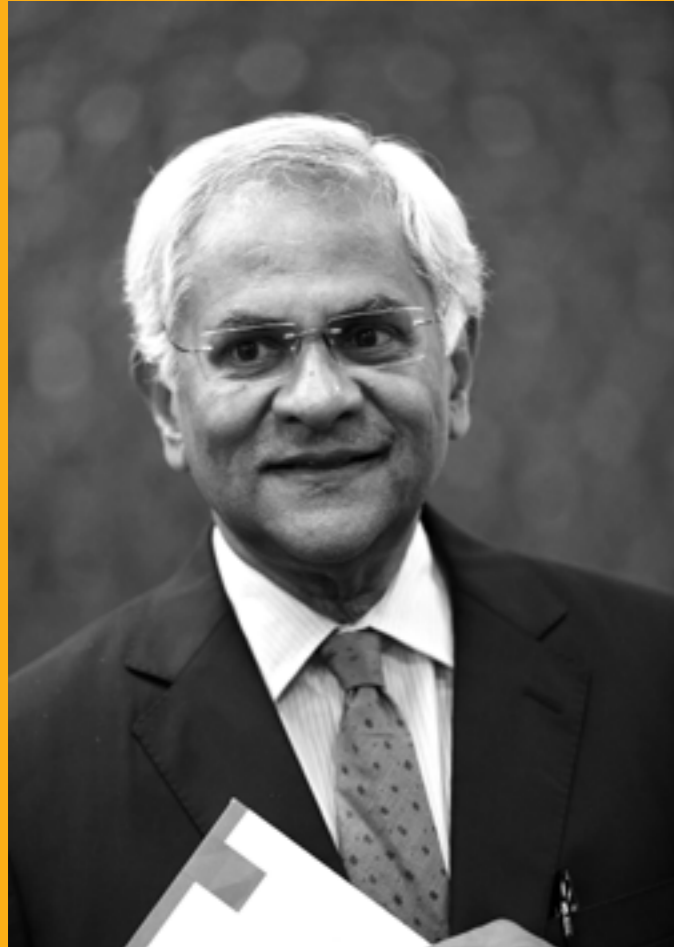




# ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

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Taking forward our Strategic Framework 2018-2022, PFI continues to work towards advancing gender sensitive, rights-based population and family planning policies and actions with a focus on adolescents and young people. This is done through:	
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Mr Keshav Desiraju was greatly admired for the intellectual breadth, problem solving administrative skills and passionate commitment to equity and social justice which he brought to health and other development sectors. He was instrumental in bringing mental health, a hitherto neglected area, into the centre stage of national and global health discourse. His vision and values invigorated many Indian and global health organisations with which he was actively associated after his retirement from the civil service. The Indian public health community has suffered a great loss in his untimely death

**Prof. K Srinath Reddy**

President Public Health Foundation of India & Member, Governing Board, Population Foundation of India.

**Mr. Keshav Desiraju**

11 May 1955 – 5 September 2021

# Tribute

We mourn the loss of our chairperson and former Union Health Secretary Mr Keshav Desiraju who passed away in Chennai on Sunday September 5th, 2021, due to an acute coronary syndrome. He was 66.

Grandson of former President of India Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Mr Desiraju was a man of many facets. He had a master's degree in Economics from the University of Cambridge and a master's degree in Public Administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. An IAS officer from the 1978 batch of the Uttarakhand cadre, he held several positions with the Governments of Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh and Government of India, and retired as the Union Secretary in the Department of Consumer Affairs.

Committed to advancing public good for the most vulnerable, Mr Desiraju will be remembered as a man who had the courage to call out corruption and commercial interests in the healthcare sector. His significant contribution to prioritizing mental health in India, and his role in the formulation of the Mental Health Act 2017, has been acknowledged and appreciated by many. Mr Desiraju launched the ambitious Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK), which envisions an integrated approach to adolescent health, thereby enabling them to realise their full potential. Mr Desiraju's passion for ensuring accountability of the health system and high-quality service delivery lives on in Population Foundation of India's work on accountability and strategic engagement. As the Chairperson of Population Foundation of India, he continued to be critically engaged with issues of public health, health justice, primary health care and community health.

Mr Desiraju's vision and fierce commitment to equity made him a valued mentor and leader across the development, civil service and health sectors. The staff at Population Foundation of India will forever remember his strong support and mentorship and vision with which he guided our work. All of us who interacted with him experienced his warmth, humility, compassion and fortitude. His visits to the office were always encouraging.

## Governing Board Members

### Chairperson

Mr Keshav Narasimham Desiraju (Late)

### Vice Chairperson

Mr Rajya Vardhan Kanoria

Mr Kiran Karnik  
Mr Ratan N Tata  
Dr Ajai Chowdhry  
Dr Syeda S Hameed  
Prof K Srinath Reddy  
Dr Shireen J Jejeebhoy  
Ms Maja Daruwala  
Mr Vinod Rai  
Justice Madan B Lokur  
Prof Vikram Harshad Patel

### Executive Director

Ms Poonam Muttreja

## Advisory Council Members

Ms Srilatha Batliwala  
Dr Leela Visaria  
Dr Saroj Pachauri  
Prof Suneeta Mittal  
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Mr P D Rai  
Ms Karminder Kaur  
Dr Arvind Pandey  
Dr Meenakshi Gopinath  
Dr Pramath Raj Sinha  
Dr Raman Kataria  
Ms Sonalini Mirchandani  
Dr Vikas Amte  
Dr Rajani Ved  
Ms Vandana Gurnani  
Ms Poonam Muttreja

# Chairperson's message

**No success or achievement in material terms is worthwhile unless it serves the needs or interests of the country and its people and is achieved by fair and honest means.**

***J.R.D. Tata***

The COVID-19 pandemic has, through 2020, impacted countries across the world. A major, catastrophic consequence of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns has been widened disparities in access to education, healthcare, employment and other steppingstones to a prosperous world. The lockdowns may have well served a crucial public health function, but they have also led to disruptions and significant reductions in the supply of essential health services, including family planning and sexual and reproductive health services. The differential impact of the pandemic on the health and well-being of vulnerable population groups, particularly women, is an aggravation of the centuries of compounded hardships they have faced.

