



THE CENTRE FOR HEALTH POLICY

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Bihar, India's third most populous and most densely populated state is also one of the most resource constrained. But what it can strengthen is human capital, which depends on a healthy and skilled population across all socio-economic groups and across all regions within the state. For more than a decade now, commendable political commitment by the Government of Bihar to improve health and nutrition care delivery system is showing results. Bottlenecks still exist for last mile service delivery either due to inadequate policy guidance or due to inherent challenges in health system design. In addition, it is evident from available literature that policy making in the state is constrained largely due to lack of high quality evidence-based research, resulting in some anomalies in health systems design.

The Centre for Health Policy (CHP) at the Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI) has been set up with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to strengthen the health sector in Bihar with a multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary approach. Its aim is to engage in rigorous analysis of the health system and inform policy makers to fine-tune interventions for even stronger outcomes. CHP has started functioning at a time when the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are being implemented globally. The driving principle of the SDGs is to 'leave no one behind'. Thus, health outcomes are expected to be as uniform as possible across income groups, social groups. SDG3 (Health) is closely linked to several other goals related to poverty, nutrition, gender, infrastructure, technology and the environment including effects of climate change.



CHP is not an isolated unit. It will build on the larger technical and implementation work that is ongoing through several partners in Bihar for several years. Primarily, CHP will act as a knowledge hub to support such ongoing work. It will follow an inter-disciplinary approach, because health outcomes, as mentioned above, depend on other development policies including education, disaster risk reduction, women's empowerment, livelihood, sustainable agriculture and the environment. These inter-linkages are crucial for a holistic health policy. CHP will uncover these interlinkages.

The status of women in the family and in society in general have a strong bearing on health outcomes for the family, particularly their children. Women's access to - and control over - resources, their education, work status, health status, age at marriage and the birth of the first child, the prevalence of gender-based domestic violence are known to be crucial variables which have a bearing on the efficacy of direct interventions. These are very much contextual and therefore require a broad set of appropriate qualitative and quantitative data to derive evidence-based policy messages. Men are an important linkage for the support and advancement of the health of women and children. Lack of male involvement in such areas often results in major initiatives failing to achieve their desired objectives. Thus, men's interest and full participation in the programs, can address gaps in 'partnership' towards the future strengthening of Bihar's health system.





CHP will remain forward looking. It will anticipate the challenges of the future, through statistical projections of important demographic variables related to health, both directly and indirectly, and suggest policies which may be implemented today to cope with those challenges. It will engage in research which is needs-driven, i.e., required by the state government, as also other stakeholders, to fill any existing evidence gaps. At the same time, it will also bring to the table new recommendations by conducting primary surveys as needed, carefully analysing local data, and drawing on global best practices, which the concerned stakeholders may consider implementing.



To the extent possible, CHP will aim at providing a 'costing' of new policies, keeping in mind the resource constraints, both on the supply as well as demand sides. On the supply side, new, or refinement of existing policies have implications for requirements of health infrastructure and availability of human resources, both of which require financial resources. This brings in the role of the private sector as health care providers. CHP will inform policy makers ways in which the private sector can be regulated so that it complements the government's responsibility in the public space. On the demand side, 'out of pocket' expenses for health care is a burden that the poor can ill-afford, beyond a level. CHP, in close partnership with the widest possible range of similar think tanks, multilateral agencies, civil society and the people in general will analyse these issues.

FOCUS AREAS OF CHP

Research and Analytical Studies

It will constitute the core of CHP's activities. The areas of research will include health infrastructure and delivery with emphasis on equity, health outcomes such as IMR, MMR, TFR and its predictors, health financing, private-public partnerships, regulatory framework and its implementation, and other issues which might emerge. Flagship knowledge products under consideration include a roadmap for health and nutrition, and periodic state health development reports.

Informing Policymakers on Strengthening the Existing Health System

CHP aims to be the trusted partner of the state Government in providing evidence-based inputs in making the health system stronger, resilient and equitable.



