9
55–59	3.3	2.9	3.1	2.5	3.1	2.8	2.6	3.1	2.8
60–64	2.6	1.7	2.2	2.8	2.4	2.6	2.8	2.3	2.6
65–69	1.2	0.9	1.1	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.7
70–74	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.5	0.7	1.1	1.4	0.7	1.1
75–79	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5
80+	0.8	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of persons	2,201	2,052	4,253	17,112	16,348	33,460	19,314	18,399	37,713
Sex ratio[1]	NA	NA	932	NA	NA	955	NA	NA	953

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
[1]Females per 1,000 males

Figure 2.1
Population Pyramid

NFHS-2, Bihar, 1998–99

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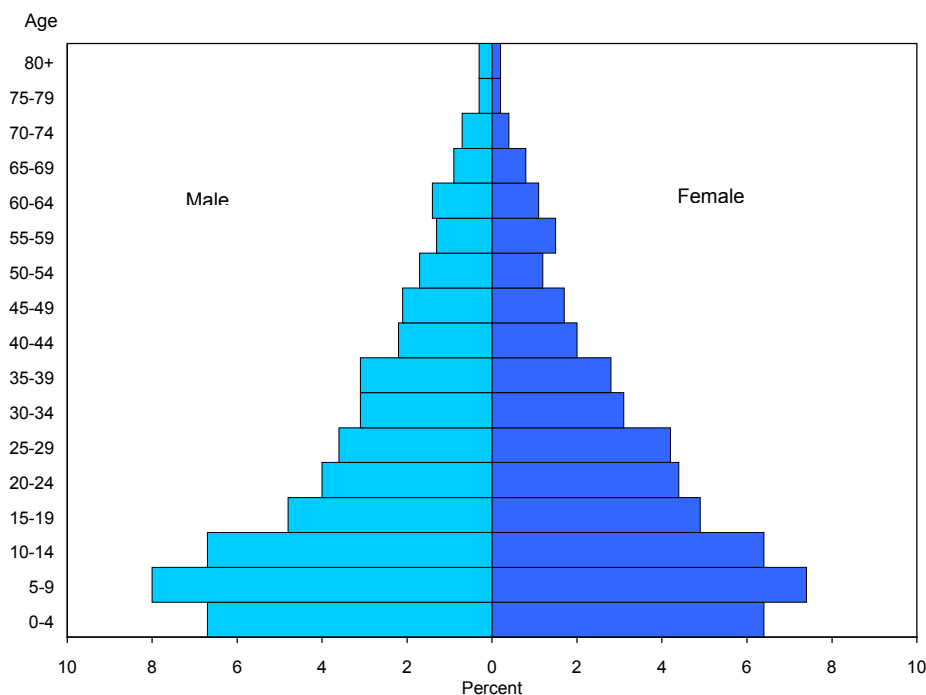
Table 2.2 Population by age and sex from the SRS and NFHS-2

Percent distribution of population by age and sex from the SRS and NFHS-2, Bihar,
1997–1998/99

| | SRS (1997) | | NFHS-2 (1998–99) | | |
Age	Male	Female	Male	Female	Sex ratio[1]
< 5	12.6	12.5	13.0	13.0	953
5–14	28.3	27.5	28.4	28.2	943
15–29	26.0	25.3	24.8	27.7	1,062
30–49	21.4	22.6	21.0	19.8	897
50–64	8.0	8.3	8.5	8.0	890
65+	3.6	3.8	4.3	3.2	700
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	949
Median age	U	U	19.2	19.3	NA

Note: Table is based on the *de jure* 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

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 (SRS) for 1997. The SRS baseline survey, which is *de jure*, counts all usual residents in a sample area (Office of the Registrar General, India, 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.

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 also present sex ratios (females per 1,000 males) in Bihar from NFHS-2. The sex ratio for the *de facto* population of the state is 953 (Table 2.1). The sex ratio of the *de jure* population (949) in Table 2.2 is almost the same as the sex ratio of the *de facto* population (953). The small difference is caused by slight differences in the composition of the *de facto* and *de jure* populations. Table 2.1 shows that the sex ratio for the *de facto* sample is 932 in urban areas and 955 in rural areas, suggesting that rural-urban migration has been dominated by males in Bihar.

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 percent distribution by marital status of the *de facto* household population, classified by age, residence, and sex. Among females age six and above, 54 percent are currently married and 38 percent have never been married. (Comparable percentages from NFHS-1 are 56 percent and 37 percent, indicating a minor change over the six years between the two surveys.) The proportion never married is higher for males (47 percent) than for females (38 percent) and higher in urban areas (53 percent for males and 45 percent for females) than in rural areas (47 percent for males and 37 percent for females). The proportion divorced, separated, or deserted is negligible in Bihar, and widowhood is quite limited until the older ages. Thirty-five percent of women age 50 or older 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, Bihar, 1998–99

			Marital status					
Age	Never married	Currently married	Married, *gauna* not performed	Widowed	Divorced	Separated	Deserted	Total percent
			URBAN					
			Male					
6–12	99.2	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
13–14	99.1	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
15–19	97.3	2.3	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
20–24	77.5	21.1	1.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
25–29	36.3	63.1	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
30–49	5.5	92.3	0.0	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.2	100.0
50+	1.3	86.8	0.0	11.5	0.0	0.0	0.3	100.0
Total	53.0	44.3	0.2	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.1	100.0
			Female					
6–12	99.5	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
13–14	99.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
15–19	76.1	19.3	3.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	100.0
20–24	29.9	66.7	1.1	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	100.0
25–29	6.9	90.1	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.8	100.0
30–49	1.0	92.5	0.0	5.6	0.0	0.2	0.7	100.0
50+	0.0	67.0	0.0	32.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	100.0
Total	45.3	47.9	0.7	5.3	0.1	0.2	0.5	100.0
			RURAL					
			Male					
6–12	99.5	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
13–14	99.4	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
15–19	88.5	5.9	5.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	100.0
20–24	48.0	45.2	6.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2	100.0
25–29	14.3	82.2	2.3	0.7	0.0	0.2	0.3	100.0
30–49	1.7	95.3	0.3	2.3	0.1	0.1	0.3	100.0
50+	0.4	85.3	0.0	14.1	0.0	0.0	0.2	100.0
Total	46.6	48.8	1.5	2.9	0.0	0.1	0.1	100.0
			Female					
6–12	99.2	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
13–14	92.4	0.7	6.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
15–19	50.4	39.3	9.5	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.6	100.0
20–24	8.4	87.2	2.7	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.9	100.0
25–29	1.4	95.5	0.4	1.2	0.1	0.4	1.0	100.0
30–49	0.1	92.6	0.0	6.0	0.1	0.2	0.9	100.0
50+	0.2	64.4	0.0	35.2	0.0	0.2	0.1	100.0
Total	36.5	54.5	1.9	6.4	0.1	0.1	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, Bihar, 1998–99