For the last five decades, the Population Foundation of India has worked towards addressing the challenge of ensuring population stabilisation through an inclusive approach, keeping women and young people at the centre. Our response to the pandemic involved both supporting the government in its COVID-19 response and recovery efforts and in trying to ensure that the provision of family planning and sexual and reproductive health services are not compromised at the expense of other priorities.

In response to the call from NITI Aayog urging 92,000 NGOs to support the Indian government, Population Foundation of India worked on developing social and behaviour change communication materials on COVID-19 prevention and vaccination. Our teams worked closely with Mission Directors and State Nodal officers for dissemination of these materials and training of frontline health workers in 150 districts. In addition, we made small grants to grassroots organizations in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Jharkhand for addressing the immediate needs of poor and vulnerable communities severely impacted by COVID-19.

Along with our NGO partners we engaged strategically with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for the inclusion of family planning on the government's list of essential services. We also worked with NGOs and social marketing

organizations to ensure that family planning information and services continued to reach people. Evidence-based strategic engagement is a core element of our work and our timely surveys, knowledge collation and sharing played a crucial role in ensuring awareness about the impact of the pandemic on women and young people.

We recognise that COVID-19 is probably not the last pandemic to impact us, and we must make efforts to be better prepared for future emergencies. We continue to work towards an informed discourse around COVID-19 appropriate behaviours as well as measures to address vaccine hesitancy. Collaboration is the hallmark of much of our work across our three verticals: community action for health, social and behaviour change communication and strategic engagement with policymakers and we will continue to leverage this three-pronged approach to bring about a positive change in people's lives in this challenging new environment.

Through the last year and more, colleagues at the Population Foundation of India have worked, often from home and, when conditions improved, in carefully scheduled sessions at the office. I am grateful to all of them. Some colleagues have lost family and friends to the pandemic. Our sympathies are with them all.



Late Keshav Desiraju  
1955-2021

# Executive Director's Report

STRENGTH

The last year has been marked by challenges, opportunities, and most of all, by a rapid transformation in the ways we live and work. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused immense upheaval in the lives of women, men and children around the globe.

At Population Foundation of India, our colleagues and partners too, have had to respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns and restrictions. In April 2020, soon after the first lockdown and even as colleagues adapted to working from home, Population Foundation of India launched a nationwide campaign addressing COVID-19 in partnership with Facebook India and Government of India's MyGov social media platforms.

Lockdowns and the need for physical distancing have forced us to reassess the way in which we work. Face-to-face discussions have been swiftly replaced by online meetings, conferences and workshops have given way to online webinars, and interpersonal communication has been substituted by social and digital media campaigns. Digital tools and technologies have allowed us to continue most of our work in the face of the pandemic. However, it has not been possible to shift every interaction or programme online, and some of our programme teams have had to realign priorities and activities due to the changed circumstances.

The pandemic adversely impacted the delivery of health services throughout the country. Essential services such as family planning, antenatal and post-natal care, and maternal care were suspended or disrupted during the lockdowns and resources were diverted to fight COVID-19. Population Foundation of India highlighted the importance of attending to women's health even during a crisis situation.

Over the course of the year, we engaged with relevant stakeholders to advocate for a greater need to strengthen choice-based family planning and access to contraceptives to prevent an unprecedented impact on family planning and reproductive health. We used online platforms to sustain and amplify deliberations to maintain family planning as an important item on the public health agenda. We engaged with Government of India and state governments on finding creative ways to continue work on family planning.

We also worked to address the reproductive health needs of adolescents, especially girls during the past year. For example, our engagement with the Department of Health in Rajasthan ensured that Adolescent Friendly Health Centres are included in all the 200 model Community Health Centres opened in the constituencies of Members of the Legislative Assembly. In Bihar, young women from our youth groups came together to create sanitary pad banks to provide menstrual hygiene supplies to women and girls during the lockdown.

Our digital-forward rather than digital-first strategy has allowed the organisation to deepen our engagements with young people.

SnehAI, the Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered chatbot, continues to reach young people on issues related to their health and well-being. The chatbot has an audience of over 1,30,000 active users and has had over 8.7 million conversations. We are excited to have launched the End Violence Against Children project this year, which will expand the chatbot to reach younger audiences on issues of digital safety and online child sexual abuse and exploitation. While this shift to a digital-forward approach has allowed Population Foundation of India to remain responsive and relevant, we are still committed to ensuring that our work is rooted in ground realities. Cultural contexts, evidence-based research and locally relevant solutions continue to drive our work. Campaigns such as Himmat Hai Toh Jeet Hai, launched digitally in September 2020, to give people hope and strength in the face of the ongoing COVID-19 battle, were rooted in inspiring stories and testimonials from our partners on the ground. Similarly, we created COVID-19 guidelines

for Patient Welfare under the Community Action for Health programme for Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Committees as well as Mahila Arogya Samitis. While the guidelines were disseminated digitally using networks of the Department of Health, the content was developed to respond to the needs and requirements raised at a community level. Population Foundation of India continues to contribute to an evidence-based discourse around public health issues. We have actively pursued informed engagement with the national and regional media (both print and digital) on critical public health issues through articles, blogs and TV interviews. Partnerships with media on World Contraception Day, International Women's Day and other significant occasions further amplify our issues.

The last year has been difficult for our staff and partners. We are grateful to our donors as well as our Governing Board and Advisory Council members who have provided immense support as we re-worked our priorities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. As I reflect on the past year and look forward to the next, I am confident in saying that Population Foundation of India has emerged stronger, with an even more robust commitment to stepping up for the health and wellbeing of young people—women and men across the country.

**Himmat Hai Toh Jeet Hai—and we are full of himmat!**



Poonam Muttreja



# Community Action for Health

# CHANGE

Community Action for Health (CAH) is a key component of the National Health Mission (NHM), the flagship programme of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India, which empowers communities to engage and seek accountability from health officials on availability, accessibility and quality of public health services, thereby, bringing public back into public health.

The MoHFW constituted the Advisory Group on Community Action (AGCA) in 2005 to provide guidance to central and state governments on community processes initiatives, particularly those related to accountability for the provision of public sector health services. The AGCA comprises eminent public health experts, and Population Foundation of India hosts its Secretariat.

