

Pregnancy Neglect in Nepal

By Deanna Smith and Codi Petzold

Pregnancy Neglect in Nepal is a problem on the rise. If they had more facilities, if women did not have such harsh life situations, if they had more money in Nepal, if medicine was easier to be accessed in need, and if doctors were not prejudice and better educated, then maybe this problem would be solved. Multiple studies have been done on the birth defects in children born in the rural areas of Nepal. Many volunteers have gone to help these women who are pregnant and infected, but only so many volunteers can help so many women in need. These women are in areas that are difficult to get to, and most women are much too busy trying to survive and help their children survive to get medical help they unknowingly need for them and their unborn child.

Transportation in the rural areas of Nepal is limited to many citizens. 86 percent of the population of Nepal live in the hills, and very little facilities are located in the rural areas of Nepal. Those families who live in the rural areas are run by the women, and the family structures are a mess with separations everywhere because of immigration to different parts of Nepal, and occasionally to other countries to find work. The women are constantly working to provide for the many children they already have. In the rural areas of Nepal families have on average 7 kids per household, luckily it means at age 6 they

can be of use to help provide for the younger ones. Many of the pregnant women are incapable of getting to the urban areas where help can be provided.

Women in Nepal have rough living situations to the point where they will do anything to get money. Men in Nepal will rape women for enjoyment or simply to show dominance, but if the women are lucky they will get paid for sexual intercourse. Being pregnant is a huge hit to them financially, because they are unable to sell their bodies. Other ways to make money is for the women to sell their daughters, as light labor or for sexual intercourse. If the daughter becomes pregnant at a young age both the baby and the mother are in serious danger, and the lack of medical assistance makes the risk greater. That is why women hope for a boy. Sons can be sold as slaves to do harder labor. Occasionally when starvation is encroaching mothers will send their children to steal from the market; the younger and smaller the child the better, or negotiate themselves for food. The rural area has bad housing for weather conditions.

The money needed in Nepal is to help build facilities closer to the population with a fully trained staff to help keep women and children healthy through child birth.

“We propose a two-pronged approach by starting quality improvement of maternity care from both ends of maternity service”

Albrecht Jahn, Department of hygiene and public health.

Because of the lack of facilities, in 1997 doctors did field work on pregnant women in the Banke district. The facilities there are not located near the people who need it the most. The only place that will provide delivery care is in the capital city, which most people can not reach or do not have the resources to reach. Many districts lack the obstetric services that pregnant women need. The zonal hospital has very little qualified staff with only one obstetrician, and six qualified nurses. The services needed do not need much training and could be done, some in one year. If more people would go through the training, there would be more available help.

A study was done in Nepal called the first line and this consisted of the rural population. The study found that 90% of the population lived within 5km of a health facility but those facilities did not offer all of what is needed for a pregnant woman. This is causing more and more women to not go to the facilities. Their lack of services causes the women to be only half covered for their pregnancy and not the whole pregnancy. Some facilities only offer labor which most babies do not make it to. The risk of still birth rises with each pregnancy with it being 70/100. Still birth takes an emotional hit on women who do still birth. Still birthing is one of the worst things these women have to go through.

Most doctors in Nepal are male. Some males discriminate against black women. Or they judge them because of their living conditions. Although doctors from better off countries go to Nepal to help women in need, with not only pregnancy but also STDs, the pregnancy and sexually infected rate is so high, it's hard for these doctors to help everyone, especially since it's mostly volunteer work. Doctors that do not have to live in the rural areas of Nepal are much more interested in helping the people with money and not such critical situations. They frown upon the girls who have slept with many men, and think of them as unclean and worthless, that they deserve to be neglected.

Although doctors are scarce in the rural areas of Nepal some doctors are located in the villages scarcely, they do not know much, nobody in the rural areas has had an incredibly high education. Most of their "doctors" are witch doctors and only practice methods involving herbs and spices. Which can help with a healthy pregnancy, but with dirty water, living conditions, and sexual diseases, they need more than herbs. Occasionally herbs can also interfere with a pregnancy and cause problems. Herbs can also cause an illness or sexual infection to flare. In rare cases it can also cause a bad mix with an environmental substance the woman comes in contact with and cause a bad reaction. With limited supplies there is no way to test on allergies, which can be bad, especially if it is not a clear obvious symptom. They are inexperienced and are not quite sure of the substances they are using; they are relying on spirits to guide them.

In conclusion the conditions in the rural area of Nepal are no place for a woman that is impregnated, probably not knowing who the father is, and with the medical facilities no way to find out or keep the baby and mother healthy. No woman deserves this treatment or to be put in this situation. If they had more facilities, if women did not have such harsh life situations, if they had more money in Nepal, if medicine was easier to be accessed in need, and if doctors were not prejudice and better educated, then maybe this problem would be solved.

To think if women had better treatment in Nepal the generations to come would not have to suffer the way their parents, grandparents, great grandparents.

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