Age	Never married	Currently married	Married, *gauna* not performed	Widowed	Divorced	Separated	Deserted	Total percent
			TOTAL					
			Male					
6–12	99.5	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
13–14	99.4	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
15–19	89.7	5.4	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	100.0
20–24	52.1	41.9	5.6	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	100.0
25–29	17.0	79.8	2.0	0.7	0.0	0.1	0.2	100.0
30–49	2.1	94.9	0.3	2.3	0.1	0.1	0.3	100.0
50+	0.5	85.4	0.0	13.8	0.0	0.0	0.2	100.0
Total	47.4	48.2	1.4	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.1	100.0
			Female					
6–12	99.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
13–14	93.2	0.7	6.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
15–19	54.0	36.5	8.7	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.6	100.0
20–24	10.7	85.0	2.5	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.8	100.0
25–29	2.0	94.9	0.3	1.2	0.1	0.4	1.1	100.0
30–49	0.2	92.6	0.0	6.0	0.1	0.2	0.9	100.0
50+	0.2	64.6	0.0	34.9	0.0	0.2	0.1	100.0
Total	37.5	53.7	1.8	6.2	0.1	0.1	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 24 percent for females in urban areas, 11 percent for males and 50 percent for females in rural areas, and 10 percent for males and 46 percent for females in the state as a whole. By age 25–29, marriage is nearly universal for females. For males in this age group, the proportion ever married is 64 percent in urban areas, 86 percent in rural areas, and 83 percent in the state as a whole. Overall, the table shows that women marry at much younger ages than men, and that both men and women marry at much younger ages in rural areas than in urban areas.

Table 2.4 shows estimates of the singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM), which is 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 various censuses, which, as mentioned earlier, are modified *de jure* counts. According to the SMAM measure, men in Bihar tend to marry women 5.1 years younger than themselves. The census data indicate that age at marriage has been rising for both men and women. The NFHS-1 and NFHS-2 data indicate that age at marriage has risen considerably since 1991 for both men and women. During the six years between NFHS-1 and NFHS-2, the age at marriage has increased noticeably in both urban and rural areas for both males and females.

Table 2.4 Singulate mean age at marriage

Singulate mean age at marriage by sex from selected sources, Bihar, 1961–1998/99

| | Singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM) | | |
Source	Male	Female	Difference
1961 Census	18.9	14.3	4.6
1971 Census	20.0	15.3	4.7
1981 Census	21.6	16.6	5.0
1991 Census	22.1	17.6	4.5
1993 NFHS-1			
Urban	25.4	20.3	5.1
Rural	22.7	17.6	5.1
Total	23.2	18.0	5.2
1998–99 NFHS-2			
Urban	26.3	20.9	5.3
Rural	23.5	18.5	5.1
Total	23.8	18.8	5.1

Note: Table is based on the de jure population. The male SMAM minus female SMAM may not correspond exactly to the difference in SMAM due to rounding.

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 number of usual household members. The table is based on the *de jure* population because household type and number of usual household members pertain to the usual-resident population. The table shows that 92–95 percent of household heads are male, regardless of area (rural or urban) or region of residence. The median age of household heads varies slightly by residence or region, from 43 years in rural areas to 46 years in urban areas and from 42 years in the Jharkhand region to 46 years in the South Bihar Plain region. Household heads are somewhat more concentrated in the 45–59 age group in urban areas than in rural areas. Eighty-three percent of household heads are Hindu, 15 percent are Muslim, 1 percent are Christian, and less than 1 percent belong to other religions. Muslims are more concentrated in urban areas; they constitute 20 percent of urban households and 14 percent of rural households. Twenty-one percent of household heads belong to scheduled castes and 10 percent to scheduled tribes. Both of these groups constitute higher proportions of the population in rural areas than in urban areas. The largest group of household heads belongs to other backward classes (OBC)[2]. Fifty-three 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 for the state as a whole is 6.1 persons per household, which is about the same in urban and rural areas. However, the mean household size is relatively low in the Jharkhand region (5.4 persons per household) and high in the South Bihar Plain region (6.7 persons per household).

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[2]Other 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 and region, Bihar, 1998–99

Characteristic	Residence		Region			Total
	Urban	Rural	North Bihar Plain	South Bihar Plain	Jhar-khand	
Sex of household head						
Male	93.4	93.3	92.8	92.3	95.2	93.3
Female	6.6	6.7	7.2	7.7	4.8	6.7
Age of household head						
< 30	10.0	13.9	14.8	11.0	14.2	13.5
30–44	37.3	39.1	39.3	34.8	42.8	38.9
45–59	36.4	28.1	28.4	29.9	29.1	29.1
60+	16.2	18.9	17.4	24.3	13.9	18.6
Don't know/missing	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Median age	45.5	42.8	42.7	46.3	42.0	43.2
Religion of household head						
Hindu	77.4	83.9	80.7	86.8	82.8	83.2
Muslim	19.5	14.2	18.9	12.7	10.6	14.8
Christian	2.0	1.0	0.3	0.2	3.5	1.1
Sikh	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0
Jain	0.4	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Zoroastrian/Parsi	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
No religion	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Other	0.4	0.9	0.0	0.1	2.9	0.8
Caste/tribe of household head						
Scheduled caste	15.6	21.5	20.6	26.1	15.0	20.8
Scheduled tribe	2.7	10.9	1.7	2.3	31.7	9.9
Other backward class	47.8	50.2	53.6	54.7	38.8	49.9
Other	33.9	17.4	24.1	16.9	14.5	19.3
Household type						
Nuclear household	56.0	52.7	54.2	44.4	61.3	53.1
Non-nuclear household	43.9	47.1	45.7	55.5	38.6	46.8
Household with no usual members	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Number of usual members						
0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
1	4.9	2.0	1.8	2.0	3.7	2.4
2	4.9	6.2	5.8	4.9	7.8	6.1
3	9.7	9.2	9.4	7.1	11.4	9.2
4	12.3	13.6	13.5	11.0	16.1	13.4
5	14.9	15.7	15.4	13.9	17.8	15.6
6	14.8	16.5	17.2	15.6	15.5	16.3
7	13.9	12.3	12.6	13.5	11.0	12.5
8	9.1	8.4	9.0	9.4	6.6	8.5
9+	15.5	16.0	15.1	22.4	10.1	16.0
Mean household size	6.0	6.1	6.1	6.7	5.4	6.1
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of households	720	5,625	2,701	1,937	1,707	6,345

