

Analyzing The Level of Awareness and Suggestions for Improvement of The Postnatal Care Services

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ABSTRACT

The postnatal period is the time from birth to six weeks postpartum. This is an important time for both mothers and their babies. There are major physical, emotional, and social changes. Even though it is accepted that the importance of postnatal care service in the prevention of complications and promotion of healing processes among mothers and their babies is significant, its utilization is still very low in the community. The aim of the study was to assess the level of awareness regarding the postnatal care service among postnatal mothers. The study was also aimed at obtaining suggestions regarding the improvement of the postnatal care service.

The design of the study that was employed for conducting the research is a descriptive cross-sectional study. A structured questionnaire was employed in conducting the study to gather the required information from the postnatal mothers who were attending the Maternal and Child Health clinic. Descriptive statistics were employed in the study to analyze the data collected from the participants through the convenience sampling technique.

The findings from this study indicated that the level of utilization of postnatal care services was very low, and only a small percentage of mothers reported that they utilized postnatal care services. A large number of respondents had poor knowledge regarding the basic needs of mothers during the postnatal period, while a few had good knowledge regarding the basic needs of mothers. The long hours of waiting, understaffing, and poor attitude of service providers were identified as the main barriers to service utilization.

The study indicates that there is a gap between the availability and utilization of postnatal care services. Health education in the community, organization of services, and provider-client interactions are important in improving the utilization of postnatal care services.

Keywords: *Postnatal Care, Maternal Awareness, Service Utilization, Health System Barriers, Quality of Care, Maternal and Newborn Health.*

I. Introduction

However, since the majority of the maternal deaths occur after birth, it is of critical importance for individuals to access the postnatal health care services. Moreover, the utilization rate for the utilization of the three postnatal health care visits is low among the individuals, even though they are living in the urban area, which is favorable for accessing the health care services compared to the countryside, in terms of geographical positioning. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore the challenges that hinder the utilization of the postnatal health care services from the perspectives of the mothers and the health care providers. Methods: The urban region of the Kathmandu district was the research setting for the qualitative research, which applied a community-based exploratory research design. In-depth interviews with the mothers whose babies were 45 days old or more, as well as the health care providers, were conducted with the application of an interview guide to explore their views on the research topic. Theme analysis was applied. The results that came out from the thematic analysis showed that there was a total of seven general topics, and these topics had their own divisions. The obstacles in the utilization of postnatal care services include the absence of an efficient system in the recording and reporting of data, ineffective health communication, absence of prioritization in comparison with other maternal healthcare services, the need to build beforehand, postnatal care services and information depending on female community health volunteers, absence of utilization of mass media, and perceptions by individuals. The absence of understanding about the benefits and timeliness of postnatal care services due to ineffective health communication is the most common reason for not using postnatal care services. The fact that women do not know about postnatal care services means that there has not been enough effort in providing access to information about these programs. In an attempt to make the maternal health care services comprehensive in nature, it is felt that education and awareness regarding the postnatal care services, along with the therapeutic communication skills, is the need of the hour. One of the most crucial steps in making the overall health care of the mothers and their children comprehensive in nature is the postnatal care services, which begin the moment the mother gives birth to the child and continues for the next six weeks. As the child begins to get accustomed to the outside world from the womb of the mother, the mothers undergo drastic changes during this period. In a bid to ensure that the mother and the child remain healthy and safe during this period, the postnatal care services that include a wide range of dietary, psychological, and medical inputs assume a crucial role in this regard. When considered in the larger context of the health care of the mothers and their children, the prenatal and intrapartum care services seem to have received much more attention in comparison to the postnatal care services, despite the latter assuming the same degree of importance as the former. Thus, it is clear that there are tremendous challenges which need to be overcome in order to achieve the best postnatal outcomes globally due to inequalities. As postnatal care services are of utmost importance, it is imperative to highlight the objective of this research as assessing the knowledge level about postnatal care services among various stakeholders and suggesting ways to improve postnatal care services.

Firstly, it is imperative to highlight the various dimensions of postnatal care services and the inherent importance of postnatal care services in the broader context of mother and child healthcare. There are a variety of services which are provided by postnatal care service providers in order to ensure that the needs of the mother and child are met during the postnatal period. The postnatal care services include a wide range of services from medical check-ups and lactation support to psychological counseling and family planning. However, the relevance of the postnatal care services is not only confined to the

present state in relation to the health of the mother but also extends to the future state in relation to the diseases, deaths, and developments that may take place in the future and which may have an impact on the health of the mother and the children. Thus, in the context of the health and well-being of the mothers and the children, the relevance of highlighting the importance of the postnatal care services assumes the highest importance. However, despite understanding all this, there is a lot of issues with the postnatal care services as they are today, and the most important one among them is the lack of knowledge about these. In spite of the relevance of the postnatal care services, it has been found that there is a lack of knowledge about the postnatal care services among the practitioners as well as the mothers. Due to this lack of knowledge, women are not getting the required postnatal care in a timely manner or through the means that have been outlined. These disparities are further exacerbated by the various economic, social, and cultural barriers that the disadvantaged and vulnerable populations face in gaining access to the required postnatal care that they need. In other words, the required treatments for postnatal care that are administered to women are not as effective or as widespread as they should be, leading to unnecessary morbidity and mortality on a global scale.

