

## **In India, a child dies every 15 seconds** *4 lakh newborns die before 24 hrs every year*



The numbers alone are bound to send shivers down your spine. A child dies every 15 seconds in India due to neonatal diseases while 20 lakh children die before reaching their fifth birthday. Over four lakh newborns are dying every year within 24 hours of life in the country. Over 20% of the world's child deaths occur in India — the largest number anywhere in the world. One in three of all malnourished children in the world lives in India. A child who has severe acute malnutrition is at least nine times more likely to die than a child who does not. Around 46% of children under three are underweight in India. Around 28% of child deaths are linked just to poor sanitation and unsafe drinking water.

These shocking figures are part of Save the Children's latest report 'Every One' to be made public on Friday. The report, available with TOI, says that in most cases, the infections and conditions that are the direct cause of death within the first 28 days of a child's life are preventable and treatable with proven low-cost interventions.

Globally, 8.8 million children die before reaching their fifth birthday. The report says there are a small number of diseases that directly cause more than 90% of deaths in under-fives. These are pneumonia, measles, diarrhoea, malaria, HIV and neonatal conditions that occur during pregnancy and during or immediately after birth. Severe infections, asphyxia and premature births cause 86% of newborn deaths.

“Every child, no matter where or to whom they are born, has an equal right and

deserves an equal chance to survive. And every one of us has a moral responsibility to act and act now,” Thomas Chandy, CEO, Save the Children, said.

The report estimates that globally, an additional \$40 billion needs to be spent annually to dramatically reduce child and maternal mortality worldwide to achieve the millennium development goals (TNN 5 October 2009).