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V.S.Swamy*

Age Pattern and Current Fertility from National Family Health Survey vis-a-vis Sample Registration System

Introduction

THE National Family Health Survey (NFHS) launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has provided a host of data on fertility, family planning, maternal and child health care. In the past, similar surveys were conducted by various organisations on a limited scale covering selected backward districts under Area Project Programmes. The present survey is unique in that it covers almost the entire country, thus providing estimates at State and national levels.

A variety of data on fertility and mortality has been thrown up by the Sample Registration System (SRS) implemented by the Office of the Registrar General India. In this paper an attempt has been made to compare the pattern of age distribution and to assess the quality of current fertility data collected in NFHS with regard to SRS data.

Data Source

The per cent distribution *of de-jure* population by age for the period 1992-93 for various States and current fertility measures for the three-year period prior to the survey centring around 1991 have been presented in the Introductory Report—India. These have been utilised for comparison with the corresponding SRS data.

Methodology

The percent distribution *of de-jure* population by five-year age groups as obtained from NFHS and SRS for various States is presented in Table 1. The decile values of the cumu lati ve age distribution provide convenient yard-stick for studying the pattern of age distribution

Formerly, Deputy Registrar General (Vital Statistics), Office of the Registrar General, New Delhi-110066.

TABLE 1: PER CENT DISTRIBUTION OF *DE-JURE* POPULATION BY AGE GROUPS, NFHS AND SRS

State	*NFHS/SRS*	*Age Group*												
		0-4	*5-9*	*10-14*	*15-19*	*20-24*	25-29	*30-34*	*35-39*	*40-44*	*45-49*	*50-54*	55-59	*60+*
Andhra Pradesh	NFHS	10.7	12.9	11.3	10.0	9.0	8.7	6.7	6.4	5.0	4.1	3.7	3.3	8.2
	SRS	11.6	11.5	10.9	10.3	9.5	8.2	7.1	6.4	5.3	4.9	4.0	3.7	6.6
Assam	NFHS	13.1	15.4	12.6	10.4	9.0	8.3	6.9	6.0	4.3	3.3	2.4	2.4	5.9
	SRS	12.2	12.7	11.2	10.1	11.0	9.6	7.7	5.8	4.9	4.0	3.7	2.6	4.5
Bihar	NFHS	13.5	15.3	12.9	9.1	8.4	7.8	6.7	5.7	4.3	4.0	2.5	2.7	7.1
	SRS	15.4	12.5	12.0	11.2	8.7	6.9	6.2	5.7	4.9	4.3	3.3	2.8	6.1
Gujarat	NFHS	11.1	11.9	11.3	10.2	10.3	8.3	7.4	5.8	5.3	4.3	3.1	3.3	7.7
	SRS	11.4	11.6	11.2	10.6	10.4	8.8	7.6	6.1	5.1	4.4	3.8	3.0	6.1
Haryana	NFHS	13.8	13.3	12.3	10.6	9.2	8.1	6.4	5.8	4.0	3.2	2.4	2.2	8.6
	SRS	14.9	12.5	11.1	11.1	10.7	8.5	6.7	5.6	4.2	3.7	2.9	2.7	5.5
Himachal Pradesh	NFHS	12.3	11.9	11.8	11.7	9.1	7.8	5.5	5.7	4.2	3.8	3.7	3.2	9.4
	SRS	13.1	12.3	11.4	10.6	9.6	7.5	6.6	5.6	4.8	4.2	3.6	3.2	7.5
Karnataka	NFHS	11.7	12.9	11.9	10.3	9.4	8.4	6.8	6.0	4.6	4.1	3.2	3.2	7.6
	SRS	11.7	11.6	11.5	10.9	10.0	8.4	7.1	6.4	5.1	4.6	3.6	3.4	6.1
Kerala	NFHS	8.9	!0.0	11.4	10.3	10.4	8.5	7.1	7.0	5.4	4.7	3.6	3.7	9.1
	SRS	9.8	9.8	9.8	10.2	10.6	9.5	7.9	6.7	5.5	4.5	3.9	3.5	8.3

