

1. High Maternity deaths – economy

A study published in The Lancet found that India remains among the countries with the highest number of maternal deaths globally

1.Introduction

1. Maternal mortality is a critical indicator of a country's healthcare system, reflecting access to quality maternal care, nutrition, and social conditions.
2. India has achieved significant progress over the past decades, but maternal mortality remains a public health challenge with regional disparities.
3. Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3.1 requires addressing both medical and socio-economic determinants.

2.Concept of Maternal Mortality

Definition and Measurement

1. Maternal death refers to the death of a woman during pregnancy or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy due to causes related to or aggravated by pregnancy.
2. Maternal Mortality Ratio measures maternal deaths per 1,00,000 live births.
3. Maternal Mortality Rate measures maternal deaths per lakh women in the reproductive age group.
4. These indicators reflect the effectiveness of maternal healthcare services.

Global and National Targets

1. The SDG target aims to reduce global MMR to below 70 per 1,00,000 live births by 2030.
2. India has already achieved its National Health Policy target of reducing MMR below 100.

3.Major Findings and Trends

Global Scenario

1. Maternal mortality has declined since 1990 but progress has slowed after 2015.
2. Around 2.4 lakh maternal deaths occurred globally in 2023, highlighting persistent challenges.

India's Contribution and Burden

1. India remains among high-burden countries despite progress.
2. The burden reflects population size as well as healthcare disparities.

State-Level Disparities

1. States like Kerala and Tamil Nadu have achieved near-target levels due to strong healthcare systems.
2. States such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh continue to report higher maternal mortality.
3. This highlights uneven development and health infrastructure gaps.

4.Progress Made by India

Decline in Maternal Mortality

1. India has witnessed a steady decline in MMR over the years.
2. This reflects improved healthcare access and government interventions.

Rise in Institutional Deliveries

1. Institutional births have increased significantly across the country.
2. Several states have achieved near-universal institutional delivery coverage.
3. This has reduced risks associated with home deliveries.

Improved Rural Healthcare Access

1. Rural institutional delivery rates have improved considerably.
2. This indicates better outreach and health service penetration.

5.Causes of Maternal Mortality

Medical Causes

1. Haemorrhage remains the leading cause of maternal deaths.
2. Hypertensive disorders and infections contribute significantly.
3. Pre-existing conditions such as diabetes and anemia increase risk.

Preventable Nature of Deaths

1. Most maternal deaths are preventable with timely medical intervention.
2. Access to skilled birth attendants and emergency care is crucial.

6.Challenges in Reducing Maternal Mortality

High Out-of-Pocket Expenditure

1. Families incur significant costs for medicines, diagnostics, and private care.
2. Financial barriers delay access to timely treatment.

Sociocultural Barriers

1. Gender norms and low female autonomy restrict healthcare access.
2. Lack of awareness and stigma delay care-seeking behaviour.

Rising High-Risk Pregnancies

1. Increasing prevalence of lifestyle diseases and delayed childbirth increases complications.
2. Short birth intervals also elevate risks.

Weak Health Infrastructure in Remote Areas

1. Rural and tribal regions lack emergency obstetric care facilities.
2. Poor transport and inadequate blood storage systems worsen outcomes.

7.Government Initiatives

Promoting Institutional Deliveries

1. Janani Suraksha Yojana incentivises institutional deliveries among poor women.
2. It has significantly increased safe childbirth practices.

Maternity Benefit Schemes

1. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana provides financial support to pregnant women.
2. It promotes better nutrition and healthcare utilisation.

Quality Antenatal and Delivery Care

1. Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan ensures free antenatal check-ups.
2. LaQshya programme improves quality of care in labour rooms and operation theatres.

Monitoring and Surveillance Mechanisms

1. Maternal Death Surveillance and Response identifies causes and enables corrective action.
2. Digital platforms track pregnant women and ensure continuity of care.

Community-Based Interventions

1. Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Days improve awareness and service delivery.
2. Innovative state initiatives enhance early detection and referral systems.

8.Innovations and Best Practices

Community-Based Models

1. Campaigns focusing on early detection of risks improve maternal outcomes.
2. Community engagement strengthens healthcare delivery.

Emergency Referral Systems

1. Efficient referral networks ensure timely access to advanced care.
2. They reduce delays in critical situations.

9.Way Forward

Strengthening Healthcare Infrastructure

1. Expand emergency obstetric care facilities in rural and remote areas.
2. Improve transport and referral systems.

Reducing Financial Barriers

1. Enhance insurance coverage and reduce out-of-pocket expenditure.
2. Ensure availability of free medicines and diagnostics.

Addressing Social Determinants

1. Improve female education and empowerment.
2. Promote awareness regarding maternal health.

Enhancing Quality of Care

1. Focus on skilled healthcare personnel and continuous training.
2. Ensure quality standards in both public and private facilities.

Targeted Interventions in High-Burden States

1. Focus on states with high maternal mortality through region-specific strategies.
2. Strengthen governance and accountability mechanisms.

Conclusion

India has made notable progress in reducing maternal mortality through sustained policy efforts and healthcare improvements. However, regional disparities, socio-economic barriers, and infrastructure gaps continue to pose challenges. A comprehensive approach combining medical, social, and institutional interventions is essential to achieve the SDG target and ensure safe motherhood for all.

Source- https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-accounts-for-1-in-10-global-maternal-deaths-lancet-report/articleshow/129887051.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst