



TATHASTU
Institute of Civil Services

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS



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53/1, Upper Ground Floor, Bada Bazar Road, Old Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi -110060

www.tathastuics.com

9560300770, 9560300554

enquiry@tathastuics.com



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MATERNAL MORTALITY FROM HEART DISEASES IN RURAL INDIA

TAG: GS Paper II- **Social Justice – Health.**

Why in the News?

- ❖ ICMR Initiates a study to Address Maternal Mortality from Heart Diseases in Rural India after a 23-year-old woman who succumbed to heart failure during childbirth, highlights the need for early detection and intervention to prevent such fatalities.

Current Challenges in Maternal Healthcare:

- ❖ Dhaanu's case reveals difficulties accessing diagnostics and skilled obstetricians in rural healthcare centers, leading to missed chances for early detection of heart conditions during pregnancy.
- ❖ Lack of screening facilities and trained professionals increases the risk of maternal mortality due to undiagnosed congenital heart defects.

Initiative by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR):

- ❖ ICMR has initiated a study to analyze the prevalence and causes of maternal mortality related to heart diseases.
- ❖ The aim is to develop a treatment protocol tailored to pregnant women with heart conditions, especially in remote rural areas with limited healthcare access.

Significance of Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR):

- ❖ MMR is a crucial indicator of women's health and public health readiness.
- ❖ Despite progress in reducing MMR, maternal deaths due to heart diseases emphasize the need for targeted interventions to further improve maternal healthcare outcomes.

Focus on Heart Disease Management in Pregnancy:

- ❖ Heart disease emerges as a significant risk factor for maternal mortality, alongside hemorrhage and infection.
- ❖ Enhancing care for pregnant women with heart conditions is vital to sustain the decline in MMR.

Understanding Cardiovascular Risks in Pregnancy:

- ❖ Pregnancy-induced metabolic changes heighten the risk of cardiovascular events, particularly heart failure.
- ❖ The Lancet study underscores critical periods during pregnancy when the risk of heart failure is elevated, emphasizing early detection and management of pre-existing heart conditions.

Maternal Mortality:

- ❖ Maternal mortality, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), encompasses the death of a woman during pregnancy or within 42 days of its termination.
- ❖ It includes deaths caused by or exacerbated by pregnancy or its management, excluding accidental or incidental causes.



Maternal Healthcare Disparities in India:

- ❖ A UN report identified India as one of the top 10 nations responsible for 60% of global maternal, stillbirth, and neonatal deaths.
- ❖ In 2020, India contributed over 17% of such deaths, ranking second only to Nigeria.

Antenatal Care Challenges:

- ❖ 1% of Indian mothers skipped all antenatal care (ANC) visits during their recent pregnancies.
- ❖ Only 34.1% attended one to three ANC visits, falling short of the WHO's recommended four visits.

Postnatal Care Disparities:

- ❖ 16% of Indian women did not receive any postnatal health check-ups.
- ❖ 22.8% experienced delayed check-ups occurring two days after childbirth.
- ❖ Disparities were observed, with 26.3% of women in the poorest households never receiving postnatal health check-ups compared to 7.9% in the richest households.

Shortage of Skilled Health Providers:

- ❖ 8% of Indian women did not receive tetanus shots, crucial for infection prevention during and after childbirth.
- ❖ In approximately 11% of cases, skilled health providers were absent during delivery, increasing risks in identifying and managing complications.

Progress in Maternal Mortality Reduction:

- ❖ Despite challenges, India has seen a decline in its maternal mortality rate (MMR).
- ❖ The Sample Registration System (SRS) 2016-2018 estimated India's MMR at 113 per 100,000 live births, indicating progress compared to previous years.



GLACIAL LAKE OUTBURST FLOOD

TAG: GS Paper III- **Environment - Disaster and Disaster Management**

Why in the news?

