



Study of conditional cash transfer programme *Janani Suraksha Yojana* for the promotion of institutional births : Studies from selected states of India

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Abstract

Background: To accelerate the coverage of skilled birth attendance, in 2005, the Indian government initiated a conditional cash transfer (CCT) programme, JananiSurakshaYojana (JSY) that provides cash to women upon delivering in health facilities. The attempt to increase the utilization of facilities through the JSY, given the health system's fragile state, has raised concerns about the program's success at achieving its intended goal of reducing the maternal mortality ratio (MMR).

Aim: To understand the implementation of the CCT policy to promote institutional births in India, with a special focus on nine of India's poorest states.

Methods: Thesis uses both quantitative and qualitative methods. The changes in coverage and inequalities in institutional births in the nine states following the initiation of JSY were analyzed by comparing levels before and during the programme using state and district level data. The association between the coverage of institutional births and MMR was assessed using regression analysis (I). The change in socioeconomic inequalities in institutional births was estimated using the concentration index and concentration curve, and contributions of different factors to inequalities was computed by decomposition analysis (II). The quality of referral services was studied by conducting a survey of health facilities (n=96) and post-partum women (n=1182) in three districts of Madhya Pradesh. Conditional logistic regression was used to study the association between maternal referrals and adverse birth outcomes, while spatial data for referrals were analyzed using Geographical Information Systems (III). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with government and non-government stakeholders (n=11) to explore their perceptions of the JSY, and the data were analyzed using a thematic framework approach (IV).

Results: In five years, institutional births increased significantly from a pre-programme average of 20% to 49%. However, no significant association between district-level institutional birth proportions and MMR was found

I The inequality in access to institutional delivery care, although reduced since the introduction of JSY, still persists. Differences in male literacy, availability of emergency obstetric care (EmOC) in public facilities and poverty explained 69% of the observed inequality. While MMR has decreased in all areas since the introduction of JSY, it has declined four times faster in the richest areas than in the poorest

II Adjusted odds for adverse birth outcomes among those referred were twice than in those who were not referred (AOR 2.6, 95% CI 1.1-6.6). A spatial analysis of the inter-facility transfer time indicated that maternal deaths occurred despite good geographic access to EmOC facilities

III While most health officials considered stimulus in the form of JSY money to be essential to promote institutional births, non-government stakeholders criticized JSY as an easy way of addressing basic developmental issues and emphasized the need for improvements to health services, instead. Supply-side constraints and poor care quality were cited as key challenges to programme success, also several implementation challenges were cited

Conclusions: Although there was a sharp increase in coverage and a decline in

institutional delivery care inequalities following the introduction of JSY, the availability of critical care is still poor. CCT programmes to increase the service utilization need to be essentially supported by the provision of quality health care services, in order to achieve their intended impacts on health outcomes.

Keywords: Maternal health, conditional cash transfer, Inequality, Referral, India

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