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**Subject:** Question regarding NFHS variable definition  
**Posted by** [DHS user](#) on Thu, 21 Feb 2013 17:38:23 GMT  
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I am working with the 1998-9 DHS data set from India. I am interested in the operational definition of the variables urban and rural (HV025). I have noted the definition of HV026 (size of place of residence) specifies large cities and small cities but does define town and rural/countryside. Is there a working definition relative to density/sq km or some other working definition?

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**Subject:** Re: Question regarding NFHS variable definition  
**Posted by** [Bridgette-DHS](#) on Thu, 21 Feb 2013 17:39:17 GMT  
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Here is a response from one of our DHS experts Fred Arnold, that should answer your question.

The NFHS-2 sample is based on the 1991 Census as a frame. Therefore, the survey adopts the Census definitions of urban and rural. In the Census, the dichotomy between urban and rural is based partly on an area's ability to satisfy established urban criteria (population size, percent of males working on non-agricultural pursuits, and population density) and partly on the basis of statutory notifications. I can send you a more precise definition if you need it. In short, the "rural/countryside" category in HV026 coincides exactly with the census definition of rural areas. Towns are urban areas that do not fit the criteria for either large cities or small cities that you already have.

I hope this helps.

Bridgette-DHS

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**Subject:** Re: Question regarding NFHS variable definition  
**Posted by** [rafael](#) on Wed, 04 Dec 2013 10:56:00 GMT  
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I would like to follow up on this question. I am working with the 2005/2006 DHS data from India. I will need to analyse the population living in cities larger than 500'000 inhabitants. Therefore I am trying to identify this population in the survey. There are two variables in the survey that classify respondents according to city size. These are hv026 and sh025 in the household data set. Given your previous response I assume that definitions are based on the 2001 Indian census. According to the census, towns with more than 100'000 inhabitants are defined as cities. However there is no information on the definition of "large city" and "mega city". If you could provide a definition of these two categories or point me to the source, that would be extremely helpful.

Thank you in advance and best regards.

Rafael

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Subject: Re: Question regarding NFHS variable definition  
Posted by [Bridgette-DHS](#) on Mon, 23 Dec 2013 18:53:23 GMT  
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Here is a response from one of our STATA experts Tom Pullum, that should answer your question.

If you cross-tabulate hv025 and hv026 in any DHS survey you will see that "rural" for hv025 and "countryside" for hv026 are exactly the same. I don't think there is any good reason for using two different terms. Basically, the difference between the two variables is that hv026 subdivides "urban" into three types of places: "capital, large city"; "small city"; and "town". This subdivision, as well as the designation rural/countryside, has no consistent relationship with density or size of place. These are country-specific designations. In many cases, administrative or historical significance is more important than size. In general, the classification is determined by each country's central statistical office.

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Subject: Re: Question regarding NFHS variable definition  
Posted by [zakaria.jnu@gmail.com](#) on Tue, 17 Feb 2015 22:08:08 GMT  
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Hi,  
After reading all the comments I could not directly derive the definition of Subcategories with in urban areas "large city, capital city" and "Small city" and "town".If any you could provide a definition of these categories or point me to the source, that would be extremely helpful.  
  
Regards  
Zak

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Subject: Re: Question regarding NFHS variable definition  
Posted by [zakaria.jnu@gmail.com](#) on Wed, 18 Feb 2015 00:20:43 GMT  
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Hi All,

Got some indication though not exhaustive of the definition of urban areas used by NFHS. One of the article uses a variable given in NFHS data that breaks urban areas into much more aggregated level. It classifies urban area into 5 categories

1. mega city
2. large city
3. small city
4. large town

## 5. small town

This article defines these subcategories on the basis of population size and I quote

" In NFHS 3, cities and towns are classified as mega city (more than 5 million), large city (1-5 million), small city (1 lakh# to 1 million), large towns (50,000 to 1 lakh) and small towns (less than 50,000).

