Education and Under-5 Mortality

What is the issue?

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An analysis of NFHS-4 data has shown that education of women has a direct impact on children's health.

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What is Under-five mortality?

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- Under-five mortality is the number of children under the age of five dying per 1,000 live births.
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- It is considered a good indicator of child health as it is a result of a variety of inputs such as mother's nutritional status and health, level of immunisation, income and food availability, sanitation, availability of maternal and child health services, and the overall safety of a child's environment.
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What does the data show?

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- The data showed that the states with more educated women show better health outcomes for children.
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- The states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Assam to have the highest under-five mortality rates.
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- The percentage of women with more than 10 years of schooling in these states is lower than the national average of 35.7%.
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- Kerala, Goa, Manipur, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra have the lowest

under-five mortality rate in the country.
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- The percentage of women with more than 10 years of schooling in these states is much higher than the national average.
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- UNESCO report also support the claim that women's education leads to better health outcomes for their children.
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- According to the report, child born to a mother who can read is 50% more likely to survive past five years of age.
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- It also says that the each year of mother's schooling decreases the probability of infant mortality by 5-10%.
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What are the other features of these states?

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- The states with the lowest under-five mortality rates also fared better on women's empowerment indicators like more women owning bank accounts that they themselves use, fewer women getting married before 18 years of age etc.
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- These states also have a higher-than-average percentage of women who get full antenatal care and who take iron and folic acid (IFA) supplements for 100 days or more during their pregnancy.
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- Further, these states have a lower percentage of underweight children than the national average.
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- On the other hand, Uttar Pradesh has the highest under-five mortality rate (78 deaths per 1,000 live births) and only 32.9% of its women complete 10 years or more of schooling.
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- Subsequently, only 5.9% of its women get complete antenatal care and 12.9% consume IFA tablets for 100 days or more during pregnancy.
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Source: Business Standard

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