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

2.4   Educational Attainment

The level of education of household members tends to affect reproductive behaviour, contraceptive use, the health of children, and proper hygienic practices. Table 2.6 shows the percent distribution of the *de facto* household population by 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 2.6 shows that 65 percent of females and 37 percent of males age six and above are illiterate. Comparable figures from NFHS-1 are 71 percent of females and 40 percent of males, indicating a considerable decline in illiteracy in six years. The increase in educational attainment can also be seen by examining the differences in educational levels by age. For example, the proportion of males completing at least high school rises from 20 percent at age 50 and above to 40 percent at age 20–29. For females, the proportion completing at least high school is negligible (only 1 percent) at age 50 and above but reaches a level of 14 percent at age 20–29.

A higher percentage of males than females has completed each level of schooling. The proportion illiterate is lowest at age 10–14 and is highest at age 50 and above for either sex. The median number of years of schooling for males is 3.6, whereas the majority of women in Bihar have never been to school, implying a median of zero.

Education levels are much higher in urban areas than in rural areas. The proportion illiterate is almost twice as high for rural females (69 percent) as for urban females (35 percent), and more than twice as high for rural males (39 percent) as for urban males (18 percent).

Table 2.7 and Figure 2.2 show school attendance rates for the school-age household population by age, sex, and residence. In the state as a whole, 63 percent of children age 6–14 are attending school, up from 51 percent in NFHS-1. The attendance rate drops off sharply at age 15–17. For the age group 6–17, the attendance rate is 68 percent for males, 51 percent for females, and 60 percent for the state as a whole. Attendance rates are higher in urban areas than in rural areas. In urban areas, attendance rates are almost the same for males and females at age 11–14, but males record higher school attendance at ages 6–10 and 15–17. In rural areas, however, attendance rates are considerably higher for males than for females at all ages, and the differentials are higher in the older age groups.

Table 2.8 shows reasons for children never attending school or not currently attending school (for those who have dropped out of school). For both boys and girls, 'costs too much' and 'not interested in studies' stand out as main reasons for never attending school or not currently attending school. Not surprisingly, the need for children to work in the household is mentioned more frequently for girls than for boys. For girls, other frequently mentioned reasons for not currently attending school include 'got married', 'no proper school facilities for girls', and 'further education not considered necessary'. For both boys and girls, the accessibility of schools ('school too far away' and 'transport not available') is mentioned infrequently for both never attending and not currently attending school. The need for children to remain out of school in order to work (including household work, taking care of siblings, working in a family farm or business, and working outside for payment in cash or kind) is mentioned as the main reason for never attending school for 10 percent of boys and 16 percent of girls, and as the main reason for not currently attending school for 23 percent of boys and 22 percent of girls.

Table 2.6 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, Bihar, 1998–99

Age	Illiterate	Literate, < primary school complete	Primary school complete	Middle school complete	High school complete	Higher secondary complete and above	Missing	Total percent	Number of persons	Median number of years of schooling
				URBAN						
				Male						
6–9	28.8	69.8	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	222	1.5
10–14	15.9	35.1	31.9	15.4	1.7	0.0	0.0	100.0	300	5.0
15–19	16.0	5.8	17.1	29.4	23.0	8.6	0.0	100.0	262	9.1
20–29	11.6	4.9	7.6	10.1	21.6	44.3	0.0	100.0	380	10.8
30–39	15.4	4.1	12.1	13.0	22.7	32.7	0.0	100.0	253	10.2
40–49	17.4	4.7	14.5	8.0	23.5	31.9	0.0	100.0	219	10.2
50+	24.9	8.5	16.0	7.9	19.8	22.8	0.0	100.0	300	8.2
Total	18.0	17.6	14.6	12.2	16.3	21.3	0.0	100.0	1,937	8.0
				Female						
6–9	33.7	65.5	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	224	1.2
10–14	18.1	36.7	28.8	15.4	1.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	314	4.9
15–19	19.6	6.3	15.0	28.6	21.7	8.8	0.0	100.0	260	9.0
20–29	30.0	6.0	11.5	10.3	20.0	22.3	0.0	100.0	342	8.6
30–39	44.6	6.2	9.2	7.5	15.0	17.5	0.0	100.0	246	4.9
40–49	52.1	7.0	17.0	6.4	10.5	7.0	0.0	100.0	176	0.0
50+	62.3	6.4	18.9	5.4	5.4	1.5	0.0	100.0	207	0.0
Total	34.9	19.2	14.8	11.2	11.0	8.9	0.0	100.0	1,770	4.3
				Total						
6–9	31.2	67.6	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	446	1.4
10–14	17.0	35.9	30.3	15.4	1.3	0.0	0.0	100.0	615	5.0
15–19	17.8	6.1	16.1	29.0	22.4	8.7	0.0	100.0	522	9.0
20–29	20.3	5.4	9.4	10.2	20.8	33.9	0.0	100.0	721	10.3
30–39	29.8	5.1	10.6	10.3	18.9	25.2	0.0	100.0	499	8.9
40–49	32.8	5.7	15.6	7.3	17.7	20.8	0.0	100.0	395	7.5
50+	40.1	7.7	17.2	6.9	14.0	14.1	0.0	100.0	507	5.3
Total	26.1	18.4	14.7	11.7	13.8	15.4	0.0	100.0	3,707	6.2

