Snakebite Mortality

Centre for Global Health Research (CGHR), Canada has recently released a study titled ‘Snakebite Mortality in India: A Nationally Representative Mortality Survey’.

The study found that India has recorded 1.2 million snakebite deaths in the 20-year period from 2000 to 2019 with an average of 58,000 deaths caused by snakebite annually. Around 70% of these deaths occurred in low altitude, rural areas of eight States namely Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana, Rajasthan and Gujarat.

Half of all the snakebite deaths occurred during the monsoon period from June to September. The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes snakebite as a top-priority neglected tropical disease. Indian anti-venoms neutralize venom from only the following snakes such as

- Spectacled Cobra (there are three other Indian cobra species),
- Common Krait (there are seven other krait species),
- Russell’s Viper,
- Saw-scaled viper,

Whereas there are 12 other snake species causing fatal bites in the country.