

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-23



Cover *Photograph from a sensitisation workshop with adolescent girls and anganwadi workers on menstrual health, sexual and reproductive health and online safety in Ranchi, Jharkhand.*

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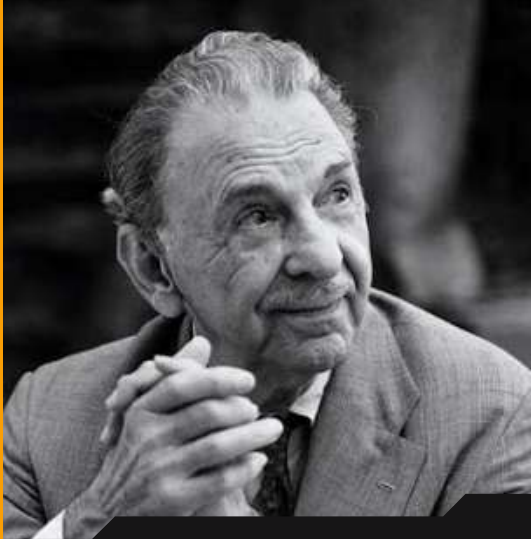
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**Jehangir Ratanji
Dadabhoy Tata**

“... achievement of demographic objectives is entirely dependent on a whole set of societal responses and policy initiatives which go well beyond contraception.”

Chairperson's Message



Prof K. Srinath Reddy
Chairperson, Governing Board

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Annual Report of Population Foundation of India. We began the year under review by celebrating 75 years of India's Independence. By the end of the year, India had become the world's most populous nation, expected to accelerate sustainable global development and promote world peace. In our demographically youthful country, young Indians have high aspirations but are also anxious about their future in a complex world.

Through the G20 leadership proceedings underway, India has been able to showcase to the world its commitment to women-led development. This opportunity couldn't have come at a better time, given India's focus on women's rights, equality and the

enhancement of their capabilities and opportunities in many spheres of development. For instance, data suggests fewer women than men have access to digital technologies. This barrier to learning, skill enhancement and gainful employment must be removed.

The year 2022-23 was beset by global challenges. The Ukraine war went into its second year, while a devastating earthquake killed more than 50,000 people in Turkey. India recorded 2,227 human casualties due to extreme weather events in 2022. This number is significantly higher compared to 1,750 people in 2021 and 1,338 in 2020.

According to the United Nations, natural disasters are occurring three times more frequently than they did half a century ago. Climate change has greatly affected seasons, temperatures, sea levels and precipitation, resulting in silent emergencies around the world. Vulnerable populations, especially women and girls, have been the worst affected by these crises, with their reproductive and overall health taking a hit. It is imperative that public health agencies and government bodies treat reproductive healthcare as an essential service.

The prevalence of diseases has increased. Health experts have stated that COVID-19 is not the last pandemic the world will experience. Increase in vector borne and water borne infections, zoonotic outbreaks with

pandemic potential, and a variety of non-communicable diseases and mental health disorders will impact human health. Further, reduction in the quantity and quality of agricultural crops, nutrition levels and disrupted health and social systems due to climate change will aggravate the situation. As an organisation committed to the promotion and protection of human and planetary health, Population Foundation of India will partner initiatives to combat climate change and its harmful effects on health.

This is also the time to involve the young in leadership roles, a subject I have dealt with in my upcoming book, *Pulse to Planet*. A global coalition of young people is needed to shake off complacency. Population Foundation of India's new strategy has a renewed focus on adolescents and youth.

Population Foundation of India is expanding its programmes on the ground by venturing into new geographies like Manipur and Jharkhand, working to connect people to reproductive health services. This has helped increase women's access to education, skilling and employment, thus bridging the ubiquitous gender gap that denies women their rights.

We continue to focus on digital health through our SnehAI initiative, an Artificial Intelligence-powered chatbot that offers a secure, personalised and non-judgemental space for the young to address their concerns about sexual and reproductive health and online safety. More than 10.2 million messages have been exchanged with over 1,86,000 users. We look forward to expanding the ambit of the chatbot to include additional information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, menstrual hygiene management and gender issues.

We are also testing the efficacy of Virtual Reality (VR) in nurse training and family planning counselling to reimagine our existing methods.

From a global funding perspective, in 2022-23 a large part of the world's resources was directed towards the humanitarian crises in Ukraine and Turkey, given their monumental suffering. However, the relatively silent emergencies of poverty and lack of basic resources continue to impact a large part of the world. I do hope these are not ignored, especially at a time when funding has become uncertain for many countries, including India. We need to combat the numerous public health emergencies unfolding in India with the same level of vigilance and vigour displayed when confronted with acute threats to health security.

“ Population Foundation of India subscribes to the vision of One Earth, One Family, One Future, as eloquently articulated by the Indian presidency of G20. We will strive to contribute to the successful realisation of that vision. I do hope we will make an even bigger difference this year. ”

Message from the Executive Director



Poonam Muttreja
Executive Director

Two key developments in 2022-23 brought the focus back on India's population and development policies. In November 2022 the world population reached eight billion and in April 2023, India overtook China as the world's most populous country. The spotlight became a glare as India assumed the leadership of the G20.

It was inevitable that issues in India would be magnified through the G20 lens. We, at Population Foundation of India, leveraged the opportunity to interact with the global media and underscore the links between population, gender and family planning in the context of sustainable development.

It was an endless stream of media interactions, both online and in-person. A number of international media representatives made their maiden visit to India. There was a risk of the discourse turning alarmist, of the gains made by India's health and family planning programmes getting ignored, with the focus shifting to population 'control'.

We knew we needed to make the global community aware that India had already achieved replacement level fertility and commenced the process of population stabilisation. With this aim, we interacted with the media. Our messaging highlighted lessons from China which recorded negative population growth last year for the first time since the 1960s, and which has experienced a lower fertility rate than is ideal due to its one-child policy.

The contrast with China is important to ensure that the media and the public do not fall for the population control frenzy, and instead appreciate India's slow but steady march to population stabilisation. It is gratifying to see that we may have contributed to the prevalence of a more rational and nuanced understanding of India's population issues in the media discourse.

In addition to the media, our engagement with other important players like G20 functionaries, United Nations agencies, ministries and civil society, was also critical. We engaged in dialogue about a shared understanding

of India's unique demographic advantage, i.e., a large young population who need quality health and family planning services, including temporary methods of contraception.

Unfortunately, in India, maternity as well as family planning continue to be the responsibility of women alone. While the former is biological, the latter is the imposition of a patriarchal social order. It is necessary to get men to bear the responsibility of family planning, something we strive for in our programmes.

We remain ardent advocates for adolescents and youth, who have the potential to take India to its next stage of development.

As our Chairperson Prof Srinath Reddy writes in his new book, *Pulse to Planet*, "I hope the young can rescue the world from the many ills that plague our society today". I couldn't agree more.

It is the young who will usher in change. Yet, older people occupy positions of authority and make decisions which affect the lives of everyone, including the young. It is, therefore, necessary to get the youth to participate adequately in decision-making processes.

“Change has become a constant for the funding environment of the voluntary sector in India, which is facing unprecedented challenges. Many organisations need help to stay afloat, while several others have downsized significantly. In this time of need, both Indian and international donors—especially those from India—need to step up their support so that the voluntary sector continues to play a role in the country’s human development.”

Highlights of the Year 2022-23

In the fiscal year 2022-2023, Population Foundation of India achieved remarkable progress across various sectors, further solidifying our position as a leader in the field. Our accomplishments ranged from gaining global recognition through media engagement to utilising technology for evidence-based solutions. We also made significant strides in adolescent health and community empowerment.

Some noteworthy achievements from the past year



The Foundation established itself as a leading authority in **shaping the global discourse** on India surpassing China as the world's most populous nation. We engaged in over 200 interactions across digital, electronic and print media platforms.



Our innovative **Sehat Kendra model in Bihar** was showcased at the National Family Planning Summit in July 2022 and the G20 co-branded event 'Health of Youth-Wealth of Nation' in June 2023, organised by India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.



We collaborated with the Government of Uttar Pradesh to develop guidelines for establishing **health clubs** in 56,000 schools and **Saathiya Corners** in 36 inter-colleges.



