

Differentials and Determinants of Full Antenatal Care Utilization among Scheduled Caste Mothers in India: Evidence from NFHS-5 (2019-21)

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Background: One of the key factors contributing to high maternal death rate among women in India is inadequate utilisation of full ANC. Despite very low level of ANC coverage among mothers belonging to Schedule Castes, as compared to privileged groups, no study has focused on ANC utilisation among them at national-level.

Methods: Using data from the National Family Health Survey-5, 2019-21, a sample of 30394 SC mothers was analysed. The outcome variable full ANC was determined from three components. Bivariate statistics was employed to determine the significance of association between full ANC utilisation and its predictors. Furthermore, to investigate the net effect of the predictor variables on full ANC coverage, univariate and multivariate binary logistic regression was applied.

Results: Only 30% of SC mothers received full ANC with 58% undergoing four or more ANC visits, 47% ingesting the recommended amount of IFA, and 84% receiving TT injections at least twice. Mothers aged 30-39 years, those who had higher education (AOR: 1.89, 95% CI: 1.62-2.20), belonged to rich households (AOR: 1.49, 95% CI: 1.32-1.68), had high exposure to mass media (AOR: 1.32, CI: 1.09-1.60), met with health workers (AOR:1.27, CI:1.17-1.35), belonged to southern (AOR: 2.07, CI: 1.86-2.30) region had higher likelihood of utilising full ANC. On the other hand, multiparous (AOR: 0.55, CI: 0.48-0.61), rural (AOR: 0.85, CI: 0.77-0.93) and Muslim mothers (AOR: 0.67, CI: 0.0-0.90) had lower odds of the same.

Conclusions: Several socio-demographic, and behavioural factors were found to be significantly associated with full ANC coverage among SC mothers.

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