Madhya Pradesh	NFHS	12.5	13,9	12.2	9.7	9.1	8.0	6.6	5.6	4.4	3.9	3.1	3.0	7.9
	SRS	14.2	12.0	11.6	10.6	9.7	7.8	6.9	5.7	4.8	4.2	3.6	3.1	5.8
Maharashtra	NFHS	11.9	12.4	11.5	9.5	9.7	8.3	6.7	6.4	4.9	4.0	3.5	3.3	7.9
	SRS	12.8	11.5	10.5	10.0	9.8	8.2	7.3	6.2	5.4	4.7	4.0	3.3	6.5
Orissa	NFHS	10.7	13.0	11.3	10.0	9.4	8.9	7.1	6.2	4.3	3.6	3.5	3.2	8.7
	SRS	12.8	10.7	10.8	11.1	10.4	8.2	7.3	6.0	5.1	4.5	3.9	3.3	6.0
Punjab	NFHS	10.6	12.5	12.1	10.5	9.1	7.8	6.4	6.5	5.1	4.4	2.9	2.8	9.6
	SRS	11.7	11.5	10.6	9.9	10.2	9.2	.7.5	6.3	5.1	4.3	3.6	3.0-	7.1
Rajasthan	NFHS	11.8	14.6	13.2	10.2	8.6	7.7	6.2	5.4	4.3	3.8	3.3	3.3	7.7
	SRS	14.2	12.6	11.5	10.9	9.7	8.1	6.8	5.9	4.6	4.0	3.3	2.9	5.4
Tamil Nadu	NFHS	9.7	10.9	10.8	10.2	9.4	8.6	7.0	6.7	5.6	4.6	3.9	3.9	8.7
	SRS	10.3	10.2	10.4	9.8	10.1	8.9	7.5	6.5	5.8	5.2	4.5	3.8	6.9
Uttar Pradesh	NFHS	14.6	14.1	12.7	9.9	8.2	7.5	5.7	5.6	4.2	4.0	2.7	3.1	7.6
	SRS	14.8	12.8	11.8	10.6	9.4	7.3	6.3	5.4	4.8	4.3	3.4	3.0	6.0
West Bengal	NFHS	11.2	12.8	11.7	10.3	9.5	9.1	7.0	6.3	4.6	3.9	3.6	3.0	7.1
	SRS	12.7	11.6	10.1	10.5	10.2	8.2	7.9	6.8	5.2	4.5	3.6	3.1	5.7
India	NFHS	12.2	13.4	12.1	10.0	9.1	8.2	6.6	6.0	4.6	4.0	3.1	3.1	7.8
	SRS	13.1	11.8	11.1	10.5	9.8	81	7.0	6.0	5.0	4.4	3.7	3.1	6.2

Source: Fertility and Mortality Indicators, 1992, Sample Registration System; Introductory Report—India, National Family Health Survey, 1992-93

TABLE 2: AGE-SPECIFIC FERTILITY RATE, TOTAL FERTILITY RATE AND BIRTH RATE, NFHS AND SRS

State	*NFHS/ SRS*	Age Group								
		15-19*	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	TFR	BR
Andhra Pradesh	NFHS	160	202	101	47	19	5	0	2.6	24.5
	SRS	122	218	140	67	29	12	4	3.0	26.0
Assam	NFHS	139	200	195	117	55	21	0	3.5	31.0
	SRS	60	199	195	129	76	34	6	3.5	30.9
Bihar	NFHS	130	241	190	141	78	26	4	4.0	32.3
	SRS	79	231	204	165	116	60	27	4.4	30.7
Gujarat	NFHS	87	251	157	74	21-	5	4	3.0	27.2
	SRS	40	244	178	95	40	17	6	3.1	27.5
Hrayana	NFHS	154	316	196	88	36	15	3	4.0	33.1
	SRS	81	289	229	107	57	22	8	4.0	33.1
Himachal Pradesh	NFHS	75	259	172	46	34	7	0	3.0	28.2
	SRS	69	272	169	70	35	9	2	3.1	28.5
Karnataka	NFHS	155	206	134	64	24	6	5	2.9	26.4
	SRS	77	232	160	81	42	14	7	3.1	26.9
Kerala	NFHS	38	160	123	54	17	6	1	2.0	19.6
	SRS	26	142	122	47	15	4	I	1.8	18.2
Madhya Pradesh	NFHS	170	255	191	106	47	18	10	3.9	31.9
	SRS	125	289	235	144	77	33	13	4.6	35.8
Maharashtra	NFHS	160	227	132	53	12	6	0	2.9	26.7
	SRS	80	238	173	75	32	9	1	3.0	26.2
Orissa	NFHS	91	204	163	89	31	10	0	2.9	26.6
	SRS	62	208	204	109	49	21	8	3.3	28.8
Punjab	NFHS	66	238	180	72	21	5	2	2.9	25.0
	SRS	23	244	211	101	35	9	2	3.1	27.7
Rajasthan	NFHS	118	247	181	107	55	14	10	3.6	27.2
	SRS	86	284	247	157	90	43	21	4.6	35.0
Tamil Nadu	NFHS	91	203	132	51	19	4	0	2.5	23.6
	SRS	45	187	131	55	21	4	2	2.2	20.8
Uttar Prdeash	NFHS	117	278	251	177	94	37	14	4.8	36.0
	SRS	72	271	255	197	127	67	25	5.1	35.7
West Bengal	NFHS	139	202	138	75	31	8	5	2.9	25.9
	SRS	84	213	158	96	54	25	12	3.2	27.0
India	NFHS	127	211	170	97	44	15	5	3.4	28.9
	SRS	76	234	191	117	67	31	12	3.6	29.5

* Includes the age group 13-14 years.

Source: Fertility and Mortality Indicators, 1991, Sample Registration System Introductory Report—India, National Family Health Survey 1992-93.

in the two surveys. The points for comparison chosen are the first, second and third quart lies and the ninth decile values. The quartile or decile values describe the spread of the distribution along the age axis. However, it does not give a measure of the magnitude of the population.

