



# Perspectives of Pregnant Women on Maternal Health and Pregnancy Experiences in Urban Areas | A Qualitative Analysis of Maternal Health in Tamil Nadu

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Received: 30 Oct 2023; Received in revised form: 03 Dec 2023; Accepted: 10 Dec 2023; Available online: 17 Dec 2023

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**Abstract**— *Maternal health and pregnancy experiences are critical issues for women in India. Despite recent efforts to improve maternal health outcomes, there is still much work to be done. This research project aims to explore the current state of maternity health in India and investigate the pregnancy experiences of pregnant women. Using a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative interviews with quantitative data analysis, this study will examine factors that contribute to maternal mortality and morbidity, including access to health care, socioeconomic status, and cultural norms. Additionally, this research will explore the experiences of pregnant women in India, including the challenges they face during pregnancy and childbirth. By examining these issues, this study aims to provide recommendations for improving maternal health outcomes and promoting positive pregnancy experiences for women in India." The study will examine several factors that affect maternity health in India, including access to healthcare services, socioeconomic status, and cultural norms. By exploring these factors, the research project aims to develop recommendations for improving maternal health outcomes and promoting positive pregnancy experiences. The research project will provide valuable insights into the experiences of pregnant women in India, including the challenges they face during pregnancy and childbirth. It will also identify areas where improvements are needed to enhance maternal health outcomes in the country. By disseminating the findings of the study, the hope is to create a greater awareness of the issues surrounding maternity health and to provide useful guidance for policymakers and healthcare providers in India.*



**Keywords**— *Maternal Health, Pregnancy Experiences, Mixed-Methods Approach, Factors Affecting Maternity Health, Recommendations for Improvement*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Maternal health is a critical issue in India, with high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity. Despite efforts by the Indian government to improve maternal health outcomes, challenges remain in terms of limited access to maternal healthcare services, cultural and societal factors, and poor quality of healthcare services. The purpose of this paper is to review the literature on maternal health in India, with a focus on understanding the key challenges and opportunities for improving maternal health outcomes.

Maternal mortality in India remains high, with an estimated 44,000 deaths per year. Maternal deaths are often the result of preventable causes, such as hemorrhage, infection, and unsafe abortion. Most maternal deaths occur in rural areas, where access to maternal healthcare services is limited. According to a study by Kesterton et al. (2010), the main barriers to accessing maternal healthcare services in rural areas include lack of availability of services, lack of transportation, and lack of funds. Access to maternal healthcare services is a critical factor in improving maternal health outcomes. However, many women in India face

significant challenges in accessing these services. A study by IIPS and Macro International (2007) found that only 42% of women in India receive antenatal care from a skilled provider, and only 40% of women give birth in a healthcare facility. The study also found that there are significant disparities in access to maternal healthcare services based on factors such as income, education, and geographic location. Cultural and societal factors also play a significant role in maternal health outcomes in India. The preference for male children over female children has led to sex-selective abortions, which can lead to complications for women who undergo unsafe abortions. The dowry system, which requires families to provide large sums of money and gifts to the husband's family at the time of marriage, also contributes to the low value placed on female children. Additionally, there is a lack of awareness and education about maternal health, with many women not receiving proper information about nutrition, prenatal care, and safe delivery practices. While increasing access to maternal healthcare services is essential, it is also crucial to ensure that these services are of high quality. A study by Randive et al. (2014) found that the quality of maternal healthcare services in India is often poor, with a lack of trained staff, proper equipment, and adequate resources. The study also found that there is a lack of focus on providing patient-centered care and addressing the social determinants of health.

The Indian government has implemented several initiatives to address maternal health in the country. The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), launched in 2005, aims to improve access to healthcare in rural areas. Under this initiative, several maternal health programs were implemented, such as the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), which provides financial incentives to women who give birth in healthcare facilities, and the Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK), which provides free delivery and postnatal care to women and their new-borns. Maternal health is a critical issue in India, with high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity. Limited access to maternal healthcare services, cultural and societal factors, and poor quality of healthcare services all contribute to this problem. While there have been several initiatives implemented to address maternal health in India, there is still much work to be done to improve outcomes. A comprehensive approach that focuses on increasing access to quality maternal healthcare services, addressing cultural and societal factors, and providing education and awareness around maternal health is necessary to make significant progress in this area.

## II. METHODOLOGY

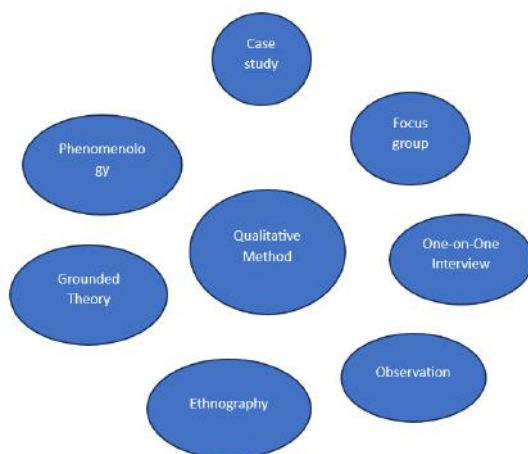
Developing a methodology for assessing maternal health among pregnant women in urban areas involves several steps. Here are some suggested steps that you could follow:

