Society & Social Justice · GS - II

Extreme heat is emerging as a public health challenge in India, particularly for pregnant women and unborn children. Discuss its implications for maternal and child health and suggest suitable adaptation measures.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 06/11/2026	GS - II	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~ 150 words

Answer Hint

Heat exposure during pregnancy, dehydration and thermal stress, placental blood flow, preterm births, maternal healthcare, heat action plans, climate-resilient health infrastructure, awareness and early intervention.

Model Answer

Introduction

Rising temperatures and frequent heatwaves are creating serious public health challenges in India. Pregnant women are particularly vulnerable because extreme heat can increase the risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes, including premature birth.

Implications for Maternal and Child Health

Heat exposure can cause dehydration, cardiovascular stress and disturbances in maternal circulation. Reduced placental blood flow may affect foetal development and increase the likelihood of preterm delivery. Premature infants face higher risks of respiratory complications, infections and developmental difficulties.

Adaptation Measures

Heat Action Plans should specifically include pregnant women as a vulnerable group. Public health facilities must provide heat-risk counselling, hydration guidance, antenatal monitoring and timely medical intervention. Climate-resilient maternity centres, community awareness programmes and occupational protection for pregnant workers are also essential. Climate-related health surveillance can help identify vulnerable regions and populations.

Conclusion

India must integrate maternal healthcare into climate adaptation planning. Protecting pregnant women from extreme heat is essential for reducing preventable maternal and neonatal health risks.

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