

Child Death in India

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Growing up and with a great many advancements in health and nutrition system in the world and almost unprecedented wealth growth in India, it still has statistics in child health unacceptable in the world standard. Every year more than 3 lakhs babies die in India on the first day of their birth. India accounts for 29 per cent of all first-day deaths globally.

Almost 65 years later I vividly remember my severe sickness when I was a child growing up in a moderately nice village, Adampur in the current district, Jajpur of Odisha. I was attacked by severe small pox, then rampant all over India, frequent fever and seizures due to a quick spike in body temperature, and frequent severe diarrhea. Any of these could have terminated my life before I turned to be a teen ager. I very clearly remember when I used to get back my consciousness from high fever seizures my father would be chanting “[Vishnu Sahasra Nama](#)” the only health care he knew to pull me off from the bad spells of demons. The last time as a surviving child, at the age of eleven, when I was just coming out of a seizure attack, I would be in a delirium and was be hearing from the neighborhood elders congregated to console my parents, “if he survives the beginning of the teen age he should be alright.” And those consolations by the elders to my parents appeared to me as words coming from god himself. I really did not have better choice but to accept those words as the only ladder to my future. But that conviction probably gave me strength to fight out the suffering and the belief that the god exists, I was really a strong guy, and the god had a purpose to help me survive.

I could not find an independently reviewed article on this subject on Odisha but using an approximate ratio of Odisha and India population (41:1650) the child death of the first day born babies are 7.4 thousands.

The current healthcare system even if not adequate can still take care of the situation a little better. Keeping apart the healthcare problems the available treatment is not encouraging.



What causes the deaths?

Main causes for the child deaths are poor hygiene, malnourishment, diarrhea, pneumonia, and underweight. According to the [Save the Children](#) organization in India, 48 percent of children under the age five are stunted, and 43 per cent are underweight in India. Also

- More than two-thirds of infants die in the very first month. Ninety per cent of these deaths are due to easily preventable causes like pneumonia and diarrhea.
- A child's chances of survival varies enormously simply because she is born in one State rather than the other. For instance, the under-five mortality rate in Madhya Pradesh is 92 per 1000 live births, in Kerala it is only 14 per 1000.

Low cost interventions could reduce neonatal mortality by up to 70 per cent if provided universally. According to a publication in the [Washington Post](#) article on May 13, 2013, 40 percent of the diarrhea in young children is caused by four intestinal bugs, namely, Rotavirus, cryptosporidium, Escherichia coli, and Shigella. Of course the chance of survival depends on the living environment not just the medication.

American children receive an oral rotavirus vaccine since 2006. Some public-private organizations here are helping low-income countries get access to it.

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