

## Editorial

# India newborn action plan

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“India envisions a health system that eliminates preventable deaths of newborns and stillbirths and where every pregnancy is wanted, where every birth is celebrated, and where women, babies and children survive, thrive, and reach their full potential.”

India contributes more than any country to global under 5 and newborn deaths. The four large states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan together account for more than half of the country's neonatal mortality, which accounts for about 14% of global newborn deaths.

The country has witnessed a dramatic reduction in maternal and child mortality rates over the past two decades. Newborns and stillbirths, however, have missed out on the attention. Neonatal mortality has reduced much less than postneonatal deaths, thereby increasing the contribution of neonatal deaths from 41% of under 5 deaths in 1990 to 56% in 2012. Even now, 0.76 million newborns die each year, mainly due to preventable causes, while stillbirths have largely remained invisible.

Newborn health has now captured the attention of policymakers at the highest levels. Various efforts have been made in this direction which recognize newborn health as a national development necessity. Two important milestones in this direction have been NRHM and the RMNCH + A strategy.

The India newborn action plan (INAP) developed in response to the global every newborn action plan and launched at the World Health Assembly in June 2014. It outlines a targeted strategy for accelerating the reduction of preventable newborn death and stillbirth in the country.

The INAP will be implemented within the existing RMNCH + A framework. It would be guided by the principles of

integration, equity, gender, quality of care, convergence, accountability, and partnerships.

It has six pillars of interventions:

- Preconception and antenatal care
- Care during labor and childbirth
- Immediate newborn care
- Care of healthy newborn
- Care of small and sick newborn
- Care beyond newborn survival.

The success of the INAP hinges on active participation and commitment by the states to attain the vision of ending preventable deaths of newborn and stillbirths. We need to work stridently to attain the goals of “Single digit NMR by 2030 and Single digit SBR by 2030.”

There is a definite need to involve the private sector. Private sector facilities should be part of perinatal and neonatal databases. The private sector should support the government in developing standards, in improving health care management, skill building, training and mentoring of health professionals, in providing technical support, and in adoption of public health facilities, IT related interventions, telemedicine, and research.

INAP is India's renewed commitment to end preventable stillbirths and newborn deaths with a clear understanding that almost all of these deaths and subsequent disabilities are preventable; the plan is concerted effort toward translating these commitments into meaningful change for newborn.

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