Broader Dissemination and Outreach

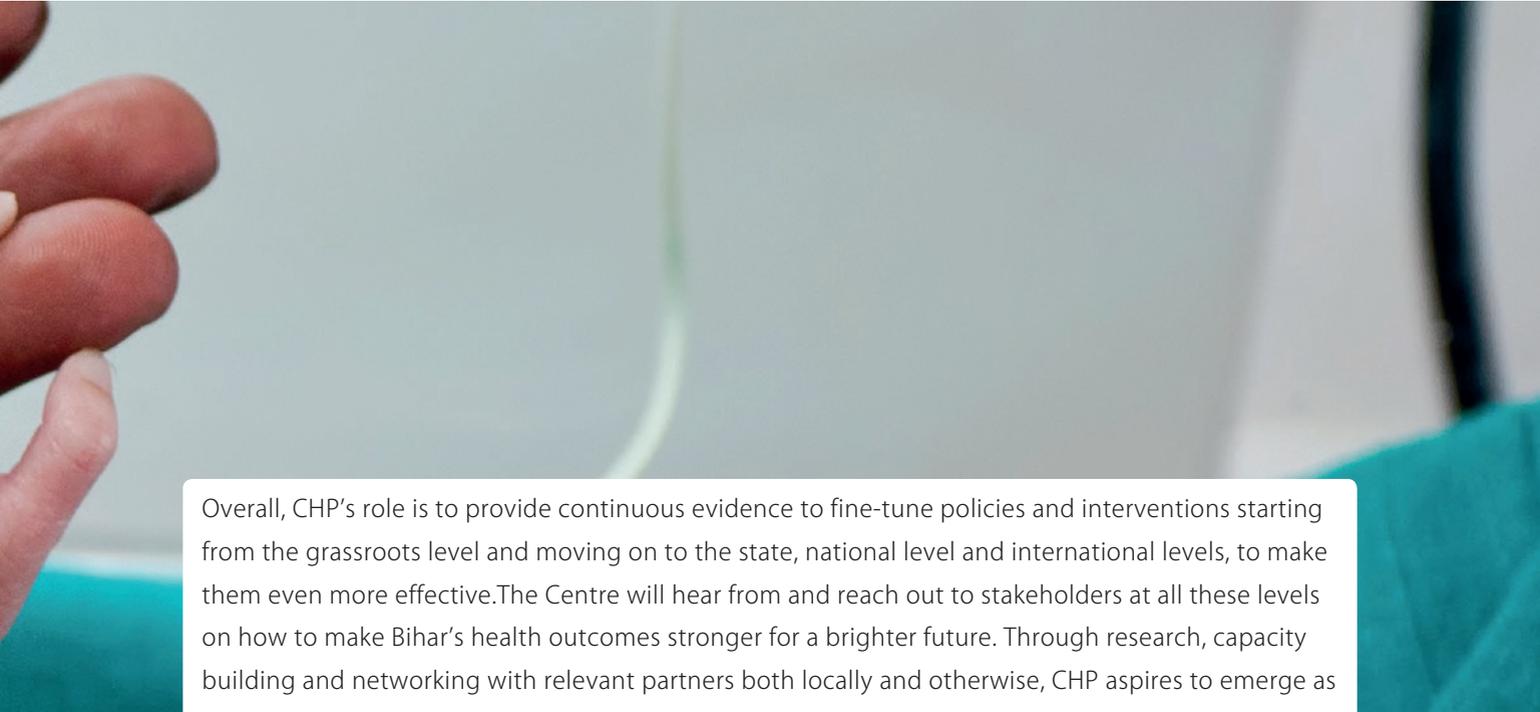
CHP will liaise with all other stakeholders in health and human capital – the latter being a more holistic concept combining health, education and livelihoods - about its own research findings, and those of others which are relevant to Bihar's context, in several ways including conferences, workshops, formal and informal interactions and through its website.

Sustainable Health Solutions

CHP recognizes the need for establishing a strong health system which will be self-sustaining. It means immunity to natural disasters/calamities, financial uncertainties and possibly political instability. These three pillars are interrelated; CHP will provide a framework of synergy among actors working on these pillars.