Table 2.6 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, Bihar,1998–99

Age	Illiterate	Literate, < primary school complete	Primary school complete	Middle school complete	High school complete	Higher secondary complete and above	Missing	Total percent	Number of persons	Median number of years of schooling
						Educational level[1]				
				RURAL						
				Male						
6–9	44.0	55.3	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	2,158	1.0
10–14	27.8	40.8	24.1	6.8	0.5	0.0	0.0	100.0	2,238	3.5
15–19	28.4	9.1	20.7	25.3	12.5	4.1	0.0	100.0	1,564	6.8
20–29	31.2	6.2	13.8	13.1	17.3	18.2	0.0	100.0	2,482	7.7
30–39	44.7	6.3	12.5	9.3	13.1	14.1	0.0	100.0	2,114	4.7
40–49	45.7	7.4	13.6	9.3	15.4	8.5	0.0	100.0	1,421	4.1
50+	54.3	8.5	15.2	5.4	10.6	6.1	0.0	100.0	2,210	0.0
Total	39.4	19.9	14.2	9.3	9.6	7.5	0.0	100.0	14,187	3.0
				Female						
6–9	54.0	45.3	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	2,000	0.0
10–14	48.5	28.8	17.4	5.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	100.0	2,113	1.8
15–19	55.9	6.3	14.4	13.8	8.0	1.6	0.1	100.0	1,576	0.0
20–29	72.7	3.5	8.1	4.9	7.7	3.1	0.0	100.0	2,897	0.0
30–39	81.5	3.8	8.0	2.4	2.8	1.5	0.0	100.0	2,001	0.0
40–49	84.4	4.3	7.8	1.3	1.6	0.6	0.0	100.0	1,206	0.0
50+	91.5	3.0	3.8	0.9	0.6	0.2	0.0	100.0	1,845	0.0
Total	69.1	13.9	8.6	4.0	3.2	1.1	0.0	100.0	13,640	0.0
				Total						
6–9	48.8	50.5	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	4,157	0.0
10–14	37.9	34.9	20.8	5.9	0.4	0.0	0.0	100.0	4,351	2.9
15–19	42.2	7.7	17.5	19.5	10.2	2.8	0.0	100.0	3,140	5.0
20–29	53.6	4.8	10.7	8.7	12.2	10.1	0.0	100.0	5,379	0.0
30–39	62.6	5.1	10.3	5.9	8.1	8.0	0.0	100.0	4,115	0.0
40–49	63.5	6.0	10.9	5.6	9.1	4.9	0.0	100.0	2,627	0.0
50+	71.2	6.0	10.0	3.4	6.1	3.4	0.0	100.0	4,055	0.0
Total	54.0	17.0	11.4	6.7	6.5	4.4	0.0	100.0	27,827	0.0

Table 2.6 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, Bihar,1998–99

		Educational level[1]								
Age	Illiterate	Literate, < primary school complete	Primary school complete	Middle school complete	High school complete	Higher secondary complete and above	Missing	Total percent	Number of persons	Median number of years of schooling
TOTAL										
Male										
6–9	42.6	56.6	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	2,380	1.1
10–14	26.4	40.1	25.0	7.8	0.6	0.0	0.0	100.0	2,538	3.7
15–19	26.7	8.6	20.1	25.9	14.0	4.7	0.0	100.0	1,825	7.3
20–29	28.6	6.1	13.0	12.7	17.9	21.7	0.0	100.0	2,862	8.4
30–39	41.6	6.1	12.5	9.7	14.2	16.0	0.0	100.0	2,367	5.5
40–49	41.9	7.0	13.7	9.1	16.5	11.7	0.0	100.0	1,640	5.2
50+	50.8	8.5	15.3	5.7	11.7	8.1	0.0	100.0	2,510	0.0
Total	36.8	19.7	14.2	9.7	10.4	9.2	0.0	100.0	16,124	3.6
Female										
6–9	51.9	47.3	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	2,224	0.0
10–14	44.6	29.8	18.9	6.3	0.4	0.0	0.0	100.0	2,427	2.3
15–19	50.8	6.3	14.5	15.9	9.9	2.6	0.1	100.0	1,836	0.0
20–29	68.2	3.8	8.5	5.5	9.0	5.1	0.0	100.0	3,239	0.0
30–39	77.5	4.1	8.1	3.0	4.1	3.3	0.0	100.0	2,247	0.0
40–49	80.3	4.7	8.9	2.0	2.8	1.4	0.0	100.0	1,382	0.0
50+	88.5	3.4	5.3	1.4	1.1	0.3	0.0	100.0	2,051	0.0
Total	65.2	14.5	9.3	4.8	4.1	2.0	0.0	100.0	15,410	0.0
Total										
6–9	47.1	52.1	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	4,604	0.0
10–14	35.3	35.1	22.0	7.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	100.0	4,965	3.1
15–19	38.8	7.5	17.3	20.9	11.9	3.7	0.0	100.0	3,661	5.7
20–29	49.6	4.8	10.6	8.9	13.2	12.9	0.0	100.0	6,101	2.5
30–39	59.1	5.1	10.3	6.4	9.3	9.8	0.0	100.0	4,614	0.0
40–49	59.5	5.9	11.5	5.8	10.2	7.0	0.0	100.0	3,022	0.0
50+	67.7	6.2	10.8	3.7	6.9	4.6	0.0	100.0	4,562	0.0
Total	50.7	17.1	11.8	7.3	7.4	5.7	0.0	100.0	31,534	0.0

Note: This table and all the subsequent tables (unless otherwise indicated) are based on the *de facto* population i.e., usual residents. Illiterate persons may have been to school, but they cannot read and write. Total includes 2 males and 4 females with missing information on age, who are not shown separately.
[1]In 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.

Table 2.7 School attendance

Percentage of the household population age 6–17 years attending school by age, sex, and residence, Bihar, 1998–99

	Male			Female			Total		
Age	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
6–10	81.0	68.0	69.3	72.1	53.0	55.0	76.6	60.8	62.4
11–14	78.6	71.6	72.4	78.2	48.7	52.6	78.4	60.4	62.7
15–17	76.1	54.3	57.5	62.4	29.9	34.7	69.3	42.2	46.3
6–14	80.0	69.4	70.5	74.8	51.3	54.1	77.4	60.6	62.5
6–17	79.1	66.8	68.2	72.1	47.5	50.5	75.5	57.4	59.6

