

MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO DROPS BY 9 POINTS

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In fact, the MMR has increased in four States — West Bengal, Haryana, Uttarakhand, and Chhattisgarh.

Attributing the decline in MMR to the collective efforts of health workers who have created awareness on institutional deliveries, Rajkumar N., State Deputy Director (Maternal Health), told *The Hindu* on Friday that Karnataka is now on course to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of an MMR of less than 70 by 2024.

Admitting that the State was facing challenges in providing maternal and child health services, Dr. Rajkumar said, “Our biggest challenge is to make all the 147 taluk hospitals functional round the clock for maternity services. Efforts are being made to address the lack of availability of specialists — obstetricians, paediatricians, and anaesthetists — at government hospitals in rural areas.”

Currently, maternal mortality is high in districts like Dharwad, Chickballapur, Bidar, Hassan, Haveri, Shivamogga, and Tumakuru followed by Chamarajanagara. “The scenario changed owing to COVID-19 and poor health-seeking behaviour among people there. We are working round the clock availability of delivery services at all State-run health facilities. We are also cutting down the referrals from lower hospitals to higher facilities by conducting skill-based training of service providers and stringent monitoring of services,” he said.

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