Collaboration

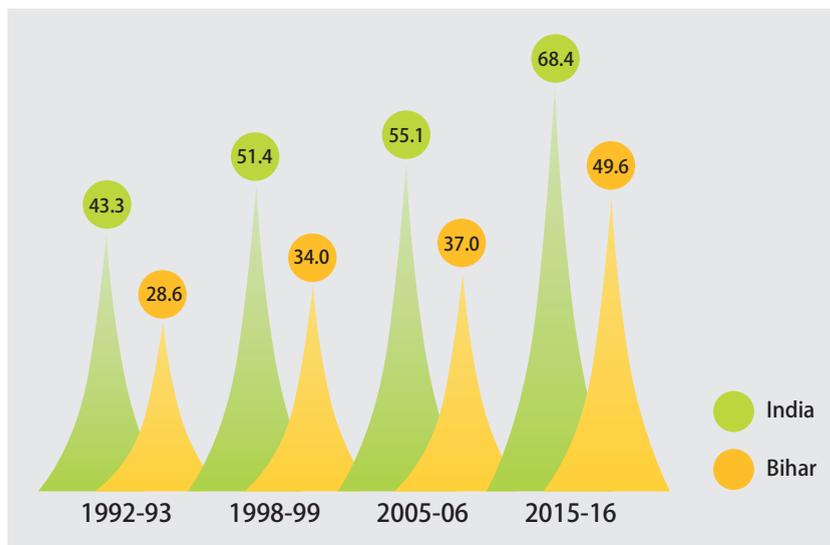
CHP will engage in collaboration with an extensive network of academic and policy research institutions both in India and abroad in health and the broader social sciences.



Overall, CHP's role is to provide continuous evidence to fine-tune policies and interventions starting from the grassroots level and moving on to the state, national level and international levels, to make them even more effective. The Centre will hear from and reach out to stakeholders at all these levels on how to make Bihar's health outcomes stronger for a brighter future. Through research, capacity building and networking with relevant partners both locally and otherwise, CHP aspires to emerge as a widely recognized centre for research on health policy. Hosted at ADRI, CHP, will be guided by an Executive Board of experts and eminent scholars, soon to be formed.

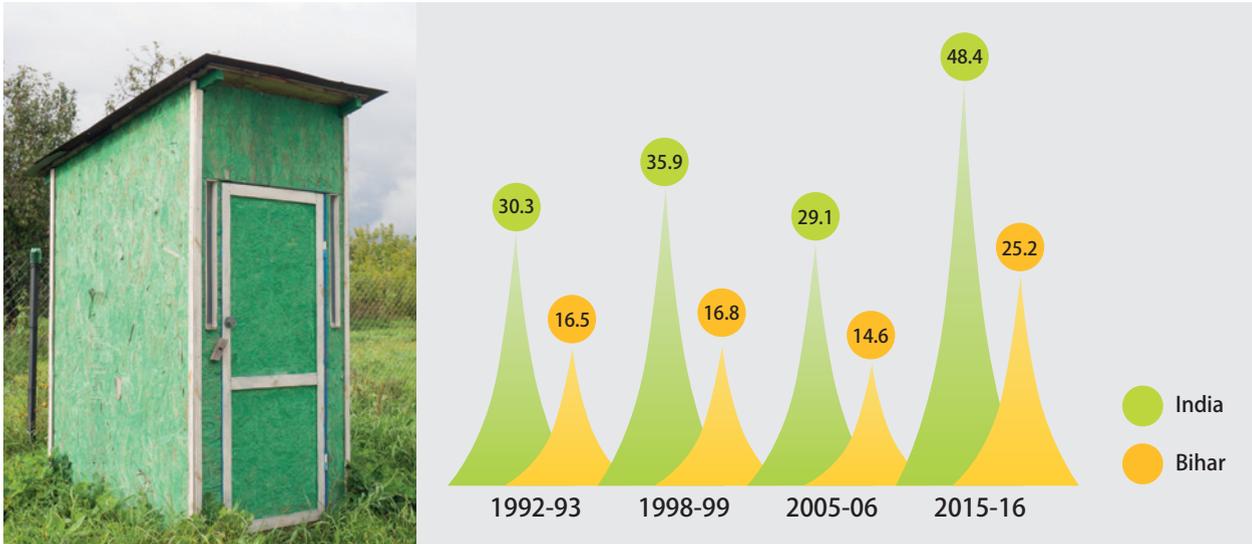
SNAPSHOT OF KEY HEALTH STATISTICS OF BIHAR

TRENDS IN FEMALE LITERACY (%)



