



Levels and Trends in Child Mortality

For Prelims: [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\)](#), Levels and Trends in Child Mortality, United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, Under-five Mortality Rate (U5MR).

For Mains: Levels and Trends in Child Mortality, Issue of Stillbirths and Child Mortality in India.

[Source: DTE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, has released a report titled- **Levels and Trends in Child Mortality**, which highlighted that the annual number of global under-five deaths in 2022 declined by more than half from the 2000 estimate — from 9.9 million to 4.9 million.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **Historic Low in Child Mortality:**
 - The annual number of under the age of five deaths dropped to **4.9 million in 2022**, representing a significant achievement in the global effort to reduce child mortality.
 - This is coupled with a **decline of more than half in the global under-five mortality rate (U5MR)** since 2000.
 - The decline in under-five mortality has been consistent, driven by sustained commitment from various stakeholders including governments, organisations, local communities, healthcare professionals, and families.
- **Persistent High Death Toll:**
 - Despite the progress, the annual death toll among children, adolescents, and youth remains unacceptably high.
 - In 2022, **2.3 million under-five deaths** occurred during the **first month of life, and an additional 2.6 million children** died between the ages of 1 and 59 months.
 - Furthermore, 2.1 million children, adolescents, and youth aged 5–24 also died that year.
- **Magnitude of Lives Lost:**
 - Between 2000 and 2022, the world lost 221 million children, adolescents, and youth, with nearly the **entire population of Nigeria being a staggering** comparison.
 - Neonatal deaths (death of a baby within 28 days of birth) accounted for 72 million of these under-five deaths, and deaths among children aged 1–59 months numbered 91 million.
 - The trend of under-five deaths has increased in the neonatal period from 41% in 2000 to 47% in 2022.
- **Inequality in Survival Chances:**
 - Children face unequal chances of survival based on factors such as **geographical location, socio-economic status**, and whether they live in fragile or conflict-affected settings.
 - These disparities highlight persistent and entrenched inequities among vulnerable

populations of children.

▪ **Regional Disparities:**

- While global rates of child mortality are declining, there are significant regional disparities.
 - 35 million children under the age of 5 will lose their life before 2030 and **sub-Saharan Africa will bear most of the death toll.**
- Countries will not meet the UN-mandated [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\)](#) targets on time.
 - If, however, every country realised the SDG-5 vision of an end to preventable under-five deaths and met the relevant mortality targets on time, 9 million **more children would survive to age five.**
- Under current trends, 59 countries will miss the SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) under-five mortality target and 64 countries will miss the neonatal mortality target.

▪ **Recommendations:**

- Several low- and lower-middle-income countries have outperformed the global decline in under-five mortality, in some cases slashing their rates by more than two thirds since 2000.
 - These inspiring outcomes demonstrate the high returns when **investments are made in maternal, newborn and child health and survival.**
- They also provide important proof that if **sustained and strategic action is taken - even in resource constrained settings** - levels and trends in under five mortality will shift and lives will be saved.

What can be done to Curb Child Mortality?

- **Increase Access to Family Planning Services:** Providing comprehensive family planning services can help prevent unintended pregnancies, which can reduce the risk of preterm births and stillbirths.
- **Improve Antepartum Services:** Enhancing antenatal care services, including regular health and nutrition check-ups for pregnant women, can contribute to healthier pregnancies and reduce the likelihood of preterm births and stillbirths.
 - Ensuring access to iron folic acid supplementation for pregnant mothers can also improve maternal and foetal health.
- **Identification and Management of Risk Factors:** Implementing effective screening programs to identify and manage risk factors associated with preterm births and stillbirths can help mitigate adverse outcomes.
 - This includes managing conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and infections during pregnancy.
- **Improve Data Recording and Reporting:** Enhancing data collection systems to accurately record and report preterm births and stillbirths is crucial for understanding the magnitude of the problem and implementing targeted interventions effectively.
 - Adopting standardised classification systems, such as the International Classification of Diseases, for reporting perinatal mortality can improve data quality and comparability.
- **Implement Surveillance Guidelines:** Ensuring effective implementation of maternal and perinatal deaths surveillance guidelines can help in identifying trends, risk factors, and opportunities for intervention.
 - This includes timely reporting and analysis of maternal and perinatal deaths to inform policy and practice.

What are India's Initiatives for Women Nutrition and Preventing Child Mortality?

- **POSHAN Abhiyaan:** The government of India has launched the [National Nutrition Mission \(NNM\)](#) or POSHAN Abhiyaan to ensure a "Malnutrition Free India" by 2022.
 - Further, in order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Poshan Abhiyaan, [Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0](#), the integrated nutrition support programme was announced in [budget 2021-2022 for all States/UTs](#).
 - Steps have been taken to improve nutritional quality and testing in accredited labs, strengthen delivery and leverage technology under Poshan Tracker to improve governance.
- **Anemia Mukt Bharat Abhiyan:** Launched in 2018, the mission aims at accelerating the annual

rate of decline of anaemia from one to three percentage points.

- **Mission Shakti:** 'Mission Shakti' comprises two sub-schemes '**Sambal**' and '**Samarthya**' for safety and security of women and empowerment of women respectively.
 - The schemes of [One Stop Centres \(OSC\)](#), **Women Helplines (181-WHL)**, [Beti Bachao Beti Padhao \(BBBP\)](#) and Nari Adalat are part of '**Sambal**' sub- scheme.
 - The components of [Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana \(PMMVY\)](#), Palna, Shakti Sadan, Sakhi Niwas and Hub for Empowerment of Women are **part of 'Samarthya' sub scheme.**
- **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme:** It was launched in 1975 and the scheme aims at providing food, preschool education, primary healthcare, immunisation, health check-up and referral services to children under 6 years of age and their mothers.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims:

Q. Which of the following are the objectives of 'National Nutrition Mission'? (2017)

1. To create awareness relating to malnutrition among pregnant women and lactating mothers.
2. To reduce the incidence of anaemia among young children, adolescent girls and women.
3. To promote the consumption of millets, coarse cereals and unpolished rice.
4. To promote the consumption of poultry eggs.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (d) 3 and 4 only

Ans: (a)

Mains:

Q. Can the vicious cycle of gender inequality, poverty and malnutrition be broken through microfinancing of women SHGs? Explain with examples. (2021)