1. Define the research question: The first step is to define the research question, which in this case could be "What are the maternal health challenges faced by pregnant women in urban areas and how can they be addressed?"
  2. Review the literature: Conduct a comprehensive review of relevant literature to identify the existing evidence on maternal health in urban areas, including the factors that influence maternal health outcomes, the interventions that have been successful in improving maternal health, and the gaps in the existing knowledge.
  3. Develop a study design: Based on the research question and the literature review, develop a study design that will enable you to collect and analyze data on maternal health in urban areas. This could include a quantitative survey, qualitative interviews, focus groups, or a combination of these methods.
  4. Define the sampling strategy: Determine the target population for the study, such as pregnant women living in urban areas, and develop a sampling strategy that will enable you to select a representative sample of this population.
  5. Develop data collection tools. Create data collection tools such as surveys, interview guides, and focus group guides to gather the data you need to answer your survey questions.
  6. Run data collection. Collect data from selected samples using the data acquisition tool developed in step 5.
  7. Analyse the data: analyze the collected data using appropriate statistical or qualitative analytical methods.
  8. Conclusion: Based on data analysis, we draw conclusions about the maternal health challenges faced by pregnant women in urban areas and identify interventions that are likely to be most effective in addressing these challenges.
  9. Communicate Insights: Communicate research findings to relevant stakeholders, including policymakers, healthcare providers, and members of the community, through reports, presentations, or other means.
- Implementation of the intervention: Implement interventions to improve the maternal health of pregnant women in urban areas based on the results of the study.

Overall, to develop methodologies to assess maternal health in urban pregnant women, ensure careful planning and implementation, and identify interventions that are relevant, feasible, and effective.

### III. QUALITATIVE METHOD

A form of research approach called qualitative research uses non-numerical data to analyse and evaluate social phenomena. To develop a thorough understanding of human behaviour, attitudes, and experiences in a particular environment, qualitative research is frequently used. Qualitative research methods often involve gathering and interpreting data using methods such as interviews, focus groups, observation, and document analysis. These methodologies allow researchers to obtain insights into the views, attitudes, and values of individuals and communities, and to study the complexity and nuances of social phenomena. Through the analysis and interpretation of non-numerical data, qualitative research is a form of research approach that aims to explore and comprehend social phenomena. In-depth insight into human behaviour, attitudes, and experiences in each setting is frequently achieved through qualitative research. Using methods including interviews, focus groups, observation, and document analysis, qualitative research methods primarily include gathering and analyzing data. Using these techniques, researchers can investigate the subtleties and intricacies of social phenomena as well as the viewpoints, values, and beliefs of individuals and groups. For example, a researcher may want to understand why people choose to use public transportation instead of driving. In a qualitative survey, the researcher might conduct in-depth interviews with people who use public transportation and ask them to describe their experiences and the reasons why they chose this mode of transportation. This type of research can provide rich, detailed information that helps the researcher understand the motivations behind people's choices and can give insight into the challenges and benefits of using public transportation.



### IV. CONVENIENCE SAMPLING

Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique used in research where participants are chosen

based on their availability, accessibility, or willingness to participate in the study. This method involves selecting participants who are easy to reach or who are readily available to participate in the study, rather than randomly selecting individuals from the population of interest. Convenience sampling is commonly used in research studies where the focus is on collecting data quickly and cost-effectively. Examples of convenience sampling might include recruiting participants from a specific location, such as a university campus or a shopping mall, or using online surveys to gather responses from individuals who are willing to participate. While convenience sampling is an efficient way to collect data, it may not always provide a representative sample of the population being studied. Therefore, the findings of studies that use convenience sampling may not be generalizable to the larger population, and researchers should be cautious when interpreting and drawing conclusions from the results.

### V. RESULT

Based on our research; we conducted interviews with 7 pregnant women using a convenience sampling technique. We selected participants based on their availability and willingness to participate based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study. We created an interview guide that covered various aspects related to pregnancy, including details about the pregnancy, family support, mental health, access to healthcare facilities, and other relevant factors.

We conducted in-depth interviews with each participant and recorded their responses for further analysis. The interviews allowed us to gather detailed information about the experiences of pregnant women in India and the challenges they faced during their pregnancies.

Our qualitative research approach enabled us to gain a deep understanding of the experiences of pregnant women in India. By analysing the data collected from the 7 interviews, we were able to draw conclusions about the factors that contribute to positive and negative pregnancy experiences for women in India. Based on our research, it is evident that pregnant women in hospitals and healthcare facilities in India face various challenges and issues, such as anemia and lack of facilities. Moreover, backward-section women face discrimination and are not treated properly during their pregnancy. Our findings also suggest that pregnant women face common problems during their pregnancy, such as headaches and other health issues. However, they felt that their symptoms were not taken seriously, and they were unsure of how to speak out for themselves. Nonetheless, some healthcare providers have helped them during their tough times, and their primary care physician was

instrumental in getting the treatment they required. Overall, our research highlights the need to improve healthcare facilities and address discrimination towards pregnant women in India.