Figure 2.2
School Attendance by Age, Sex, and Residence

NFHS-2, Bihar, 1998–99
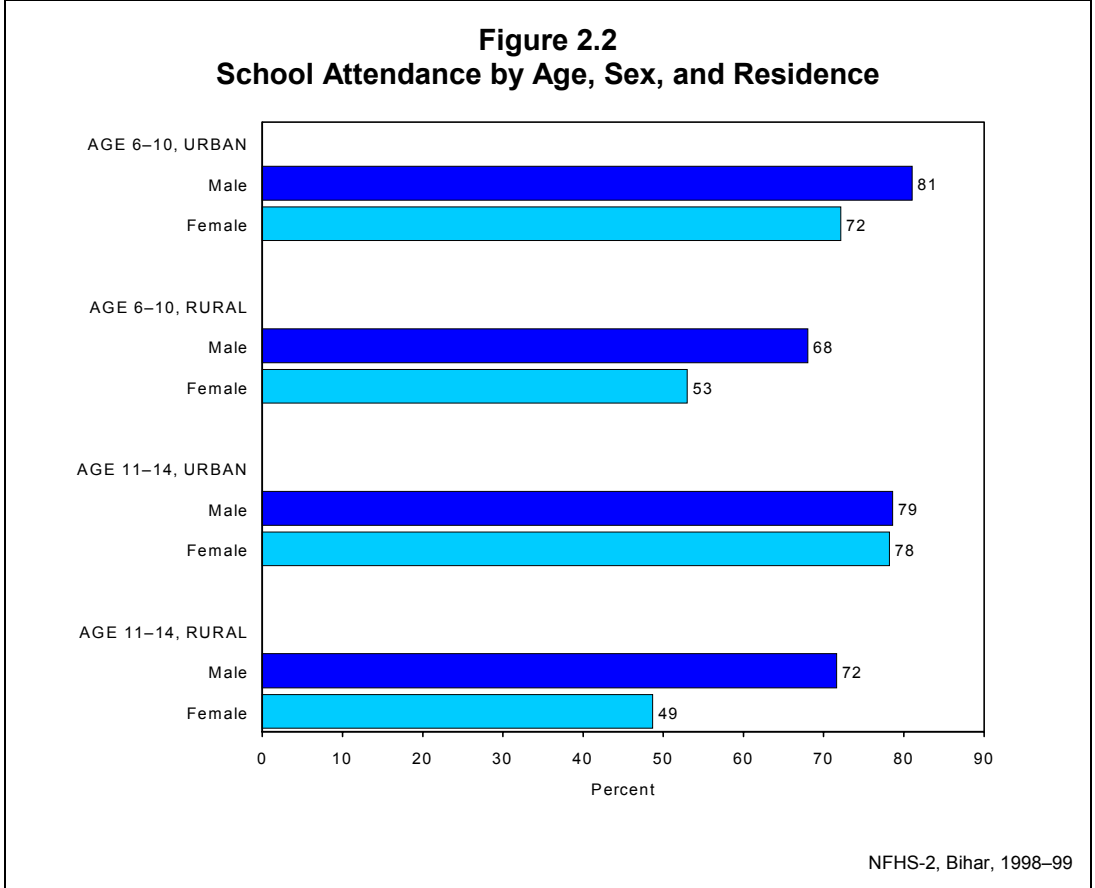
2.5   Housing Characteristics

Table 2.9 provides information on housing characteristics by residence and region. Only 18 percent of households in Bihar have electricity (compared with 17 percent in NFHS-1). The proportion of households with electricity is 72 percent in urban areas and 11 percent in rural areas. The proportion of households with electricity is much lower in the North Bihar Plain region (12 percent) than in other regions (23–24 percent).

Table 2.8 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, Bihar, 1998–99

	Urban		Rural		Total	
Reason	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Main reason for never attending school[1]						
School too far away	0.0	2.8	3.2	2.8	3.0	2.8
Transport not available	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5
Education not considered necessary	6.8	13.8	9.1	12.4	8.9	12.5
Required for household work	0.9	11.1	5.5	14.2	5.2	14.0
Required for work on farm/family business	5.8	0.0	2.9	1.0	3.0	0.9
Required for outside work for payment in cash or kind	1.9	0.7	1.4	0.4	1.4	0.4
Costs too much	42.9	38.0	38.5	35.6	38.8	35.8
No proper school facilities for girls	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0	3.2
Required for care of siblings	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.7
Not interested in studies	31.9	21.6	27.6	20.1	27.9	20.2
Other	9.8	11.2	9.1	7.7	9.1	7.9
Don't know	0.0	0.7	1.8	1.3	1.7	1.2
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of children	105	146	1,466	2,314	1,571	2,460
Main reason for not currently attending school[2]						
School too far away	(0.0)	(0.0)	1.0	6.5	0.9	5.6
Transport not available	(0.0)	(0.0)	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.6
Further education not considered necessary	(2.7)	(4.1)	3.0	6.3	3.0	6.0
Required for household work	(5.6)	(23.4)	9.6	18.7	9.1	19.3
Required for work on farm/family business	(8.0)	(0.0)	8.1	1.0	8.1	0.8
Required for outside work for payment in cash or kind	(8.0)	(0.0)	5.4	1.3	5.7	1.1
Costs too much	(40.6)	(29.6)	26.0	16.7	27.7	18.4
No proper school facilities for girls	(0.0)	(2.2)	0.0	7.7	0.0	6.9
Required for care of siblings	(0.0)	(0.0)	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.1
Not interested in studies	(27.0)	(34.1)	38.5	21.9	37.2	23.5
Got married	(0.0)	(2.2)	0.3	10.5	0.3	9.4
Other	(8.2)	(4.2)	5.5	6.9	5.8	6.5
Don't know	(0.0)	(0.0)	2.7	0.7	2.4	0.6
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of children	38	48	297	310	334	358

( ) Based on 25–49 unweighted cases
[1]For children who never attended school
[2]For children who have dropped out of school

Water sources and sanitary facilities have an important influence on the health of household members, especially children. NFHS-1 and NFHS-2 contained questions on sources of drinking water and types of sanitary facilities. NFHS-2 found that only 8 percent of households use piped drinking water (9 percent in NFHS-1), 68 percent get water from hand pumps, and 23 percent from wells. As in the case of electricity, there are large urban-rural and regional differences in the source of drinking water. For example, the proportion of households with piped drinking water is 35 percent in urban areas but only 4 percent in rural areas. Eighty percent of households can fetch drinking water in less than 15 minutes. The proportion of households that purify water by any method is 24 percent in urban areas and only 6 percent in rural areas. Households in the Jharkhand region are more likely to purify water than in other regions.