#1 lakh=100,00

the link of the article is <http://infochangeindia.org/agenda/urbanisation/size-matters.html>

upon cross tabbing this variable (s025 in Individual file) with the variable in discussion (v026) I found that v026 is aggregated version of this variable where equivalences are as follows

mega city+ large city = large/capital city of v026

small city = small city of v026

large town +small town= town of v026

I am pasting the result of the cross tab

city\town\cou ntry\side	de facto place of residence				Total
	0.capita	1.small	2.town	3.country	
1. mega city	7,794	0	0	0	7,794
2. large city	18,524	0	0	0	18,524
3. small city	0	9,336	0	0	9,336
4. large town	0	0	4,497	0	4,497
5. small town	0	0	16,810	0	16,810
6. rural	0	0	0	67,424	67,424
Total	26,318	9,336	21,307	67,424	124,385

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Subject: Re: Question regarding NFHS variable definition

Posted by [zakaria.jnu@gmail.com](mailto:zakaria.jnu@gmail.com) on Wed, 18 Feb 2015 00:32:15 GMT

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Hi All,

Found another article a more formal one in Lancet that gives definition on the basis of population and I quote

people), small city (100,0001 million people), large town (urban, 50,000100,000 people), small town (urban, <50,000 people), and all other areas were coded as rural."

The article can be seen at

<http://iwhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/lancet-child-marr iage-study-3-10-08.pdf>

I hope this suffices the requirement. It is difficult find appropriate government website which defines this such clear term.

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Subject: Re: Question regarding NFHS variable definition  
Posted by [Trevor-DHS](#) on Wed, 18 Feb 2015 12:49:48 GMT

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You might also find these websites useful although they relate to the 2011 census:

[http://censusindia.gov.in/Data\\_Products/Library/Indian\\_perce ptive\\_link/Census\\_Terms\\_link/censusterms.html](http://censusindia.gov.in/Data_Products/Library/Indian_perce ptive_link/Census_Terms_link/censusterms.html)

[http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/paper2/data\\_file s/India2/1.%20Data%20Highlight.pdf](http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/paper2/data_file s/India2/1.%20Data%20Highlight.pdf)

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Subject: Re: Question regarding NFHS variable definition

Posted by [zakaria.jnu@gmail.com](mailto:zakaria.jnu@gmail.com) on Wed, 18 Feb 2015 21:57:24 GMT

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Thanks Trevor,

Thanks for posting the links. This helps us identify urban areas and its complement (i.e What is not urban) rural areas. Yes it helps at least to know the definition of urban areas. The question that we are trying to address is how NFHS/Census of India defines subcategories within the urban areas. If you find anything to that effect it would be great.

Cheers

Zak

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Subject: Re: Question regarding NFHS variable definition

Posted by [Hassen](#) on Sun, 06 May 2018 09:28:22 GMT

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Dear all Thank you for your attractive assistance and support eachother!!

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Subject: Re: Question regarding NFHS-4 variable definition

Posted by [sujata](#) on Wed, 08 May 2019 10:19:59 GMT

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Dear All,

There are some variables in NFHS-4 data set which have been repeated for several times like glucose level, education attainment, age of the household have been repeated for 41 times. I

need clarification on what does these repetitions mean.

Best regards,  
Sujata

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**Subject: Re: Question regarding NFHS variable definition**

Posted by [Trevor-DHS](#) on Wed, 08 May 2019 14:36:31 GMT

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Please specify exactly which dataset you are using. I suspect you are looking at household recode (HR) file, in which case each variable is for a different household member. If you want to work with the household member data I suggest that you use the household members (or persons) recode file (PR file).

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**Subject: Re: Question regarding NFHS variable definition**

Posted by [sujata](#) on Fri, 24 May 2019 05:40:24 GMT

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Thankyou for your reply. Yes, I was looking at the household recode file and my that doubt is clear now. I want to make few more things clear. Number Of observations in individual Recode file is same as that of number of women observations. Is it the case that individual recode file is for women only? And what is the line number representing? Caseid in IR file is given as 01000101 02. What is this 02 standing for?

Regards,  
Sujata

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**Subject: Re: Question regarding NFHS variable definition**

Posted by [Trevor-DHS](#) on Fri, 24 May 2019 15:44:03 GMT

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Yes, the number of observations in the individual recode file is the number of women, and the individual recode file is for women only. The line number refers to the sequence number of the people listed in the household roster (household members file). 02 mean the second person listed in the household member file.

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