Taking into consideration the significance of the postnatal care services administered to the global community and the various factors that impact an individual's knowledge of the postnatal care services administered, it is important that we acknowledge the various ways in which we can improve the overall quality of the postnatal care services administered to the global community. This particular research seeks to inform the individual on the complexities of the postnatal care services awareness through an advanced level of analysis of the literature and data collection methods. The purpose of this research is to highlight the trends in the utilization of postnatal care services by identifying the factors that impact the level of awareness, which include socio-demographic factors, cultural factors, and the dynamics of the healthcare system. In addition, it is the purpose of this research to provide a diversity of viewpoints from postnatal mothers, healthcare providers, and policymakers. As a result, it is proposed that this research will be able to provide a diversity of stories and identify what works and what does not work in relation to postnatal care services. Lastly, it is the purpose of this research to improve maternal and child health outcomes by suggesting, based on personal experiences and evidence, how postnatal care services can be improved.

Postnatal care services include a broad range of preventive and curative interventions, which vary from medical check-ups to counseling on breastfeeding, nutrition, mental health, family planning, and early detection of postpartum complications. Effective postnatal care services have proven to play a significant role in controlling the mortality and morbidity rates of mothers and children. In spite of the importance of postnatal care services, these services do not attract the required attention in comparison to antenatal and intrapartum care services. In metropolitan cities, it is observed that the usage of postnatal care services is low, but the availability of health care facilities is relatively higher in urban areas compared to rural areas. Various factors contribute to the low usage of postnatal care services, such as lack of awareness regarding postnatal care services, lack of health communication, long waiting times, quality of care, and the lack of consideration of postnatal care services in sociocultural factors. Lack of awareness regarding the benefits of postnatal care services makes the women reluctant to seek postnatal care services.

Awareness level is an important factor in the utilization of postnatal care services. Mothers who are not aware of postnatal care services are less likely to utilize the services. Moreover, the poor health system in terms of human resource, communication strategy, and use of mass media also affects the utilization of postnatal care services. These are some of the major factors which, in combination, lead to complications and poor health outcomes in the postnatal period.

Given the importance of postnatal care services, it is the need of the hour to assess the knowledge level of mothers regarding postnatal care services and improvements in postnatal care services. In this regard, the present study aims to assess the awareness level of mothers regarding postnatal care services and provide suggestions for improvements in postnatal care services. The study has been conducted to make a contribution towards the improvement of postnatal care services, which would ultimately lead to improvements in health outcomes.

II. Review of Literature

Shrestha, Jene et al., (2021) Since most maternal fatalities happen after birth, it is crucial that people have easy access to and make good use of postnatal care services. The usage of all three postnatal visits is low, even though metropolitan areas have easier access to health services and better geographical positioning than rural areas. Therefore, this research seeks to investigate, from both the mothers' and the health care providers' points of view, the obstacles that prevent mothers from making use of postnatal care services. The urban region of the Kathmandu district was the site of a qualitative research that used a community-based exploratory methodology. Using interview guidelines, we conducted in-depth interviews with mothers whose babies were 45 days old or older and with health care practitioners to get their perspectives on the topic. A theme analysis was carried out. Thematic analysis revealed seven overarching themes, which were further subdivided into more specific groups. Obstacles to the utilization of postnatal care services include a lack of a reliable system for recording and reporting data, ineffective health communication, the fact that these visits are not as highly prioritized as other maternal health services, the need to build beforehand, the fact that postnatal care services and information are dependent on female community health volunteers, a lack of use of mass media, and people's perceptions of these services. Lack of understanding about the benefits and timeliness of postnatal care due to poor health communication is the most prevalent cause for non-utilization of these services. The fact that women aren't aware of postnatal care options is evidence that there hasn't been enough of an attempt to make information about these programs widely accessible. In order to round out maternal health services, it is believed that postnatal care service education and awareness, along with appropriate therapeutic communication, are crucial.

Ganiga, Pradeep et al., (2020) Evaluation of the mother's and newborn's health is the primary goal of postnatal care, making it an integral part of maternal health services. It encourages the correction of the fault and the detection of the baby's development, both of which are crucial in resolving health issues: We used a structured questionnaire to check the level of self-awareness and infant care knowledge of one hundred postpartum mothers. Participants' ages ranged from 21 to 25, making up the largest age group (42%). Nearly 90% of those who took the survey could read and write. Among the many sources of knowledge on neonatal and postnatal care, health care providers rank high

(49%). After using the restroom, 77% of people wiped the area around their privates. Postpartum exercise is performed by 39% of moms. 54% knew that there should be at least one year between pregnancies. Most moms know that colostrum is the first milk a baby receives from its mother (68%). 78% of people know that a baby should only be breastfed for the first six months. It was known by 79% of postnatal moms that immunizations protect babies from illnesses. There was a high level of self-awareness and newborn-care awareness among postpartum moms. There is a higher risk of complications and death for both mother and child in the first two days after delivery. One of the most important aspects of maternal health care is postnatal care, which helps reduce maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity, as well as impairments and disabilities.