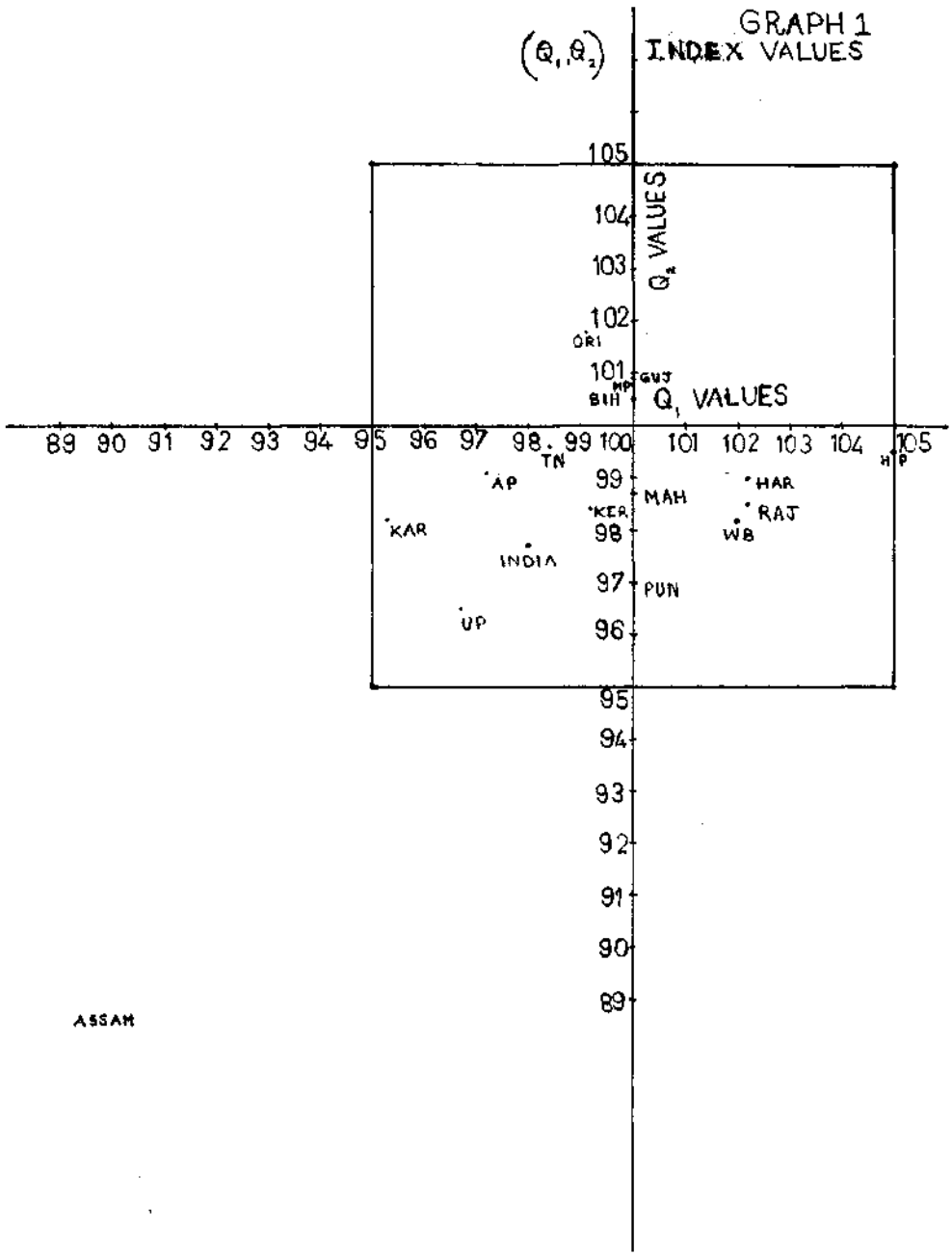
The age-specific fertility rates along with total fertility rate and crude birth rate as obtained from NFHS and SRS for major States are given in Table 2. The age specific fertility curve describes the pattern of fertility. The cumulative per cent fertility measures the quantum of fertility in percentage terms attained by women at various stages of reproduction. It is seen that around 85-90 per cent of fertility is contributed by women below 35 years in most of the States considered. In order to assess the quantum and pattern of current fertility in relation to SRS, two indices are considered. The first one refers to the ratio of the cumulative fertility of women below 35 years to total fertility expressed as a percentage separately for the two surveys, this is combined into one index by taking the ratio considering SRS value as the base and later expressed as a percentage. The second one is obtained as the ratio of the cumulative fertility of women below 35 years as obtained from NFHS to the corresponding cumulative fertility from SRS expressed as a percentage.