Our findings suggest that access to healthcare facilities, social support, and mental health are crucial factors that impact the pregnancy experiences of women in India. We hope that our research can inform future efforts to improve maternal health outcomes and promote positive pregnancy experiences for women in India.

## VI. ANALYSIS AND OBSERVATIONS

Based on the data collected through qualitative research using convenience sampling, some observations that one can make about the pregnancy experiences of pregnant women are:

1. Access to healthcare facilities plays a significant role in the overall pregnancy experience of women. The availability and quality of healthcare services can affect the physical and mental health of pregnant women, as well as their overall satisfaction with their pregnancy experience.
2. Social support from family and friends can also have a significant impact on pregnancy experiences. Women who have a strong support system tend to have better pregnancy experiences and are better equipped to handle the challenges that come with pregnancy.
3. Mental health is an important factor that affects the pregnancy experience. Women who experience mental health issues such as anxiety and depression may find it more challenging to cope with the physical and emotional demands of pregnancy.
4. Pregnant women, particularly those from marginalized communities, may face discrimination and bias from healthcare providers. This can affect their access to quality healthcare services and lead to negative pregnancy experiences.
5. Common health issues faced by pregnant women include anemia, headaches, and other health problems. Women may feel that their symptoms are not taken seriously or that they do not know who to turn to for help.
6. Primary care physicians can play a crucial role in ensuring that pregnant women receive the treatment and care they need. Healthcare providers who are sensitive to the needs of pregnant women and provide appropriate care can significantly improve the pregnancy experience of women.

Overall, qualitative research on pregnancy experiences can provide valuable insights into the factors that impact the physical and emotional well-being of pregnant women. It can help identify areas where improvements can be made to

ensure that women have positive and fulfilling pregnancy experiences.

## VII. COMPARISON OF THIS STUDY WITH RURAL AREAS

Firstly, access to healthcare facilities and resources is often more limited in rural areas compared to urban areas. This can lead to delays in receiving necessary care, as well as challenges in accessing specialized services such as obstetric care. Women in rural areas may also have to travel longer distances to reach healthcare facilities, which can be a barrier to receiving timely and effective care.

Secondly, social support systems may differ between urban and rural areas. In urban areas, there may be greater availability of community support groups or other resources to provide emotional and practical support to pregnant women. In contrast, rural areas may have more tightly knit communities where family and friends can provide support, but there may be fewer formal resources available.

Thirdly, mental health has been identified as a key factor in maternal health experiences. The study on pregnant women in urban areas found that screening for mental health disorders was an important aspect of antenatal care, indicating a recognition of the importance of mental health in maternal health. However, it is unclear whether this is also the case in rural areas.

Lastly, socio-economic status may also play a role in maternal health experiences. Women in rural areas may be more likely to come from lower socio-economic backgrounds, which can impact their ability to access healthcare and other resources. This can also impact their ability to make decisions about their own health, as financial constraints may limit their options.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Maternal health is a major issue for pregnant women, especially those who live in metropolitan areas, according to the sampling data. Although pregnant women in metropolitan settings still confront a number of difficulties that may have an impact on their health and welfare, cities do offer improved access to medical services and resources. We have noted the maternal health-related issues that expectant mothers in urban areas encounter and have made recommendations for solutions. There are a variety of women, from those who are completely uninformed of how pregnancy affects mental health to those who are completely conscious of it. The degree of awareness among urban women also varies and it plays a great role in determining the health of the mother. Though



it has been seen that the education and awareness about how to breastfeed is known to many 16 women, still there are women who lack it. There has been an information deficit also which needs to be addressed and the government needs to focus on it so that correct medication and care is provided. The families of the women also play a major role in maternal health. It is generally seen that the families are always supportive and help the mother to the extent they can. The healthcare facility and support from doctors can be more optimized but the major change can be brought through information itself in the current scenario of our healthcare facility and the mothers are demanding it too. In conclusion, pregnant women in urban regions have a lot of concerns about maternal health. Governments can develop initiatives to increase access to healthcare, encourage healthy lives, and support mental health to address the issues they face. By implementing these actions, we can guarantee that expectant mothers in urban areas have access to the resources and assistance they need to ensure a successful pregnancy and delivery.

#### IX. LIMITATIONS

- Limited access to good healthcare: In many parts of India, pregnant women have difficulty getting the care they need because there aren't enough health facilities or skilled healthcare providers.
- Poorer women are at higher risk: Women from poorer communities are more likely to have problems during pregnancy and childbirth and to die from complications.
- Lack of education can be a barrier: Women who haven't had much schooling may not know about the importance of maternal health care or how to access it.
- Poor nutrition can cause problems: Women who don't get enough of the right nutrients during pregnancy are more likely to have premature babies or babies with low birth weight.
- Social and cultural factors can be a barrier: Some families and communities in India may have beliefs or traditions that prevent women from accessing the care they need during pregnancy and childbirth.
- Lack of data makes it hard to know what's happening: It's difficult to track progress in improving maternal health outcomes when there isn't enough data available.

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