Table 2.9 Housing characteristics

Percent distribution of households by housing characteristics, according to residence and region, Bihar, 1998–99

			Region			
	Residence		North Bihar	South Bihar	Jhar-	
Housing characteristic	Urban	Rural	Plain	Plain	khand	Total
Electricity						
Yes	72.0	11.3	11.6	22.7	23.6	18.2
No	28.0	88.7	88.4	77.3	76.4	81.8
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Source of drinking water						
Piped	34.6	4.3	3.1	8.9	13.9	7.8
Hand pump	50.4	69.8	88.5	68.7	33.3	67.6
Well water	14.2	23.5	7.3	22.0	47.1	22.5
Surface water	0.3	1.6	0.1	0.1	5.2	1.5
Other	0.4	0.7	1.0	0.3	0.6	0.7
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Time to get drinking water						
Percentage < 15 minutes	87.8	79.4	90.1	80.4	64.9	80.4
Median time (minutes)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.2	0.0
Method of drinking water purification[1]						
Strains water by cloth	6.9	2.9	0.3	2.9	8.9	3.4
Uses alum	1.4	0.4	0.2	0.5	1.1	0.5
Uses water filter	9.1	0.7	1.1	1.5	2.5	1.6
Boils water	10.3	2.6	0.8	1.8	9.5	3.4
Uses electronic purifier	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.1
Uses other method	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.2	1.1	0.4
Does not purify water	75.9	93.9	97.8	94.4	79.7	91.9
Sanitation facility						
Flush toilet	57.1	7.7	11.1	17.3	12.1	13.3
Pit toilet/latrine	9.4	2.8	3.3	4.1	3.3	3.6
No facility	33.5	89.5	85.6	78.5	84.6	83.2
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Main type of fuel used for cooking						
Wood	20.2	53.0	51.8	33.3	63.6	49.3
Crop residues	3.2	15.6	25.8	9.3	1.6	14.2
Dung cakes	5.8	24.5	15.4	43.6	9.2	22.4
Coal/coke/lignite/charcoal	34.0	4.2	1.0	5.7	20.0	7.6
Kerosene	10.3	0.8	1.2	3.2	1.5	1.9
Electricity	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.6	0.2
Liquid petroleum gas	24.0	1.7	4.6	4.4	3.4	4.2
Biogas	0.9	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Type of house						
Kachha	18.8	63.8	58.3	51.3	67.6	58.7
Semi-*pucca*	23.9	26.0	30.8	28.5	14.6	25.7
Pucca	57.2	10.1	10.7	20.1	17.8	15.5
Missing	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Contd…

Table 2.9 Housing characteristics (contd.)

Percent distribution of households by housing characteristics, according to residence and region, Bihar, 1998–99

	Residence		Region			
			North Bihar	South Bihar	Jhar-	
Housing characteristic	Urban	Rural	Plain	Plain	khand	Total
Persons per room						
< 3	63.1	55.7	50.1	55.8	67.5	56.5
3–4	22.8	28.1	31.5	27.3	21.4	27.5
5–6	9.1	11.1	12.4	10.5	8.7	10.8
7+	5.1	5.1	5.9	6.4	2.4	5.1
Don't know/missing	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mean number of persons per room	2.7	2.9	3.1	3.0	2.5	2.9
Number of households	720	5,625	2,701	1,937	1,707	6,345

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

Regarding sanitation facilities, only 13 percent of households have a flush toilet (using either piped water or bucket water for flushing), no change from NFHS-1; 4 percent have a pit toilet or latrine; and 83 percent have no facility. There are large urban-rural differences: 57 percent of urban households have a flush toilet compared with only 8 percent of rural households.

Several types of fuel are used for cooking in Bihar, with wood as the most common type. In the state as a whole, 49 percent of households rely mainly on wood, 22 percent on dung cakes, 14 percent on crop residues, 8 percent on coal/coke/lignite/charcoal, 4 percent on liquid petroleum gas, and 2 percent on kerosene. Use of biogas or electricity as a primary cooking fuel is rare. Again there are large urban-rural and regional differences. Fifty-eight percent of urban households rely mainly on liquid petroleum gas or coal/coke/lignite/charcoal, whereas 93 percent of rural households rely mainly on wood, crop residues, or dung cakes. By region, use of crop residues as a primary cooking fuel ranges from 2 percent in the Jharkhand region to 26 percent in the North Bihar Plain region, and use of coal/coke/lignite/charcoal ranges from 1 percent in the North Bihar Plain region to 20 percent in the Jharkhand region. Use of wood and dung cakes also varies considerably across regions.

Regarding type of house construction, 59 percent of houses are *kachha* (made from mud, thatch, or other low-quality materials), 26 percent are semi-*pucca* (partly low-quality and partly high-quality materials), and 16 percent are *pucca* (high-quality materials throughout, including roof, walls, and floor). By residence, the proportion of houses that are *pucca* is 57 percent in urban areas and 10 percent in rural areas.

Crowded conditions may also affect health as well as the quality of life. Forty-three percent of households live in houses with three or more persons per room. The mean number of persons per room is 2.7 in urban areas, 2.9 in rural areas, and 2.9 (compared with 2.8 in NFHS-1) in the state as a whole.

Table 2.10 gives a number of measures related to the socioeconomic status of the household, including ownership of land, house, and livestock. Overall, 45 percent of households

Table 2.10 Household ownership of agricultural land, house, and livestock

Percent distribution of households owning agricultural land and percentage owning a house and livestock by residence and region, Bihar, 1998–99

| Asset | Residence | | Region | | | Total |
	Urban	Rural	North Bihar Plain	South Bihar Plain	Jhar-khand	
No agricultural land	69.6	42.0	50.7	49.8	30.9	45.1
Irrigated land only						
< 1 acre	3.0	15.5	18.2	16.2	5.1	14.1
1–5 acres	5.4	13.0	13.9	15.7	5.2	12.1
6+ acres	3.7	3.1	3.2	4.9	1.1	3.1
Nonirrigated land only						
< 1 acre	5.6	6.1	2.7	2.8	15.0	6.0
1–5 acres	5.9	8.8	1.7	2.5	25.8	8.4
6+ acres	1.3	2.3	0.2	0.6	7.0	2.2
Both irrigated and nonirrigated land						
< 1 acre	1.1	2.1	2.7	1.1	1.8	2.0
1–5 acres	2.3	5.5	5.3	4.8	5.2	5.1
6+ acres	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.6	2.4	1.7
Missing	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.2
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percentage owning a house	84.7	95.7	99.0	90.9	91.3	94.5
Percentage owning livestock	20.4	60.9	57.9	55.5	54.7	56.3
Number of households	720	5,625	2,701	1,937	1,707	6,345

do not own any agricultural land. Forty-two percent of households in rural areas do not own agricultural land (41 percent in NFHS-1), compared with 70 percent of households in urban areas. In rural areas, among those who own land, 70 percent have at least some irrigated land. This proportion is much lower in the Jharkhand region (31 percent) than in the North or South Bihar Plain regions (88–91 percent). The proportion of households owning a house is 85 percent in urban areas, 96 percent in rural areas, and 95 percent overall. The proportion of households owning livestock is 20 percent in urban areas, 61 percent in rural areas, and 56 percent overall. The proportion owning a house or a livestock does not vary much by region.

