

**MATERNAL MORTALITY ESTIMATES IN MAJOR INDIAN STATES 1997-2003: A NEW APPROACH**

Dilip Chandra Nath<sup>1</sup> and Dilip Dey<sup>2</sup>

*Gauhati University, India<sup>1</sup>*  
*Census Office, India<sup>2</sup>*

In recent years, in general, age specific death rate (ASDR) of female is comparatively lower than that of male. It means the female has an added advantage of surviving more number of years than male except perhaps in age group 0-4 in some areas. However it is observed that in the reproductive age group of female, 15-34 in particular, age specific death rate for female is more than the male. Under the assumption that biological difference between the female and male is the difference of reproductive system, deaths occur due to reproductive activities, though it may not be sole factor. In this paper, a composite index of probability has been proposed to find maternal mortality rate using age specific death rates for both male and females, which are available through various surveys. The maternal mortality rates for different major states of India have been estimated for the period 1997-2003 using the proposed method. The SRS data has been used for estimation of MMR. The results obtained through the new method are quite close to the estimates obtained by direct method. It is estimated that MMR for India for the year 2003 is 357. For the same year MMR for Punjab is least (51) and it is highest in Assam (588). It is seen that MMR for Assam has been increased over the years. Eight Indian states have shown decline in maternal mortality over the years 1997 to 2003. The most important issue is that in the absence of direct data, this method provides an alternative method of maternal mortality estimation.