Adigun, Abimbola et al., (2019) Researchers in Ekiti State, Nigeria, looked at what makes women go to the doctor after giving birth. A structured questionnaire was employed to collect the data used in the research. The data was analyzed using chi-square and multiple linear regressions, and five hypotheses were formed. It was shown that women's work position, the kind of settlement they reside in, their religious beliefs, and the site of birth had a significant impact on their attendance at postnatal health care. The attendance of postnatal health care services is unaffected by women's educational levels. Findings suggest that efforts to improve postnatal care should prioritize ensuring that all vulnerable groups have access to it by removing financial, religious, settlement-related, educational, cultural, and other obstacles; enhancing quality of care to make women happier and help the less fortunate; and implementing integration programs to increase the number of times women interact with health care providers both during and after giving birth, which would boost economic development.

Kassie, Bekalu et al., (2019) There is a lack of consensus across Ethiopian literatures about the variables that contribute to the high rate of postnatal care service usage. Therefore, the purpose of this meta-analysis and systematic review was to provide combined information about the extent to which postnatal care services are used and the characteristics that are linked with it. Methods: Studies published in English between 2002 and 2018 were searched for in this systematic review and meta-analysis using worldwide databases such as HINARI, PubMed, Medline, EMBASE, Google Scholar, and the Cochrane library. A meta-analysis was carried out using STATA version 14, and papers were evaluated for quality using the Modified Newcastle-Ottawa quality assessment scale. To evaluate heterogeneity, the Q-statistic and the I²-test were used. When estimating the combined usage of postnatal care at 95% CI, the random effect model was used. Findings: This evaluation comprised 22 publications with a combined sample size of 42,320 women. In Ethiopia, the combined rate of women using postnatal care services was 41.5% (95%CI: 28.51-54.52). Women were more likely to use postnatal care services if they had a formal education (OR, 2.37, 95%CI: 1.13, 4.97), lived in a middle-class or upper-class household (OR, 2.57, 95%CI: 1.31,5.05), had an antenatal care visit (OR, 6.72, 95%CI: 4.16, 10.87), were multigravida (OR, 0.68, 95%CI: 0.53, 0.88), and gave birth in a health institution (OR, 3.86, 95%CI: 2.89, 5.16). Contrarily, women living in rural areas were less likely to use postnatal care services (OR, 0.17, 95%CI: 0.05, 0.60). Ethiopia has a poor use rate of 41.5% for postnatal care services. Factors that influence it include level of education, place of residency, wealth quintile, gestational age, location of birth, and follow-up treatment during prenatal

care. It is crucial to prioritize increasing services and raising awareness for rural residents, boosting family income, enhancing prenatal care follow-up, and encouraging institutional delivery.

Mehta, Charul et al., (2015) The goal of the research was to examine the mothers' postnatal care knowledge, awareness, and behaviors. **Layout and Environment:** At a tertiary care facility, moms were asked to fill out a questionnaire that had been designed and evaluated in advance to gauge their level of understanding and familiarity with postnatal care. After the baby had stabilized, anywhere from one to five days after birth, the mother was asked to fill out a questionnaire. Out of the 540 moms who received prenatal and postnatal education at our antenatal care facility, 200 (ranging in age from 18 to 35) were chosen for the postnatal program. From the months of June to September 2013, Mothers had a high level of knowledge on proper skin and eye care (72%), thermal care (89%), and nursing habits (78%). They know very little about the risks of pre-lacteal feeding (45%), when to take the baby's first bath (60%), how to properly care for the umbilical cord (60%) and immunization (36%). While 44% of moms were planning to employ gripe water as a remedy for infantile colic, 32% are really instilling oil into their noses. The research emphasizes the critical need of raising public awareness and education on community-based infant care. We should also work on dispelling the widespread misconceptions and harmful customs that exist within the community.

Socio-demographic and contextual variables also play an important role to a large extent in shaping the use of postnatal care. Variables such as the employment status of women, living conditions, socio-cultural variables, and delivery places have been found to influence the use of postnatal care. Interestingly, educational attainment has not been found to influence the use of postnatal care. This suggests that the use of postnatal care is not merely dependent on knowledge levels but is shaped by a host of socio-demographic variables.

Moreover, studies conducted at the population level have found that the use of postnatal care is low in developing nations. It has been found that there is a significant gap in the use of postnatal care in rural areas compared to urban areas. Women who have access to regular antenatal care services, institutional deliveries, and previous exposure to healthcare facilities are more likely to use postnatal care services. On the other hand, women belonging to disadvantaged economic backgrounds or rural areas encounter a host of barriers in accessing postnatal care services, including economic constraints, absence of transportation facilities, and previous exposure to health education campaigns.