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 2.11 shows that in the state as a whole, the majority of households have a cot or a bed (94 percent), or a clock or watch (51 percent). Other durable goods often found in households are bicycles (45 percent), chairs (40 percent), tables (34 percent), radios/transistors or mattresses (28 percent each), electric fans (17 percent), televisions (14 percent), and pressure cookers (13 percent), with smaller proportions owning sewing machines (9 percent), motorcycles or scooters or mopeds (5 percent), water pumps (5 percent), refrigerators or bullock carts (3 percent each), threshers or telephones (2 percent each), and tractors (1 percent). Only one-half of one percent own a car.

Table 2.11 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 and region, Bihar, 1998–99

| | Residence | | Region | | | |
| | | | North Bihar Plain | South Bihar Plain | Jhar-khand | |
Asset	Urban	Rural				Total
Durable goods						
Mattress	58.2	23.9	30.0	30.9	20.9	27.8
Pressure cooker	49.5	8.2	11.4	15.7	11.9	12.9
Chair	70.4	36.0	44.3	37.3	35.9	39.9
Cot/bed	98.1	92.9	92.6	95.8	92.1	93.5
Table	70.7	29.7	36.5	32.9	32.6	34.4
Clock/watch	82.6	46.5	51.7	52.3	46.8	50.6
Electric fan	66.7	10.6	12.6	20.3	20.2	17.0
Bicycle	62.2	42.7	45.5	38.7	51.3	45.0
Radio/transistor	49.0	25.8	30.9	26.7	26.5	28.4
Sewing machine	30.3	6.6	8.5	10.6	8.8	9.3
Telephone	9.4	0.9	2.2	1.9	1.4	1.9
Refrigerator	14.9	1.0	2.1	2.3	3.6	2.6
Television (black and white)	46.1	7.5	10.0	11.8	15.1	11.9
Television (colour)	9.2	1.0	1.3	2.0	2.8	1.9
Moped/scooter/motorcycle	18.4	2.9	4.3	3.8	6.3	4.7
Car	2.3	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.7	0.5
Water pump	5.1	4.5	5.4	4.1	3.6	4.5
Bullock cart	1.4	2.9	2.2	0.9	5.8	2.8
Thresher	1.9	2.2	2.3	3.0	0.9	2.1
Tractor	1.3	0.9	1.4	0.9	0.3	0.9
None of the above	0.4	3.9	4.9	1.8	3.2	3.5
Main type of kitchenware used						
Clay	2.1	0.7	0.4	0.9	1.6	0.8
Aluminum	29.5	54.5	45.3	62.9	49.0	51.7
Cast iron	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.6	0.4
Brass/copper	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.1	1.0	0.3
Stainless steel	67.4	44.1	54.1	35.7	47.8	46.8
Don't know/missing	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Standard of living index						
Low	24.1	61.7	56.6	57.1	59.0	57.4
Medium	43.0	32.7	35.1	33.6	32.3	33.9
High	32.8	5.5	8.1	9.2	8.7	8.6
Missing	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.1
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of households	720	5,625	2,701	1,937	1,707	6,345

Urban households are much more likely than rural households to own each of these durable goods, except bullock carts and threshers. Four percent of households in Bihar do not own any of the above durable goods. In the state as a whole, 52 percent of households mainly use aluminum kitchenware and 47 percent use stainless steel kitchenware. Stainless steel kitchenware is used by 67 percent of urban households, compared with 44 percent of rural households.

Table 2.11 includes a standard of living (SLI) index, defined in terms of ownership of household goods 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/coke/lignite, 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, and 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, 57 percent of households in Bihar have a low standard of living, 34 percent have a medium standard of living, and 9 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 (62 and 24 percent, respectively), and the proportion with a high standard of living is much higher in urban areas than in rural areas (33 and 6 percent, respectively). The proportion with a medium standard of living is somewhat higher in urban areas (43 percent) than in rural areas (33 percent). There is little regional variation in the distribution of households by the standard of living index.

2.6   Lifestyle Indicators

The NFHS-2 Household Questionnaire asked about certain aspects of the lifestyle of household members. Table 2.12 shows the percentages of males and females 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.

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

Table 2.12 Lifestyle indicators

Percentage of usual household members age 15 and above who chew *paan masala* or tobacco, drink alcohol, currently smoke, or have ever smoked by selected background characteristics and sex, Bihar, 1998–99

Background characteristic	Chew *paan masala* or tobacco	Drink alcohol	Currently smoke	Ever smoked[1]	Number of household members
MALE					
Age					
15–19	14.1	4.8	5.1	6.4	1,917
20–24	33.4	14.0	14.0	16.8	1,570
25–29	52.8	22.4	24.1	29.0	1,424
30–39	65.9	31.9	33.3	40.1	2,479
40–49	69.6	31.4	38.8	46.0	1,684
50–59	66.4	28.0	34.8	44.4	1,145
60+	64.0	23.4	36.7	45.6	1,409
Residence					
Urban	38.4	13.7	16.4	20.2	1,435
Rural	53.6	23.6	27.7	33.6	10,193
Education					
Illiterate	64.3	32.4	37.3	43.8	4,400
Literate, < middle school complete	52.6	22.2	25.4	31.6	2,568
Middle school complete	37.2	15.7	16.8	21.4	1,404
High school complete and above	40.4	11.7	16.1	20.9	3,257
Standard of living index					
Low	58.3	28.4	31.8	37.7	5,607
Medium	48.5	19.4	23.5	29.2	4,630
High	36.1	7.4	13.4	18.2	1,377
Total	51.7	22.4	26.3	32.0	11,629
FEMALE					
Age					
15–19	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.4	1,867
20–24	3.2	1.6	1.4	1.5	1,737
25–29	4.0	3.1	2.5	3.0	1,611
30–39	6.3	4.4	6.1	6.7	2,320
40–49	12.0	5.1	11.5	13.0	1,414
50–59	14.9	5.6	14.6	16.4	1,069
60+	15.1	4.5	16.6	18.8	1,041
Residence					
Urban	6.9	1.2	2.7	3.2	1,255
Rural	6.9	3.6	6.8	7.7	9,805
Education					
Illiterate	8.5	4.3	8.3	9.3	8,028
Literate, < middle school complete	4.6	1.1	2.4	2.7	1,448
Middle school complete	1.3	0.5	0.3	0.3	622
High school complete and above	1.4	0.2	0.3	0.3	960
Standard of living index					
Low	8.7	5.1	9.0	9.9	5,495
Medium	5.7	2.0	4.5	5.2	4,288
High	3.4	0.1	1.4	1.8	1,263
Total	6.9	3.3	6.4	7.2	11,060
Total male and female	29.9	13.1	16.6	19.9	22,689