Expanding upon its existing English version, the Foundation's **Family Planning Resource Bank** now includes a new Hindi version, enriching its comprehensive repository of family planning information. This Hindi adaptation received the prestigious 'Knowledge Success Award' from Johns Hopkins University.



Our **AI-powered chatbot, SnehAI**, achieved a remarkable milestone by facilitating over 10.2 million meaningful interactions with 186,000 users.



Educately.org, our ed-tech platform offering courses on adolescent health, well-being and mental health, attracted an impressive 270,000 unique visits and enrolled 12,000 educators.



The Foundation hosted the secretariat for the **National Health Mission's Community Action for Health program** and reached a significant milestone by successfully training over 50,000 health officials as master trainers and facilitators. These trained individuals now operate at state, district and block levels, enhancing the effectiveness of community-level health facilities under the National Health Mission. This initiative is gaining traction within communities and holds the promise of transforming healthcare accessibility.

A Vision for Equitable Progress: New Strategic Plan (2023-2028)

For over five decades, Population Foundation of India has remained a driving force in tackling critical population and family planning issues, rooted within a framework of women's empowerment. As we embark on our next chapter, the Foundation is committed to adapting and evolving in an ever-changing world.

At the core, was the active participation of the Foundation's senior management team. Inputs from diverse team members fostered a comprehensive and holistic strategy refresh process. Through collaborative and participatory methods, external stakeholders such as funders, board members, and fellow NGOs were engaged.

The cornerstone of the new Strategic Plan (2023-2028) rests upon the Foundation's resolute commitment to forging a just and equitable society in India. This vision encapsulates a realm where individuals exercise their reproductive rights, pursue their aspirations, and embrace optimal health and wellbeing—a life fundamentally enriched by these inherent rights. At the heart of it lies our unwavering dedication to improving sexual and reproductive health outcomes for adolescents and young people, set against the backdrop of India emerging as the world's most populous country with the largest young population.

The Foundation will strengthen its engagement with adolescents and young individuals through online interventions and community engagement programmes. This shift is accompanied by a renewed focus on gender inclusivity. The strategic plan extends to critical adjacent areas, notably menstrual health and hygiene, mental health, skill-building, fostering women's agency, leadership among young people, as well as the interplay between population dynamics, gender, women's empowerment, and climate change. These issues are framed beyond the confines of the health discourse, in the context of gender equity and sustainable development.

This holistic approach reflects the Foundation's dedication to nurturing the overall wellbeing of India's large young population, representing a crucial step towards harnessing the demographic dividend.

Navigating the Pathways to Progress: Strategic Approaches

Population Foundation of India's strategy for 2023-2028 is channelled through a comprehensive set of strategic pathways, each designed to drive tangible impact and meaningful change.



Strategic Engagement: Through dialogue, research, evidence-based insights, and technical support, the Foundation will engage with key stakeholders, facilitating policy formulation, unlocking funding opportunities, and enabling on-ground implementation.



Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC): We will leverage the power of communication to promote shifts in knowledge, attitudes, gender norms, beliefs, and behaviours, fostering transformative change at community and societal levels.



Capacity Building and Government Support: Strategic support for building stakeholder capacity and partnering with the government to fortify health systems is integral to the Foundation's trajectory.



Knowledge Generation: Our commitment to knowledge generation through research lays the groundwork for the Foundation's advocacy and informs evidence-based decision-making.



Community Engagement and Direct Implementation: Our hands-on approach will be enhanced through deepened direct implementation programmes and increased on-ground activities, reinforcing the Foundation's connection with communities and directly impacting lives.



Partnerships and Alliances: By forging partnerships with governmental bodies, international agencies, the private sector, academic institutions, and fellow NGOs, the Foundation aims to broaden its reach and influence.



Health Commitment: The Foundation's expansion into areas such as maternal and child health, family planning, and sexual health education underscores its steadfast dedication to health-centric interventions.

As it embarks on this transformative journey, Population Foundation of India stands ready to amplify its impact, promote gender equity, and champion sustainable development through a renewed strategic vision. The synergy of the Foundation's experiences from its fifty-year-old journey and its futuristic approach has forged a roadmap that promises a future where every individual can flourish, empowered by their rights and aspirations.

A photograph of three young women in school uniforms (light blue dresses with dark blue scarves) standing outdoors in a green, sunlit setting. They are looking at books and documents. The woman on the left is holding a book with a colorful cover. The woman in the middle is looking at the book. The woman on the right is wearing glasses and holding a blue folder or book with a building illustration on it. An orange speech bubble-like shape is overlaid on the bottom left of the image, containing the text 'Our Programmes and Initiatives'.

Our Programmes and Initiatives

Realising Commitment to Family Planning in India

The Realising Commitment to Family Planning in India programme (RCFP), an evidence-based strategic engagement effort, is focused on working with stakeholders and thought leaders on increasing access to choice-based quality family planning (FP) services.

The programme's goal is to enhance commitment to family planning among key stakeholders, policy makers, media and the private sector, in line with the Government of India's commitments (FP2030 and SDGs).

Highlights 2022-23



Media & Communication

Population Foundation of India is a leading voice in the global discourse on population dynamics, family planning, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and gender equality. Our media presence is pervasive, with over 200 engagements in 2022, across various national and international electronic, print, and digital platforms. Our body of research and empirical evidence—unique in kind, scale and scope—is routinely referenced by policymakers, funders, non-profits, and cited in global publications.

Population Foundation of India received requests from national and international media for opinion articles, interviews, quotes and TV debates. During these engagements, we highlighted various issues such as population trends

and demographics, child marriage, male engagement in family planning, adolescents' SRH, behaviour change and health budgets.

Themes of media engagement

110+
NFHS-5

40+
Child
Marriage

50+
Adolescent
Issues

30+
Union
Budget

200+
Population Foundation of
India (referenced/quoted)



Media appearances by Population Foundation of India on national and international media



Our Work with the Government

The National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC), an apex body under the National Health Mission providing technical support to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), invited Population Foundation of India to draft a section on population and development for a reference book targeted at Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The section is part of a chapter titled 'Understanding Health'.

This is a significant milestone in our ongoing endeavour to empower PRIs in monitoring health and FP/SRH services. By leveraging the strength of one of the largest community-based institutions, our aim is ensuring last mile availability of health and FP/SRH services.

As the FP2030 Civil Society Organization (CSO) Focal Point, Population Foundation of India worked closely with the MoHFW to draft a chapter titled 'Reviving Male Engagement for FP' for the government's FP2030 Vision Document.

We have been working extensively to inform policy discussions around the interconnectedness of population, gender, and development, particularly in the context of India's G20 presidency.

The G20 represents a pivotal juncture for global development objectives and has consistently recognised its foremost goal of fostering strong and sustainable growth. Population Foundation of India has proactively participated in various G20 working groups, including Civil 20 (C20), Think Tank 20 (T20), and Women 20 (W20), to underscore the importance of population, family planning, health, and women's empowerment as critical issues for deliberation.

We helped facilitate multiple meetings to discuss the role of civil society organisations in positioning health as a pivotal component of India's G20 agenda, while emphasising the significance of investing in FP /SRH. We have been engaging with the G20 Sherpa, Mr Amitabh Kant, to strategically position India's demographic dividend and population-related issues within a framework of women's empowerment on the G20 platform.

These crucial engagements reaffirm Population Foundation of India's status as a technical expert in the areas of FP/ SRH, youth, community engagement and accountability, social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) and providing responsive support to the government.



Global Advocacy

At the International Conference on Family Planning held in November 2022 in Pattaya, Thailand, Population Foundation of India gave an oral presentation: 'Policy Engagement for the Introduction of New Contraceptive Methods in the Public Sector: A Case Study from India'.

Additionally, we showcased our work through two poster presentations: 'Leveraging the Media and Strategic Engagement to Target Misinformation on Population Issues' and 'Impact of COVID-19 on Young People: Rapid Assessment in Three States (UP, Rajasthan, Bihar)'.

At a plenary session titled 'Standing Up for Abortion Rights in the Aftermath of Roe vs. Wade: A Call to Action!', distinguished civil society representatives from around the world, including the Executive Director of Population Foundation of India, Poonam Muttreja, were invited to make a commitment to safeguard the right to abortion in their respective countries.



