

Topic: Carelessness can be Catastrophic – 72 died

More than 70 children died in 5 days at BRD Medical College Hospital in Gorakhpur (UP). The infants retired the earth before they could commence their journey of life. A number of family members, who were carrying the grief and burden of corpses of their newborns, were shoved and shooed away without any explanation. They were not even obliged with a post mortem report; let alone any condolence. It wasn't an unforeseen and unavoidable accident but a heartless mistake and abundant ignorance.

On the first day of careless death outburst, death consumed seven children as the administration helped it by keeping the oxygen supply low and the amount of pending bills high. Neither the children nor the Oxygen supplier were paid the due dues. Just because the hospital authorities didn't pay the bills, hundreds of family members were charged with their sons and daughters' demise; for no fault of their own. If the emergency systems were intact in place, it shouldn't have been difficult to save all the children. The hospital had **four hours after the metres started beeping** because of **low** oxygen supply. The administration knew since 7:30 PM that they were out of oxygen supply. The hospital had oxygen cylinders that exhausted in **six hours**. Six hours is an ample amount of time to arrange for oxygen in case the staff was efficient and the resources sufficient.

The UP Health Minister Sidhartha Nath Singh has denied the claim that disruption of oxygen was the cause of the fatal incident. He explained that the deaths were caused by the Japanese disease encephalitis. This fact is baseless, says **Soumya Shriwastavan**, a doctor from the **Secretary, Department of Health Research, Union Health Ministry and Director General at ICMR**. She said, *"Intensive care management of sick patients and ventilator management is an expertise which is lacking in the state. We recently conducted a workshop at the hospital and trained doctors. We involved many private experts and doctors from government hospitals from Delhi."*

"So many patients cannot die of encephalitis in two days. In fact, when ICMR came up with a report under National Japanese Encephalitis Control Programme in Uttar Pradesh, especially in Gorakhpur, only 5 to 10% of cases were of Japanese Encephalitis. With high death rate of infants, it is apparent that intensive care units are poorly managed and they don't have trained staff," she added. According to *Mint's* report, *"of the first 30 deaths that occurred on 10 and 11 August, only five were due to acute encephalitis syndrome or AES; one was due to hepatic encephalopathy, which is related to AES. The other deaths were of terminally ill newborns."* The NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) has witnessed the maximum deaths and the possible cause is the low supply of oxygen.

BACKGROUND
According to *Mint*,

In general, public health programmes in Uttar Pradesh are in a sorry state. In the last 15 years, the population of the state has increased by 25% but the number of public health centres, the core health facilities of the government, has actually fallen by 8%.

Topic
Introduction

In 2017 (till July), the total number of admissions to the pediatrics department was 3,878, of which 596 patients died. The figures for the neonatal intensive care unit (newborns) arouse even more concern—of the total 2,386 admissions, 931 died.

Uttar Pradesh has the worst infant mortality rate in the country of 78 (per 1,000 live births) according to the National Family Health Survey- IV (2015-16). The national average is 41.

In light of the deaths at BRD Medical College, child health specialists have pointed to the importance of strengthening emergency medical services in the state.

A 2017 study by Tata Trusts and Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) programme, funded by the UK government's department for international development (DFID), studied the state's healthcare system and revealed major gaps in it.

“The healthcare status of women and children in Uttar Pradesh is cause for utmost worry—a newborn in Uttar Pradesh is expected to live four years fewer than in the neighbouring state of Bihar, five years fewer than in Haryana and seven years fewer than in Himachal Pradesh,” the report of the study's findings said.

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<http://www.huffingtonpost.in/2017/08/14/while-nation-mourns-the-death-of-children-in-gorakhpur-yogi-adi a 23076532/>

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/gorakhpur-hospital-deaths-yogi-adityanath-jp-nadda-encephalitis-death-toll-4794479/>

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/up-30-dead-in-48-hours-due-to-disruption-of-oxygen-supply-in-gorakhpur-hospital/story-TwMrMJxhAZzIkn3pXcZEMN.html>

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/death-of-children-gorakhpur-meedical-college-principal-sacked/article19482490.ece>

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/XspLuS7RqCId9KRuqDNu4O/Gorakhpur-tragedy-Most-children-deaths-not-due-to-encephali.html>

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/15IKTzUDGRbgJWReLIDZtK/NRHM-financial-wrongdoings-reflect-systemic-irregularities.html>