

Incidents of maternal death and ill-health in nine districts of UP

As presented at Lucknow (UP) on 28 May 2009 by Mahila Swasthya Adhikar Manch and Healthwatch Forum UP

Case Summaries

1. S. (Schedule Caste), 28, a resident of **Kushinagar** decided to deliver in the government hospital when she was pregnant for the fourth time. During her pregnancy, she had two tetanus injections and twice had ante natal checkups, and she was completely healthy. On 15 December 07, at about 01:00pm, S started having labor pains. Her mother-in-law along with two other women from the village took her to a PHC which was 2kms away, walking, by that time it was already 04:00pm. At the PHC, the ANM said that she is about to deliver and asked them to buy the injection which increases the labor pain. In the next four hours, she gave her 13 injections, but still she didn't deliver the baby. After the 13th injection, S felt extremely uneasy and started screaming, on which the ANM started abusing her and slapped her thrice. Suddenly S's body became cold and she began to collapse, and later at about 08:00pm, she died. After the local woman's group and the NGO raised the case with national level officials, there was an enquiry into the matter and the ANM was suspended.
2. When M. (Schedule Caste), 26, a resident of **Mirzapur** was pregnant for the third time, she neither had any antenatal checkups nor had any immunization, but she was completely healthy. On 12th September 2008 at about 8:00pm, she started having labor pains. Her mother took her to a CHC which was 2kms away on a small cart, by then it was already 09:00pm. The ANM was present at the CHC and so she admitted M. The whole night, the ANM tried to deliver the child (she pressed M's abdomen many times), but nothing happened. Next day, the ANM asked the family to take M to the district hospital. But the family didn't have the means and the money, so they took her back home. Next day, at around 09:00am, they took her to a private hospital on a tractor, but the doctor refused to admit her. They pleaded in front of the doctor, and after some time he admitted her. She delivered a dead baby girl, and then they brought her back home. After 5 days, on 19 September 2008, she developed swelling and pain in her abdomen and legs, then her family took her about 40kms away to a government hospital which was closed at around 10:00pm. From there they took her to a private hospital where the doctor gave medicines worth Rs.250 but didn't admit her. So, they again took her to the government hospital, but since no one would open the gate, they waited outside till morning. She was admitted at around 8:00am and the doctor started a drip, but died within few hours. The family hired a tempo for Rs.700 to bring the body back home.
3. Twenty six year old R. (Scheduled Caste) from **Chandauli** district was pregnant for the second time. She had taken all the required vaccines during her pregnancy and was

completely healthy. On the afternoon of 18th October 08 her labour pain started. She was taken to the PHC on a cycle by her husband. They reached the PHC by 2:00 pm. The ANM present there admitted R and told them that the baby would be born in some time and asked R's husband to get three glucose bottles and three injections. At 11:00 in the night the ANM asked for another bottle of glucose. But R's husband did not have money left from his Rs 300. He had to travel 17Km back to his village to arrange for money. When he returned at around 6:00 in the morning, after arranging for Rs.9000 through loans, but he saw that R was lying dead and the staff had disappeared.

4. C. (Schedule Caste), 35, a resident of **Chitrakoot** has four children and she was pregnant for the fourth time. She had complete immunization during pregnancy. On 31 December 08, at about 06:00pm, she started having labor pains. Her family along with the ASHA took her in an auto rickshaw to a PHC, which was 3kms away. They got her admitted there at about 08:00pm. After admission, the staff nurse, dai and ASHA began helping her to deliver and after 2hrs she delivered a baby boy. The nurse demanded money and informed that C is not well so bring money for the medicines also. Once her husband left, she asked her mother-in-law and sister-in-law to take C away. Right then, they discovered that C was dead, they raised their voices, so the hospital authorities booked an auto rickshaw and kept her body in it. When the mother-in law enquired from the ASHA, she said that the nurse had pulled the child out with force, as a result of which, she bled profusely, and died. She died around 12:00 in the night, but her husband came at 01:00am, when they had to take a tractor to bring her body back home. Her child died in another 15 days time. C's husband was approached by a lawyer, the husband of another ASHA, who took away all the documents from C's husband and a payment of 1500. Later on, he got the husband 1000/- from the PHC doctor.
5. It was the fifth pregnancy for twenty seven year old N. (Other Backward Class) from **Gorakhpur/Sant Kabir Nagar** district. She had got two check-ups done during her pregnancy. She had also got her blood pressure checked. She had taken all the vaccines required and was completely healthy till the fifth month. From the seventh month her amniotic fluid started to leak. She had gone to the doctor with the ASHA regarding this problem and was taking medication. N's labor pain started on 30th December 2008 at around 5:00 AM. By 10:00 AM her family took her to the PHC in an auto. She met the ANM there but was not admitted immediately. She was admitted by 11:00 AM and a glucose bottle was administered but there was no improvement M's situation for the next two days. There was no delivery either. Therefore, on 02 January 2009, the ANM asked her to be taken to the district hospital. When she reached the Merrygold hospital, she was refused admission by the doctor as they were going for training. She was asked try another hospital. M was taken to a private hospital where she gave birth to a baby through a "small operation" that cost them Rs 6500. She continues to have health problems.