(left) Sanghamitra Singh, Population Foundation of India alongside international delegates at ICFP 2022



Corporate and Philanthropy Engagement

Population Foundation of India took proactive measures to reinforce its commitment to attracting interest and investment from corporates and philanthropies in FP/SRH.

We partnered with Samhita Social Ventures, a social-sector consulting firm building long term partnerships between companies, donor organisations,

government agencies and social organisations to maximise social impact.

Two zonal roundtables, co-convened in Mumbai and Delhi, focused on creating a corporate discourse around women and adolescent health and underlined the need to invest in these areas for sustainable development.

In December 2022, Population Foundation of India became a vision member of the Asian Venture Philanthropy Network (AVPN). This strategic partnership aims to prioritise family planning, population, health and development issues as critical components of both the national and global philanthropic agendas.

In January 2023, our participation at the AVPN South Asia Summit provided us with a critical opportunity to position the family planning agenda among global and national impact investors.



Expanding Access to FP/SRH information

Recognising that most FP/SRH information, evidence and news are primarily available in English, which restricts access for rural and Hindi-speaking audiences, Population Foundation of India launched a Hindi version of the Family Planning Resource Bank (FPRB).

The Hindi microsite was among the winners of a competition organised by Knowledge Success, a Johns Hopkins initiative.

The FPRB in a vernacular language not only serves as a valuable tool for journalists in the Hindi media space but also acts as a credible source of data and information, providing context-specific insights to a wide audience.

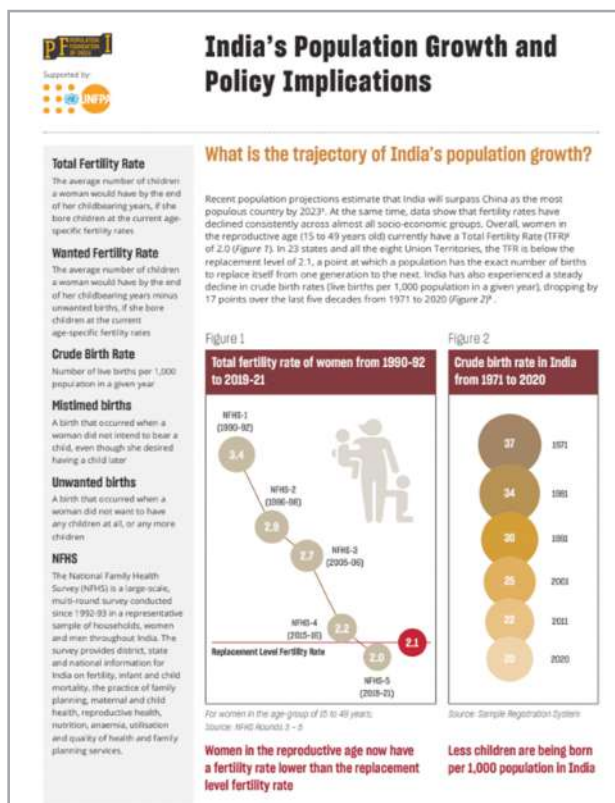
SAMVAAD

Samvaad aims to shape policy narratives by engaging stakeholders, including elected representatives, policymakers and the media, on Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) and Family Planning (FP) issues, with a focus on youth and gender. The project enhances stakeholders' awareness to foster a favourable policy environment, informed discourse, and evidence-based policy formulation. Leveraging digital technology and platforms, Samvaad expands reach and raises awareness on SRH, FP and gender.



Knowledge Products for Policy Making

The fifth round of the National Family Health Survey (2019-21) indicates that India has achieved replacement level fertility, with the total fertility rate (TFR) declining from 2.2 to 2.0. However, interstate and interregional variations in TFR continue to exist. Addressing these disparities requires sustained engagement on population and related issues with key stakeholders such as policymakers and the media.



Population Foundation of India developed two knowledge products to engage policy makers and elected representatives effectively:

- **'India's Population Growth and Policy Implications'** provides an overview of India's population growth trajectory. It analyses why population growth will continue, even with lower fertility rates, emphasising the influence of socio-economic and societal norms on fertility decisions.
- **'The Sexual & Reproductive Health Status of Young People in India'** provides a comprehensive analysis of the unique SRH needs, challenges and opportunities for healthy outcomes among young people.



Media Engagement on Population Issues

Samvaad envisions a pivotal role for both new and established media platforms in initiating and amplifying constructive dialogues surrounding gender, FP and SRH through opinion pieces, editorials, news articles, and digital content. In pursuit of this objective, Population Foundation of India has proactively collaborated with a multitude of media outlets, including prominent names such as Time, New York Times, Reuters, ABC, Washington Post, Le Monde, El Pais, The Globe and Mail, NDTV, Zee News, Hindustan Times, and Financial Express, among others.

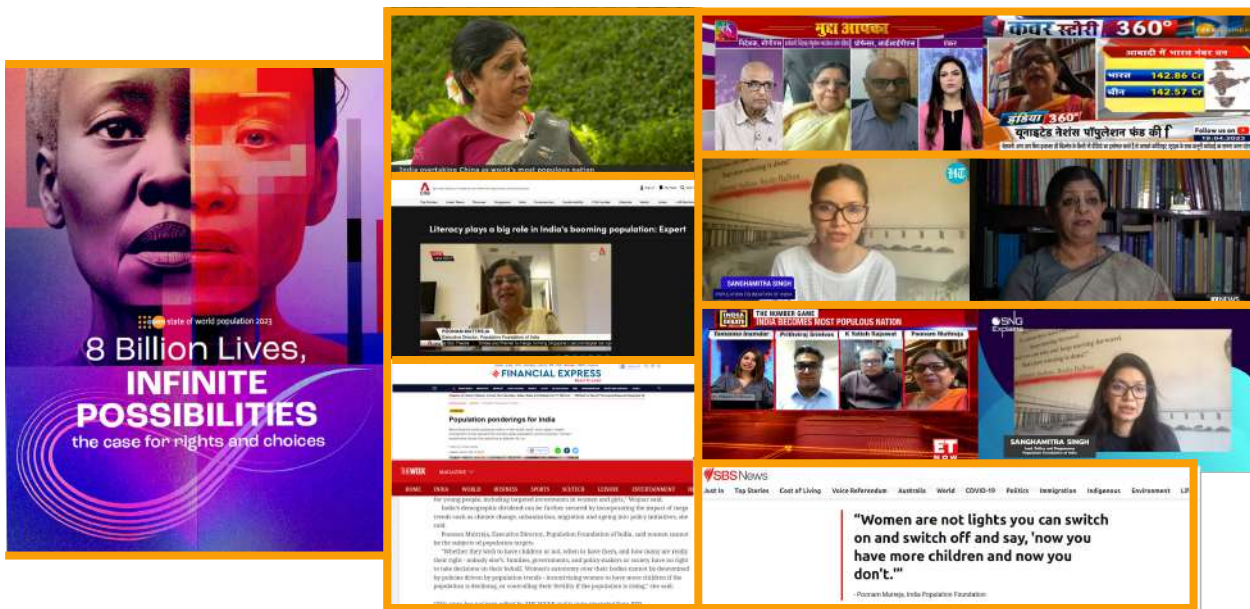
Our commitment to media engagement persisted as we addressed population dynamics and their policy implications of India overtaking China's population to become the world's most populous nation. During this period, we authored two articles spotlighting the significance of investing in young individuals and participated in ten interviews addressing issues pertinent to India's growing population.

Concurrently, our media engagement around the release of the UNFPA's State of World Population (SWOP) Report for 2023 yielded substantial results, including thirty interviews, ten television appearances, and Population Foundation's contributions being featured in over seventy reports.

 **10**
Articles

 **30+**
Interviews

 **70+**
Citations in reports



Snapshot of our media engagement on India surpassing China to become the most populous country in the world

Our Executive Director Ms Poonam Muttreja and Ms Andrea Wojnar, UNFPA India Representative, co-authored an op-ed in Hindustan Times titled **‘India’s chance to lead: Reproductive autonomy, healthier lives and gender dividend,’** where they highlighted key takeaways from the UNFPA SWOP Report.