Analysis

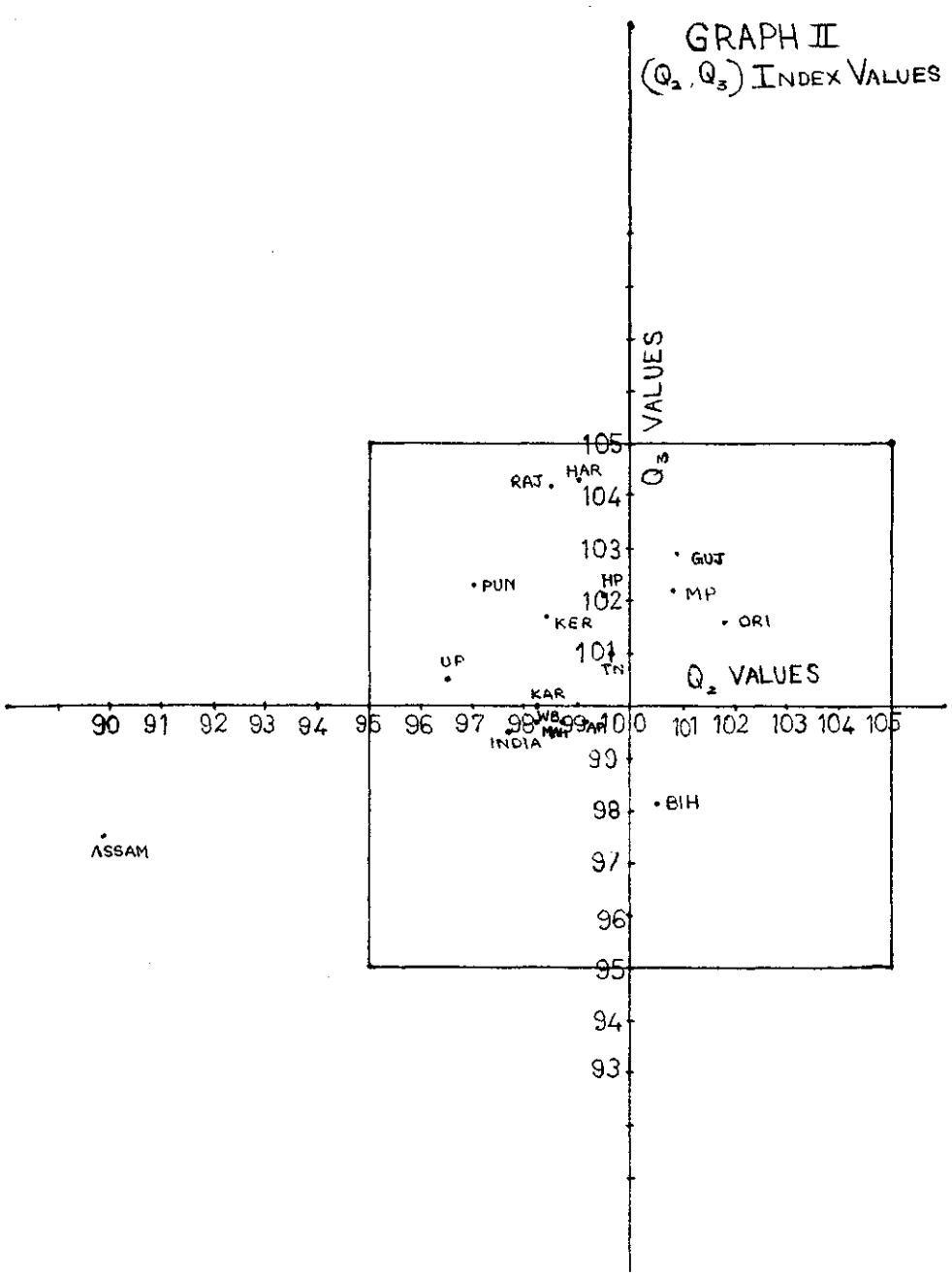
Age Distribution

The values of the three quartiles (Q_1, Q_2, Q_3) and the ninth decile (D_9) are given in Table 3 separately for NFHS and SRS covering 16 major States and India. For each State, an index is formed by taking the ratio of the quartile/decile values as derived from NFHS to SRS values expressed as a percentage. The indices for each State corresponding to (Q_1, Q_2), (Q_2, Q_3), $(Q_3 D_9)$ are plotted separately in Graphs I, II and III. In the ideal case, the points plotted in each graph should cluster around 100. Allowing for a margin of error in the estimates by five points on either side, it is seen from Graphs I and II that all the States except Assam fall within the limits indicating that the pattern of age distribution for the points considered are fairly close to SRS age distribution pattern. In the case of Assam, the first two quartile index values are below 90 pointing to the fact that more young children are covered in NFHS in comparison to SRS. The age of young children collected in SRS is superior to the one obtained by interview method since in SRS after recording the birth of the child, the age is updated during each half-yearly survey. Graph HI provides the plot of the points pertaining to third quartile and ninth decile index values. The ninth decile index values corresponding to the States of Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab and Rajasthan are outside the limits possibly due to lower coverage of older persons in NFHS than in SRS or due to higher variability on account of small sample. On the whole, except for Assam in all the other States considered, the age pattern as revealed by NFHS is similar to SRS. However, this does not give a measure of the magnitude of the population.

