

# Welcoming Pregnant Women: Introducing Navigation and Support Services in a Secondary Health Facility in Bangladesh

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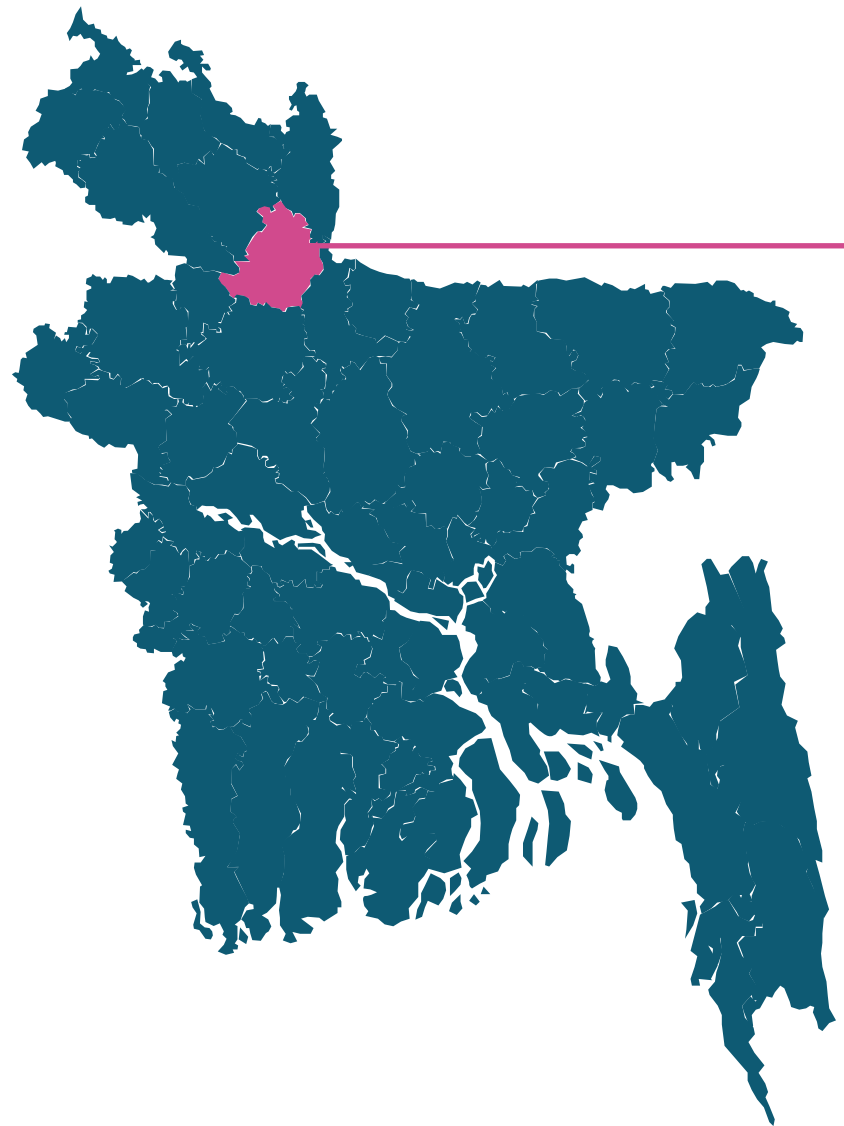
## Introduction

Maternal mortality remains high in Low-and Middle-income Countries (LMICs) like Bangladesh, driven by preventable causes such as inadequate healthcare access and delays in receiving care in health facilities, highlighting the need for improved support in health facilities.

## Aim

The study aimed to explore the opportunities and difficulties of introducing **Welcome Persons (WPs)**, a hospital navigation and support cadre for pregnant women, from the perspectives of recipients, patients' attendance, healthcare providers, and facility managers.


## Methods




**District Hospital**  
of Gaibandha

- **This qualitative study employed an ethnographic design, combining participant observation and interviews (IDI, KII and FGD)**
- **Data were collected through purposive sampling from:**
  - Healthcare providers
  - Facility managers
  - WPs
  - Pregnant and delivered women, and their attendants
- **Study Period:** 15 March - 30 April 2023


## 7 Responsibilities of WPs




**1** Welcoming pregnant women upon arriving the emergency section




**2** Notifying on call doctor or, health care provider about patient




**3** Navigating patient from emergency to labour room in case of admission




**4** Informing Senior Staff Nurse or, Midwives of labour room about patient



**5** Utilization of Pathology service provided by health facility



**6** Supporting attendant in collecting medicine for in-patient



**7** Helping mobilise both referred out and in patients between labor room and ambulance

## Thematic Findings

Enablers of the service of WPs	Barriers to the service of WPs	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduced waiting times</li><li>• Emergency technical and information management</li><li>• Brokers' free services ensured</li><li>• WP's behavioural decency</li><li>• Support for Educationally disadvantaged people</li></ul> <p><b>“</b> I know I can come to them and ask anything if I face any problem; at least they will show me a way like they escorted me right from the road and brought me here (labour ward). If for a less educated person like me, this is an advantage, then it's an even better service for uneducated ones.” <b>- Pregnant woman, Grade Eight, Housewife, 20y</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gender sensitivity in service provision</li><li>• Insufficient WP</li><li>• Additional engagements beyond assigned responsibilities</li></ul> <p><b>“</b> “My daughter (patient) got their services almost all day long. However, at night, I found no sisters (indicated female WPs) around. I mean, they are all constantly there in the daytime, but hardly any female staff are seen at night!” <b>- Patient attendant, Primary Education, Housewife, 55y</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introducing additional Cadre Support in other similar settings</li><li>• Increasing the number of WPs</li></ul> <p><b>“</b> “With such a limited workforce, it is almost impossible to manage such a huge workload. They are playing a significant role in providing quality services in the hospital, and I can say that very strongly. So, I wish these welcome persons' longer stay in the hospital. They are changing the momentum in the care provision of pregnant women, and my care providers are very satisfied with them, too.” <b>- Facility manager, MBBS, 50y</b></p>

## Key Takeaways

- Study revealed the **positive influence of WP** in maternal healthcare provision by ensuring timely services, preventing outsiders' interference, and contributing to prompt emergency management, specifically for educationally disadvantaged patients.
- It also discovered challenges such as a lack of human resources on the **night shift, logistical constraints**, and **potential gender insensitivity** by the recipients.

## Conclusion

The study findings explained the WP's intervention for facilitating maternal healthcare services and navigation among pregnant women. While they were well-received, addressing identified barriers is crucial for a sustainable positive impact on maternal healthcare in secondary health facility settings in Bangladesh.