On World Contraception Day in September 2022, we published an article titled **‘Reducing Her Burden: Contraception as a Critical Step Toward Women’s Empowerment’** in the Economic Times, co-authored by Ms Andrea Wojnar and our Executive Director Ms Poonam Muttreja.

In December 2022, we participated in a media and policy communication workshop titled **‘Development Reporting: Big Picture Versus Fine Print,’** organised by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in partnership with the Outlook Group. The workshop aimed to sensitise media professionals to population and gender-based violence issues, while helping journalists simplify their communication and find innovative reporting approaches.

During the workshop, Ms Muttreja highlighted the factors behind low fertility rates in developed countries compared to high fertility rates in underdeveloped regions. She emphasised the impact of lifestyle changes, employment loss in the pre- and post-COVID-19 era, the significance of family planning and investments in public health and education. Ms Muttreja also emphasised the importance of knowledge-sharing and education on sexual health and evolving social norms.



Digital Intervention to Disseminate SRH, FP and Gender Agenda

Population Foundation of India’s online portal on adolescent health and wellbeing Educately.org will be leveraged to address issues of adolescents in a comprehensive manner. The content on the portal will be enriched by adding more resources such as the Integrated Sexual and Reproductive health (ISRH) e-learning course offered by UNFPA.

SnehAI: A Companion to Empower and Protect

SnehAI is an AI-powered chatbot focused on adolescent health and wellbeing. SnehAI, was introduced in April 2019 based on the learnings of Population Foundation of India's transmedia social and behaviour change communication program, Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon (MKBKSH; I, A Woman, Can Achieve, Anything). It uses the on-screen persona of the lead protagonist of the show, Dr Sneha to provide information and support on sexual and reproductive health and rights, and online safety.

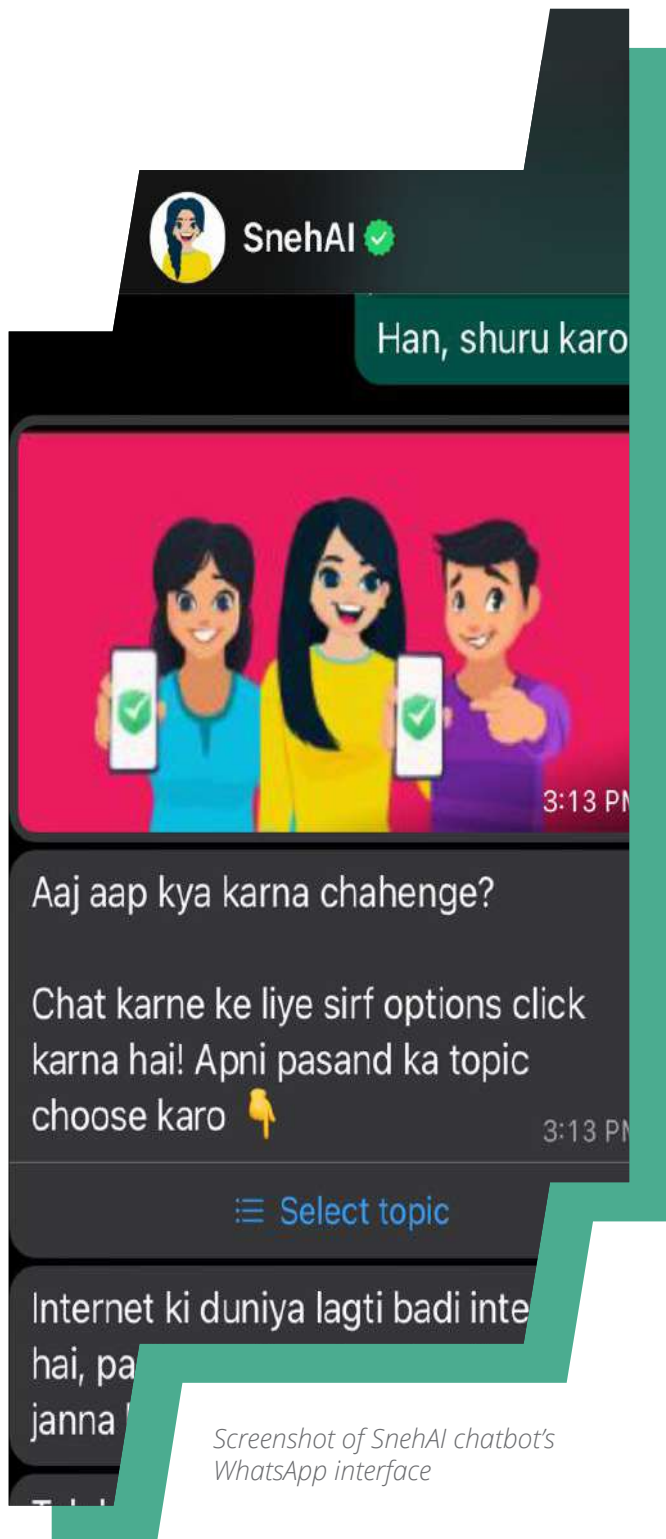
SnehAI incorporates content related to Online Children Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA)—developed as part of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (EVAC) Fund, a global coalition comprising over 500 member organisations across 31 countries. The integrated content includes quizzes, stories and animations, which raise awareness and promote knowledge about online safety.



Artificial Intelligence powered chatbot SnehAI

Highlights 2022-23

- In April 2022, Population Foundation of India launched the latest version of SnehAI, with online safety content, on Facebook Messenger. The event included a Facebook Live session hosted by renowned actor and filmmaker Farhan Akhtar, who announced the public release of the SnehAI chatbot and discussed the importance of safe online spaces for young people. The Facebook Live video garnered **over 8,500 views** and **reached more than 9,400 users**.
- The launch received media coverage in **15 print and 23 digital publications**, including Indian Express, National Herald, WION and The Tribune, among others.
- We also initiated a digital safety marketing and outreach social media campaign to raise awareness about the chatbot. Still ongoing, the campaign has reached **over 22 million users**. Additionally, the SnehAI website content and design has been updated to include information on online safety.



Screenshot of Snehai chatbot's WhatsApp interface

- At the Meta Health Summit, a national conference organised by Meta to highlight digital health initiatives, Population Foundation of India emphasised the role of AI chatbots in delivering reliable and accessible health information to young people. We presented the Snehai WhatsApp bot, showcased its successful implementation and impact on promoting online safety, and shared our plans for future development.
- We undertook a study on adolescents' digital interactions and OCSEA in India to understand the nature and extent of adolescents' social media activities, as well as their experiences, and mitigation strategies related to potential OCSEA. Perceptions of parents and stakeholders were also analysed as part of the study.

Educately

Educately, a digital platform developed by Population Foundation of India, serves as a comprehensive resource on adolescent health and wellbeing. It offers a range of information, resources and programmes in Hindi and English, catering to adolescents, parents, educators and policymakers. The platform enables users to conveniently access training content through internet-enabled devices and mobile apps.



Scene from ARSH for You lecture video

The flagship course on Educately is '**Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health (ARSH) for You**'—a self-paced teacher-training programme. It equips educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to support adolescents on health and wellbeing issues. Since its launch in 2020, Educately has attracted **over 270,000 visits**, with **12,000 educators** enrolling in the ARSH for You course.

Educately holds immense potential in positively impacting adolescent health and wellbeing, showcasing how technology can enhance access to reproductive and sexual health information and mitigate health disparities and hesitations. Educately also provides in-person and offline training to educators across various states, expanding its reach and impact.

EDUCATELY

270,000
unique visits
on the site

12,000
educators
enrolled

**In-person
and offline
training**

**Available
in Hindi and
English**



An offline ARSH for You training session in Patna, Bihar

Bihar

After successfully conducting a pilot training session in Jehanabad district with **493 educators**, Population Foundation of India signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Education Department to expand the programme's reach.

An additional **800 trainers** from the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) were trained, who in turn trained educators in their respective districts. At a state planning and review meeting of nodal officers the team from the Foundation trained 56 associate professors of 'Sehat Kendras' (Health Centres).

