

Double whammy: India tops lists of mum, infant deaths

Rupali Mukherjee | TNN

Mumbai: India registered the highest number of child and maternal deaths worldwide in 2011. Its abysmal record continued with an estimated 1.6 million children under five dying this year, representing 23% of global deaths in that age group. The country also recorded the largest percentage — 18.5% — of all maternal deaths worldwide with 50,648.

What's worse, a whopping 697,000 children — the most in the world — die within the first six days of birth.

Globally, in children under 5 years, the mortality rate has fallen from 111.6 million deaths in 1990 to about 7.2 million in 2011.

Also, the maternal mortality rate dipped from 409,100 deaths to 273,500 over the 20-year period.

But the developing nations lag far behind in terms of meeting the UN's 2015



LOW FIVES

	CHILD DEATHS		MATERNAL DEATHS
	0-6 days	Under-5	
India	697.4	1647.4 (23)	50.6 (18.5)
Nigeria	185.1	891.1 (12.4)	31.5 (11.5)
Pakistan	143.9	396.8 (5.5)	15.9 (5.8)
Democratic Republic of Congo	72.6	374.2 (5.2)	14 (5.1)
Ethiopia	64.6	253 (3.5)	13.8 (5)

* All figures in thousands

* Figures in brackets denote % of global deaths

deadline of meeting the millennium development goals. However, improving health of women and children, which were set as millennium development goals (MDGs) by the UN with a deadline of 2015, look far from being met by most developing nations.

According to analysis by medical journal Lancet, just nine out of 137 developing countries are set to achieve the goals of improving the

health of both women and children. Says Dr Rafael Lozano of Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, University of Washington, and lead author of the study: "India has seen some of the most exciting progress in maternal mortality and child mortality over the past decade. In 1990, 455 women out of every 100,000 live births died from complications related to pregnancy or birth. By 2011, that number had been reduced by

half to 186 deaths. India represents the largest percentage of maternal deaths worldwide at 50,648. Child mortality has fallen at a slower pace, but it still has seen a strong decline since 1990."

Though there is progress on reducing mortality rates, most developing countries will take many years past the deadline (2015) to achieve the international target.