In the Indian healthcare context, it has been found that despite the rise in institutional deliveries, there is a lack of standardization of awareness and practices regarding postnatal care. Mothers have been found to possess adequate knowledge in some areas, such as lactation and thermal care, but not in umbilical cord care, immunization, and harmful practices. The presence of misconceptions about postnatal care practices highlights the need for effective and sustained education and follow-up, as opposed to counseling.

Overall, it can be seen that the existing literature indicates that the utilization of postnatal care is affected by a multifaceted interaction between awareness levels, healthcare delivery systems, socio-cultural factors, and service quality. Despite the growing recognition of the significance of postnatal

care, it continues to remain underutilized because of communication, accessibility, and service-related issues. It is pertinent to highlight that there is a scarcity of research studies that examine the awareness levels of mothers and suggestions for enhancing postnatal care services. This assumes significance in the context of developing effective interventions that are responsive to women's realities and can help enhance the effectiveness of postnatal care services.

III. Research Methodology

A descriptive survey design was used in the research. The study's goal was accomplished via the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies in terms of data gathering, analysis, and presentation. In order to gather information for this research, questionnaires were used. Women who visited the Maternal Child Health (MCH) clinic at General Hospital West Bengal after giving birth were the subjects of the research. All women in the postnatal period, moms with infants less than six months, and those who provided permission were considered for participation in the research. We did not include any moms who refused, had infants older than six months, or came for any other purpose other than to have their babies checked up. Three hundred and ten moms made up the study's sample. Since moms visit the center at various times, convenience sampling was used in the research. The researchers in this study used English-language questionnaires that were translated during interviews to gather data. All eligible responders were informed of the study's objective. Verbal and written informed permission were obtained from participants when they agreed to take part in the research. We used Microsoft Excel to clean, code, and input the data we received from the surveys. Qualitative methods were used to display the data.

3.1 Research Design

The design of the current study was descriptive in nature, which is based on the cross-sectional survey design to assess the level of awareness regarding the postnatal care services and to identify the suggestions for the improvement of the services. The rationale for selecting the design of the current study was that it helps to collect the data systematically from the defined population at a specific time, which in turn helps to create an accurate representation of the level of awareness.

3.2 Study Area and Population

The current study was conducted at the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) clinic of a General Hospital in West Bengal. The population for conducting the current study was postnatal mothers who visit the clinic for post-delivery and child health care services. Women in the postnatal period with infants below six months of age and who gave their consent to participate in the study were selected for the study. Mothers who did not give their consent to participate in the study, had infants above six months of age, or attended the hospital for reasons other than postnatal and child health care services were excluded.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size of the postnatal mothers was found to be 310. However, considering the time constraint and the availability of the postnatal mothers at the clinic, the convenience sampling technique was used as a sampling strategy. The convenience sampling technique helped the

researcher to include the study participants who were available at the time of the study and were willing to become a part of the research.

3.4 Data Collection Instrument

The researcher used a questionnaire as a tool to collect the required data. The researcher designed the questionnaire in such a manner that it covered different aspects of postnatal care services, such as the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, knowledge of postnatal care services, utilization of postnatal care services, and suggestions for improving postnatal care services. The researcher designed the questionnaire in English, and interviews were conducted using the questionnaire.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Before the actual data collection, the respondents were made aware of the purpose of the study. Informed consent was obtained from the respondents in both verbal and written forms. The interview was conducted in a secluded and comfortable area to enable the respondents to feel free to respond to the questions.

3.6 Data Processing and Analysis

The collected data was reviewed for completeness and consistency. The collected data was coded and analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the collected data. The collected data was presented in tables to enable easy interpretation of the results. The collected qualitative data on suggestions for improvement was coded and grouped according to their themes to identify the key issues on services.

3.7 Equation Used for Awareness Level Assessment

To determine the extent of awareness among the respondents, an Awareness Index (AI) was calculated using the following equation:

$$AI = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n S_i}{N}$$

Where:

S_i = individual awareness score of the i th respondent

n = total number of awareness items

N = total number of respondents

3.8 Algorithm for Data Collection and Analysis

Algorithm: Assessment of Postnatal Care Awareness

1. Start
2. Define population for the study and set inclusion criteria
3. Recruit respondents using convenience sampling method
4. Obtain informed consent from respondents
5. Conduct interview using structured questionnaire
6. Ensure accurate recording of responses from respondents

7. Code and enter data into Microsoft Excel
8. Calculate individual awareness scores for respondents
9. Classify individual levels of awareness based on set criteria
10. Compute descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage)
11. Analyze suggestions for service improvement
12. End



Figure 1: Flowchart Depicting the Research Methodology for Assessing Postnatal Care Awareness and Service Improvement

Figure 1: The above diagram shows the different steps involved in the process of conducting the study. The diagram begins with the selection of the study area in the Maternal and Child Health clinic of the general hospital. The postnatal mothers were identified by setting criteria. The postnatal mothers were selected by using the convenience sampling method. The data collection was conducted by using the questionnaire interview method. The data collection was conducted accurately by using the questionnaire interview method to know the level of awareness of the participants. The data was entered into the system by coding. The data was interpreted by using descriptive statistics. The data was interpreted to know the level of awareness. The results of the study were analyzed to make meaningful suggestions.