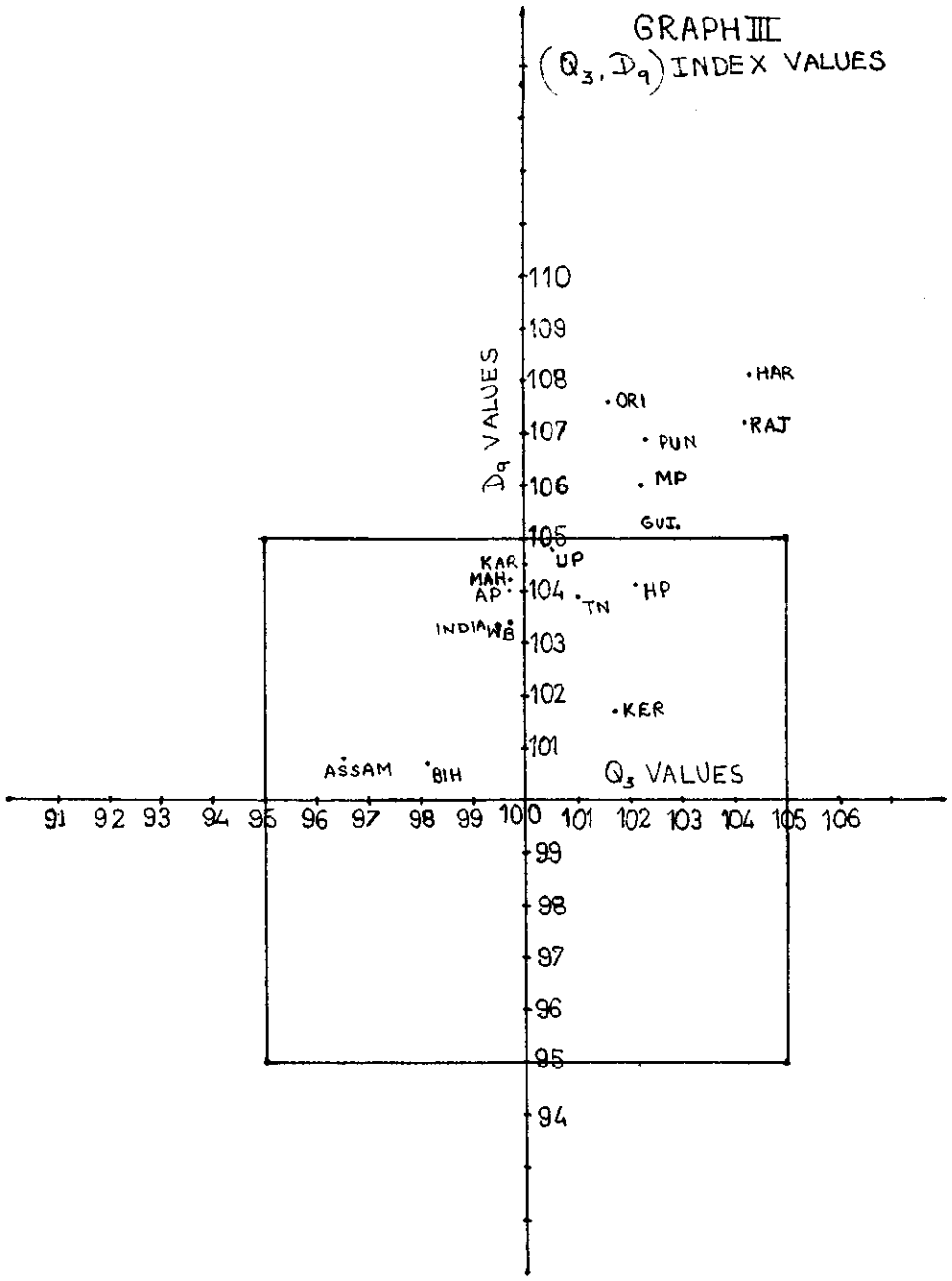
On the basis of the index values in respect of the four points considered, the States can be grouped as given in Table 4.



