

# Culture and Nutrition: A Qualitative Exploration of Food Intake Behavior among Lactating Women in a Tea Garden Community, Bangladesh

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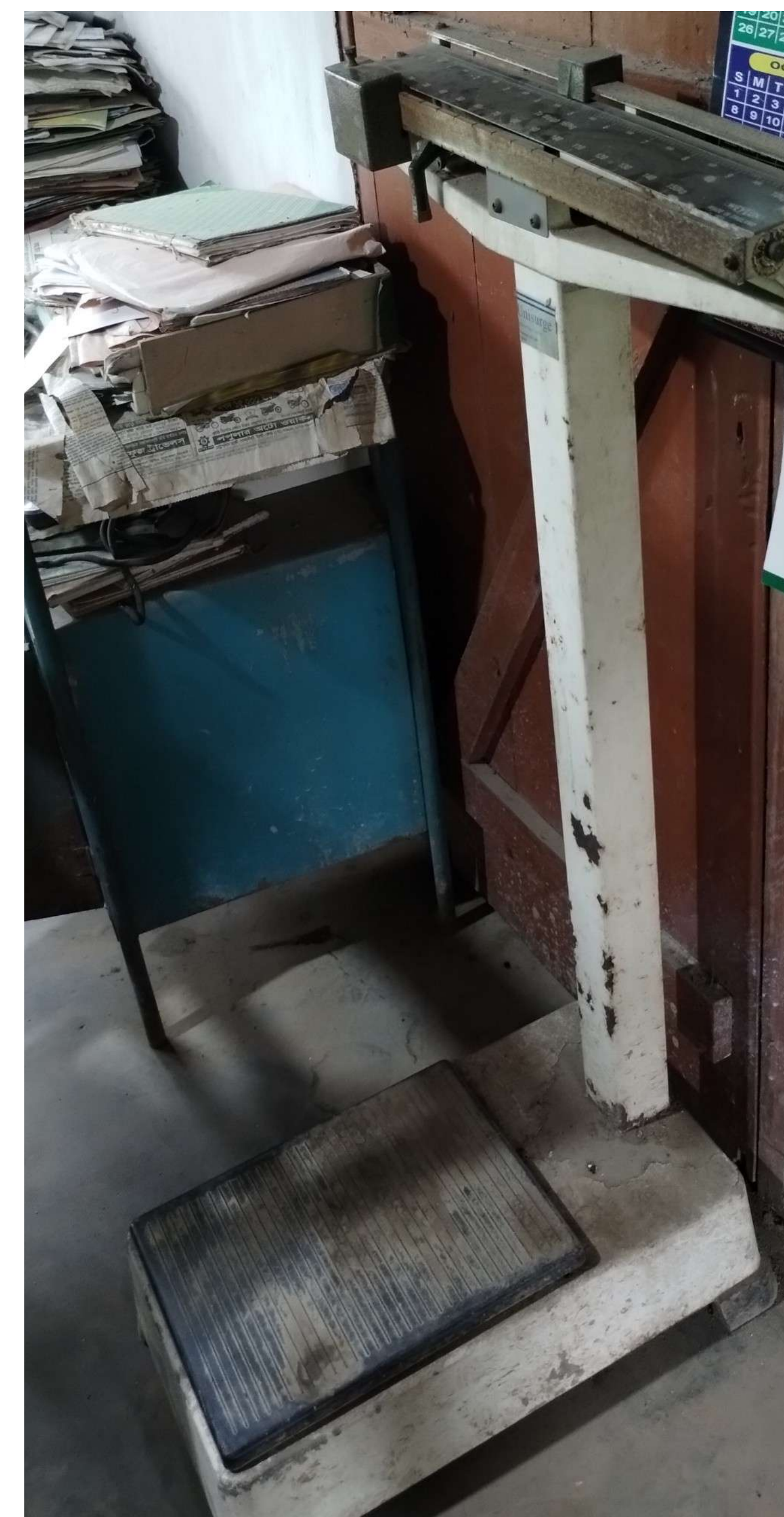
## Background and Objective

Tea garden workers are nearly 14% of the total ethnic minorities and 0.22% of the total population in Bangladesh (Hossain et al., 2017). Tea garden people are mostly tribal, poor and backward Hindu by caste and colonial Attitude and policy of the rich man made them marginalized class – Food Intaking, Healthcare Facilities - which is isolated from the mainstream of the society and eventually shaping their nutrition and food intake behavior (Biswas et al., 2018). The research question driving this study is, **How do cultural beliefs and practices shape the food intake behavior of lactating mothers in a tea garden community?** To address this question, this study is focused on these objectives,

- To know and understand the cultural beliefs and practices regarding post-pregnancy.
- To explore the food intake behavior of tea garden lactating mothers.
- To find out the underlying factors influencing food intake behavior these mothers.

## METHODOLOGY

- This study adopts a **qualitative research** design.
- We adopted **in-depth interviews (IDI)** and **Key informant Interviews (KII)** to gather qualitative data focusing on cultural beliefs and practices that shape the food intake behavior of lactating mothers.
- Using these data of **IDI** ( Total 20 : 12 mothers, 8 household members), **KII** ( Total 5: 2 Midwives, 1 TBA, 1 Medical Officer, 1 Local Hospital Staff) and **FGD** (Total 2: 1 Community mother, 1 HHH)
- We generated a thematic codebook containing **cultural beliefs, post pregnancy, food intake behavior** components and emergent themes including the **factors regarding these behaviors and reference groups**.
- NVIVO has been used for the analysis of data



## FINDINGS

- Cultural beliefs, family traditions, and societal norms all have significant impact on the food intake behavior of lactating women.
- Factors such as socioeconomic, ancestral practices and beliefs, and gender concepts play a vital role in shaping these dietary behaviors.
- Most of the mothers rely primarily on vegetables and often ignore other nutritious food sources such as protein intake.
- Some fishes are being avoided due to some traditional belief that eventually create a lack of nutrition

*“An imbalance of nutrition for lactating women in the tea garden, affecting their ability to properly produce breast milk for their babies and eventually causes physical problems for both babies and mothers.” (Healthcare Service Provider\_KII2)*

- The Local community hospital does not have proper the medicine supplies for the mothers
- Traditional Belief even creates an impact on taking medicine timely.

*“ We do not take any food during the Chandra Grohon (Lunar Eclipse) as it will be not good for our child if I am pregnant or I gave birth.” (Community Mother\_IDI11)*



## STUDY IMPLICATIONS

Based on the scenario of food taking behavior, development organizations, international bodies, and United Nations-based health organizations that work on nutritional education and health promotion around the world can work and come up with new plans and projects in South Asia to reach the SDG 3. Moreover, individuals in the academic research will be benefited from this study to explore the food intake behavior of these mothers and those who have chronic illness such as kidney diseases, heart diseases, liver diseases or acute severely ill mothers.

Methods	IDI	KII	FGD
<b>Participants Category</b>	Lactating Mothers, Household Members	Service Providers – Midwife, TBA, Medical Officer, Medical Staff	Lactating Mothers and HHH
<b>No. of Participants</b>	20	5	2

