



COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELL-BEING SURVEY REPORT

Rural Children, Adolescents & Youth in Himachal Pradesh

Year of Study: 2023-24

A Community-Led Research Initiative Conducted by Youth Leaders

Enlightened India Foundation



Turning local insight into collective action.

Executive Summary

This report presents findings from a community-based health and wellbeing survey conducted by Enlightened India Foundation during 2023–24 in selected rural areas of Kangra district, Himachal Pradesh. The survey aimed to understand nutritional status among children, household exposure to tobacco and alcohol, and substance use patterns among adolescents and youth.

The assessment was conducted in two parts. The first component focused on village-level health and household environments in Sokhni Da Kot (Mohli) and Rakkar villages, covering children aged 3–17 years and their households. This included a Body Mass Index (BMI) assessment of children and documentation of tobacco and alcohol exposure within households. The second component examined tobacco, alcohol, and substance use among older adolescents and young adults studying in two government schools and two colleges in the region.

Key findings indicate that the majority of children assessed had BMI levels within the normal range, with a smaller proportion identified as underweight or overweight. Household-level data revealed significant exposure to tobacco and alcohol use within families, highlighting environmental risk factors affecting children's wellbeing. Among adolescents and college students, substance use prevalence was notably higher, underscoring the need for early preventive interventions and awareness programmes.

The survey was conducted by trained youth leaders associated with Enlightened India Foundation using a structured, child-sensitive approach. Based on the findings, families of children identified with nutritional risks and households with high substance exposure were sensitized on healthy practices through informal counselling and community-level discussions. The findings have also been shared with relevant local stakeholders and are intended to inform future community programmes, school-based interventions, and policy engagement focused on child health, adolescent wellbeing, and preventive education.

Survey Scope and Methodology

The Community Health and Well-being Survey was designed to capture multiple dimensions of children's health, household environments, and adolescent risk behaviours. The survey was structured across distinct components to allow focused analysis while maintaining a holistic understanding of community-level challenges.

Survey Components

A. Child Nutrition (BMI) Survey

This component assessed the nutritional status of children using Body Mass Index (BMI) measurements. The survey covered children aged 3 to 17 years in the villages of Sokhni Da Kot (Mohli) and Rakkar.

B. Household Tobacco and Alcohol Exposure

This component examined the prevalence of tobacco and alcohol use within 50 households in the same villages of Sokhni Da Kot (Mohli) and Rakkar. The objective was to understand children's exposure to substance use within their immediate living environment, given its known impact on health, behavior, and learning outcomes.

C. Substance Use Among Senior School and College Students

This component focused on substance use patterns among adolescents and young adults. The survey was conducted among 46 students from two government schools and 60 students from two colleges, including HP University Regional Centre and Government College, Nagrota Bagwan.

Data Collection Process

Data was collected by trained youth leaders associated with Enlightened India Foundation. Enumerators were familiar with local contexts and languages, enabling respectful and effective engagement with children, families, and young adults.

Ethical Considerations

The survey adhered to ethical principles of confidentiality, dignity, and non-stigmatization. No personal identifiers were recorded. Data was used strictly for community understanding and programmatic planning, and findings were shared with local stakeholders in an aggregated form.

Key Findings

The survey findings highlight patterns related to child nutrition, household substance use, and adolescent risk behaviors across the surveyed communities.

Nutrition & BMI Findings

A. Child Nutrition (BMI)

- Total children assessed: 105
- Children with normal BMI: 84
- Children with low BMI: 12 (Girls: 7, Boys: 5)
- Children with high BMI: 9 (Boys: 6, Girls: 3)
- Parents of children identified with low or high BMI were counseled on nutrition and healthy lifestyle practices.

B. Household Tobacco & Alcohol Use

- Total households surveyed: 50
- Households with alcohol use: 60%
- Households with tobacco use: 50%
- Substance use was reported as a common presence within households, indicating early exposure risks for children.

C. Adolescent & Youth Substance Use

- School-level adolescents
 - Sample Size – 46
 - Approximately 20% of senior schoolboys reported tobacco or substance use
- College-level youth
 - Sample size: 60
 - 64% reported tobacco, alcohol or substance use
- The findings suggest a significant prevalence of substance use among older adolescents and youth (primarily males), warranting early preventive interventions.

Response & Way Forward

Following the findings of the survey, immediate community-level actions were undertaken to address identified risks and reinforce preventive awareness. The responses focused on counselling, information sharing, and laying the groundwork for structured follow-up interventions.

A. Immediate Actions Taken

- Parents of children with low or high BMI were counseled on nutrition, diet diversity, and healthy habits.
- Awareness discussions were conducted with families on the risks of household tobacco and alcohol exposure.
- Survey findings were formally shared with the local district administration for awareness and record.
- Youth leaders were briefed on identifying early warning signs related to substance use among adolescents.

B. Key Learnings

- Early household exposure plays a significant role in shaping adolescent behavior.
- Nutrition challenges coexist with emerging lifestyle-related health risks.
- Community trust enables sensitive data collection on health and substance use.
- Youth-led surveys improve access, honesty, and local participation.

C. Way Forward

- Develop targeted awareness modules on nutrition and substance abuse for children and parents.
- Integrate preventive education into community learning spaces.
- Conduct follow-up surveys to track trends and behavioral change.
- Use findings to inform future programme design and partnerships.

The survey serves as a baseline assessment to guide evidence-informed community interventions and future research efforts.