Jharkhand

The Jharkhand State AIDS Control Society (JSACS) approved Educately's proposal to train 50 nodal officers from the Red Ribbon Clubs (RRC) across the state. An online orientation was conducted with JSACS officials. Although the initial enrollment and completion rates posed challenges, a re-orientation of nodal officers is anticipated to enhance the reach of the ARSH for You course. The Population Foundation of India will closely collaborate with JSACS officials to achieve this objective.

Uttar Pradesh

Population Foundation of India presented Educately as a valuable tool to the Uttar Pradesh (UP) government for enhancing the knowledge and skills of **over 11,000 health and wellness ambassadors** participating in the Government of India's flagship School Health Programme across five districts. 1,072 health and wellness ambassadors have enrolled on the platform.

Population Foundation collaborated with the Bharat Scouts and Guides (BSG) in UP, with an aim to **educate 7,500 teachers, 14,736 senior youth volunteers, and over 3 lakh youth volunteers** about adolescent sexual and reproductive health. Roughly 1,500 divisional and district-level officials of the BSG will also undergo the online training. 935 BSG information technology coordinators from 75 districts were oriented.

The collaboration was featured in the October edition of 'Tejal,' the quarterly e-magazine of BSG in the state.

11,000
health and
wellness
ambassadors

Rajasthan

Population Foundation of India and the Education Department of Rajasthan have signed an MoU to promote and strengthen adolescent health and wellbeing through the ARSH for You course in 33 districts of Rajasthan. The initiative is being rolled out in a phased manner, and currently, over 700 teachers have enrolled in the online programmes, with 89 successfully completing it.

Manipur

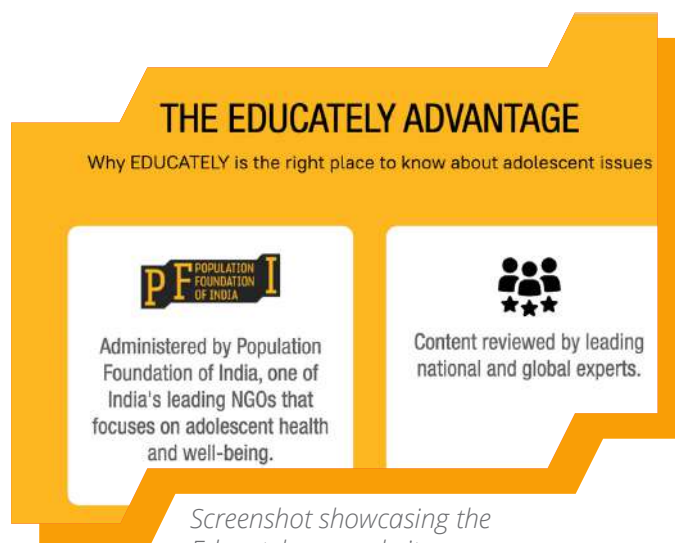
Population Foundation of India has received a letter of approval from the National Service Scheme (NSS) coordinator of Manipur to roll out the ARSH for You course, and train programmes officers in the districts of Churachandpur and Thoubal. An orientation session was conducted under the guidance of Dr Maibarn Nodyachand Singh, program coordinator of the NSS Cell and head of the Department of Yoga at Manipur University.

An MoU with the Social Welfare Department of the Government of Manipur to integrate Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) into the Child Care Institute (CCI) and the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) has also been signed. The aim is to enhance the sexual and reproductive health outcomes of adolescents in the pilot districts.

Over 100 staff members from over 40 CCIs have completed the course. One member from each CCI was trained as a master trainer using a module developed for out-of-school settings, which helps reach a broader adolescent population, particularly in resource-compromised areas with limited internet access. It also serves as a valuable reference guide for facilitators.

Collaboration with HCL Foundation

Population Foundation of India and the HCL Foundation (HCLF) partnered to host the ARSH for You course on the HCLF Academy platform from October 2020 to June 2022, with **107 enrolments and 33 successful completions** across three batches. An enhanced version of the course will be launched on the HCLF Academy portal this year.



Partnership with UNFPA

Population Foundation of India has partnered with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to offer the Integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health (ISRH) course on the Educately portal. The course provides an orientation to primary healthcare providers, focusing on integrated sexual and reproductive health services. It offers up-to-date, evidence-based information and covers essential programmatic aspects. The ISRH course is scheduled for launch in 2023.

Mental Health Programme in Partnership with Sangath

Population Foundation of India has partnered with Sangath, an organisation focused on improving access to mental health services. We launched a course on Educately called Adolescent Problem-Solving Counselling Training (APT) in August 2022—aimed at enhancing the capacity of individuals working with adolescents. The course provides evidence-based problem-solving counselling that empowers adolescents with effective coping strategies. It is available in English and Hindi, and has self-assessment quizzes, readings and primary resources. The course has attracted 1,350 enrolments so far.

Virtual Reality for Nurse Training and Family Planning

Population Foundation of India and Meta India collaborated on a pilot project to augment nurse training and family planning counselling through immersive technology. We aim to leverage VR technology (utilising Meta's Oculus Quest devices) to develop visual and gamified content that enhances nurse training and transforms the delivery of family planning counselling. The pilot will evaluate how this technology can be implemented at scale.



Immersive Technology for Nurse Training

As part of the project, we conducted a study using VR content to train nurses and nursing students, focusing on improving their clinical skill proficiency in specific areas related to maternal health. The objective was to gather evidence on the effectiveness of immersive technologies, particularly VR, in nurse training and education. The pilot content utilised a blended learning approach, combining VR simulation and imitation, delivered through Oculus devices.

The study targeted two groups: nursing students, and nurses working in labour and delivery and neonatal care. The study was implemented in partnership with 8chili inc., and India's leading hospital and nursing educational institutions, including Apollo Hospitals in Hyderabad; Apollo Children's Hospital and Women's Hospital in Chennai; and Kempegowda Nursing College, Bengaluru.







An engaged participant utilising the Oculus device for immersive Family Planning Counselling

266
Nurses

4
Locations

18
VR-based training modules

Evaluations and responses showed a significantly higher score among nurses who underwent VR training versus those who did not.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	UNDERWENT VR TRAINING	DID NOT UNDERGO VR TRAINING
 Accuracy of nursing procedure performed	91.2% scored very good — excellent	35.8% scored very good — excellent
 Speed of performing nursing procedure	90.2% performed well	38.9% performed well
 Confidence while performing nursing procedure	90.2% were confident	41.8% were confident
 Quality of nursing procedure performed	90.9% performed well	41% performed well

Immersive Technology for Family Planning Counselling

To support couples in choosing the most suitable contraception method, it is crucial to provide high-quality family planning (FP) counselling. Given the sensitive nature of this topic and the target audience, continuous efforts are needed to explore innovative technology-driven solutions that can complement existing counselling methods and cater to individual needs.

To this end, we have developed VR content to enhance FP counselling. It provides interactive information on FP methods and dispels misconceptions. Gamified simulations have also been included to illustrate the importance and methods of FP through mock-up scenarios. This pilot has been initiated at 15 urban-public health facilities in Faridabad.

Community Action for Health

Community Action for Health (CAH) is a vital component of India's National Health Mission (NHM), actively engaging communities and gathering feedback on the delivery of public health services. This approach empowers individuals to voice concerns about the availability, accessibility and quality of healthcare in areas where they live. By bridging the gap between the public and health officials, this collaborative effort enhances healthcare provisions.



Focus group discussions with women at Chittorgarh, Rajasthan

In 2005, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) established the Advisory Group on Community Action (AGCA) to provide guidance to the Ministry and state governments on community initiatives and accountability for public sector health services.

The AGCA comprises renowned public health experts, and Population Foundation of India hosts its Secretariat under a government order.

Currently, CAH processes are implemented across 25 states/union territories, encompassing **over 2,30,000 villages, 452 districts, and 200 cities** throughout India.

Over the last five years, the AGCA has established a network of over **50,000 master trainers** or facilitators at the state, district, and block levels to strengthen the functioning of community-level institutions under the NHM, namely Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committees (VHSNCs), Mahila Arogya Samitis (MASs), Rogi Kalyan Samitis (RKSs) and Jan Arogya Samitis (JASs).



