

# Community-Based Pregnancy Care Services

Bangladesh has made substantial progress in improving health outcomes over recent decades; however, maternal malnutrition and antenatal care (ANC) services remain persistent public health challenges. High levels of micronutrient deficiencies among women of reproductive age contribute to adverse pregnancy outcomes, including low birth weight. To address these issues, SMC, with the support of Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), introduced **FullCare** Multiple Micronutrient Supplements (MMS) in 2021, based on the UNIMMAP formulation, and integrated its distribution nationwide through Star providers of SMC. Despite these efforts, ANC utilization remains suboptimal, particularly among rural and underserved populations, due to financial constraints and mobility restrictions. SMC has been implementing community mobilization program in 153 upazilas across 64 districts through 4 implementing partner NGOs. As a component of SMC's community mobilization activity, SMC has deployed trained paramedics across all 153 upazilas to deliver pregnancy care services in communities through dedicated 30 service points in each upazilla to improve equitable access to quality maternal healthcare. Each service point covers approximately 150-200 pregnant women. These paramedics are offering basic pregnancy care services, including weight, height, and blood pressure measurement; urine tests for albumin and blood tests for sugar; and counseling on nutrition, pregnancy danger signs, and the benefits of MMS and calcium supplements. They also refer high-risk pregnancies to the nearby designated health facilities. They advise pregnant women to receive at least one ANC service from a qualified doctor and promote institutional delivery. This initiative has been fully functional since January, 2025.

SMC conducted a study to understand ANC service utilization among pregnant women and use of supplements (MMS and calcium) during pregnancy. This study covered 2,160 women who had given birth within the preceding 12 months of data collection. The survey collected information from 72 villages across 24 upazilas during February to March 2026. Selected indicators were compared with rural estimates from Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) 2022.

## Study Coverage



**Mothers  
Interviewed**

**2,160**



**Upazilas  
Covered**

**24**



**Implementing  
Partners**

**4**



**Data Collection**

**Feb-Mar  
2026**

## KEY FINDINGS



Findings reveal that overall, 10.8% of women received advice on nutrition, healthy diet, and iron or folic acid supplementation before their most recent pregnancy. Thirteen percent of women took nutritional supplements before the conception.

## Comparison of Selected Maternal Health Indicators Between SMC Intervention Areas and BDHS 2022 Rural Estimates

| Indicators                           | SMC intervention areas | BDHS 2022 rural estimates |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Received at least one ANC service    | 97%                    | 93%                       |
| Received four or more ANC services   | 58%                    | 36%                       |
| Received ANC from a qualified doctor | 87%                    | 82%                       |
| Delivered in a health facility       | 75%                    | 63%                       |
| Delivered by qualified doctors       | 59%                    | 54%                       |

*Comparisons with BDHS 2022 are descriptive and should not be interpreted as causal effects.*

The above table shows that the maternal health indicators reported in the intervention areas were higher than the corresponding BDHS 2022 rural estimates. The largest difference was observed in receipt of four or more ANC visits, 58% in the intervention areas compared with 36% in rural BDHS. Facility delivery was also higher in the intervention areas (75% versus 63%). In addition, 97% received any ANC, 87% received ANC from a qualified doctor, and 59% were delivered by a qualified doctor, compared with 93%, 82%, and 54%, respectively, in the BDHS 2022 rural estimates.

## SMC Paramedics: Awareness and Service Uptake

**39.3%**

**Awareness of SMC paramedics**  
Among all 2,160 respondents

**71.5%**

**Utilized services from SMC paramedics**  
Among those who were aware (n=848)

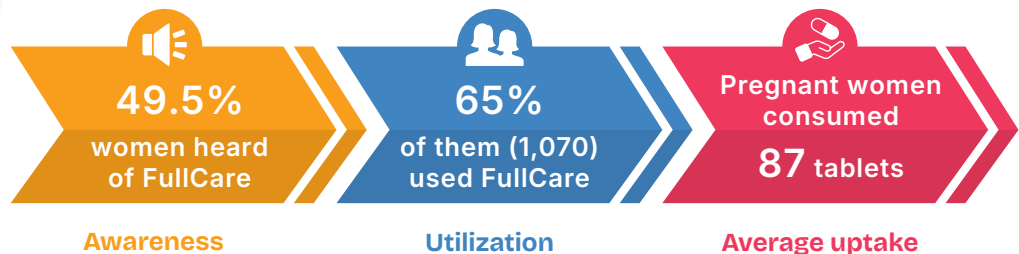
Among women who were aware, the high level of service uptake indicates strong acceptance of community service delivery by paramedics. Paramedics are offering services not only from the service points but also at households, especially to cover those pregnant women who are unwilling to travel to the service points. Findings show that about 51% of the pregnant women received pregnancy care services from service points, whereas around 49% of women received services from households, which demonstrates the flexibility of the community-based service delivery model.

### Services received from paramedics (n=606)

| Service received                        | %    |
|-----------------------------------------|------|
| Blood pressure measured                 | 88.3 |
| Weight measured                         | 84.7 |
| Urine test performed                    | 64.9 |
| Blood sugar measured                    | 33.8 |
| Counseling on nutrition                 | 71.0 |
| Counseling on danger signs of pregnancy | 22.3 |
| Counseling on MMS                       | 87.0 |
| Counseling on Calcium                   | 72.1 |

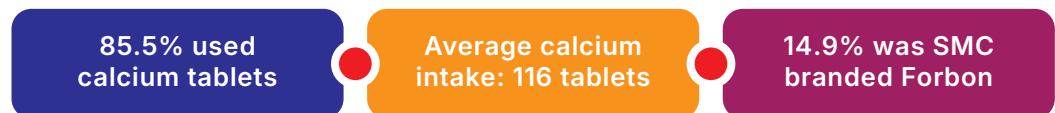
☐ Blood pressure and weight measurements were widely provided by paramedics, while counseling on danger signs during pregnancy and blood sugar measurement were comparatively low.

### Awareness-to-Use Pathway of FullCare



Findings revealed substantial reach and utilization of **FullCare** among pregnant women. Approximately half of all respondents were aware of the product, and 65.0% of them consumed it. Overall, 32.2% of women used **FullCare** during pregnancy, indicating significant progress even though the program is at its initial stage. Users consumed an average of 87 tablets, compared with an average recommended dose of 180 tablets, indicating meaningful uptake and an opportunity to improve completion of the recommended dose.

### Use of Calcium Supplements



Overall 85.5% of pregnant women used calcium tablets. On average, pregnant women consumed 116 calcium tablets. Among all used brands of calcium, SMC-branded calcium, **Forbon**, accounted for 14.9%.

☐ SMC's community-based paramedic services appears to be contributing to increased use of pregnancy care services and maternal supplements due to home and community-based services including basic screening, referral support, and product access through paramedics.

Conducted by

**MITRA AND ASSOCIATES**

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