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The CAH processes are currently being implemented in

**2,24,000 villages in**

**372 districts including**

**51 aspirational districts &**

**72 cities across**

**24 states/UTs**

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## HIGHLIGHTS

Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic across the country, the MoHFW advised the AGCA to reorganize its objectives and provide technical support to state governments on mitigation of COVID-19 at the community level. In close co-ordination with the state NHMs, the following processes were supported by the AGCA team:

### PROTOCOLS

**A set of five guidance notes were developed and disseminated** to state and district nodal officers and civil society organizations (CSO). These documents detailed roles and responsibilities, standard operating procedures, and COVID-19 protocols for Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committees (VHSNC), Rogi Kalyan Samiti (RKS), Mahila Arogya Samitis (MAS), Resident Welfare Associations (RWA), Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Day (VHSND) and Urban Health and Nutrition Day (UHND).

### TRAINING

**Online training was facilitated by the AGCA team** to strengthen engagement and promote cross training of VHSNCs, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) MASs, RKSs in COVID-19 mitigation. More than 6,500 state, district and block nodal officers from 13 states were trained in 142 batches.

### DIALOGUE

**The AGCA team organised 12 virtual Jan Samwads (Public Dialogues) in Bihar and Rajasthan** to provide direct interface of communities with health officials; approximately 1700 people participated in the Jan Samwads.

# ACTION



12 Jan Samwads in Bihar & Rajasthan



6500+ Nodal officers from 13 states trained



8000+ youth generate ARSH awareness



8 AFHCs established in Darbhanga and Nawada



Strengthening of VHSNCs in Begusarai and Sheikhpura



Covid Guidance Notes developed for State and Districts



Adolescent girls during a meeting in Bihar

## ENGAGEMENT

A set of 17 good practices/positive stories on community engagement initiatives during COVID-19 from 11 states was developed and disseminated with state governments.

## SUPPORT

The AGCA team provided support to the National Health System Resource Center (NHSRC) in rolling out Jan Arogya Samitis (JAS). The MoHFW issued guidelines to state governments for the constitution of JASs in all functional Health and Wellness Centers (HWCs) in December 2020, and the AGCA team supported the NHSRC in developing state governments' capacities to implement the guidelines. The AGCA team co-facilitated the first batch of national level training of trainers (ToT) in March 2021 in which state nodal officers from 19 states participated.

## LEADERSHIP

We strengthened leadership and agency among youth by mobilising over 8,000 adolescents and youth in eight blocks across Darbhanga and Nawada districts in Bihar to generate demand for Adolescent Reproductive Sexual Health (ARSH) services; undertake community monitoring of ARSH services and; provide regular feedback to frontline workers and health managers. As a result of continued dialogue between the youth champions and block and district officials, eight Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHC) were established between September and October 2020. About 1,500 adolescents availed services at the AFHCs through March 2021. The youth champions also played an important role during the first surge of COVID-19 by distributing masks and sanitary pads, especially among marginalized girls and women who could not procure napkins during the lockdown.

## PARTNERSHIP

To accelerate progress on health outcomes in the aspirational districts of Bihar, Population Foundation of India partnered with NITI Aayog and Piramal Foundation on community engagement and social behaviour change communication (SBCC). District and block nodal officers were oriented in 24 blocks of Begusarai and Sheikhpura districts of Bihar to strengthen functioning of VHSNCs and use SBCC resources to promote local actions on COVID-19. This led to increased utilization of untied funds on locally identified priorities and support to frontline health workers on COVID-19 mitigation.

## Case Study

# Bridging the Digital Divide:

Connecting Communities with Health Systems through virtual Jan Samwad during COVID-19 in India



Communities participating in a virtual Jan Samwad, Bihar

The Jan Samwads, a social-audit platform, serve as an important mechanism to attain community feedback on health services and redress grievances regarding the availability and quality of public health services. Jan Samwads are usually organised bi-annually at the block and districts Primary Health Centers. Community feedback on health services is collected through a set of tools used by community members and are presented at the event before a panel comprising district and block officials. The community feedback provides directions to officials for actions to strengthen the delivery of health services.

The lockdowns and isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic led to disruptions in the provision of health services and a break in direct contact with the community. Population Foundation of India's Jan Samwads raised the voices and concerns of communities during the crisis and offered an opportunity for redress.

In December 2020, the first virtual Jan Samwad was organised at Pakaribarawan block of Nawada district in Bihar. Participants shared their experiences and grievances about the delivery of public health services with the District Civil Surgeon. Key issues raised by the participants related to restoring out-patient services at hospitals, provision of ante-natal care (ANC) services, distribution of iron folic acid tablets, and postings of doctors at Additional Primary Health Centers (APHC) and a female doctor at the Community Health Center (CHC).

The minutes and the action taken report were finalized within a week of the event. A government notification was issued for posting doctors at the Additional PHCs in Budhauri and Dumrawan. All ANMs were instructed to provide complete range of ANC services at Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Day (VHSND) sites as well as at the health sub-centres. The Civil Surgeon sent a request to the Principal Secretary—Health, Government of Bihar to depute a gynecologist at the CHC.

The replacement of routine in-person meetings with the virtual Jan Samwad may be a small step, but more importantly, it is replicable and scalable. It brings together the community and key decision makers at the state, district and block levels, which would otherwise not be feasible given the circumstances. The key pre-conditions for a successful virtual event includes a fair degree of community mobilisation, presence of a facilitating organization, an active NHM community processes team and internet connectivity.

Since December 2020, twelve virtual Jan Samwads were organised in Bihar and Rajasthan. The AGCA is working with other states to organise virtual Jan Samwads in the coming months.

Emerging challenges such as vaccine hesitancy among communities will also need to be addressed. It remains critical that we continue engaging with and listening to communities, and ensuring that their grievances are addressed.



## SUPPORT TO BIHAR GOVERNMENT IN ESTABLISHING SEHAT KENDRAS

Population Foundation of India supported the State Health Society in Bihar and Bihar State AIDS Control Society in the conceptualization of youth-friendly spaces in 30 colleges of Bihar called Sehat Kendra. The Sehat Kendras will provide college students accurate information on health, including sexual and reproductive health and mental health, gender issues, and nutrition. We developed the branding guideline and reference manual for Sehat Kendras. Population Foundation facilitated a state level TOT with 99 peer educators and Red Ribbon Club Coordinators who will manage these centers. Shri Manoj Kumar, IAS, Executive Director-cum-Special Secretary Health inaugurated the TOT and addressed the participants.



