

Community-Based Nutritional Awareness cum Evaluation Program for Pregnant and Lactating Mothers

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Abstract:

Pregnancy and motherhood are natural processes in the lives of women of reproductive age. These processes are generally considered positive and fulfilling experiences. For various reasons, many women lose their life as a result of these processes. The government's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) is to reduce the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) to 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030. However, progress toward achieving these goals remains poor. As 2023 is being celebrated as International Millet Year, adding millet to the daily diet can enhance the availability of essential nutrients in the diet. The aim of this paper was to reduce maternal and child mortality, improve maternal health education, support health-related activities, raise community nutritional status, and raise awareness about health and hygiene among villagers. Moreover, it seeks to conduct training classes for AWW, ASHA workers, and pregnant and lactating mothers regarding different healthy cooking techniques to avoid unintentional loss of nutrients from the food. A low-budget recipe booklet was provided, including different recipes for one meal or snack of the day. Booklet comprised of 30 low-cost recipes (vegetable daliya, chana dal cheela, daliya khichdi, chana methi veg, etc.). Knowledge regarding the inclusion of millet in an adequate amount was given using different recipes that can be prepared in the kitchen. The program ran for three months. It created awareness for antenatal care, postnatal care, and immunization services, enhance the mother's nutritional needs, and promote local, nutritious food options. This paper strengthens the implementation of existing schemes in terms of improving maternal health. Women had poor knowledge of nutrients in food, their types, sources, functions, and the consequences of deficiencies. This initiative came out to be an effective and efficient medium to influence improvements in nutritional knowledge and reduce malnourishment.

Keywords: Lactating mothers, Low cost recipes, Malnourishment, Nutritional awareness, Pregnant women, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).