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**MATERNAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH LOW BIRTH WEIGHT AMONG NEW-BORNS DELIVERED IN SELECTED GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS IN KALUTARA DISTRICT**

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**Background:** Low Birth Weight (LBW) is a major global public health concern, with profound implications on neonatal morbidity and mortality. Understanding the factors associated with LBW is crucial for effective interventions. Hence, this study was conducted to assess the maternal factors associated with low birth weight among newborns delivered in selected government hospitals in Kalutara District.

**Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 200 postnatal mothers who were selected using a stratified probability proportionate sampling technique, irrespective of the mode of delivery, at Teaching Hospital Kalutara and P. C. H Dias Memorial Hospital for Women Panadura. Data were collected using an interviewer administered questionnaire. Factors associated with LBW were assessed using Chi-square test at  $p < 0.05$  significance level.

**Results:** Response rate was 100%. The prevalence of low birth weight was 21.5% in the study settings. Maternal marital status ( $X^2 = 7.38$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ), maternal weight gain during pregnancy ( $X^2 = 5.18$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = 0.023$ ), maternal diet ( $X^2 = 11.988$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) and pre-pregnancy haemoglobin ( $X^2 = 4.78$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = 0.029$ ) showed a statistically significant association with LBW of the new-borns.

**Conclusion:** The study revealed that LBW is prevalent in the study settings. Maternal marital status, weight gain during pregnancy, maternal diet, and pre-pregnancy haemoglobin level were found to be significantly associated with LBW among the new-borns. Conducting targeted focused community-based health education, health promotion, screening and follow-up programmes for pre-pregnant females and antenatal mothers is recommended.

**Key words:** low birth weight, new-borns, maternal factors, associated, Kalutara