## Strategic Engagement

A key pillar of Population Foundation of India's work is strategic engagement with key stakeholders, including policy makers and the media on family planning (FP), sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and population-related issues by providing compelling evidence to inform and inspire decision making. We undertake critical analysis of policies and programmes on population, family planning and sexual and reproductive health of women, men, and adolescents. Through our work we strive to shift the FP and population discourse to a gender-sensitive and rights-based approach.

### Objectives of approach include:

- Ensuring that adequate resources are committed for comprehensive, rights-based high quality FP and adolescent reproductive health services.
- Strengthening Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) policies and programmes aligned with a gender and human rights perspective.
- Improving service delivery and enhancing access to FP and adolescent reproductive health programmes.

### Realizing Commitments to Family Planning (RCFP)

The second phase of Realizing Commitments to Family Planning in India program (RCFP-II), funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, mobilises support from stakeholders and thought leaders for increased access to choice-based, quality FP services and affirms the centrality of FP for sustainable development with particular focus on young people. The project is anchored in evidence-based strategic engagement efforts with key stakeholders, including the MoHFW.

We use a multi-pronged strategy to build an evidence-informed discourse and action among key stakeholders. The programme relies on:

- Evidence building and dissemination
- Engagement with and amplification of voices of thought leaders
- Media engagement to inform and promote increased dialogue on FP
- Engagement with CSOs to build a cohesive voice for choice-based, quality FP services
- Interventions to counter narratives that may negatively impact choice-based family planning

The RCFP-II strategic engagements align with India's global commitments, primarily the FP2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals that aim at addressing the unmet need for FP. As India continues to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become all the more pertinent to sustain the gains made in FP over the past few years and to ensure that both FP and SRH remain a priority agenda for achieving national and international commitments.

# ACCESS

To address the impact of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns on access to and provision of essential health services including FP/SRH services, Population Foundation of India promote an informed discourse to ensure that FP remained a priority during the pandemic.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Population Foundation of India played a lead role in having FP included as an essential service in the MoHFW guidelines by leveraging its convening ability to hold strategic conversations with key stakeholders.
- During the pandemic we generated, collated and disseminated knowledge products on FP/SRH issues as well as the impact of COVID-19 on FP/SRH services.
- On the request of the Parliamentary Standing Committee-Health & Family Welfare, Population Foundation of India presented recommendations on the “Outbreak of Pandemic COVID-19 and Related Contingent and Mitigation Plan” before the Committee. The Parliamentary Standing Committee then submitted these recommendations to the Vice President of India in November 2020 for action.
- Engagement with NITI Aayog for inclusion of family planning indicators in NITI Aayog’s Aspirational Districts Programme resulted in Niti Aayog considering the inclusion of specific indicators, which could form part of the districts performance measurement on health. This work is on-going.
- Active engagement with national and regional media on issues surrounding FP/SRH and population issues resulted in widespread coverage across digital, print, television media both nationally and regionally. Over 100 articles, either authored by, or quoting Population Foundation of India, were published on topics such as, access to FP/SRH services by women and girls during COVID-19 pandemic; key drivers of population stabilization; choice-based access to FP; expansion of contraceptive choices; increased investments for health and FP; among others. Importantly, the media continues to seek Population Foundation of India’s insights and expert opinion on issues pertaining to FP/SRH. .

## Advocating Reproductive Choices

Advocating Reproductive Choices (ARC) is a national-level coalition of 115 organisations working collectively to strengthen and advance access to FP services in India since 2005. Since 2015, Population Foundation of India has hosted the ARC Secretariat.

A grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation enables Population Foundation of India to host the ARC Secretariat, strengthen operations of ARC focusing on strengthening governance norms, member engagement and visibility of the coalition.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- ARC General Body Meeting: On July 22, 2020 the ARC secretariat hosted a virtual general body meeting that was attended by 85 member organizations. Dr Manohar Agnani, Joint Secretary - Reproductive and Child Health, MoHFW, Government of India addressed members at the plenary session.
- Reconstituting the ARC Core Committee: There was a need to induct new members to the Core Committee as its membership had remained more-or-less unchanged over the last 15 years. The ARC general body in its July

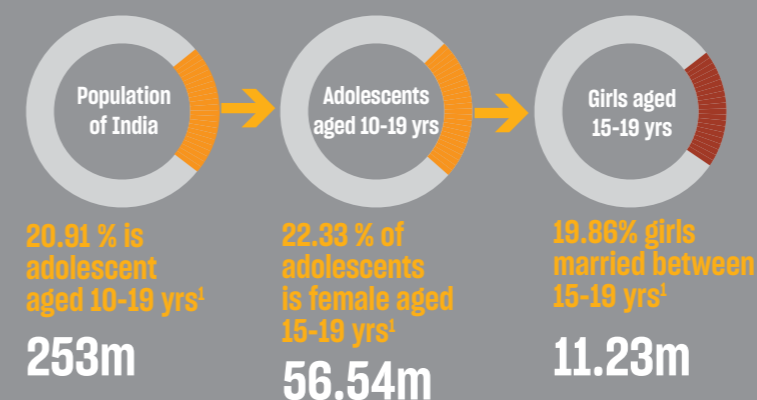
2020 meeting, elected a new Core Committee. Current members of the ARC Core Committee include: Integrated Development Foundation, PATH, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant Institute of Studies in Rural Development, Action Research Training for Health (ARTH), Foundation for Reproductive Health Services India, Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India, Indian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, Abt Associates and Population Foundation of India.

- Social media to amplify issues related choice and quality: ARC is now active on Facebook and Twitter which helps to amplify its messages on SRHR, crowdsource information, engage in conversations and increase the visibility of the coalition.
- ARC Secretariat shared knowledge, resources and webinar updates with members frequently. This helped in bringing members on the same page regarding FP and COVID-19.
- Organization of webinars: ARC Secretariat organized three webinars:
  - Analysis of family planning and social demographic determinants: National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS) in collaboration with Population Council in December 17, 2020.
  - Population myths and realities with Dr. S.Y Quraishi in February 26, 2021.
  - Impact of COVID-19 on reproductive health and family planning services in Rajasthan' in collaboration with ARTH on January 22, 2021.
  - On the Move: COVID-19, Migration and Family Planning in collaboration with Population Council on April 8, 2021.

## Adolescent Reproductive Sexual Health & Wellbeing

Every third Indian is a young person (10-24 years). This large cohort of young people presents an unprecedented opportunity to attain accelerated economic development. To leverage the nation's demographic dividend, adequate investments in the health needs of young people are a must. Population Foundation of India works on adolescents and youth across programmes, by prioritising SRH-related information and services for adolescents and youth, through partnerships with government, CSOs and youth-led organizations.

