Society & Social Justice · GS - II

Despite constitutional safeguards and welfare programmes, tribal communities continue to face barriers in accessing essential healthcare. Examine the causes of this gap and suggest measures to ensure equitable healthcare delivery in tribal regions.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 21/11/2026	GS - II	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Tribal health disparities, geographical isolation, healthcare infrastructure, maternal and infant mortality, malnutrition, specialist shortages, cultural barriers, public health financing, mobile medical units, community participation, primary healthcare.

Model Answer

Introduction

Tribal communities in India often experience poorer health outcomes due to geographical isolation, socio-economic disadvantages and inadequate access to quality healthcare. Infant deaths reported in Attappadi, Kerala, highlight the gap between welfare commitments and healthcare delivery.

Reasons for Persistent Healthcare Gaps

1. **Geographical barriers:** Remote settlements, difficult terrain and poor transport delay emergency referrals and treatment.
2. **Inadequate infrastructure:** Shortages of doctors, specialists, diagnostic facilities, blood banks and neonatal care units affect timely treatment.
3. **Economic vulnerability:** Travel costs, hospital expenses and loss of daily wages discourage families from seeking care.
4. **Maternal and child health challenges:** Poor antenatal screening, nutritional deficiencies and delayed identification of congenital conditions increase health risks.
5. **Socio-cultural barriers:** Language differences, limited health awareness and insufficient culturally sensitive services weaken healthcare access.
6. **Implementation gaps:** Fragmented coordination among health departments, tribal welfare institutions and local authorities reduces programme effectiveness.

Measures Required

- Strengthen primary health centres and sub-centres with trained personnel and essential diagnostics.
- Expand mobile medical units, telemedicine and emergency referral transport.
- Ensure antenatal screening, institutional delivery and specialised neonatal care.
- Provide financial protection against treatment, travel and referral-related expenses.
- Involve tribal health workers and Gram Sabhas in planning and monitoring services.

Conclusion

Equitable healthcare requires moving beyond the formal availability of welfare schemes towards accessible, affordable and culturally responsive services. Strengthening last-mile delivery is essential to protect tribal mothers and children.

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