

Global recognition of the importance of achieving reduction in MMR and U5 mortality rates had led to the inclusion of these as goals 4 and 5 in the Millennium Development Goals. In view of its billion plus population and the relatively high MMR and U5 MR rates, India's progress towards improvement in U5 MR and MMR is watched closely not only by national but also by international agencies because India's progress is a major determinant the rate of global progress toward Millennium Development Goals. Both nationally and internationally, there is growing concern that the progress in the efforts to reduce U5 MR and MMR has been tardy and patchy; the focus is therefore to identify factors responsible for the slow progress and initiate corrective interventions needed for achieving the set goals within the time frame.



During the last decade India has invested in the Reproductive and Child Health Programme. In view of the massive diversity not only between states but also between districts in the same state the emphasis decentralized state and district specific identification of problems, drawing up and funding district specific interventions through state plans. Over the last five years, the National Rural Health Mission has given a fresh impetus to infrastructural development, improvement in coverage, content and quality of services so that there is improvement in health status of women and children. With the Janani Suraksha Yojana, there has been substantial increase in the institutional deliveries; however there has not been commensurate improvement in U5MR and MMR in some of the states.

The discussion during the symposium will address time trends and current levels of maternal and under five mortality, ongoing interventions for their reductions, current concerns and constraints retarding the progress and midcourse corrections which could accelerate the progress towards the set goals.