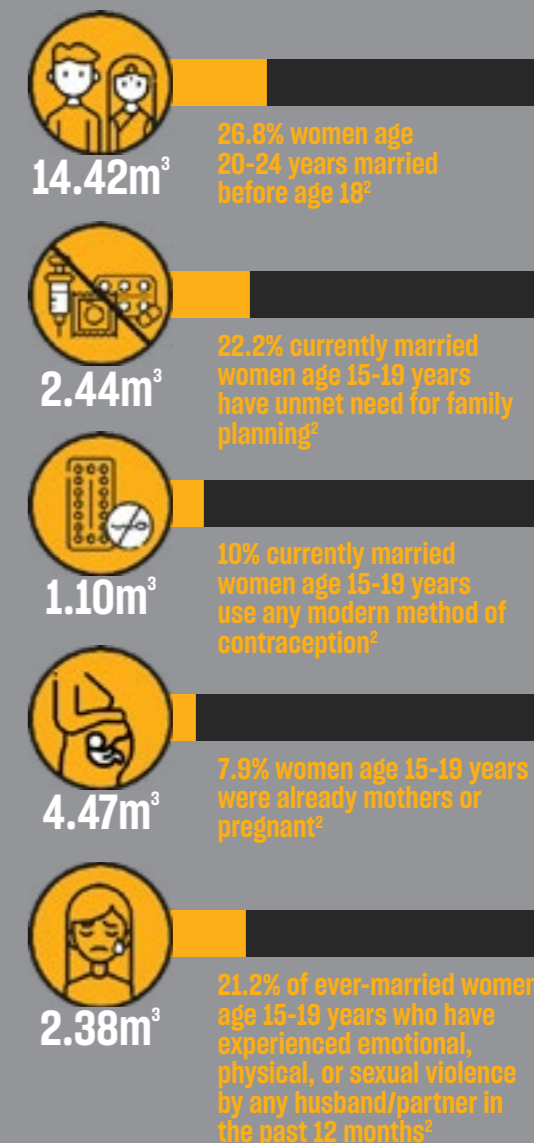
### Legal age for marriage in India is 18 years.



# \$4.60 => \$46

**Improving the physical, sexual, and mental health of adolescents aged 10-19 years at the cost of about \$4.60 per person per year could bring a tenfold economic benefit by averting more than 12 million adolescent deaths and preventing more than 30 million unwanted pregnancies between 2015 to 2030.**

A Lancet study points to the fact that investments in the health of adolescents significantly enhance a nation's social and economic status.



1 Census 2011

2 NFHS-4, 2015-16

3 Estimated through NFHS-4 prevalence rate and Census 2011 population

## HiWAY

This project supported by the Child Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) seeks to bring about large scale change for the situation of adolescents in India by making a case for accelerated investments in their health and wellbeing since adolescent health and well-being is not yet fully a strategic priority for India. Adolescents face information barriers and gender stereotypes in making informed choices related to SRH, education, age of marriage, choice of partner, mobility, skilling and employment. Improved programmes and policies are required to address implementation and resource bottlenecks at various levels. This project builds on the understanding that better adolescent health programming in the country will be critical to harnessing India's demographic dividend.

The objective is thus to ensure that adolescent health and well-being is identified as a clear priority for the country in its development journey. The project uses three approaches to achieve its objective of prioritising adolescent health and well-being:

- **Building evidence for a compelling narrative** focusing on adolescent development and wellbeing through research to ascertain social and economic benefits of public investment on adolescents in India.
- **Strategic engagement with key stakeholders** on building a consensus on and accelerating investments in adolescent development and wellbeing.
- **Media engagement and communication** to mobilise and garner public opinion and support for adolescent development, through a positive and persuasive media discourse.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Stakeholder Engagement for Adolescent Development and Well-being

In November-December 2020, Population Foundation of India reached high-level stakeholders in various ministries, such as Ministry of Health, Youth and Sports Affairs and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and development partners such as UNICEF and World Health Organisation to understand their current priorities, programmes and plans for adolescents in India. **The need for a proactive, multi-stakeholder engagement at the highest level to plan, implement and monitor programmes on adolescents emerged as key takeaways from the meetings and discussions.**

Based on these insights, Population Foundation of India engaged with NITI Aayog, to co-host a **high level, multi-stakeholder roundtable** with various ministries such as education, skill development and entrepreneurship, women and child development, health and sports and youth affairs in March 2021. The engagement with NITI on this project is on-going.

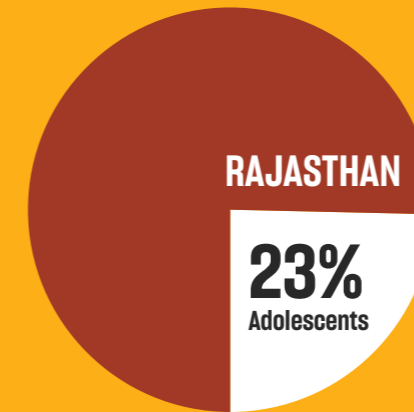
Population Foundation of India partnered with Institute for Competitiveness (IFC) in October 2020 to **research and develop a report on the status of adolescents in India.** This study aims to understand current investments, strategies and programmes in adolescent health, wellbeing and development across ministries and programmes, identify gaps, and programmes and recommend measures for sustainable efforts at the national level to improve and prioritise issues of adolescents.

## COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Another grant from CIFF is enabling Population Foundation of India to implement the project on "Scoping for Expansion of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in India". The focus of the project is to generate thought leadership at the national level and in four states to encourage the integration of CSE within existing schemes, programmes and departments and for increased investments and programming on CSE.

## STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT IN RAJASTHAN

A grant from CIFF aims to expand the quality of, and access to, adolescent reproductive health services in Rajasthan.