People's Health Assemblies



A State Health Assembly in Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Under its Tamil Nadu Health Systems Reform Programme (TNHSRP), the state government has been organising people's health assemblies across ten districts to address the needs and challenges of the community, establish a dialogue between community representatives and health officials, and improve delivery of health services.

Based on the positive feedback, these health assemblies were increased to include an additional 16 districts in 2022-23.

Assemblies were organised at the village, block and district levels, leading up to a state health assembly in Chennai in

March 2023. Here, resolutions related to infrastructure, equipment and shortage of human resources were discussed and collated for necessary action.

The event was chaired by State Health Minister Ma. Subramanian, and attended by public health experts and representatives from the World Bank, the Society for Community Health Awareness, Research and Action (SOCHARA) and the AGCA Secretariat.



Samwad

The AGCA Secretariat initiated Samwad, a webinar series aimed at providing a platform for state governments to share and learn from each other's experiences and scale up good practices within the NHM.

The first webinar titled 'Formation of Jan Arogya Samitis (JASs) at the Primary Health Centres (PHCs) in Odisha' was curated and facilitated by the Secretariat on February 3, 2023, in collaboration with the Odisha NHM team. The session saw participation of **over 900 attendees**, including state and district nodal officers and community health officers from **more than 20 states**.

The webinar received **over 5,000 views** on YouTube and garnered positive feedback from states like Karnataka, Maharashtra, Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana, particularly participants who were in the early stages of forming JASs at the PHCs.

Encouraged by the responses, the AGCA Secretariat plans to organise similar webinars on other relevant topics.



Community-based Health Planning

The AGCA Secretariat prepared a note to reintroduce the Community-based Health Planning (CBHP) process within the NHM. The purpose is to identify community needs and aspirations, which will be incorporated into the State Programme Implementation Plan submitted annually to the MoHFW for approval.

To lead this initiative, an AGCA sub-group was formed. The sub-group held multiple meetings to develop the note, which provides a background on decentralisation and community health planning in India, as well as specific recommendations for integrating community-based health planning in the states. The note has been submitted to the MoHFW for review and approval.



Module for Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) Members on Health

The National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC) developed a module on health for members of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

The AGCA Secretariat contributed by writing two chapters for the module: **'E-institutional Mechanisms for Implementation of Health Programmes'** and **'Social Accountability—Community Monitoring, Planning and Action'**.

The module has been completed and distributed to state governments by the MoHFW. Following this, NHSRC conducted training sessions for master trainers at the national and state levels to roll out PRI trainings in states.



A state-level training session on JAS in Goa

Uttar Pradesh

- Established and trained a pool of 146 master trainers for the functioning of Rogi Kalyan Samitis. Master trainers included Additional Chief Medical Officers, Divisional Programme Managers, Divisional Consultant Quality Assurance, Regional Managers Community Process, Districts Education & Health Officer and District Community Process Managers.
- Developed a reference book for Rogi Kalyan Samitis (RKS) operating at the Community Health Centre (CHC) and district-level, as well as guidelines for their renewal process.
- Training sessions for RKS members: 3,485 members from 150 district-level health facilities and 1,027 members from CHC/Block Primary Health Centre-level trained.
- Technical support to the UP government to operationalise Jan Aarogya Samitis (JAS) under its flagship Ayushman Bharat scheme. 210 government staff from CHCs and Sub-Health Centres (SHCs) comprising medical officers, Community Health Officers were given an orientation in the functioning of JAS.

Additionally, the Foundation supported the opening of 2,870 JAS bank accounts and the development of resource materials. The Foundation's staff members were nominated as nodal points for JAS-related training sessions and received training from the National Health Systems Resource Centre.

- Expanded support to the Community Process component of the National Urban Health Mission (NUHM) by developing a training module for 31,715 VHSNCs across 34 districts and conducting training of trainers for 136 district officers from the same districts.

Bihar

In 2022-2023, Population Foundation of India organised five Jan Samwad in Darbhanga and Nawada districts of Bihar to enable communities to interact and share their feedback on health services with frontline workers and government health officials.

Three block level Jan Samwad took place in Pakaribarawan and Rajauli blocks of Nawada district, and Hanuman Nagar



Jan Samwad in progress at Darbhanga, Bihar

district of Darbhanga. 600 participants including Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committee, Panchayati Raj Institution members, ASHAs, Auxiliary Nursing Midwives, Medical Officers attended the events. Two district level Jan Samwad were organised at Darbhanga and Nawada where systemic issues and gaps were shared.

Some results of the Jan Samwad

- Initiation of caesarean deliveries (C-sections) and X-Ray services (which benefit 300 patients every month) in CHC Pakaribarawan in Nawada.
- Nutrition Rehabilitation Centre (NRC) established at Sub Divisional Hospital Rajauli in response to community demand at Jan Samwad.
- Monthly camp-based antenatal care initiated in hard-to-reach areas of Rajauli block, Nawada.
- Construction of an approach road for Project Girls High School, Anandpur from Hayaghat Block, in Darbhanga providing much needed access.
- Doctors posted at Gulni and Teyar Health and Wellness Center (HWC) in Nawada, and at Additional Primary Health Centres (APHCs) in Singhwara block, for regular OPD services.
- Regularisation of OPD services in the SHC centre of Simri Panchayat of Singhwara Block after allocation of space in Panchayat Bhawan through the efforts of Mukhiya.
- Mukhiya allocated two rooms in the Gram Panchayat to start the HWC services at Bharathi Panchayat, Singhwara Block, Darbhanga district, resulting in regular provision of OPD services.



Sehat Kendra

The Foundation supported the State Health Society Bihar (SHSB) in conceptualising and setting up Sehat Kendras in 48 colleges. These youth-friendly spaces provide accurate information on SRH, mental health, gender and nutrition.

The initiative has been successful, with over **150,000 students** benefiting. The SHSB plans to expand the programme to 15 additional colleges each year.

- The Foundation inaugurated a Sehat Kendra at IIT Patna.
- Developed an annual activity calendar to engage students. Activities include group sessions, blood donation camps, talk shows, discussions, debates, and sports and yoga sessions.
- Facilitated Sehat talk shows with over 30,000 student participants.
- Organised a state-level review and planning meeting with 56 nodal officers and assistant professors.
- Conducted orientations on family planning, teenage pregnancy, anaemia and nutrition.
- Members of the Foundation were invited to judge and facilitate inter-college youth festivals organised on National Youth Day.



A talk being organised on SRH at a Sehat Kendra

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)

The 'Scoping for Expansion of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in India' project is a grant that focuses on expanding CSE and is currently being executed in four states: Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Manipur and Delhi.

The objective is to gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of CSE in diverse geographical, socio-demographic and cultural settings. The project emphasises the integration of CSE within both in-school and out-of-school environments, leveraging existing government mechanisms.

Uttar Pradesh

Supporting the state government to introduce needs-based innovations for improving adolescent health and wellbeing

Population Foundation of India was appointed as the nodal partner by the National Health Mission (NHM), Uttar Pradesh (UP) to develop a ten-year operational plan for achieving objective 3.4 on improved adolescent health outcomes in the UP Population Policy (2021-30).

Throughout the year, the Foundation facilitated three meetings of the Adolescent Technical Support Group, consisting of government officials and development partners.



CSE workshop in Manipur

These consultations served as the basis for drafting an operational plan for adolescent health that aligns with the commitments laid out in the state population policy.

While awaiting government approval, we have proposed several need-based initiatives in the NHM Programme Implementation Plan for 2022-23, aimed at enhancing adolescents' access to information and services related to nutrition, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), mental health, cyber safety and substance abuse, among other areas.

The government has allocated resources exceeding INR 3.5 crore for these initiatives, which include the establishment of adolescent health clubs in **56,647 government schools**, the implementation of 36 Sathiya Corners or counselling centres in major inter-colleges across the state, and the introduction of rewards and recognition programs for health and wellness Ambassadors, among other measures.

