Infant death rate down by a sliver

But AP Only State Behind T In South

Amrita.Didyala@timesgroup.com

Hyderabad:

Telangana’s infant mortality rate (IMR) dropped from 31 per 1,000 live births in 2016 to 29 in 2017, as per latest sample registration system (SRS) data.

While the TRS government pats its back for the steady dip since 2013 when the figure stood at 35, fact remains that Telangana lags behind all southern states except Andhra Pradesh in the indicator considered a rough estimate of the health scenario of a region.

Even as the state government attributed the improvement to the distribution of KCR kits and increased focus on normal deliveries, Kerala with an infant morality rate of 10, Tamil Nadu with 16 and Karnataka with 25 have outstaged Telangana.

Andhra Pradesh with an IMR of 32, is the poorest performer in the south and Madhya Pradesh with 47, the worst in the country.

Nagaland reported the least number of infant deaths compared to other States: 7.

Within the state, the count varies between 23 per cent (Hyderabad) and 33 per cent in rural areas.

“This is largely due to more institutional deliveries in cities and also because authorities, unfortunately, tend to focus on certain areas when promoting healthcare schemes such as KCR kits which was aimed at reducing infant mortality rate and maternal mortality rates,” said a senior official from the health department.

As per officials, the maximum number of kits was distributed in Hyderabad and Rangareddy districts.

Officials of the department are now aiming to jack up the number of deliveries in government hospitals from the current 30-40 per cent to at least 50 per cent with the aim of improving IMR rates further.

Experts TOI spoke to said a crucial area that perhaps is being overlooked is the median interval between births.

In Telangana the interval is 29.1 months.

Almost two-thirds (64%) of births occur within three years of the previous birth including 14 per cent of births that occur within 18 months of the previous birth and 18 per cent within 18-23 months.

Research shows that waiting for at least three years between deliveries reduces the risk of infant mortality and improves maternal health, as per the National Family Health Survey- 4.
Even as the state attributes the dip to the distribution of KCR kits, and focus on normal deliveries, Kerala with an IMR of 10, Tamil Nadu with 16 and Karnataka with 25 are far ahead of Telangana.