- ❖ In response to an inquiry by the National Green Tribunal (NGT), the Sikkim government has attributed the devastating flooding last year to an unusually heavy rainfall preceding a glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) event in the South Lhonak lake region, based on findings from a report by the North East Space Application Centre (NESAC) that analyzed satellite data to track rainfall patterns surrounding the GLOF incident.

NGT's Observations and NDMA's Preliminary Findings:

- ❖ The Sikkim government's observations align with NDMA's initial suspicions, suggesting heavy rainfall as a potential trigger for the disaster.
- ❖ NDMA indicated a likely combination of excess rainfall and a Glacier Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) event as the primary causes of the flooding, which resulted in 40 deaths and 76 missing individuals across multiple districts.
- ❖ The sudden surge in water levels overwhelmed existing infrastructure, including the Chungthang Dam, attributed to rapid downstream flow.

Challenges in Confirming the Causes:

- ❖ Despite efforts to analyze satellite data, the absence of crucial information during the critical period hampers a conclusive determination of the exact sequence of events.
- ❖ The NESAC report highlighted heavy rainfall preceding the GLOF but couldn't confirm further developments due to data unavailability, raising questions about attributing the disaster solely to heavy rainfall.

Calls for Accountability and Preparedness:

- ❖ Experts emphasized the need for accountability, urging the Sikkim government to explain its response to early warnings about the GLOF.
- ❖ Questions arise regarding the efficacy of response measures, such as the timely management of dams, in mitigating the disaster's impact.
- ❖ The history of the South Lhonak lake as a potential flood risk area underscores the importance of proactive measures and preparedness.

Implications:

- ❖ The Sikkim flooding incident highlights the challenges in predicting and managing natural disasters in mountainous regions prone to GLOFs and erratic weather patterns.
- ❖ Addressing deficiencies in early warning systems and enhancing coordination between agencies is crucial for effective disaster preparedness and response.
- ❖ A comprehensive understanding of interconnected factors contributing to such disasters is imperative for formulating robust mitigation strategies and infrastructure development plans.



UNPRECEDENTED RAINFALL FLOODS THE UAE

TAG: GS Paper I- **Geography – Geophysical Phenomena**

Why in the News?

- ❖ UAE recently saw its heaviest rainfall on record during a severe thunderstorm, contrasting sharply with its usual arid climate. This event, unprecedented since data collection began in 1949, underscores the rarity of heavy rain in the region. Unlike occasional winter showers, this thunderstorm's intensity and duration were far beyond typical weather patterns in the UAE.

Impact of the Thunderstorm:

- ❖ The desert city of Dubai experienced unprecedented levels of rainfall during the thunderstorm.
- ❖ More than 142 millimeters of rain were recorded, equivalent to what the city typically receives in a year and a half.
- ❖ The heavy rainfall caused widespread disruptions, including air travel disturbances with flights redirected or delayed, and a temporary halt in operations at Dubai International Airport.
- ❖ Homes were flooded, vehicles were stranded on waterlogged roads, and popular shopping centers like Dubai Mall and Mall of the Emirates faced inundation.

Factors Contributing to Heavy Rainfall:

- ❖ The primary cause of the heavy rainfall was attributed to a storm system passing through the Arabian peninsula and moving across the Gulf of Oman.
- ❖ Cloud seeding, a technique involving the introduction of salt mixtures into clouds to stimulate condensation and precipitation, may have exacerbated the rainfall.
- ❖ The UAE's National Center for Meteorology conducted multiple cloud-seeding flights before the rainfall, potentially intensifying its impact.
- ❖ Experts speculate that climate change might have played a role in amplifying the heavy rainfall.
- ❖ Between 2003 and 2022, the UAE experienced an average surface temperature increase of 0.4 degrees Celsius, leading to higher evaporation rates and atmospheric moisture content.
- ❖ However, attributing any single extreme weather event solely to climate change is challenging, as various factors, including natural climate oscillations like El Niño, contribute to such phenomena.