Adolescent health clubs in 56,647 government schools

- In 2022-23, Population Foundation of India developed operational guidelines for the Sathiya Corners, which were jointly circulated in March 2023, across all 18 divisional headquarters by the Department of Education and the Department of Health & Family Welfare. Branding guidelines were also developed.
- With the NHM's support, we are facilitating the setting up of model Sathiya Corners in campuses of ten inter-colleges spread across Prayagraj, Lucknow, Agra, Bareilly and Ayodhya. Two teachers per college have been selected and trained as counsellors, and an online orientation session was conducted for nearly 30 teachers and principals in January 2023.

Strengthening youth networks for Comprehensive Sexuality Education in collaboration with Bharat Scouts & Guides, Uttar Pradesh (BSG UP)

BSG UP is one of India's largest youth networks, encompassing both school-going and non-school-going young individuals.

- Population Foundation of India partnered with BSG UP to scale up Educately. In April, 2022, the BSG UP issued a letter to its 1,500 divisional and district-level officials, urging them to undertake the online training.

36 counselling centres in major inter-colleges

Through BSG officials, it is expected that crucial information on adolescent SRH will reach approximately 7,500 teachers, 14,736 Rovers & Rangers (senior youth volunteers), and over 3 lakh scouts and guides (youth volunteers) within the BSG network.

- To catalyse the process, Population Foundation of India conducted special orientation sessions for BSG officials from Prayagraj, Meerut, Bahraich, Gorakhpur and Bulandshaher. Additionally, in May 2022, the Foundation introduced Educately to 93 BSG IT coordinators from 75 districts. The link to Educately has been made available on the BSG UP website (bsgup.org/).
- The October to December 2022 edition of BSG UP's quarterly e-magazine, 'Tejal,' featured an article on the collaboration between BSG UP and Population Foundation of India.
- In February 2023, a new collaboration was initiated with BSG UP to train 40 youth champions in Lucknow district. These champions, drawn from the BSG cadre, will receive training to promote healthy behaviours and positive approach to gender-based issues among the youth, represent adolescent-related concerns on social media platforms and engage in offline interactions with teachers, parents, media, government officials, and other key stakeholders.

Engaging Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the dialogue on adolescent health and wellbeing

In August 2022, Population Foundation of India organised an online meeting on adolescent health and wellbeing with CSOs from Azamgarh district in collaboration with the Gramin Punarnirman Sansthan, Azamgarh, to involve grassroots-level entities in initiatives related to adolescent health and wellbeing.

As part of this endeavour, the Foundation oriented the staff, workers, and key individuals within these CSOs on Educately. Additionally, conversations were held on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), with most participants concurring that CSE is essential for adolescent wellbeing.

Some of the noteworthy CSOs that took part in this meeting include Gramin Punarnirman Sansthan, Bundelkhand Development Society, Shikhar Prashikshan Sansthan, PRASAR, and Sahyog Sansthan, among others.



ARSH orientation for NSS volunteers in Manipur

Manipur

To effectively disseminate information on Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health (ARSH) outside of the school system, Population Foundation of India collaborated with the National Social Service (NSS), Manipur.

The partnership aimed to integrate ARSH sessions into the NSS program for volunteers. Several meetings and workshops were conducted for college teachers who also served as NSS nodal persons. NSS youth volunteers participated in these workshops, enabling the incorporation of ARSH topics into their mandatory work adopted under the NSS.

Feminist Adolescent and Youth-led Action

Feminist Adolescent and Youth-led Action (FAYA) is a youth-led and owned community-based programme implemented in four districts of Rajasthan: Bundi, Dungarpur, Karauli and Tonk. The programme primarily aims to disseminate age-appropriate and contextually relevant comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) to 10,000 adolescents directly through sessions led by trained youth facilitators, as well as indirectly to about 20,000 adolescents through peer educators.

FAYA is also aimed at helping community leaders, Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) members and parents have a positive attitude towards gender and power.



FAYA participants from Rajasthan

A total of **30,000 adolescents** were reached through a combination of direct and indirect CSE sessions. To facilitate indirect sessions, peer educators were given a diary called the Kishor Mitra diary, which contained relevant content from the CSE curriculum, including stories and summaries of nine most important sessions.

- Between May and June 2022, a two-day training programmes on strategic engagement and leadership skills was conducted for 200 youth leaders in each district. Mentoring and coaching workshops on leadership were organised for 200 youth leaders to equip them with the knowledge and skills to lead local advocacy efforts with stakeholders in their villages.
 - Mentoring and coaching workshops on meaningful stakeholder engagement and leadership skills were organised for 200 youth leaders. Eight physical training sessions were organised to equip youth leaders with the necessary knowledge and skills to lead local advocacy efforts with stakeholders in their villages.
 - These youth leaders conducted surveys in 81 villages to assess the representation of young people's issues in Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committees (VHSNC) and on Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health (ARSH) outreach in 41 schools. Key findings were compiled into fact sheets and posters, and shared with government officials and community leaders.
 - Support for issues identified in the surveys was mobilised through signature campaigns, rallies led by adolescents and interactions with government officials and PRI members.
- Four Super Saathi Kendras (SSK) were established, one in each of the intervention districts. Established in government schools, SSKs provide a safe space for students to convene and discuss issues related to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), mental health, education, employment opportunities, accessing government schemes and more.
 - Thirty youth champions met with government officials at eight block-levels meetings and flagged issues related to availability of sanitary pads (under the Udaan scheme) and iron folic acid tablets; health check-ups by auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs); counselling services at Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (also known as Ujala clinics), among others.
 - On World Health Day, Population Foundation of India shared videos on its official social media platforms, featuring young people advocating for their health rights.



FAYA volunteers in action



Impact of Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Key findings from an independent end-line evaluation of the programme carried out with adolescents by Population Foundation of India in Bundi, Dungarpur and Karauli districts — of the 10,000 adolescent girls who were directly exposed to CSE through the FAYA programme:

33.3%
expressed an egalitarian attitude towards shared responsibility in SRH matters

61.9%
shared that they reject controlling behaviours

72.3%
rejected female submissiveness in sexual matters and expressed agency in marriage-related decisions

96.1%
agreed on providing sexuality education to adolescents, indicating a significant need expressed by the adolescents themselves

43.7%
were aware of Ujala clinics, compared to only 21.2% among those who were not part of the FAYA intervention

60%
expressed intent to use contraceptives in the future, compared to 40% among those who did not receive CSE

48.9%
reported having some say in the timing of marriage



Awards

At an event in Jaipur, organised by the Government of Rajasthan to commemorate World Hepatitis Day, Population Foundation of India set up a stall to support the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK), through FAYA interventions. Ms Roli Singh, Additional Secretary and Mission Director National Health Mission, from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare appreciated our work. We received an **'excellent contribution certificate'** from the Secretary of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Rajasthan.

Stories of Change



Annu Kumari—from Youth Champion to Policewoman

Annu Kumari has come a long way since her days as a teenager on the brink of marriage.

It was Sheela Devi, her mentor and Population Foundation of India's block coordinator, who emboldened her to stand her ground and say no. By then, Annu had already been a member of the Kishori Samooh (adolescent group) for five years—a platform for young people created by Population Foundation of India—a life-changing experience for her. It's here that she learnt about sexual and reproductive health, and women's empowerment in the company of other girls, under the guidance of a mentor.

Given the taboos on discussions around sexual and reproductive health, the villagers were initially sceptical of the Kishori Samooh. "Later, people understood that we were helping their daughters. We also formed a group of mothers called Sneh Samooh for them to see for themselves that we were sharing accurate information with adolescents," explains Sheela Devi.

After Annu passed class 12 with a good grade, her father gifted her a motorcycle. She was the only bike-riding girl in her village and had dreams of a higher education. She enrolled at a college 40 kilometres away. Initially, her father or brother accompanied her but with time she travelled on her own.

During this period, Annu evolved into a youth champion. She stopped the marriage of a minor girl by reaching out to the police, and convincing the parents to get their daughter married, with her



Annu Kumari on police duty

consent and as an adult. In another instance, she convinced a woman with five children to undergo a tubectomy as she and her husband were not keen on using contraceptives. One day, as Annu was riding her bike without a helmet, she was stopped by a woman traffic police officer.

“I was so inspired by her power to protect the law and make a difference that I decided to do my best to join the police force. I hate to see injustice around me.”