IV. Data Analysis and Interpretation

This section will highlight the findings of the study, based on the analysis of data collected from postnatal mothers who attended the Maternal and Child Health clinic. The findings are organized in a thematic manner to capture the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, use of postnatal care services, awareness levels, and factors that influence the use of services.

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The age structure of the respondents reveals that the majority of postnatal mothers belonged to the younger reproductive age group. The largest number of respondents belonged to the 19-24 years age group, followed by those aged 25-30 years, while very few belonged to the above 30 years age group. This indicates that early childbearing is prevalent in the study population. The educational status of the respondents was quite varied, with a significant proportion of women having no education or primary-level education. The low educational status of the respondents indicates structural disadvantage and its implications for health awareness and service utilization.

Table 1: Respondents Attended Postnatal Services

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	40	12.9
No	270	87.1
Total	310	100.0

The number of respondents who visited postnatal services is shown in Table 1. Out of 310 people who took the study, only 40 (12.9% of the total) said they went to postnatal appointments. But 270 people (or 87.1% of the total) said they didn't go to such kinds of services.

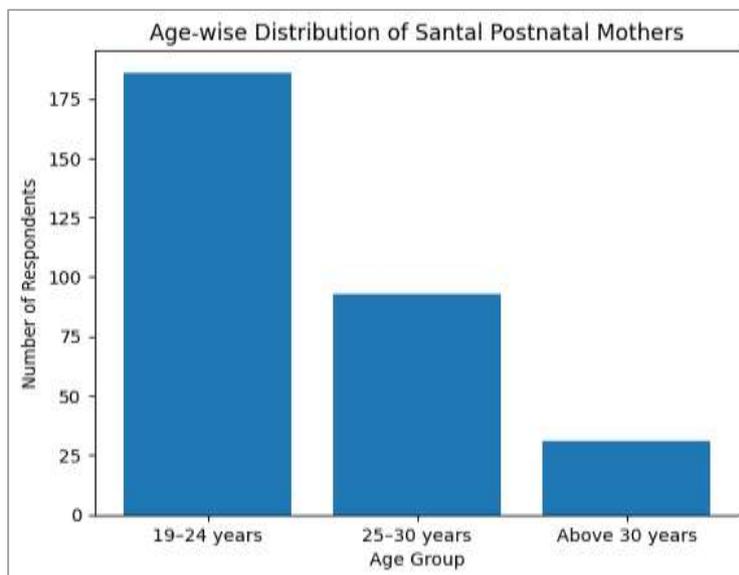


Figure 2: Age-wise Distribution of Santal Postnatal Mothers

Figure 2: denotes the age-wise distribution of postnatal Santal women. The largest number of women (60%) belonged to the age group of 19-24 years. The second largest number of women (30%) belonged to the age group of 25-30 years. Only 10% of women belonged to above 30 years of age. This shows that the study was carried out among the reproductive age group of women.

4.2 Utilization of Postnatal Care Services

The study on the utilization of postnatal care services revealed that although all the women had utilized health services after delivery, the regularity of postnatal care was not very high. While some women were regular in taking postnatal care services, others took postnatal care services only when they faced health problems. This shows that postnatal care services are not preventive but problem-centered. Distance between health facilities and homes, household work, and lack of need were some of the reasons that led to irregular postnatal care.

Table 2: Postnatal Knowledge

Knowledge Scores	Frequency	Percent
Poor knowledge	110	35.5
Inadequate knowledge	80	25.8
Adequate knowledge	65	21.0
Very good knowledge	55	17.7
Total	310	100.0

Table 2 shows how the ratings for postnatal knowledge were distributed across the respondents. According to the statistics, 35.5% of the respondents (110 people) had poor knowledge, and 25.8% (80 people) had insufficient knowledge. In addition, 65 people showed acceptable awareness of postnatal care (21.0%), while 55 people (17.7%) showed very high understanding.

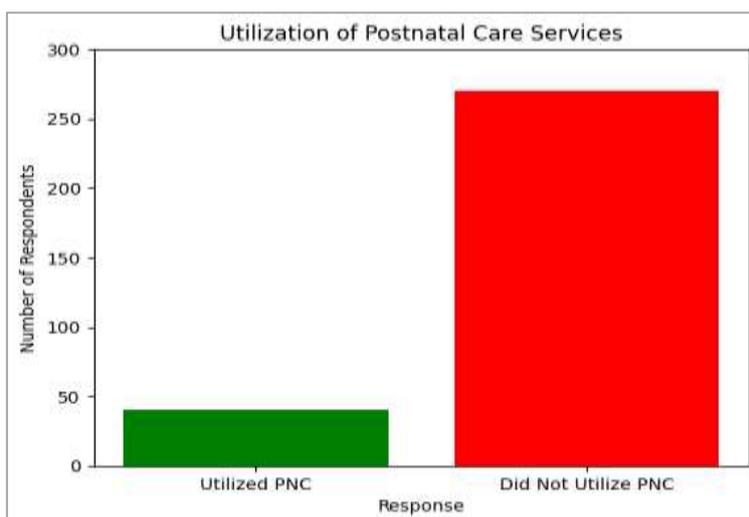


Figure 3: Utilization of Postnatal Care Services among Santal Mothers

Figure 3: shows the use of postnatal care services by the respondents. Only 12.9% of the total respondents had availed themselves of the postnatal care services, while the remaining 87.1% of the mothers had not availed themselves of the services.

