

Mother India among worst nations for moms

Ranks 76 Of 80 Less Developed Countries: Report

New Delhi: India doesn't seem to be a happy place for women to become mothers. The country has been ranked 76th among 80 "less developed" countries, even below some poor African nations, in a report released to mark Mothers' Day celebrations across the world on Tuesday.

The State of World's Mothers 2012 report by international child rights NGO 'Save the Children' has seen India slipping one position down from the 75th spot it held last year.

According to the report, which looks at how good the life of a woman or a mother is around the globe, one out of every 140 women in India runs the risk of dying during childbirth, which is a much higher figure compared to neighbouring nations such as China and Sri Lanka.

In China, one in 1,500 women runs the risk of maternal death, while it is one in 1,100 in Sri Lanka and one in 180 in Myanmar. The study also found that less than half (49%) of women in India use some form of modern contraceptive, and only 53% of births are attended by skilled health workers, which is the fifth lowest among all tier-II countries.

With 43% of underweight children in the under-five age group, India has the highest rate of child malnutrition among all tier-II countries and the second-highest rate in the world (tied with Yemen) after Timor-Leste.

"Even though India has made efforts to improve maternal health by encouraging institutional deliveries and taking other measures, the benefits have not yet appeared to bring about a shift,"

Maternal Woes In Land of Goddesses



- ▶ One out of every **140 women** in India runs the risk of dying during childbirth
- ▶ In China, 1 in 1,500 women runs the risk of maternal death. The figure is 1 in 1,100 for Sri Lanka and 1 in 180 for Myanmar
- ▶ Only **53%** of births in India are attended by skilled health workers—the fifth lowest in all of the tier II countries
- ▶ With **43%** children in the under-five age group underweight, India has the highest child malnutrition rate in tier II countries
- ▶ Less than half (**49%**) of Indian women use some form of modern contraceptives
- ▶ Only **46%** of newborns in India are exclusively breastfed till six months

Funds crunch: Key health data off govt website, future surveys under cloud

New Delhi: The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) data that highlighted the stark public health condition in the country have been taken off the internet due to an acute funds crunch. In fact, all future surveys have been scrapped by the Union health and family welfare ministry. The data, especially on women and children's health, have embarrassed successive governments.

The NFHS had compiled data on fertility, family planning, child and infant mortality, maternal and child health as well as women's empowerment and domestic violence through three reports published in 1992-93, 1998-99 and 2005-06.

The health ministry has claimed that the survey was not required as similar data would be available through other exercises carried out by various government agencies.

The health ministry officials reasoned that the Annual Health Survey and the District Level Health Survey provided district-level estimates for a number of parameters covered by NFHS, even though Union rural development minister Jairam Ramesh questioned their robustness and comparability. **TNN**

Thomas Chandy, CEO of Save the Children India said.

"This report shows that even now, almost half of our births take place in the absence of skilled health personnel. This has a direct bearing on mothers' health and, due to the strong dependence of children on mothers, also

on children's health," he said.

Shireen Vakil Miller, director for policy and advocacy at Save the Children, said though exclusive breastfeeding is a critical source of nutrition for a baby, only 46% of newborns in India are exclusively breastfed till six months. **AGENCIES**