Annu Kumari

Now Annu is training at the Bihar Military Police academy to become a police officer. Back home, 300 kilometres away, Annu is paving the way for many girls to be independent and have agency.

“Now people don't stop me from talking to their daughters, or even taking them away for a meeting. They want their daughters to succeed too,” says Sheela Devi.

APHC Bardaazi reopens—thanks to Community-Government collaboration

The Additional Primary Health Centre (APHC), Bardaazi, served approximately 28,000 people in three panchayats of Kawakole block, Nawada district, Bihar. With a functional building, a doctor's residence, and other necessary amenities, APHC Bardaazi attracted a good footfall.

Six years ago, the APHC building collapsed. Doctors and staff stopped coming, and the medical services came to a halt. Soon, squatters and encroachers occupied the APHC, even using it as a shelter for their cattle.

“
When the APHC closed down, patients had to go to PHC, Kawakol [around 10 kilometres away from some villages]. It was inconvenient.”

Manoj Kumar, Villager

Population Foundation of India facilitated dialogues at the community, block and district levels, involving community members, service providers and officials.

The APHC issue was discussed at Village Health and Sanitation Committee (VHSNC) meetings, the Block Planning and Monitoring Committee in 2021, and at a Jan Samwad.

Subsequently, the Block Development Officer, along with Khadsari Mukhiya Suraj Kumar, identified a suitable public building, Saamudayik Bhawan—which was then allocated to the health department of Kawakole to operate the APHC.

The District Health Society allocated funds for preparing the premises and installing blood pressure monitoring machines, blood test kits and antenatal care tables. But the new APHC remained non-functional.

In December 2021, during a block-level Jan Samwad VHSNC members raised concerns about the persistent delay. Dr Nirmala Kumari, the civil surgeon of Nawada, assured the attendees that health services would resume. The assurances did not materialise.

Undeterred, the community highlighted the issue during a district-level Jan Samwad held in April 2022. The jury members instructed the medical officer in-charge to commence services. The building was cleaned, the approach path established and on August 3, 2022, the civil surgeon inaugurated the APHC.

The doctor now visits the APHC once a week, while other health staff are available every day.

Thanks to Jyoti—adolescent girls enjoy access to sanitary napkins in their village

21-year-old menstrual hygiene champion Jyoti Kumari is a youth champion on a mission. Hailing from Nawada in rural Bihar, Jyoti has successfully set up a sanitary bank in her village, Pharaha, for easy access to hygiene products.

Jyoti, a member of Population Foundation of India's Kishori Samooh (adolescent group), says, "During the lockdown in 2020, I saw the difficulties because of the inaccessibility of hygiene products. I, along with another girl, requested every woman in our village to donate just one rupee—and bought pads for those who could not afford them. Now, we have switched to sustainable options and make cloth pads to sell within the community."

Initially, many young girls did not understand the significance of menstrual hygiene, Jyoti recalls.

“*I had been trained to tackle such issues and did my best to explain to them that periods were linked to their reproductive health. Now, both women and men seem comfortable discussing menstrual health.***”**

Jyoti Kumari



Jyoti Kumari

This is a far cry from the time girls were not allowed to touch pickle jars or enter the temple while menstruating. "They even kept sanitary pads hidden from male members of the family. But now, they know they have nothing to feel ashamed about. My father and my brother have no issues buying pads for me," Jyoti says.

Discussions on family planning and contraception have become part of the everyday. This change has led many women to enrol in voluntary nurse and midwifery courses. "With many indigenous and tribal groups living in rural areas with limited resources, it is critical to educate young women. Awareness and education would mean that they have a bright future ahead," says Parimal Chandra, Population Foundation of India's state programme head.

Jyoti leads a group of 30 like-minded volunteers on other issues like water scarcity in her village. "I have discovered how powerful knowledge is. Population Foundation of India has given me a platform to impact lives. I wanted to be an Army officer, that dream has remained unfulfilled, I am now serving my nation in a different way," she says.

A road that made all the difference

For years, the Health and Wellness Centre (HWC) located at Surhachatti did not attract enough patients. It was not a lack of staff or facilities but the road leading to the HWC. The slightest bit of rain made it worse.

“How would anyone get to the centre with the road totally broken?” asks Dhani Ram, a resident of Hayaghat. Even those living close by did not access the HWC. The matter was brought up at a Village Health Sanitation Nutrition Committee (VHSNC) meeting. Members tried to have the road repaired from the development fund. A written complaint was submitted to the Primary Health Centre, Hayaghat, responsible for the upkeep of the HWC. The VHSNC members took up the matter with the Block Planning and Monitoring Committee in 2019. Even after a few meetings, there was no action.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus shifted to improving health services. The Block Development Officer led the government’s overall efforts in containing the pandemic. Realising this was the time to reiterate their demand, community members discussed the matter with the BDO.

The HWC was a designated centre for COVID-19 testing and vaccination. In 2021, repairs began. Bricks were laid on the broken road, improving its usability. Patients started visiting the HWC and the outpatient department (OPD) became functional. During the pandemic, the HWC hosted VHSNC meetings, and held health camps.

The demand for a pucca road was raised at the Jan Samvad at Hayaghat in December 2021. Mukhiya Nagendra Das,



Health and Wellness Centre at Surhachatti

promised that getting the road plastered would be his priority after the elections. He was re-elected, and kept his promise. With a pucca road, health camps and fixed-day family planning services, HWC Surhachatti sees high public participation. “For the first time we have 16 counters providing services. It seems HWC Surhachatti is alive now,” says a visitor.

The Foundation’s field team supported the community’s efforts to get the road repaired.

“**Access to a health centre is a basic requirement to serve the community.**”

Parimal Chandra, Population Foundation of India’s state programme head

Financial and Operational Highlights

Particulars	2022-23	2021-22
Source of Funds	Rs.(in Lakh)	Rs.(in Lakh)
Corpus Fund	500	500
Society Fund	6,983	6,461
Deferred Grant	110	120
Restricted Project Funds	1,097	1,603
Current Liabilities	198	398
Provisions	43	42
Total	8,931	9,124

Application of Funds		
Fixed Assets	171	186
Investments	5,170	5,470
Cash and Bank Balances	1,594	1,862
Loans and Advances	1,996	1,606
Total	8,931	9,124

Particulars	2022-23	2021-22
Income	Rs.(in Lakh)	Rs.(in Lakh)
Grant Income	1,681	1,993
Donation Income	3	-
Rental Income	296	198
Interest and Other Income	783	641
Total	2,763	2,832

Expenditure		
Health and Family Planning Expense	818	1,335
Behaviour Change Communication Expense	443	254
Community Action for Health Expense	419	389
Other Project Expense	455	268
Management & Administrative Expense	106	154
Total	2,241	2,400

Excess of Income over Expenditure	522	432
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Population Foundation of India's HR Policies

At Population Foundation of India, we maintain a comprehensive HR Policy Manual that outlines well-structured policies and processes. This manual includes guidelines and policies applicable to all personnel engaged with Population Foundation of India. The aim of these policies and guidelines is to ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency in our relationships with employees and other stakeholders. The manual covers a range of key topics, including the Code of Conduct, Conditions of Employment, Performance Evaluation, Employee Benefits, and Rules and Regulations. These terms, conditions, and policies are derived from broader employment legislation in the country, as well as from best practices followed by organizations in similar fields. In addition to this core HR manual, Population Foundation of India has established specific policies related to the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH), Child Protection, Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), and Whistleblower Protection, all of which form part of our Compliance Management framework.

Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy

At the workplace, Population Foundation of India 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. Population Foundation of India holds that all persons have the right to work in an atmosphere free of discrimination and harassment. Population Foundation of India recognises that equality in employment can be seriously impaired when women are subjected to gender-specific violence, like sexual harassment at the workplace. The Foundation has thus adopted its Policy Against Sexual Harassment at the Workplace (referred to as Population Foundation of India (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 this 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 2022-2023, no cases of sexual harassment were filed in the organisation.

About Population Foundation of India

Population Foundation of India will advance gender-sensitive, rights-based population and family planning policies and actions for a just, equitable, and prosperous society.

Mission

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 J.R.D. Tata and Dr Bharat Ram.

Our Donors

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

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