Graph I. (Q_1, Q_2) **Index Values**



Graph II. (Q_2, Q_3) Index Values



Graph III. (Q_3, D_9) **Index Values**

TABLE 3: QUARTILES, NINTH DECILE VALUES AND INDICES, NFHS AND SRS

State	*NFHS/SRS*	*Values*				Index			
		Q_1	Q_2	Q_3	Q_9	Q_1	Q_2	Q_3	Q_9
I	*2*	*3*	*4*	5	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*
Andhra Pradesh	NFHS	10.6	22.8	39.5	57.3	97.2	99.1	99.7	104.0
	SRS	10.9	23.0	39.6	55.1				
Assam	NFHS	8.9	19.3	34.5	51.5	89.0	88.9	97.5	100.8
	SRS	10.0	21.7	35.4	51.1				
Bihar	NFHS	8.8	19.6	36.1	54.6	100.0	100.5	98.1	100.7
	SRS	8.8	19.5	36.8	54.2				
Gujarat	NFHS	10.9	22.7	38.9	56.5	100.0	100.9	102.9	105.2
	SRS	10.9	22.5	37.8	53.7				
Haryana	NFHS	9.2	20.0	36.1	55.9	102.2	99.0	104.3	108.1
	SRS	9.0	20.2	34.6	51.7				
Himachal Pradesh	NFHS	10.3	21.3	39.3	58.4	105.0	99.5	102.1	104.1
	SRS	9.8	21.4	38.5	56.1				
Karnataka	NFHS	10.2	21.7	38.0	56.1	95.3	98.2	100.0	104.5
	SRS	10.7	22.1	38.0	53.7				
Kerala	NFHS	12.7	24.5	41.3	58.6	99.2	98.4	101.7	101.7
	SRS	12.8	24.9	40.6	57.6				
Madhya Pradesh	NFHS	9.5	20.9	37.7	56.7	100.0	100.8	102.2	106.0
	SRS	9.5	20.8	36.9	53.5				
Maharashtra	NFHS	10.3	22.4	38.9	56.8	100.0	98.7	99.7	104.2
	SRS	10.3	22.7	39.0	54.5				
Orissa	NFHS	10.6	22.7	38.7	58.1	99.1	101.8	101.6	107.6
	SRS	10.7	22.3	38.1	54.0				
Punjab	NFHS	10.8	22.4	39.6	58.7	100.0	97.0	102.3	106.9
	SRS	10.8	23.1	38.7	54.9				
Raj as than	NFHS	9.5	20.1	37.5	56.4	102.2	98.5	104.2	107.2
	SRS	9.3	20.4	36.0	52.6				
Tamil Nadu	NFHS	12.0	24.5	41.5	58.3	98.4	99.6	101.0	103.9
	SRS	12.2	24.6	41.1	56.1				
Uttar Pradesh	NFHS	8.7	19.3	37.1	64.3	96.7	96.5	100.5	104 8
	SRS	9.0	20.0	36.9	53.7				
West Bengal	"NFHS	10.4	22.1	37.7	55.0	102.0	98.2	99.7	103.4
	SRS	10.2	22.5	37.8	53.2				
India	NFHS	9.8	21.3	37.8	56.1	98.0	97.7	99.5	103.3
	SRS	10.0	21.8	38.0	54.3				

TABLE 4: DISTRIBUTION OF STATES BY INDEX VALUES

Index (range)	Q_1	Q_2	Q_3	Q_9
Below 95	Assam	Assam		
95-101	Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madbya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan. Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal	Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal	Assam, Bihar
101-105	Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal	Orissa	Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu	Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal
Above 105				Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan

It is seen that there is a shift in the distribution of States towards higher index at higher ages possibly due to lower coverage of older persbns in NFHS than in SRS or due to larger variability on account of small sample. It will be instructive if the analysis is made separately for each sex.