**15,700,000**  
Adolescent Population

**53%**  
Boys

**47%**  
Girls

**887**  
Adolescent Sex Ratio



**6.3%**  
Adolescent girls in Rajasthan are pregnant or mothers

**35.4%**  
Adolescent girls in Rajasthan married under age of 18



**1 in 5**

Adolescent girls (15-19 years) drop out of school and are forced to get married early, denying them access to their basic right to education and health.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Expansion of Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHCs) across Rajasthan:** Population Foundation of India provides technical support to the Health Department to advance adolescent health in Rajasthan. Through sustained strategic engagements, PFI facilitated the inclusion of Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHCs) in the Model CHCs being developed in 200 constituencies across Rajasthan. Furthermore, we provide technical support to operationalise the AFHCs.
- **Inclusion of adolescent health in the agenda of the Gram Sabha:** Strategic dialogues with the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj has resulted in adolescent health being added to the agenda of the Gram Sabha.
- **Mobilizing youth through Red Ribbon Clubs:** Population Foundation of India, in collaboration with Rajasthan State AIDS Control Society (RSACS), organized a series of webinars addressing issues related to youth SRH. A series of three webinars reached 2,340 students, 217 Red Ribbon coordinators and 146 teachers.
- **Increased discourse around ARSH by media engagement:** Population Foundation of India continued its strategic engagement with media houses and their representatives to advance their understanding on adolescent health issues. We engaged with local media to report on adolescent issues by sharing in-depth articles on the impact of COVID-19 on youth, data analytics and media exposure visits.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

**Recognition from the Chief Minister and Health Minister**  
Shri Ashok Gehlot, Chief Minister of Rajasthan acknowledged Population Foundation of India's work on and commitment to adolescent and youth health in a letter to the organisation. The Health Minister also committed to prioritize and advance adolescent health in the state on National Youth Day.

## VOICES OF ADOLESCENTS

“ एच आई वी की जाँच कराओ, भावी पीढ़ी को एच आई वी मुक्त बनाओ  
*Get HIV tested, make future generations HIV free*  
Maya Erwal, Tonk district

“ मैं विकास हूँ, मैं शक्ति हूँ, मैं कुछ भी कर सकती हूँ।  
*I stand for development, I have power, I can do anything.*  
Pooja Jhangid, Tonk district

“ स्वस्थ युवा, स्वस्थ व्यस्क, स्वस्थ भावी पीढ़ियाँ  
*Healthy youth, healthy adult, healthy future generations*  
Vedprakash Bairwa, Karauli district



Young people at the Super Saathi Kendra in (Youth Resource Centre) Rajasthan

## Feminist Adolescent and Youth led Action (FAYA)

A grant from CIFF to Population Foundation of India facilitated the development of a CSE curriculum in 2019 and its implementation through the Feminist Adolescent and Youth led Action (FAYA) programme in Rajasthan. The curriculum is being transacted with 8,000 adolescents in the age group of 12-19 years in 200 villages across four project districts – Bundi, Tonk, Karauli and Dungarpur. The project aims to educate young people on SRH, identity and power dynamics, gender roles and constructs, healthy and unhealthy relationships. The curricula provides correct and comprehensive knowledge, equipping adolescents with the information and agency to avail services.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Local programme partners came together to demand a supply of sanitary napkins:** The COVID-19 lockdown saw a disruption in the supply of essential commodities including sanitary pads due to the closure of schools and anganwadi centers. As a result of sustained advocacy with the district administration, the Chief Medical and Health Officer of Bundi issued a letter to the person in-charge of the District Drug Distribution Store to regularly supply sanitary pads in the districts. In Tonk, 5,000 sanitary napkins were distributed at the village, panchayat, block and district levels to the most disadvantaged adolescent girls residing in villages.
- **Establishment of two Super Saathi Kendras (Youth Resource Centre) in intervention villages:** The Super Saathi Kendra, an initiative which is entirely community-led, is a centre that serves as a safe space for adolescents to convene, hold discussions and access a repository of knowledge products on health and well-being.
- **Creating an enabling environment:** Knowledge and information were shared with gatekeepers who could serve as catalysts in building a conducive environment for CSE and ARSH across all intervention villages.
- **CSE curriculum-based sessions with adolescents were conducted across all implementation villages:** Approximately 8,000 adolescents were equipped with information on reproductive health, gender, menstrual health and hygiene.

## Case Study

# Advocating for Rights

Healthy menstruation is our fundamental right



A FAYA youth group meeting in progress

Maintaining good menstrual health and hygiene requires both the availability of sanitary napkins and effective behaviour change communication thereby bridging the supply and demand gap. After the COVID-19 lockdown was announced in 2020, girls from villages of Tonk and Todaraisingh blocks of Rajasthan started facing problems in accessing free sanitary napkins. Girls in these blocks who are participants in the FAYA project, broke the silence with regards to menstruation and highlighted their demands through a video clip.

Priya Harijan, an adolescent girl from Lamba village of Tonk district said, "During our periods, we used to approach our teachers in schools or Anganwadi workers (before lockdown) for pads on a regular basis. But now due to lockdown, schools and Anganwadi centers are closed and we could not get sanitary napkins when required. My friends and I discussed the problem and decided to make a video highlighting our needs."

Adolescent girls in Lamba raised their voices to demand sanitary napkin be included in the essential commodity list. Shiv Shiksha Samiti Ranoli, Population Foundation of India's implementation partner, presented the girls' concerns before the district administration and advocated for easing the supply chain of sanitary napkins.

**To respond immediately to the problem, project staff donated a portion of their salaries and sought support from local philanthropists to purchase sanitary napkins for women and girls in need. In response to the girls' campaigns, the district administration made 5,000 sanitary napkins available for distribution.**

## Educately - Knowledge Hub

Under the FAYA engagement, Population Foundation of India has developed a teacher training programme – ARSH For You – as a critical component of its digital and open-access portal on adolescent health and wellbeing called Educately. ARSH For You aims to equip educators with the knowledge and skills to address SRH topics in an effective and empathetic manner. The programme is online, free and self-paced to suit the different needs of educators from across the country. Currently 2,100 teachers from around India are enrolled in the course.

### Highlights

- Development of ARSH for You, an online teacher-training programme on adolescent health and wellbeing using a rights-based and pleasure affirming approach. The curriculum has been peer reviewed and translated into Hindi.
- Launch of ARSH for You in English in August 2020 and in Hindi in January 2021.
- Partnerships with the Education Department in Bihar for the rollout of Educately in the state.
- ARSH For You programmes will be offered in collaboration with HCL Foundation on their academic platform.