4.3 Awareness of Postnatal Care Services

The results obtained from the evaluation of the level of awareness of the respondents showed that the respondents had varying levels of awareness. The results showed that the mothers had low to moderate levels of awareness regarding the importance of postnatal care services such as the importance of the health of the mothers, danger signs, and nutritional needs. The results showed that the mothers had moderate to high levels of awareness regarding the postnatal care services that concerned the infants, such as immunization, which showed that the mothers had high levels of awareness regarding the health needs of their infants compared to their own health. The results showed that only a few of the respondents had high levels of awareness regarding the importance of postnatal care services.

Table 3: Suggestions for Improvement of The Postnatal Care Services

Suggestions	Frequency	Percent
Reduce waiting time	120	38.7
Health workers need to be polite	80	25.8
Supervise students	40	12.9
Teach mothers on postnatal care	35	11.3
Employ more health workers	30	9.7
Introduce shift to see clients on lunchtime	5	1.6
Total	310	100.0

Table 3 displays the feedback from respondents about ways to enhance postnatal care services. Out of 310 people that took part in the study, 120 people (or 38.7%) said that waiting times should be cut down. Also, 80 people (or 25.8% of the total) said that health care providers should be kind, and 40 people (12.9% of the total) said that student oversight is necessary. Thirty people (or 9.7 percent) suggested hiring additional health professionals, while 35 people (11.3 percent) suggested teaching moms about postnatal care. A smaller subset of the participants, 5 people (1.6%), proposed midday shifts to visit customers.

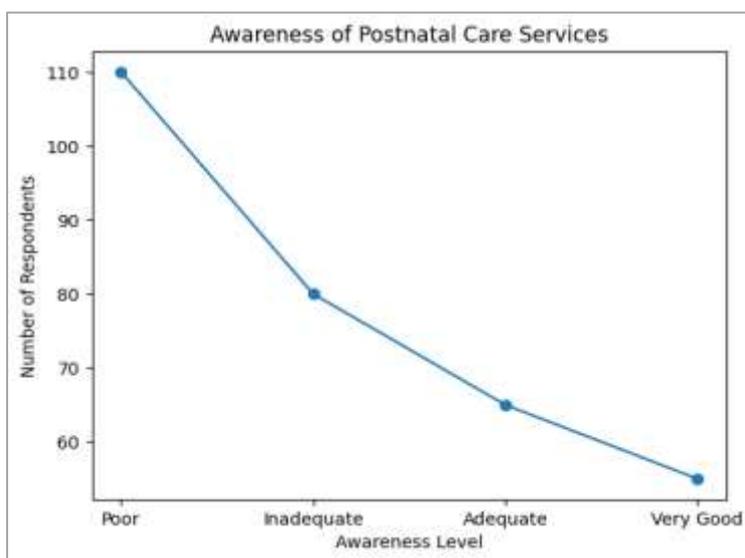


Figure 4: Awareness of Postnatal Care Services among Respondents

Figure 4: The figure indicates the distribution of the level of awareness about postnatal care services among the respondents. From the figure, it is clear that the number of mothers who fall in the poor and inadequate knowledge category is higher compared to the number of mothers with adequate knowledge and very good knowledge.

4.4 Relationship Between Socio-Demographic Factors and Awareness

From the cross-analysis, some differences were noted in the level of awareness among the socio-demographic groups of the mothers. For example, mothers with higher educational levels showed a higher level of awareness regarding the components of postnatal care compared to those with lower or no educational background. Moreover, mothers who attended multiple antenatal visits showed a higher level of awareness regarding postnatal care services. This implies that antenatal education is crucial in improving the level of knowledge regarding postnatal care services.