Source: NFHS, various years

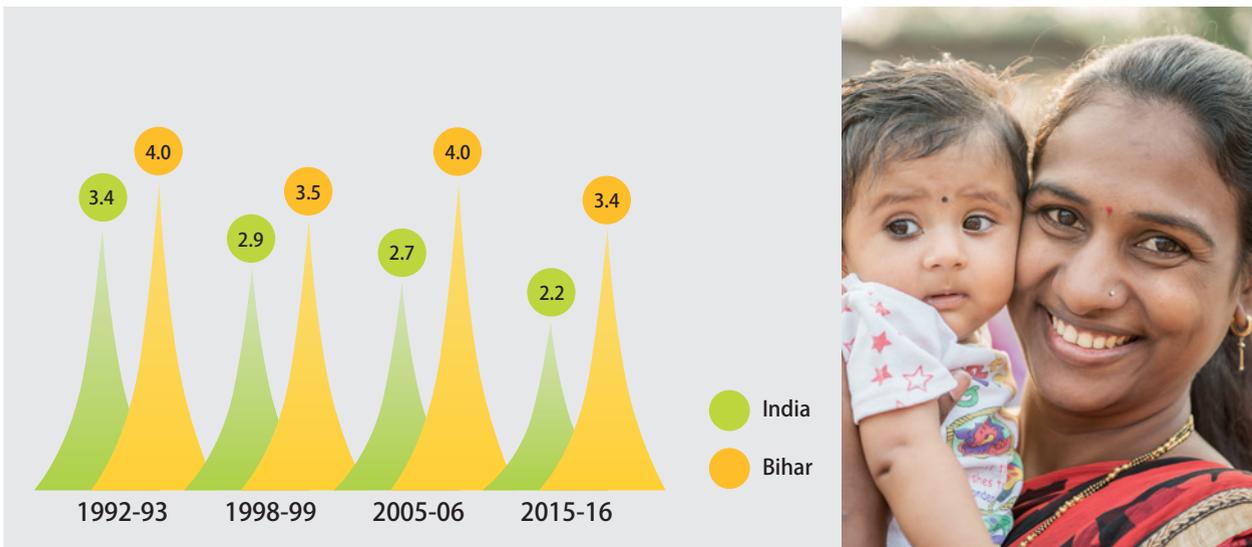
TRENDS IN AVAILABILITY OF SANITATION FACILITY IN HOUSEHOLDS (%)



Source: NFHS, various years

TRENDS IN TOTAL FERTILITY RATES (TFR)

