

Awareness Regarding Indigenous Use of Food for Maternal Health Care

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ABSTRACT The health of the future generations depend upon the health of the mother, especially so during the pre and post delivery period. Indigenous methods and materials have been used since ages to take care of the women during these crucial times. The present study is an attempt to determine the awareness of the rural women regarding the properties of some selected foods in terms of their effectiveness for maternal health care. The data collected from three districts of Punjab (India) during the year 2002-2003 using a structured interview schedule revealed that majority of the respondents had low level of education but they were aware of the properties due to which the foods were used for maternal health care. Many properties of Asafoetida (*Ferula asafetida*), Blankulthi (*Cassia absus*), Chunga (*Symplocus cochinchinensis*), Cumin seeds (*Cuminum cyminum*) and Poppy seeds (*Vetiveria zizanioides*) were known to more than seventy percent of the women. But the result point towards a scope for dissemination of information regarding the importance of these foods sources as the women were not aware of all the properties of these food sources. A planned strategies should focus on dissemination of knowledge on use of these foods for their sustainability in maternal health care through use of local resources.