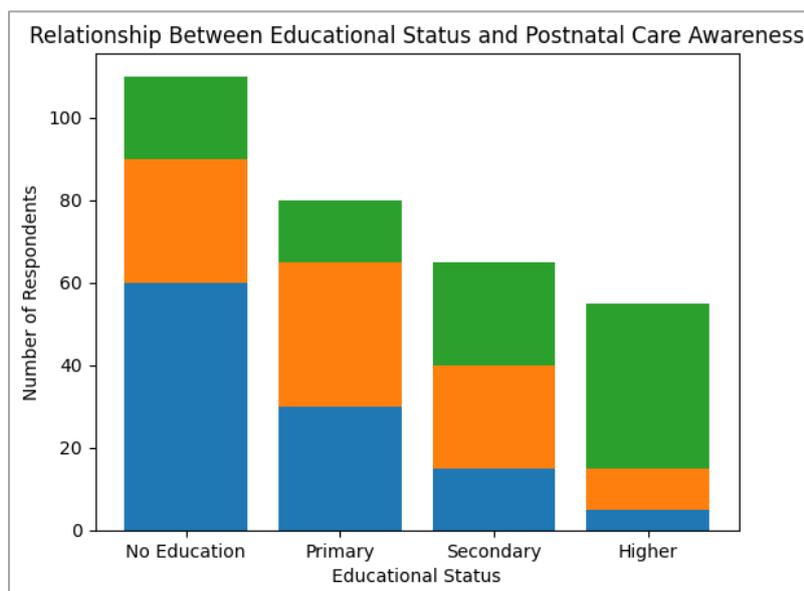


Figure 5: Relationship Between Educational Status and Postnatal Care Awareness

Figure 5: The graph indicates the relationship between the educational status of the mothers and their awareness of the postnatal care services. The mothers who never went to school had low levels of awareness. The mothers who reached the secondary and higher levels of education had moderate and high levels of awareness. The fact that the educational status of the mothers is a factor that affects their awareness of the postnatal care services indicates that it is important to improve health education to meet the needs of the mothers who lack adequate education.

4.5 Barriers to Effective Postnatal Care Utilization

There were some barriers to the effective utilization of the postnatal care services. The barriers were identified from the analysis. The barriers included cultural beliefs, lack of support from the family members, lack of time, and lack of awareness. The respondents relied on their cultural beliefs during the postnatal care.

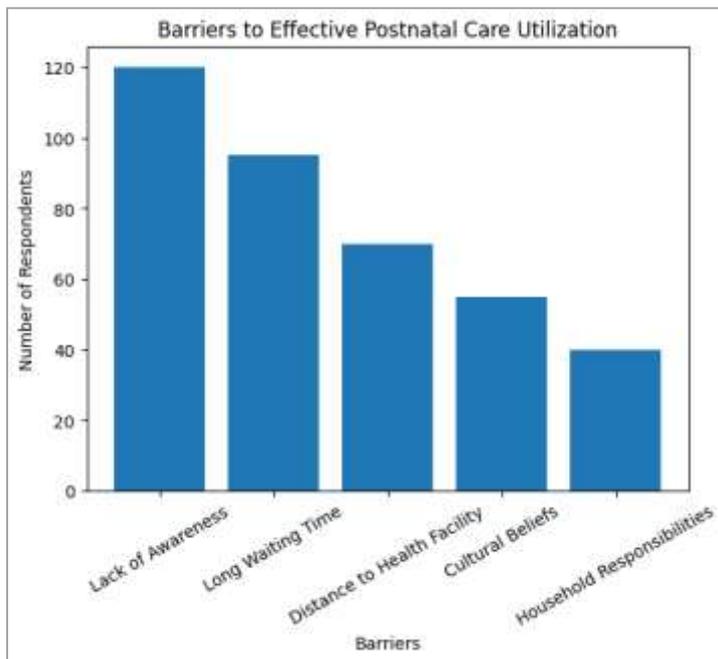


Figure 6: Barriers to Effective Postnatal Care Utilization

Figure 6: The following figure shows the major barriers that affect the utilization of postnatal care services among the respondents. The findings revealed that lack of awareness and waiting time are the major barriers that affect the utilization of postnatal care services among the respondents. The findings also revealed that distance to health facilities, cultural factors, and household responsibilities are also significant barriers that affect the utilization of postnatal care services.

4.6 Interpretation of Key Findings

The findings revealed that despite the availability of health facilities, the utilization of postnatal care services is not optimal among the population under consideration. Lack of awareness, along with socio-economic factors, plays an important role in the utilization of postnatal care services among the population.

The findings of this study revealed that the utilization of postnatal care services is not only dependent on the availability of health facilities but also on the awareness for the utilization of postnatal care services among the population. It is important to increase the level of awareness among the population, especially during antenatal and postnatal periods, to improve the health status of mothers.

V. DISCUSSION

The current study is significant in offering valuable information regarding the use of postnatal care services, the level of awareness among mothers, and the barriers perceived by Santal postnatal mothers. One of the most striking observations made in the study is the remarkably low use of postnatal care services, where only a few respondents reported visiting postnatal care clinics. This trend is an indication that postnatal care services are still underemphasized in the community, despite the long-established fact that postnatal care is essential in preventing complications among mothers and newborns.

Maternal awareness was found to be a crucial factor that influences the use of postnatal care services. A large number of mothers were found to have poor or inadequate awareness about postnatal care services, while relatively fewer respondents showed adequate or very good awareness. This disparity is an indication that a large number of mothers are not aware of the significance of postnatal care services, risks of complications after childbirth, or benefits of seeking professional care. This is likely to be the primary cause of the low use of postnatal care services observed.