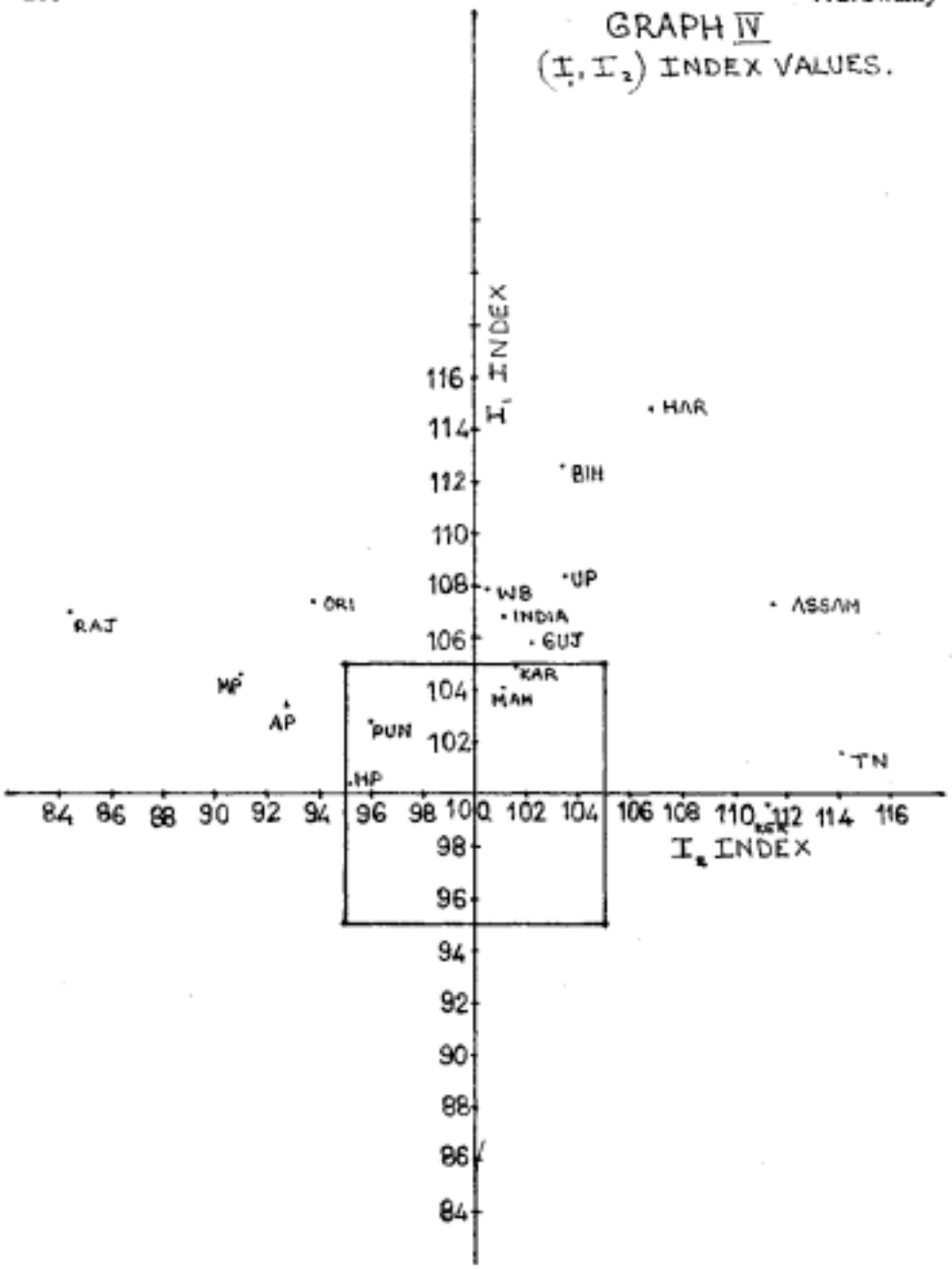
Current Fertility

A comparison of the fertility curve as obtained from NFHS and SRS is done with reference to two indices. As stated earlier, the first index refers to the ratio of the cumulative fertility of women below 35 years to total fertility expressed as a percentage separately for the two surveys. This is converted into a single index ($/_1$,) taking SRS value as the base and later expressed as a percentage. The second index ($/_2$) refers to the ratio of the cumulative fertility of women below 35 years as obtained in the NFHS to the corresponding cumulative fertility given in SRS expressed as a percentage. Table 5 provides the values of the indices.

TABLE 5: CUMULATIVE FERTILITY AND INDEX VALUES, NFHS AND SRS

State	*NFHS/SRS*	*Cumulative Fertility**			*Index*	
		15-34	*35-49*	*15-49*	$/_1$	$/_2$
Andhra Pradesh	NFHS	510	24	534	103.4	93.2
	SRS	547	45	592		
Assam	NFHS	651	76	727	107.3	111.7
	SRS	583	116	699		
Bihar	NFHS	702	108	810	112.6	103.4
	SRS	679	203	882		
Gujarat	NFHS	569	30	599	105.8	102.2
	SRS	557	63	620		
Haryana	NFHS	754	54	808	104.8	106.8
	SRS	706	87	793		
Himachal Pradesh	NFHS	552	41	593	100.4	95.2
	SRS	580	46	626		
Karnataka	NFHS	559	35	594	104.9	101.6
	SRS	550	63	613		
Kerala	NFHS	375	24	399	99.6	111.3
	SRS	337	20	357		
Madhya Pradesh	NFHS	722	75	797	104.6	91.0
	SRS	793	123	916		
Maharashtra	NFHS	572	18	590	104.1	101.1
	SRS	566	42	608		
Orissa	NFHS	547	41	588	105.4	93.8
	SRS	583	78	661		
Punjab	NFHS	556	28	584	102.8	96.0
	SRS	579	46	625		
Rajasthan	NFHS	653	79	732	107.0	84.4
	SRS	774	154	928		
Tamil Nadu	NFHS	477	23	500	101.6	114.1
	SRS	418	27	445		
Uttar Pradesh	NFHS	823	145	968	108.4	103.5
	SRS	795	219	1014		
West Bengal	NFHS	554	44	598	107.9	100.5
	SRS	551	91	642		
India	NFHS	625	64	689	106.8	101.1
	SRS	618	110	728		

- Refers to sum of age specific fertility rates.



Graph IV. (I_1, I_2) **Index Values**

The points corresponding to /, and /$_2$ for each State are plotted in Graph 4. Ideally speaking, the points should cluster around 100. Allowing for amargin of error in the estimates by five points on either side, it is seen that the States comprising Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Punjab fall within the limits indicating that the pattern .and quantum of fertility exhibited by NFHS are fairly in agreement with those of SRS. The remaining States fall outside the limits indicating divergence. In these States, the nature of likely deficiencies in NFHS in relation to SRS are broadly described in Table 6.

