

## Strategies for reduction in Infant Mortality Rate in India

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### ARTICLE CYCLE

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The number of deaths of children under one year of age per thousand life is defined as infant mortality rate. Presently, the infant mortality rate in India is about 25 per thousand births. The major component of infant mortality is in the age group of 0 to 28 days (Neonatal Period). Neonatal period deaths contributes more than 70% of the total infant mortality.

There are important lessons from in Kerala, one of developed states of the country with infant mortality of 4, which has been reported from Developed countries of world. All states can achieve this IMR with multi sectoral interventions.

What are major reasons of low IMR in Kerala is i) universal access to the healthcare for antenatal mothers and Neonates ii) strong healthcare delivery system. lii) Adequate Obstetric care iv) universal Immunization of antenatal mother and Infants v) Nutritional supplementation vi) Low prevalence of anemia among pregnant mothers vii) identification of high risk mothers and timely referral to the higher level of health care services, viii) universal breastfeeding practices ix) nearly 100 percent institutional deliveries by Trained and skilled birth attendants, x) the infection control services xi) development of secondary level

health care for the infants and mothers for who are referred particularly Newborns with prematurity / birth Asphyxia /Congenital diseases / neonatal sepsis .xii)implementation of India Newborn Action Plan (INAP) xiii) Improving antenatal care xiv) timely detection of Pneumonia and diarrheal diseases xv) adoption of Kangaroo care for preterm babies xvi) avoiding teen age pregnancy xvii) Ensuring support for Universal institutional deliveries xviii) filling up of all peripheral health workers positions xix) Universal Implementaion of ICDS scheme xx) intensive specific evidence based efforts in districts with high infant mortality

India do have a health care program which cover all the Infants but the implementation is rather weak. Universal breastfeeding is promoted along with counselling of lactating mothers and mother-in-law to encourage the breastfeeding practices.

Unlike Kerala, in few states in India, the healthcare services remain underutilized due lack of transport facilities, poor secondary level health care institutions, supply of Electricity, poor literacy of females, poor socio economic status, low women empowerment

### WAY FORWARD

Government has identified the districts which have poor health indicators and need extra

inputs on priority under the National Health Mission. Reducing infant mortality in India under the National Health Mission, involves a multi-pronged approach focusing on strengthening maternal and child healthcare through initiatives like Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK), and enhanced facility-based care, such as Special New Born Care Units (SNCUs) and Home Based Newborn Care (HBNC). Key strategies include increasing institutional deliveries, universal immunization, improved nutrition, and training health workers.

### **Key Strategies for Reducing Infant Mortality in India:**

#### **1. Strengthening Healthcare Facilities:**

- **Facility-Based Newborn Care:** Establishing Newborn Care Corners (NBCCs) at all delivery points, New Born Stabilization Units (NBSUs), and Special New Born Care Units (SNCUs) to treat sick or preterm newborns.
- **Institutional Deliveries:** Promoting Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) for institutional delivery by skilled birth attendants to ensure safe, supervised births.
- **Emergency Services:** Utilizing ambulances and establishing maternity waiting homes to ensure prompt access to emergency obstetric and neonatal care.

#### **2. Community-Based Care & Support:**

- **Home Based Newborn Care (HBNC):** Utilizing Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) to visit homes, improving newborn practices, and early detection of illnesses.
- **Antenatal Care (ANC):** Ensuring 100% of pregnant women receive checkups, iron/folate supplementation, and early pregnancy registration.

#### **3. Nutritional and Health Interventions:**

- **Immunization:** Implementing the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) to protect children against diseases like polio, tetanus, diphtheria, and measles.
- **Nutritional Support:** Promoting breastfeeding for the first 6 months, improving maternal nutrition, and addressing low birth weight through education and supplements.

#### **4. Policy and System Improvements:**

- **India Newborn Action Plan (INAP):** Guiding state-specific plans to accelerate progress in reducing preventable deaths.
- **Digital Tracking:** Using data-driven systems to monitor maternal, newborn, and child health for targeted interventions.
- **Capacity Building:** Training doctors, nurses, and midwives in Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illnesses (IMNCI).

**5. Addressing Social Determinants:** Improving female literacy, enhancing the status of women, and ensuring access to clean water to reduce mortality.