The relationship between socio-demographic factors and awareness once again points to the importance of education in the development of health-related behavior. The mothers who had attained higher levels of educational achievement had higher levels of awareness compared to mothers who had low or no educational achievement. Education helps the woman to process more information that she can utilize in the development of health-related behavior, thus increasing the chances of adhering to best practices. Once again, the importance of effective education programs in the community, especially among women who have low levels of literacy, is emphasized.

The recommendations provided by the participants regarding the improvement of postnatal care services provided in the country are important and provide useful information. The major concern provided by the participants was related to waiting time. The second concern was that health care providers need to be respectful and polite. Again, the importance of increased efficiency in organizations to shape mothers' attitudes towards health care providers is emphasized. The recommendations provided, such as the need to hire more health care providers, supervise them, and provide teaching sessions to mothers, once again point to the importance of creating a better health environment.

The barriers that were identified in the current study, such as lack of awareness, distance, cultural factors, family obligations, among others, may be affected by various information, structural, and socio-cultural factors. Addressing the barriers that were identified in the current study would require an extensive approach that would address various issues such as community, education, service organization, the family, among others.

The current study indicates the need to implement an urgent intervention that would aim to enhance the promotion and service delivery of postnatal care services in the current study. Enhancing the level of awareness among mothers regarding the importance of postnatal care services, through education, accessibility, provider-client interaction, among others, is critical steps towards enhancing the utilization of postnatal care services. Addressing the various factors would ensure that the healthcare system is able to reach the point where postnatal mothers are able to access the appropriate care.

VI. CONCLUSION

Improving postnatal care services and raising knowledge about the importance of maternal and newborn health should be top priorities in healthcare systems across the world. The results provide light on widespread knowledge and use of postnatal care services that are caused by a variety of structural, cultural, and socio-demographic variables. But there are also chances for revolutionary transformation among these difficulties. To improve postnatal care, we have outlined practical suggestions based on findings from empirical research and personal experiences. A paradigm change

towards comprehensive and inclusive postnatal care is sought for by these ideas, which range from community-based educational activities to structural improvements assuring equal access. Customized treatments that connect with different sociocultural milieus are also necessary, since the importance of context cannot be overstated. The ultimate aim is to guarantee the health of women and newborns throughout the crucial postpartum period, and these suggestions, if implemented, have the potential to enhance maternal and neonatal health outcomes. Let us, as we go through the maze of healthcare delivery, never waver in our resolve to ensure that all mothers and their newborns get the attention and resources they need.

The study also indicates that the lack of appropriate awareness is closely linked to socio-demographic factors, namely the educational level of women, which suggests that women with low educational levels are more susceptible to failing to access significant postnatal care. Furthermore, the views of mothers on the long waiting times, the lack of health staff, and the poor attitudes of providers indicate that the quality and organization of care are significant factors in shaping the willingness of mothers to access care.

Improving the use of postnatal care requires a holistic approach. There is a need to improve community-based health education programs to ensure that mothers and their families are offered appropriate and up-to-date information on postpartum health requirements. Additionally, there is a need to improve waiting times, staff, and attitudes towards patients at the facility level. There is also a need to incorporate postnatal education into antenatal and delivery care to improve continuity of care and positive health behaviors.

Therefore, in conclusion, it is worth noting that the improvement of the awareness, accessibility, and quality of the postnatal care service is crucial for the improvement of the outcomes for the mothers and their neonates in the study area. As a result, there is a need for policymakers, administrators, and workers in the health sector to come together and ensure that effective strategies are implemented for the promotion of the importance of the postnatal care service as a fundamental element in the provision of the maternal health care service.

VII. FUTURE WORK

Although the current study has provided valuable insights regarding the awareness and utilization of the postnatal care service among postnatal mothers of the Santal ethnic group, there are several research avenues that can be explored further. For instance, it is recommended that future study be conducted using a large number of samples from different geographic locations in order to enhance the generalization of the study findings.

Longitudinal study is recommended for the evaluation of the long-term effect of the implementation of health education programs on the utilization of the postnatal care service among mothers.

Moreover, further studies will also be helpful in understanding the perceptions of family members, particularly husbands and elderly individuals, whose participation in the decision-making process can significantly affect women's health-seeking practices. This will not only be helpful in formulating a more empathetic strategy but will also help in understanding the dynamics of the community.

Moreover, qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions will also be very helpful in gaining further insights into cultural values and quality of care. This will not only be helpful in complementing the quantitative research methods but will also help in gaining a deeper understanding of specific barriers to care, which may not be possible with quantitative research methods.

Moreover, further studies will also be helpful in understanding the perceptions regarding the effect of specific intervention strategies, such as community education intervention, mobile health intervention, and task shifting with community health workers. The findings of intervention studies will be very helpful in formulating effective strategies in dealing with postnatal care.

In conclusion, further studies, which will take into account social, behavioral, and health system factors, will be of immense help in formulating targeted strategies in dealing with postnatal care awareness, utilization, and quality.

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