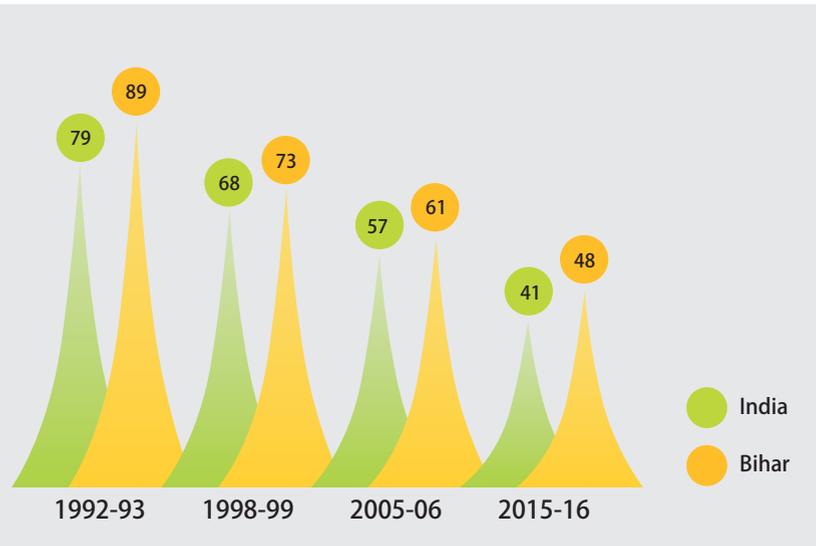
Number of Children per Woman



Source: NFHS, various years

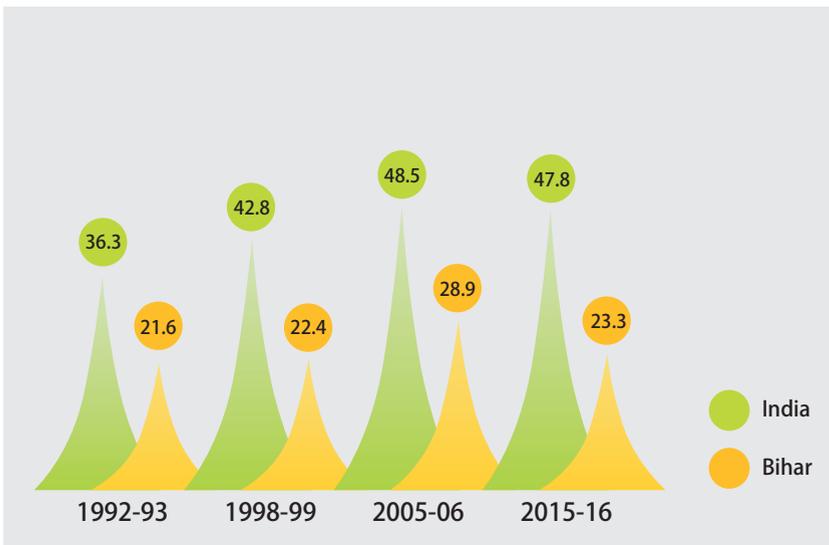
TRENDS IN INFANT MORTALITY RATE

Deaths per 1000 Live-births



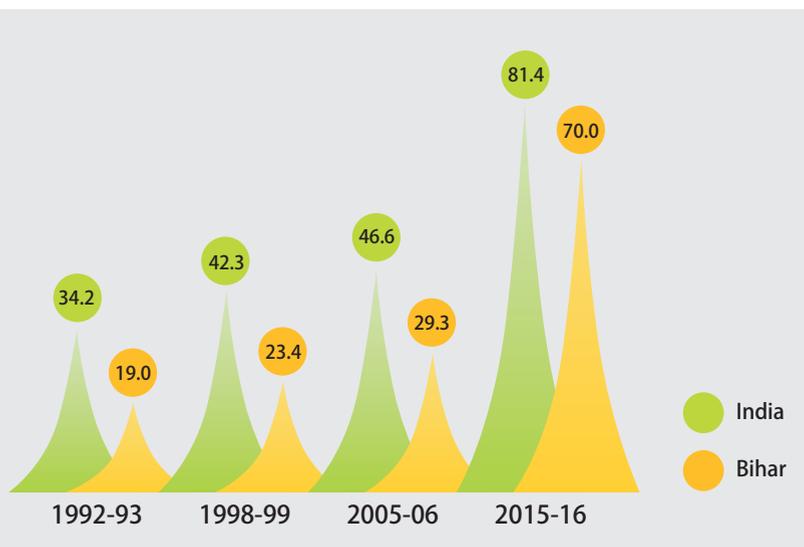
Source: NFHS, various years

TRENDS IN USAGE OF ANY MODERN CONTRACEPTIVE METHOD (%)



