

1. Maternal Death Rate Declining: Report

Prelims: Policies

Mains: GS-II Issues relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Why in News?

- The latest Sample Registration System (SRS) 2015-2017 bulletin for MMR which was released recently has reported a sharp decline in the MMR rate of India.

Key Findings of the Report:

- India's MMR has seen a decline from 130 in 2014-2016 to 122 in 2015-2017.
- As per the report, nearly 2,000 maternal deaths have been averted per year.
- The figure has declined from 167 in 2011-2013 to 130 in 2014-2016 and to 122 in 2015-17, registering a 6.15 per cent reduction.

Categorisation of States:

- To understand the maternal mortality situation in the country better and to map the changes, especially at the regional level, the government has categorised states into three groups:
 - ✓ Empowered action group (EAG),
 - ✓ Southern States
 - ✓ Other states.

Regional Statistics:

- Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh/Uttarakhand and Assam fall under the EAG and Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu are in the southern States group. "Others" comprise the remaining States and Union Territories.
- Retaining its first position, Kerala has reduced its MMR from 46 in 2014-2016 to 42 in 2015-2017. Likewise, Maharashtra retained its second position with 55 (down from 61) and Tamil Nadu its third position with 63 (down from 66).
- While Karnataka has shown the highest percentage decline in MMR, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have shown an increase by 15 points each in MMR.
- The decline has been most significant in EAG States from 188 to 175.
- The ratio has reduced considerably from 77 to 72 among southern states and in the other states from 93 to 90.

Government Interventions:

- Focus on quality and coverage of health services through public health initiatives under the National Health Mission such as LaQshya, Poshan Abhiyan, Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan, Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram, Janani Suraksha Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana have contributed to this decline.
- India is now committed to ensuring that not a single mother or new-born dies due to a preventable cause and move towards zero preventable maternal and new-born deaths through the recently launched Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan Initiative (SUMAN).

India meeting the established Targets:

- Decline is important for India as 11 States have achieved the National Health Policy target of MMR 100 per lakh live births well ahead of 2020.
- The WHO last year lauded India's progress in reducing the MMR saying the progress puts the country on track towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of an MMR below 70 by 2030.

What is MMR?

- MMR is defined as the proportion of maternal deaths per 1,00,000 live births.
- Maternal mortality is defined as the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy.
- Complications during pregnancy and childbirth are a leading cause of death and disability among women of reproductive age.

About SRS:

- Initiated on a pilot basis by the Office of the Registrar General, India in a few selected states in 1964-65, it became fully operational during 1969-70.
- SRS aims to provide reliable estimates of birth and death rates for the states and also at all India Level.
- At present, the SRS provides reliable annual data on fertility and mortality at the state and national levels for rural and urban areas separately.