Knowledge Management for Improving Maternal Health in Rural India

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Abstract

Maternal health is a vital indicator of a nation's health. There were 303,000 global maternal deaths in 2015, and India accounted for 45,000 (15 percent) deaths most of which were preventable. This study aims to identify the factors influencing the decisions, knowledge network and the ontology of the maternity care in rural scenario.

The study is based on primary data collected from two districts namely, Hugli and Paschim Medinipur in West Bengal, India. The effects of socio-demographic status of women on the knowledge level, attitude, practice (KAP), intention, health status (HS), health seeking behavior (HSB), and maternity care service utilization (SU) have been examined. The findings on the effect of socio-demographic-status on, KAP, HS and intention show significant differences in both the districts. The important factors for improving health literacy of the women are: recognizing the early symptoms of pregnancy, knowledge of risks of hemorrhage, risks related to fever and infection, problems due to criticality of abdominal pains, and importance of taking medicines. Managing knowledge and redesigning maternity care services aligned with the attitude, intention and the health seeking behavior of rural women might lead to increased service utilization.

Knowledge networks for seeking pregnancy related knowledge while taking various critical decisions during the pregnancy episode was constructed. The networks show heterogeneous pattern and low level of interactionfor seeking knowledge on different issues related to pregnancy. A large number of husbands were not involved in various critical decisions during pregnancy. The analysis of the existing knowledge level, knowledge

sources and service utilization by the women was used to redesign the existing ontology of maternity care.

The service utilization (SU) of maternity care services has been analyzed by dividing the entire episode into important tasks. A framework for effective knowledge sharing for improving the maternal health through increased service utilization is recommended. A service blueprint for the same has been proposed.