

## A 10 YEAR STUDY OF INFANT MORTALITY IN THE COMMUNITY HEALTH PROJECT AREA OF THE JAFFNA UNIVERSITY.

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Infant Mortality is considered one of the sensitive indicators of the Socio-economic and health status, and health care of a community. In recent years, political unrest and the war situation have been detrimental to normal life of the people. Life was affected in every possible situation and at different levels. This study attempts to evaluate the impact of this abnormal situation using one indicator, namely infant mortality.

This study was carried out in the Jaffna University Community Health Project Area in Kokuvil-Kondavil which had a population of around 32,000 prior to the mass exodus in October 1995.

The study period was from 1.1.1988 to 31.12.1997.

Data were collected using an interviewer administered questionnaire. The interviewers were family Health Workers.

During the 10 year period 149 infant deaths were recorded. All except one death for which data was not available, have been analysed.

The Infant Mortality Rate varied between 14 per 1000 live births in 1990, and 69 in 1996. There was a gradual rise in trend during the past 10 years.

59.5% of the infants who died were males. 56.1% of the deaths occurred within 4 weeks of birth (neonatal period).

The major causes of deaths were respiratory tract infection (33.1%), Prematurity and Low Birth Weight (LBW) (28.4%), and Gastro-intestinal tract infection (14.2%). Respiratory tract infection and Gastro-intestinal tract infection were mostly among post neonates. A majority of those who died of prematurity and LBW were early neonates. 45.2% of the infants who died had a birth weight of less than 2500 grams.

70% of the infants died in a Government Hospital, 7% in a Private Hospital and 23% at home.

50% of the mothers had a monthly family income of less than Rupees 1000.

54% of the mothers of Infants who died had made less than 5 Ante Natal visits. In 56% of the cases, the Family Health Worker (FHW) had made less than 5 visits during the antenatal period. In 11% of the cases the FHW had never visited the mothers during their pregnancy.

Out of the 148 infant deaths only 18 (12.2%) had been register of births and deaths.

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