

Reproductive Health Status Of Tribal Women: A Study In Anantapuramu District, Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

Reproductive health forms a major part of the health needs of a population. The concept of reproductive health recognizes the diversity of the special health needs of women before, during and beyond child bearing age. In India the health status of man and woman is inextricably bound up with social, cultural and economic factors that influence all aspects of lives. The health of tribal woman is more important because tribal women work harder and family economy and management depends on them. A social survey was conducted among tribal women of Anantapuram to understand the reproductive health status. The main objective of this study is to understand the reproductive health status of tribal women. A social survey was conducted among 300 tribal women in Anantapuram district. The study results that most of the tribal women are under nourished. They are lacking in their basic education, proper health care and other such amenities to lead a happy and healthy life. The study recommended that need for promoting nutritional status of tribal women and encouraging for institutional deliveries to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity.

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I. Introduction

Reproductive health forms a major part of health needs of a population. The concept of reproductive health organizes the diversity of the special health needs of women before, during and beyond child bearing age³. In India reproductive health status of man and women is inextricably bound up with social, cultural and economic factors that influence all aspects of lives. The health of tribal women is more important because tribal women work harder and family economy and management depends on them.

In Anantapur district the total population of schedule tribe is 1,27,161 poverty and illiteracy are the main challenging tasks in this district. The total schedule tribe literacy rate is only 44.52%, the female literacy rate is 30.29% and male literacy rate is 57.22%. Still some of the people believe in traditions like early marriages are high in this district. Malnutrition, illiteracy illness, caste and gender discrimination are rampant. The tribal women fulfill multiple production functions in addition to bearing children and performing household chore. The tribal women engaged in agriculture and construction work. Women are obliged to resume work even before they have fully recovered from the process of child birth.

In the last decade maternal nutrition during the pregnancy and location relieved increasing attention. Obviously, it is essential for their own health that a mothers diet should be with adequate protein and calories⁵.

Globally the world health organization recommends exclusive breast feeding for first 6 months to achieve optimal growth and development. Breast feeding also has a contribution to make to reducing inequalities in health. Location or breast feeding has a significant positive impact on the health of infants and is the best nutrition source¹.

In many tribal communities, majority of birth occur without the help of skilled assistants. Home deliveries in the absence of skilled professionals have been associated with adverse infant and maternal outcome. Presence of a professional attendant at each birth can lead to marked reduction in maternal mortality and morbidity².

The poor health condition of anantapur tribal's is reflected in the status of their reproductive health correlated with individual and household, socio-economic conditions. The reproductive rate of women all through the process of gestation, birth, breastfeeding and child rearing places her at the focal point of populations reproductive health⁴.hence current study focuses on reproductive health of tribal women to understand over all conditions of the tribal reproductive health in anantapuram district.

II. Methodology

The word tribe is generally used for a social cohesive unit, associated with a territory, the members of which regard them as politically autonomous. The constitution of India provides a protective discrimination in favor of STs for removing the age old social disparities from which these classes suffer. The constitution of India provides in article 15(4) that the state can make special provision for advancement of any socially and

educationally backward classes of citizens for schedule tribe. The directive principles of state policy also lay down in article 46 the need for promotion of educational and economic interest of schedule tribes.

Being a backward district, it deserves a good alternative for improving reproductive health of men and women. Maternal, infant and neonatal mortality can be reduced by addressing health issues. By improving reproductive health and economic levels of the people can be improved by increasing their productivity. A social survey was conducted among 300 tribal women to study the reproductive health status of tribal women at Nallagunta thanda, Kadiri taluk and D.K thanda, athmakur mandal in anantapuram district.

III. Results

The study results shows that the maximum tribal women were illiterate (71.4%) followed by 18.2% literates, 9% up to the primary level and 1.4% up to the middle level. According to distribution of occupation 76.8% were engaged in agricultural work, 14% in construction work and 9.15 % in house hold work only. The study shows that the age at the marriage is 15-16 yrs and age of first conception of tribal women is 17-18 yrs. The percentage distribution of subjects according to antenatal care 3.6% ST women were made 8-9 visits for antenatal checkup, 11.2% made 1-2 visits and 85.2% did not have even single antenatal checkup during pregnancy. According to the place of deliveries, 3.8% of child deliveries were conducted at health centers and 96.2% of the child deliveries were conducted at home. 24.67% ST women were used contractive and 75.33% were not using any contractive devices. 78.9% ST women were fed their first new born with colostrums, 1.2% with sugar water and 19.9% with honey.

IV. Discussion

The study results indicate that the early marriages, early birth is common in tribal women. Therefore, in order to improve the health status of the tribal women, the health care delivery should be designed for each specific tribal group in such a way to cater to their specific needs and problems by ensuring personal involvement.

Education play on important role for the development of society. Education brings about awareness which in turn makes women conscious of her own as well as her Childs health and wellbeing. The women is able to understand the significance of antenatal care, small family size etc. health education should be impacted by the local tribal women with guidelines provided by health functionaries.

V. Plan Of Action

I recommended to improve the health status of tribal women, the health care delivery system should be design for each specific tribal group in such a way to cater to their specific needs and problems by ensuring personal involvement

1. To reduce early marriages
2. The nutritional and health status of pregnant tribal women need to be improved by adequate intake of nutritious diet, including iron and minerals and also by 100% immunization
3. The tribal women in their advanced stage of pregnancy should be advised to reduce their work load and take adequate rest
4. The habit of taking alcohol and drugs should be discouraged
5. The children should be properly immunized, the harmful practices of discarding colostrums, delayed initiation of breastfeeding and complementary feeds should be avoided and health education aspects should be properly explained to tribal women
6. Maintenance of personal hygiene in connection with child birth, abortion or menstruation should be properly explained by health professionals in order to prevent the infections of female genital tract
7. 100% institutional deliveries should be promoted to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity

VI. Conclusion

Reproductive health is an indicator of the social justice, human rights and empowerment of the tribal population central to social work. The study results indicate that early marriages and early births are common in tribal community. The study outcome established an inverse association between background characteristics of women and their early pregnancy, behavior among tribal population.

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