TABLE 6

States	*Deficiencies*
Andhra Pradesh	Fertility in the age group 15-34 is under-estimated
Assam	Fertility in the age group 15-34 is over-estimated and 35-49 under-estimated
Bihar	Fertility in the age group 35-49 is under-estimated
Gujarat	Fertility in the age group 35-49 under-estimated
Haryana	Fertility in the age group 15-34 is over-estimated. Possibly there is shifting of births into the age group 1 5-34 from 35-49
Kerala	Fertility in the age group 15-34 is over-estimated
Madhya Pradesh	Fertility in the age group 15-34 is under-estimated
Orissa	Fertility in the age groups 15-34 and 35-49 is under-estimated
Rajasthan	Fertility in the age groups 15-34 and 35-49 is under-estimated
Tamil Nadu	Fertility in the age group 15-34 is over-estimated
Uttar Pradesh	Fertility in the age group 35-49 is under-estimated
West Bengal	Fertility in the age group 35-49 is under-estimated
India	Fertility in the age group 35-49 is under-estimated

A striking feature of the age-specific fertility rate given in Table 2 is that fertility in the age group of 15-19 years as obtained from NFHS is abnormally high in many States considered in comparison to SRS. In Punjab, the fertility level revealed by NFHS is comparable to that of SRS while the birth rate has shown a decline often percent. This needs a further probe.

Discussion

The important modules used in NFHS to collect information from the household regarding household population and fertility are the Household Questionnaire and Woman's Questionnaire. The Household Questionnaire was used to list all usual resident members of each sample household plus visitors who slept in the household the night before the interview. Characteristics of each person such as age, sex, marital status etc., were collected. Information on various characteristics of the household as well as births and deaths that occurred during the last two years were also elicited. The Woman's Questionnaire was used

to gather information from all eligible women—all ever married women aged 13-49 years including visitors and usual residents. It dealt with background characteristics of respondents, reproductive history, knowledge and use of family planning methods etc.

It has been stated that fertility estimates were based on data collected in the complete birth history of all ever married women aged 13-49 years. The methodology used for computing fertility is, therefore, the maternity history approach. The method is known to have serious limitations and too many elements of imprecision are introduced. Realising the low level of literacy of the respondents and asking them to account for the totality of their reproductive experience, the question that naturally arises is whether it is possible to obtain valid data.

The method takes into account those ever married women who were interviewed on the survey day. It thus excludes those usual resident members who were absent on the survey day. It is customary that women go to their parent's home for delivery. The method excludes such women and their births. Though visitors are included in NFHS, these may not compensate for those usual resident members absent since the contribution of visitors is likely to be small, apart from structural differences.

The methodology adopted in estimating current fertility in the two surveys is different. Though information on births, deaths and population was collected in the Household Questionnaire, it is not clear why the data collected have not been utilised to furnish estimates of fertility. The maternity history approach does not seem to have provided satisfactory estimates of fertility as compared to SRS in many States especially in States like Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan. The Mysore Population Study made an attempt to use a maternity history approach. It was found that the interviewers had recorded fewer current births than a simple single round survey of the same households, with a retrospective question on births. The extensive work done by Joseph E. Potter demonstrated that maternity history data can lead to mis-estimates of declines in age-specific fertility.

Conclusion

The pattern of age distribution was analysed with reference to the quartile and ninth decile values as obtained from NFHS and SRS covering 16 major States and India. Taking SRS as the base, indices were built up. It was observed that except for Assam all the other States fall within the limits in respect of the first two quartile index values indicating that the age pattern presented by NFHS in regard to the points considered is fairly comparable to that of SRS. In the case of Assam, the first two quartile index values are below 90, pointing to the fact that more young children are covered in NFHS than in SRS. The age of young children collected in SRS is superior to the one gathered by any interview method since in SRS, after recording the birth of the child, the age is up-dated during each six-monthly survey. The ninth decile index values, corresponding to the States of Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab and Rajasthan are outside the limits possibly due to lower coverage of persons at older ages in NFHS than in SRS or larger variability due to small sample. On the whole, except for Assam, in the remaining States the pattern of age distribution in the two surveys is similar. However, this does not measure the magnitude of the population.

A comparison of the fertility curve as obtained from NFHS and SRS is done with reference to two indices. The first index refers to the ratio of cumulative fertility of women below 35 years to total fertility expressed as a percentage separately for the two surveys. This is converted into a single index by taking SRS as the base and later expressed as a percentage. The second index is obtained as the ratio of the cumulative fertility of women below 35 years as derived from NFHS to the corresponding cumulative fertility obtained from SRS, expressed as a percentage. It is observed that the pattern and quantum of fertility revealed by NFHS in the States of Himachal Pradesh, Kamataka, Maharashtra and Punjab are fairly in agreement with those of SRS. In the remaining States, there are deficiencies in regard to the pattern and quantum of fertility in relation to SRS and these are broadly outlined in the paper. A striking feature of the age-specific fertility rate presented in Table 2 is that fertility in the age group of 15-19 years as obtained from NFHS is abnormally high in many States as compared to SRS. The methodology used in obtaining current fertility measures is the maternity history approach. The method is known to have serious limitations and too many elements of imprecision are introduced. Though information on births and deaths was collected on a retrospective basis in the Household Questionnaire, the data collected have not been utilised for working out fertility measures. The estimates of fertility as thrown by NFHS are not satisfactory as compared to SRS in many States especially in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan. Earlier studies connected with Mysore Population Study and the extensive work done by Joseph E. Potter indicate that maternity history approach is not a statisfactory method for computing current fertility measures.