

***Infant Mortality in India: Differentials and Determinants***

**Edited by Jain A.K. and Visaria P.**

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*Infant mortality in India: Differentials and determinants* is a collection of 14 papers presented and discussed in a seminar on the Determinants of Infant Mortality in India held at the Indian Institute of Management during 1-4 October 1984. There are four sections in this book: National perspective, Lessons from community health projects, Evidence from selected states, and Unresolved research issues. The first section focuses on the analysis of infant mortality at the national level. The second section reports on the experiences of lowering infant mortality through community health projects in Haryana, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. The third section examines correlates and determinants of infant mortality in six selected areas. The fourth section outlines several unresolved issues in the research of infant mortality rate. This book illustrates a dialogue between social scientists and health professionals on the subject of infant mortality.

Being an excellent indicator of the level of socio-economic development in a country or area, infant mortality is determined by multiple risk factors. Such multifactorial mechanism makes the study of infant mortality difficult. This book provides a comprehensive review of this index for India. However, most data used in the nine papers of this book were not specifically collected for the purpose of improving the understanding of the determinants of infant mortality. Neither the procedure of sampling was comparable in various studies, nor the analysis of data was adequate. The methodological issues and analytical frameworks proposed for the researches on infant mortality are discussed in details in this book. The discussion is valuable for those who are engaged in the study of infant mortality, especially those who are in the third world where most vital statistics are inadequate.

The editors argue against the commonly held belief that high rate of infant mortality in India began to decline only from 1978 after having remained stable for a decade. It is postulated that the level of infant mortality has declined steadily since 1947, although the pace of decline has varied over the past 40 years. It is em-

phasized that infant mortality may be reduced through a rapid improvement in maternal and child health even in a less developed socioeconomic milieu. In this book, neonatal and post-neonatal mortality are analyzed distinctly because of their different etiologies and intervention measures. This is an appropriate approach in the analysis of infant mortality. The identification of the determinants of neonatal and post-neonatal mortality is important for the policy-maker and those designing action programs to lower the level of infant mortality.

In this book, determinants of infant mortality has been categorized into three groups: proximate factors, maternal factors, and household- and community-level factors. The first category includes prenatal non-medical cares, prenatal medical cares, cares at birth, postnatal non-medical cares, postnatal preventive medical cares, and postnatal curative medical cares. The second category includes maternal age, parity and birth interval. The third category includes socioeconomic status of family, household environment, availability of social amenities, nature and type of community, and social and economic institutions. The impact of these factors on infant mortality has been assessed in nine papers of this book. But the limitations in data collection and analysis make the findings of several papers inconclusive. Further studies are required for better understanding of infant mortality in India.

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