



Maternal mortality ratio has fallen from 167 per 100,000 live births in 2011-2013 to 130 per 100,000 live births in 2014-2016. (IE)

Even though India has shown impressive gains in maternal mortality decline – a 22 percent reduction since 2013 – a lot more needs to be done considering many challenges waiting to be addressed. On the same day when these numbers were out, a news report from Kerala – a state that leads other states in most health indices, including MMR, stated how a tribal woman in labour in Kerala was carried on a sling made of clothes for want of a road. “What the woman went through underlines how these indices are often held hostage to physical infrastructure such as roads,” Abantika Ghosh wrote in The Indian Express.

Despite all the success on the front of reducing maternal mortality, India clearly missed the millennium development goal (MDG) of cutting MMR by 75 percent from 437 in 1990 to 109 in 2015, she wrote.

In 2010, an article in the Indian Journal of Public Health by the chief UNICEF officer in Chennai was critical of India’s likely failure to meet the MDG, yet spoke favourably of initiatives under the National Rural Health Mission, which was launched in 2005 to develop rural health infrastructure. Even Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#), in a Mann ki Baat programme in 2016, appealed to private hospitals to devote one day of the month for check-ups of pregnant women. Under the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan, pregnant

women can walk into private establishments on the 9th of the month.

Maternal mortality ratio has fallen from 167 per 100,000 live births in 2011-2013 to 130 per 100,000 live births in 2014-2016, according to a special bulletin from the Sample Registration System. Now, 1000 less women die of pregnancy-related complications each month in country, the report said.

About maternal mortality

Maternal mortality is defined as the death of woman while she is pregnant or within 42 days of pregnancy termination, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes.

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