# Social and Behaviour Change Communication



Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) is used as an approach across all of Population Foundation of India's programmes, in recognition of the fact that social norms shape people's health behaviour and attitudes. Issues such as SRH, FP, adolescent health are personal to each individual, yet governed largely by social norms. COVID-19 has further underscored the need to weave SBCC into all our work. Our SBCC programme uses both online and offline, high and low technology strategies to reach out to women, men and young people to inform and empower them.

CAMPAIGN	REACH	VEWS
Covid Phase I	55 Million +	
Himmat hai toh Jeet hai Anthem	2.2 Million +	1.4 Million +
Himmat Hai Toh Jeet Hai Testimonials	4.6 Million +	1.6 Million +
#HimmatHaiTohJeetHai	18 Million +	

## COVID-19 RESPONSE & CAMPAIGNS

As the lockdown was announced in March 2020, Population Foundation of India rolled out a campaign to address issues on COVID-19. **The campaign, in collaboration with Facebook developed a content and messaging strategy on COVID-19** to collate, authenticate and produce engaging and informative content in English, Hindi and eight other regional languages for digital and social media platforms. These materials were used by the MyGov India citizen's engagement platform and state health departments.

Population Foundation of India **conceptualised and created a short film on female healthcare workers** at the forefront of COVID-19. The video was also published on Government of India's MyGov Facebook page and became one of their top performing posts with over 4.6 million views in 24 hours!

As part of the Stigma and Discrimination Campaign by the MoHFW, Population Foundation in collaboration with renowned theatre and film director Feroz Abbas Khan **developed short animation films using an entertainment-education format. Hasya Kavi Potliwala** is a short animation film featuring a poet who recites a short kavita (poem) addressing stigma against COVID-19 patients.

**The Corona Ki Adalat animation series used the familiar setting of a courtroom drama to disseminate important messages, tackle misinformation and reinforce a sense of solidarity** around the fight against COVID-19. The use of humour to speak about grim issues at a difficult time, as well as the idea to use popular courtroom drama were experiments, that were well received. Both series have been posted on the JIO Cinema Mobile Platform and have reached an audience of over 250 million.

In September 2020, as the country slowly recovered some semblance of normalcy after the first COVID-19 wave and faced an economic downturn, the Population Foundation launched **a campaign titled "Himmat Hai Toh Jeet Hai" to celebrate himmat (strength) and fortitude.** The anthem highlighted stories of everyday courage and hope displayed by ordinary people who rose to the occasion.



# SAFETY

## END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN




In October 2020, under a grant from The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, Population Foundation launched a new project on using technology solutions to make digital spaces safe for children. The objective of this project is to expand tools and services to prevent the victimization of children and harmful behavior by offenders and potential offenders in the digital environment. Population Foundation of India aims to achieve this objective by modifying the structure and content of the existing AI-powered chatbot Snehai. This project will focus on directly interacting with its intended users about online children sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA).

Over 24 months the project will undertake the following four key activities:

1. Development of content on online child sexual exploitation and abuse that will be incorporated into the Snehai chatbot
2. On ground promotion of Snehai chatbot in schools and communities
3. Campaign on digital safety
4. Development of policy briefs pertaining to adolescents' digital interaction and safety with a focus on OCSEA

## SNEHAI: A DIGITAL COMPANION

Snehai, Population Foundation of India's artificial intelligence (AI) powered chatbot provides a safe, non-judgemental and trusted space for adolescents to seek out information and resources on their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Designed in an adolescent friendly and forward manner, the chatbot uses rich media such as videos and GIFs to engage adolescents on key issues. Launched in 2019, the first iteration of the chatbot used a click-based platform to focus on family planning and contraceptives. In 2020, Population Foundation of India, with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, upgraded the chatbot to a Natural Language Processing platform and expanded its content to include other taboo topics such as consent, menstruation, virginity, sexuality, relationships and contraceptives. With the End Violence project commencing in October 2020, the chatbot is now being modified to include content, videos, quizzes and resources on digital safety and online child sexual exploitation and abuse.

 <b>TOTAL CONVERSATIONS</b> <b>8.67 Million</b>	 <b>TOTAL USERS</b> <b>136100+</b>
 <b>AVERAGE TIME SPENT PER SESSION</b> <b>5 mins</b>	 <b>AVERAGE TIME SPENT PER USER</b> <b>6.35 mins</b>
 <b>AVERAGE SESSION PER USER</b> <b>1.27</b>	 <b>AVERAGE MESSAGE EXCHANGED PER USER</b> <b>63</b>



# COVID-19 RESPONSE

## BIHAR

Population Foundation was nominated to the state COVID-19 vaccine management cell by the State Health Society Bihar and provide the state government with support on data analytics and to the District Immunization Officers in planning the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme, especially in Darbhanga and Nawada districts.

With support from our field implementation partners, VHSNC members and youth champions were oriented to lead and support COVID-19 mitigation efforts at the village level in eight blocks across Darbhanga and Nawada districts.

They provided support on:

- Creating awareness in the community and among Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM), Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA), and Anganwadi Workers (AWW) on Covid-19 Appropriate Behaviour
- Utilization of VHSNC untied funds for local sanitation drives, purchase of masks and sanitizers for ASHAs
- Support to ASHAs in identifying migrants with travel history and relaying information with health functionaries
- Managing quarantine centres and community kitchens during the lockdown.

## ARC

- ARC member organisations conducted a rapid survey on the availability and accessibility of family planning services at the field level during COVID-19 across 26 districts in Bihar in June 2020
- A letter was drafted to the Prime Minister to consider prioritising FP services during COVID-19 in April 2020. This led to inclusion of FP services within the list of essential services.

## EVIDENCE GENERATION

Population Foundation of India commissioned two studies to assess the emerging impact of COVID-19 on adolescents in May 2020. The evidence from these studies, along with similar studies by QuiltAI and DASRA were disseminated in a national webinar hosted by Population Foundation and chaired by the MoHFW in August 2020.

## RAJASTHAN

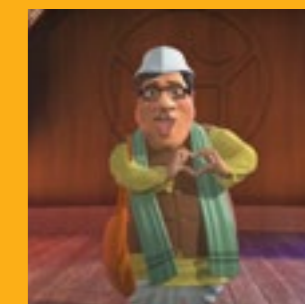
Population Foundation of India conducted a rapid assessment study in May 2020 to understand the knowledge, attitude and perceptions of young people (15-24 years) towards COVID-19. The study examined how the pandemic had impacted their lives, health outcomes, needs and priorities.

