

# PREGNANCY SPECIFIC HEALTH PROBLEMS AND HEALTH-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN INDIA

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## Introduction:

As with other countries, most of the maternal deaths in India can be prevented, and many are due to a lack of appropriate care during pregnancy and childbirth and to inadequate services for identifying and managing complications, according to the World Bank. A major thrust of the Reproductive and Child Health Programme is the provision of care for pregnant women. However, a large proportion of women still do not receive antenatal checkups, even though such care can detect and treat existing problems and complications, provide counseling on symptoms of problems, help the woman prepare for birth, and advise her on where to seek care if complications arise. Further, the Reproductive and Child Health Programme emphasizes the need for mothers to deliver babies in hygienic conditions under the supervision of skilled health professionals, but most women in India deliver their babies at home without professional help. NFHS-2 estimated that 65 percent of births, particularly those in rural areas, took place at the women's or parents' homes. Among these deliveries, fewer than one in seven were attended by a health professional. These professionals, including doctors, nurses, and midwives, can usually manage normal deliveries, treat complications, or refer patients for appropriate care. Moreover this situation is worse among marginalized people (SC/ST) in India. This paper tries to bring the facts about these SC/ST populations' specific pregnancy health problems.

**Objectives:** To study pregnancy specific health problems, pregnancy complications during childbirth, and health care seeking behaviour of marginalized population in India.

**Methods:** The data were drawn from National Family Health Survey II conducted during 1997-98 in India. A Samples of 25740 SC and ST woman were examined. Logistic regression analysis is used to assess the effects of SED variables on the probability of reporting gynaecological morbidity.

**Results:** The most commonly reported pregnancy-related health problems among these marginalized population are excessive fatigue, followed by anaemia, swelling of legs, body, or face and blurred vision. Morethan 40 percent of ST and SC women reported that they had any one of the reproductive health problem. One-fifth of the total ST women reported that they have symptom of urinary tract infections. Above 40 percent of the ST women not at all go for antenatal checkup. Morethan 80 percent of births are taken place at home and 75 percent of births are assistance by Dai among ST and Only 5 percent of the ST women seek postpartum checkup within two days of birth. Prevalence of health problems during pregnancy was relatively high among women who were young and illiterate, and many of the women had problems for the higher order pregnancies. The standard of living has a strong bearing on the ante natal care services for the marginalized women.