Note: Totals include 1 female with missing information on education and 15 males and 15 females with missing information on the standard of living index, respectively, who are not shown separately.
[1]Includes household members who currently smoke

Fifty-two percent of males and 7 percent of females age 15 and above are reported to chew *paan masala* or tobacco. This proportion rises from 14 percent of males and 1 percent of females at age 15–19 to 66 percent and 15 percent, respectively, at age 50–59. For males the proportion is highest in the age group 40–49 (70 percent). Chewing of *paan masala* or tobacco is more common among rural males than among urban males. The proportion chewing *paan masala* or tobacco is much lower among more educated men and women and among those living in higher standard of living households.

Twenty-two percent of males, but only 3 percent of females, age 15 and above drink alcohol. The proportion who drink alcohol rises with age up to age 30–39 for men and age 50–59 for women. The proportion who drink is higher in rural areas than in urban areas and among illiterate men and women than among the literate. Drinking alcohol is negatively related to the household standard of living.

Twenty-six percent of males and 6 percent of females age 15 and above currently smoke. The proportion of males who smoke rises from 5 percent at age 15–19 to 39 percent at age 40–49 and then falls to 37 percent at age 60 and above. The proportion who smoke is much higher in rural areas than in urban areas. It is more than two times higher among illiterate males than among those with at least a middle school education, and also among males with a low standard of living than among males with a high standard of living. Eighty-two percent of males 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. Only 7 percent of females are reported to have ever smoked, and the pattern of differentials for females is similar to that for males.

2.7   Availability of Facilities and Services to the Rural Population

The NFHS-2 Village Questionnaire collected information on a number of characteristics that affect health and family planning. One of these characteristics is distance of the village from various types of health facilities, including Primary Health Centres (PHCs), sub-centres, hospitals, and dispensaries or clinics. Table 2.13 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, 29 percent live in a village with a sub-centre, and 32 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 6 percent for hospitals and 9 percent for dispensaries or clinics. Nearly one-third of women (34 percent) live in a village that has some kind of health facility. Median distances from particular health facilities are 5.6 km for a PHC, 7.4 km for a hospital, 7.5 km for a dispensary or a clinic, and 2.6 km for a sub-centre.

Table 2.14 shows the proportion of rural population in Bihar that lives in villages that have various facilities and services. Four-fifths of rural residents (82 percent) live in villages that have a primary school, two-fifths (40 percent) live in villages with a middle school, and nearly one-fifth (19 percent) live in villages that have a secondary school. Higher secondary schools are available in villages where 8 percent of rural people live. Two-fifths of rural residents (40 percent) live in villages that have an *anganwadi*[3] (a nursery school for children age 3–6 years) and 7 percent live in villages with an adult education centre. One-third of rural residents (33

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[3]*Anganwadi* workers provide integrated child development services and may also engage in the promotion of family planning.

Table 2.13 Distance from the nearest health facility

Percent distribution of ever-married rural women age 15–49 by distance from the nearest health facility, Bihar, 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	28.5	31.6	5.7	9.2	34.2
< 5 km	31.1	41.8	41.5	29.3	24.9	44.3
5–9 km	28.5	17.8	16.4	23.4	25.3	13.4
10+ km	27.3	11.9	10.5	41.6	40.5	8.0
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Median distance (in km)	5.6	2.6	2.4	7.4	7.5	1.9

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
[1]Includes community health centre, rural hospital, government hospital, and private hospital

percent) live in villages that have a doctor and 42 percent live in villages with a traditional birth attendant.

Only two-fifths (42 percent) of rural residents live in villages that are at least partly electrified. Although only 12 percent of rural residents live in villages with an STD booth (for telephoning within India), 29 percent live in villages that have at least one household with a private telephone. Only 5 percent live in villages that have cable television service, indicating that exposure to modern influences through the mass media is minimal in the state. Eight percent live in villages with a *mahila mandal*, a government-sponsored women's community group that focusses on health and family welfare educational activities. Other facilities and services available within villages to a majority of rural residents include *kirana* shops and *paan* shops. The most widely available rural development programmes are the Indira Awas Yojana and the Integrated Rural Development Programme.

Table 2.14 Availability of facilities and services

Percentage of rural residents living in villages that have selected facilities and services, Bihar, 1998–99

Facility/service	Percentage of residents	Facility/service	Percentage of residents
Primary school	82.0	At least one village household has a telephone	29.2
Middle school	40.3	Mill/small-scale industry	5.7
Secondary school	18.5	Credit cooperative society	9.5
Higher secondary school	7.9	Agricultural cooperative society	10.2
College	3.9	Fishermen's cooperative society	1.2
		Milk cooperative society	6.5
Anganwadi	39.8	*Kirana*/general market shop	64.7
Adult education centre	7.0	Weekly market	32.2
		Fair price shop	48.9
Primary Health Centre	13.1	*Paan* shop	62.9
Sub-centre	28.0	Pharmacy/medical shop	30.4
Hospital[1]	5.9	*Mahila mandal*	7.8
Dispensary/clinic	9.4	Youth club	12.9
		Community centre	7.4
Private doctor	32.5	Community television set	2.9
Visiting doctor	17.8	Cable connection	5.3
Village health guide	12.2		
Traditional birth attendant	41.7	Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)	35.3
Mobile health unit	1.3	National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)	7.1
		Training Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM)	8.9
Electricity	42.0	Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS)	4.4
Bank	12.7	Development of Women and Children of Rural Areas (DWACRA)	7.6
Post office	32.3	Indira Awas Yojana (IAY)	55.0
Telegraph office	5.6	Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojana (SGNY)	0.1
STD (Subscriber Trunk Dialling) phone booth	12.2	Total population	34,339

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