In Rajasthan, adolescents reported an unmet need for reproductive health services, sanitary pads and Iron Folic Acid (IFA) due to the lockdown and the need for mental health care services. Almost one-third of the adolescents in Rajasthan who were surveyed reported an increase in workload related to domestic chores and also an increase in conflict at home. Interestingly, twice as many female respondents reported an increase in their caregiving burden.

## Social and Behaviour Change Communication campaigns on COVID-19



Facebook/MyGov campaign



Hasya Kavi Potliwala campaign



Corona Ki Adalat



Himmat Hai Toh Jeet Hai

These campaigns have been described in previous sections of the annual report.

COVID REPORT

# COVID-19 RESPONSE

## PARTNERSHIPS WITH STATE GOVERNMENTS AND NGOS

To ensure that materials being developed were widely shared, Population Foundation of India worked with state governments, MOHFW and CSOs to share materials in Hindi, English and regional languages for their use.

Our teams coordinated closely with the Mission Directors, State Nodal Officers-Community Processes and IEC in 37 States and Union Territories to disseminate our materials across 150 districts. Population Foundation of India supported state governments to make modifications to their Programme Implementation Plans to prioritize resources for COVID-19, especially for community action.

Population Foundation of India made small grants in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi and Jharkhand to organisations active in addressing poor and marginalised communities' immediate needs in the field and quarantine centres during the COVID-19 crisis.

Convened and coordinated with CSOs, including social marketing organisations working on FP/SRH to identify a consolidated approach to ensure that information and services continued to reach clients.

Population Foundation of India along with its NGO partners strategically engaged with MOHFW leading to the inclusion of FP as an essential health service in the Ministry's guidelines.

In order to ensure an informed discourse on the impact of COVID-19 and the subsequent response of the public health system, Population Foundation of India has consistently engaged with the media through interviews and articles in both digital and print platforms.

# ROZGAR DHABA

An information-based solution addressing the migrant crisis.

With the imposition of the nationwide lockdown in March 2020, a massive reverse migration returning to rural India occurred. To address this sudden influx of working age populations without a source of livelihood, Mijwan Welfare Society, with support from Population Foundation of India, developed an information based solution for rural communities called Rozgar Dhaba.

Rozgar Dhaba is a physical village information exchange centre which provides resources and information on local jobs, government schemes, health schemes and options for livelihood. The "dhaba" collects both information from local employers on job opportunities but also collects information about job seekers. Further the Rozgar Dhaba provided support to the community on administrative matters such as applying for ration and Aadhaar cards and opening bank accounts. Each centre has computers, printers, wifi and a facilitator who provided support.

By connecting migrant workers to opportunities within their localities and communities, the Rozgar Dhaba scheme was able to encourage individuals to stay in their villages instead of migrating to large cities.



**50**  
VILLAGES BENEFIT  
IN AZAMGARH

**40000**  
PEOPLE REACHED  
IN AZAMGARH

**251**  
PEOPLE ABLE TO  
FIND JOBS

**75**  
FARMERS AVAIL  
GOVT. BENEFITS

**1250**  
PEOPLE ACCESS  
GOVT. SCHEMES  
AND BENEFITS

What started with one Rozgar Dhaba in 2020, has scaled to 12 Rozgar Dhabs across Uttar Pradesh and Bihar which caters to over 15000 community members every day.

# Financial / Operational Highlights

<b>PARTICULARS</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
<b>SOURCE OF FUNDS</b>	<b>RS.(IN LAKH)</b>	<b>RS.(IN LAKH)</b>
Corpus Fund	500	500
Society Fund	6029	5743
Deferred Grant	48	43
Restricted Project Funds	2680	2064
Current Liabilities	190	278
Provisions	41	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,488</b>	<b>8,661</b>
<b>APPLICATION OF FUNDS</b>		
Fixed Assets	119	122
Investments	5470	4700
Cash and Bank Balances	2820	2963
Loans and Advances	1079	876
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,488</b>	<b>8,661</b>

<b>PARTICULARS</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>RS.(IN LAKH)</b>	<b>RS.(IN LAKH)</b>
Grant income	2180	3456
Donation income	6	24
Rental Income	216	309
Interest and other income	456	504
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,858</b>	<b>4,293</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Population, Health and Family Planning expense	1215	1331
Behaviour Change Communication expense	639	1641
Community Action for Health expense	326	484
Other Project expense	218	148
Management & Administrative expense	174	101
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,572</b>	<b>3,705</b>
<b>Excess of Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>588</b>

# About Population Foundation of India

Population Foundation of India is a national NGO, which promotes and advocates for the effective formulation and implementation of gender sensitive population, health and development strategies, policies and programmes. The organisation was founded in 1970 by a group of socially committed industrialists under the leadership of the late JRD Tata and Dr Bharat Ram.

## Mission

PFI will advance people's reproductive rights within a human rights and women's empowerment framework, by building leadership and public accountability, influencing social movements, reframing discourse, and promoting an enabling programme and policy environment.

## Our Donors

Our mission and accomplishments would not have been possible without generous support and collaboration with our donors and programme partners. We are thankful for their continued partnership and collaboration to advance our shared mission.

- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Children's Investment Fund Foundation
- The David & Lucile Packard Foundation
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- United Nations Children's Fund
- Facebook India Online Services Pvt Ltd
- HCL Foundation
- Venus Music Pvt Ltd
- International Foundation for Research and Education
- BFP Investment and Financial Consultants Pvt Ltd
- Apollo Trading and Finance Pvt Ltd
- ActionAid Association

## PFI's Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy

At the workplace, Population Foundation of India (PFI) prohibits discrimination, inappropriate conduct, or harassment, based on a person's gender, religion, caste, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, age, colour, national origin, veteran status, marital status, race, ancestry, linguistic or any other legally protected characteristic. PFI holds that all persons have the right to work in an atmosphere free of discrimination and harassment. PFI recognises that equality in employment can be seriously impaired when women are subjected to gender specific violence, like sexual harassment at the workplace. PFI has thus adopted its Policy Against Sexual Harassment at the Workplace (referred to as PFI-PASHW), for the prevention, prohibition and redressal of sexual harassment in compliance with the mandate of the Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013 and The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Rules 2013. Under the policy, the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) has been constituted under Rule IV and a detailed grievance procedure has been laid down in the Human Resource Policy of the organisation. In the year 2020-2021, no cases of sexual harassment were filed in the organisation



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