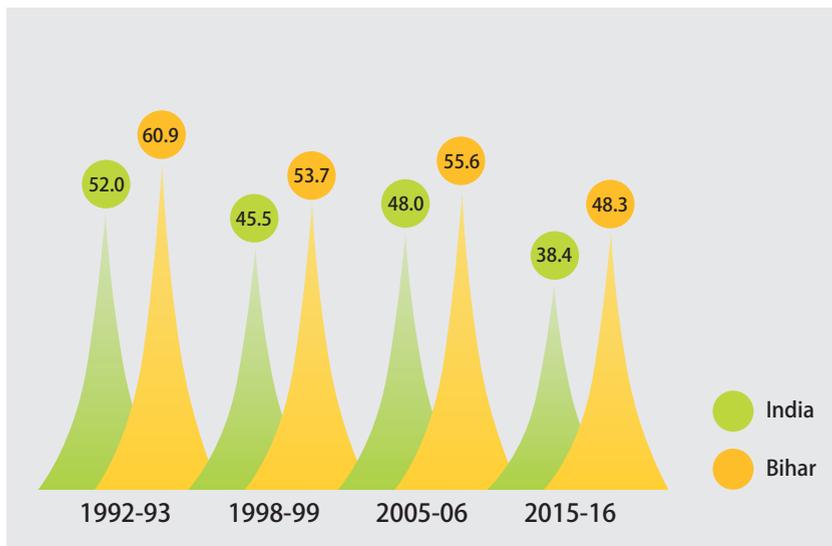
Source: NFHS, various years

TRENDS IN SKILL BIRTH ATTENDANT (SBA) (%)



Source: NFHS, various years

TRENDS IN STUNTING AMONG CHILDREN BELOW 5 YEARS OF AGE (%)



Source: NFHS, various years

SOME NOTABLE INITIATIVES

BIHAR'S



1

Continuum of Care Services (CCS)

Initiated by Care-TSU, CCS is a technology based solution which includes a suite of applications and multiple modules used for tracking health status of pregnant mothers and children up to 6 years. It aids in coordination and integration of services across two key government health & nutrition departments (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare & Ministry of Women and Child Development). Randomized Control Trials (RCT) found improvements in service delivery and significantly large improvements on health outcome indicators.

2

AMANAT-B & V (Apatkalin Matritva Avum Navjaat Tatparta Karyakram - Buniyadi & Vyapak).

AMANAT is a skill building program for service providers like doctors, nurses and midwives in all public health facilities of Bihar. AMANAT-Buniyadi is designed for nurses and midwives whereas AMANAT-Vyapak is for Doctors and Grade-A nurses working in Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and New-born Care (CEmONC) centres. Care-TSU had started this mentoring program in 80 facilities across 8 pilot districts which later was scaled up across 38 districts in 2015. The goal of this program is to improve quality of Basic Emergency Obstetric and New-born Care (BEmONC) and Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and New-born Care (CEmONC) services. AMANAT-B is successfully completed in 400 facilities which included Block Primary Health Centres, Community Health Centres and First Referral Units, where a total of 3231 ANMS and Grade-A nurses have been trained. AMANAT-V is completed in 17 district hospitals till date where 150 doctors and 285 nurses have been trained.

Both are supported by BMGF

IN HEALTH SPACE



3

Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network – eVIN

Initiated by UNDP, eVIN provides an integrated solution to address widespread inequalities in vaccine coverage by supporting state governments in overcoming constraints of infrastructure, monitoring and management information systems and human resources to prevent overstocking and stock-outs of vaccines in storage centres. The integrated solution uses technology to facilitate evidence-based decision-making by making available online real-time information on vaccine stocks and storage temperature.



BILL &
MELINDA
GATES
foundation

Established in 1991 and located in Patna, the Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI) has already completed more than 25 years of its professional journey. This was the period when the Indian economy had entered the phase of liberalisation, throwing new challenges in development research, particularly the issues of regional development that concerns the disadvantaged states like Bihar. ADRI has completed a number of analytical, diagnostic and evaluative studies to address these challenges. In addition, the Institute has also conducted a number of large scale sample surveys on important social phenomena and prepared advocacy documents for state government on critical issues.

Apart from pursuing its own research agenda, ADRI has also collaborated with state/central government and international development agencies to promote social science research. In addition to CHP, the Institute has 5 other specialised Centres — Centre for Economic Policy and Public Finance (CEPPF), International Growth Centre (IGC), Centre for Energy, Environment and Climate Change (CEECC), State Resource Centre (SRC) and Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS), catering to the various dimensions of development research.

In 2014, the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) has listed ADRI as one of the recognised centres for social science research in India.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people – especially those with the fewest resources – have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Sue Desmond-Hellmann and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.

India is investing significantly in the health and social development of its people, working to enable millions of people to participate in the country's growth and economic progress. The foundation's efforts are aligned with India's objectives - working closely with India's central and state governments. The foundation partners with community groups, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, development organizations and the private sector to achieve shared goals. With a focus on Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, the foundation develops innovative solutions to improve the quality and coverage of key services with a core focus across four sectors: Health, Sanitation, Agricultural Development, and Financial Services for the Poor.



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