Abstract: There are four major sources of vital statistics in India, namely; (a) the Sample Registration System (SRS), (b) the Civil Registration System (CRS), (c) Indirect estimates from the decennial census and (d) Indirect estimates from the National Family Health Surveys (NFHS). The SRS is the most regular source of demographic statistics in India. It is based on a system of dual recording of births and deaths in fairly representative sample units spread all over the country. The SRS provides annual estimates of (a) population composition, (b) fertility, (c) mortality, and (d) medical attention at the time of birth or death which give some idea about access to medical care. The population composition from SRS coupled with the decennial census counts, enables fairly reliable estimate of population in the intercensal periods. Average time to publication of SRS annual reports is about two years. SRS estimates are generally valid and reliable for the country as a whole and for bigger states with more than 10 million population. Recently the sample size of SRS has been increased to allow for estimates by natural divisions within the bigger states. Evaluations during 1970s and 1980s showed that completeness of recording of births and deaths by the SRS, was generally good, and errors in recording of events minimal. However, systematic evaluation of the SRS has not been taken up for quite some time. Indirect estimates for 1990s and after suggests that registration completeness has worsened and interstate variations widened. A pluralistic evaluation framework is recommended.

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Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Knowledgebase