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## FOOD TABOO – AN UNMASKED THREAT TO HEALTHY PREGNANCY: A STUDY AMONG PREGNANT MOTHERS LIVING IN SLUMS OF DHAKA, BANGLADESH

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**F**ood Taboo – An Unmasked Threat to Healthy Pregnancy: A Study among Pregnant Mothers Living in Slums of Dhaka, Bangladesh aimed to investigate the prevalent food taboos and misconception practiced by the underprivileged community of the capital of Bangladesh. A six month long cross-sectional study had some crucial findings which proved to be significant public health challenges. The most common food taboos indicated that twin fruits or vegetables would cause twin pregnancy, which has no scientific verification. Other taboos focussing plant food items were also prevalent among them. It was surprising that some mothers believed eating fish during pregnancy will lead the child having scales and fish like head and salted or dried fishes consumption may lead to birth of dull-headed baby. Even they believed that milk production may be hindered by prawn. Their meat consumption was found to be limited sometimes with the belief that eating duck meat may lead the baby having harsh voice and shockingly eggs were said to create psychological problems in baby. During the interview, some mothers denied to feed their babies colostrum as they considered that colostrum might upset infant's stomach. Thus protein rich foods of high bioavailability was less consumed by majority of the studied population. Where medical science and pharmacology are advancing, the existence of superstitions, food taboos and misconceptions, illiteracy, insufficient nutrition education and untrained community health workers are the prominent barriers to improving public health and achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the underprivileged and deprived communities of developing countries like Bangladesh.

### Biography

Nandeeta Samad graduated from Institute of Nutrition and Food Science, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. She obtained master's degree in Nutrition and Food Science from the same institute of University of Dhaka. Later on she started working as Research Associate in South Asia Institute for Social Transformation (SAIST). Her contribution in Public Health research and community development brought her recognitions of Associate Fellow at Royal Commonwealth Society, United Kingdom and Fellow at South Asian Youth Society (SAYS). She has several articles published in different international journals and portals. Presently, she is pursuing MSc Public Health at University of East London, United Kingdom.

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