

MATERNAL DIET, NUTRITIONAL STATUS, WEIGHT GAIN IN PREGNANCY, BIRTH  
WEIGHT, BREAST - FEEDING CAPACITY AND GROWTH OF THE YOUNG INFANT  
IN RELATION TO ETHNICITY

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This work in the Henemulla urban slum carried out under the auspices of the LaSallian Community Education Services programme examined the above relationships according to ethnicity in 1986 - 1987.

Dietary deficiencies of energy, protein, iron, calcium and vitamins, the limiting factors of the diet of the poor mothers where supplemented daily for 180 days of the pregnancy resulted in a weight gain ranging from 6 - 10 kgs.

Weight gain was found to be the key and overriding factor responsible for the marked reduction in low birth weight, ensuring full lactation resulting in good growth of the young infant in spite of the high percentage of undernutrition and stunting in the mothers. Ethnicity too played only a minor part in the causality.

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