

Maternal Mortality in India

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Maternal Mortality in India: Progress & Challenges

Context:

Maternal Mortality is a key indicator of public health. India's **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)** is declining steadily, but significant **regional disparities** and **systemic challenges** remain—especially in the **EAG states**. Achieving **SDG 3.1** (MMR < 70 by 2030) requires targeted interventions.

Definition:

- **Maternal Death (WHO):** Death of a woman during pregnancy or within **42 days** of its end, due to causes related to pregnancy, excluding accidental causes.
- **MMR:** Number of **maternal deaths per 1,00,000 live births**.

MMR Trends in India:

- **National MMR:**

- **103** (2017-19)
- **97** (2018-20)
- **93** (2019-21)

- **Highest MMR (EAG States):**

- **Madhya Pradesh - 175, Assam - 167, Uttar Pradesh - 151**

- **Lowest MMR (Southern States):**
 - Kerala - 20, Andhra Pradesh - 45, Tamil Nadu - 49
 - **Other States:**
 - Maharashtra - 38, Gujarat - 53, Punjab - 98
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Major Causes of Maternal Deaths:

- **Postpartum Hemorrhage (PPH)**
 - **Obstructed labor** due to anemia/malnutrition
 - **Hypertensive disorders** (eclampsia)
 - **Sepsis** from unsafe home deliveries
 - **Unsafe abortions**
 - **Infections and co-morbidities** like malaria, TB
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Government Initiatives:

- **Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY):** Promotes **institutional deliveries**
- **PM Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY):** **Financial support** for mothers
- **Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA):** **Free monthly check-ups**
- **108 Ambulance Services:** Emergency transport
- **NHM:** Focus on **maternal and child health**

- **ASHA/ANM Workers:** Awareness and care linkage
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Kerala Model (Best Practice):

- Introduced by **Dr. V.P. Paily**
 - Uses **confidential reviews**, modern tools like **uterine clamps**, and manages rare complications
 - Addresses **mental health**
 - Kerala's MMR is **only 20**, lowest in India
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Key Challenges:

- **Regional inequality**, especially in EAG states
 - **Lack of specialists**, blood banks, emergency services
 - **Social issues:** poverty, early marriage, poor nutrition
 - **Three delays:** in seeking, reaching, and receiving care
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Way Forward:

- **State-specific strategies** based on local needs
- Strengthen **First Referral Units (FRUs)**
- **Replicate Kerala model** in high-burden states
- Focus on **nutrition, awareness, and quality care**

Conclusion:

India is progressing, but achieving SDG 3.1 requires **targeted, inclusive, and well-coordinated healthcare reforms** with focus on high-risk regions.



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