What is Cloud seeding?

- ❖ It is the process of artificially generating rain by implanting clouds with particles such as silver iodide crystals. Cloud seeding uses planes to spray clouds with chemicals to condense smaller particles into larger rain droplets.



GREEN CREDIT PROGRAMME NORMS

TAG: GS Paper II- **Governance - Government Policies.**

Why in the news?

- ❖ The topic revolves around the Green Credit Programme (GCP), which encourages reforestation efforts on depleted forest lands.

Additional information:

- ❖ The Green Credit Programme (GCP) endeavors to stimulate investment in reforestation initiatives on depleted forest lands, offering 'green credits' as incentives.
- ❖ Concerns have arisen regarding the possibility of the program fostering tree planting solely for financial motives.
- ❖ The Union Environment Ministry clarified that the program's focus should be on ecosystem restoration rather than merely planting trees.
- ❖ Thirteen states' forest departments have put forth 387 parcels of degraded forest land, amounting to nearly 10,983 hectares.
- ❖ Individuals and businesses can submit applications to the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) to finance the restoration of these forests.
- ❖ State forest departments will be responsible for the actual reforestation efforts.
- ❖ Following evaluation by ICFRE after two years, each planted tree could be valued at one 'green credit'.
- ❖ These credits can serve to fulfill forest laws or for environmental, social, and governance (ESG) reporting and corporate social responsibility (CSR) obligations.



HEAT ACTION PLANS

TAG: GS Paper II- **Governance, GS3 – Environment – Environmental Pollution and Degradation.**

Why in the News?

- ❖ The news covers the issuance of early heat alerts in India, raising worries about preparedness for heat waves. It underscores governmental initiatives with Heat Action Plans while noting hurdles in their execution.

Heatwave Alerts and Severity:

- ❖ The IMD has issued early heat alerts for certain regions of India, indicating abnormally high temperatures.
- ❖ Heatwaves are categorized based on specific maximum temperature thresholds that vary regionally, with severity determined by deviations from normal temperature ranges.

Government Preparedness:

- ❖ Various levels of governance have devised Heat Action Plans (HAPs) to mitigate the impacts of heatwaves.
- ❖ These plans detail strategies for preparation, response, and recovery involving multiple government agencies and stakeholders.

Recommendations of HAPs:

- ❖ HAPs recommend implementing early warning systems, conducting public education campaigns, and establishing heat shelters and cooling centers.
- ❖ They stress the importance of well-equipped hospitals and long-term strategies such as urban planning for heat mitigation.

Challenges in Addressing Heatwaves:

- ❖ **Local Context and Thresholds:**
 - ☛ Defining heatwaves needs to consider local factors like the urban heat island effect and humidity, necessitating a nuanced approach.
 - ☛ Developing a comprehensive heat index considering various factors is crucial for accurate assessments.
- ❖ **Inconsistent Methods and Assessments:**
 - ☛ Vulnerability assessment methods differ among HAPs, underscoring the need for standardized climate risk assessments.
 - ☛ Targeted interventions and hotspot mapping are vital for effectively allocating resources.
- ❖ **Vulnerable Populations:**
 - ☛ While HAPs prioritize vulnerable groups, tailored interventions addressing local socio-economic factors are lacking.
 - ☛ Addressing the needs of informal workers during heatwaves requires collaboration and dedicated budget allocations.
- ❖ **Resource Allocation and Integration:**
 - ☛ Limited budgets and fragmented planning impede the effective implementation of HAPs.
 - ☛ Integrating HAPs with broader urban resilience and climate adaptation plans can optimize resource allocation and enhance effectiveness.



❖ **Long-Term Measures and Nature-Based Solutions:**

- HAPs predominantly focus on infrastructure development, neglecting nature-based solutions.
- Integrating green and blue spaces into heat mitigation planning is essential for improving the efficacy of HAPs.

