# The Impact of Socio-Cultural Factors on Maternal and Child Health Care in Nepalese Society

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**Background**

Women health is not a medical issue alone, such factors as education, nutrition, sanitation, water, access to economic resources and the power to make decision re very important. Health of infant is also connected with maternal health and nutrition during the pregnancy and after delivery. Poor status of health and nutrition is further compounded by lack of appropriate care and socio-cultural beliefs. Therefore this study was carried out with the objective of examining the impact of socio-cultural factors on maternal and child health care in Nepalese society.

**Methods**

A descriptive study was carried out in Dhullubaskot VDC of Baglung district among 120 sample households selected by stratified sampling technique. The study was mainly based on primary data collected using questionnaire-interview, informal discussion and observation. The collected data were edited and coded carefully. The coded data were entered into the dBASE program and analyzed using SPSS/PC+programme.

**Results**

More than 40 percent of people made first choice of treatment as consulting the traditional healer-Dhami/Jhakri. The majority of women faced some kinds of health problems during pregnancy but only few of them visited for medical checkup. About 80 percent of delivery was carried out in the dark room over dirty mattress. More than 60 percent of people cut the umbilical cord without sterilizing the tools. Feeding colostrums was found to be poor. Only 17.4 percent of mothers had the knowledge of preparing Sarbottom Pitho. With regard to awareness of immunization, 7.6 percent of sample women were aware of at least one disease which could be controlled by immunization. Likewise about 84.8 of total respondents have been informed of Jeevan Jal but only 60.7 percent had ever used Jeevan Jal in diarrhoeal episodes. Diarrhoea and worm infestation were quite common diseases among the children of under five years. Least number of people consulted the health post while children got some kinds of health problems. There is an interesting cultural practice that people smear the millet flour over the body of the child affected with measles and feed the soup prepared from white ant's hives as medicine. Among the cultural groups, the coverage of the immunization was low in the children of Kami, Damai and Sarkee community.Nutritional status of Magar children was better than that of Brahmin and Kami, Damai and Sarkee children. Likewise, nutritional status is significantly associated with social class and type of family.

**Conclusions**

Antenatal/postnatal clinic must be established at the village health post and sub-health post with essential facilities and manpower. Traditional healers should be trained relating to modern health care and utilize them to health development.

**Keywords:** impact; maternal and child health; socio-cultural factors.