6. J. an Ansari Muslim woman of **Saharanpur** district was pregnant for the seventh time. She was 35 years old. She had taken all the immunization during her pregnancy and was healthy. Her labour pain started at 5:00 AM on 20th February, 2009. Her husband rented a private vehicle and went to the CHC. The ANM admitted her and told them that the delivery would happen soon. She tried to facilitate the delivery and applied pressure on J's abdomen. When J started screaming out of pain, the ANM slapped her and tried to silence her, and complained to her husband that J was very ill mannered. The ANM asked J's husband to get an injection. After administering it, she told one of the attendants to look after J and went home. It was around 8:00 AM at that time. After she went, J's pains stopped. J's husband went to call the ANM but she sent him back saying there was nothing to worry. Only after he had called her for the third time she came to see J. The attendants started to apply strong pressure on J's abdomen. After an hour at round 9:30 the attendant came out of the room and said that the baby had been born and demanded Rs. 5000. J's husband borrowed Rs.3500 and added Rs.1500 and paid them Rs.5000. A doctor came with some papers and asked J's husband to sign on them. But he refused to sign on any paper without seeing his wife. When he forced himself into the room where J was, he found her dead. The hospital staff used physical force and administered an injection on him which made him unconscious. Later a political leader and the ANM tried to strike a compromise and offered him money, but he refused.
7. C was a 23 year-old Schedule Caste resident of **Banda** had three children and she didn't want another child. But, when she got to know that she is pregnant again, both the husband and wife planned on an abortion. On 21 February 08, C. went to the CHC along with her husband, where she asked the doctor for an abortion. But the doctor actually performed a sterilization operation to meet his target, without her consent. She discovered that she was pregnant only when her abdomen started growing, and when she got her check up done at the same CHC. She had lots of problems during her pregnancy and was not able to walk at all after 6th month. They used to go to the CHC for treatment where the doctors prescribed medicines worth Rs.2000-Rs.3000. On 11 October 2008, they went to the CHC when her pain started and reached at about 06:00am. She was given 6 injections to increase the pain for which the nurse took Rs.600. After the delivery, for a month she still had pain in the sterilization stitches, and difficulty in sitting. They got the JSY money within 7 days, but took loan for the money they spent on the medicines.
8. R was a 26 year-old Schedule Caste resident of **Azamgarh** who was pregnant for the second time, had her three ante natal checkups and all the injections in a CHC. She was completely healthy. On 25 March 09, at about 01:00am R had her labor pains. Due to the unavailability of means to take her to the hospital, they waited till morning, and then around 06:00am took her to a CHC on a thela. The ANM was present in the CHC at that point in time, so she admitted her. She asked the family members to bring injections to

increase labor pain, and after about an hour she delivered a baby. After the delivery, mother and son both were healthy, but after about 20 minutes the placenta was still not out. So the ANM pulled the retained placenta with the forceps, but then R started bleeding profusely. Within half an hour, her condition started deteriorating, and at about 12:20pm she died. After 15 days the ASHA gave the husband a JSY bearer cheque of Rs.1400 and advised her to take another woman along to encash it. The husband took another woman and got the cheque encashed. So R is officially recorded as a successful institutional delivery case!

9. N a 35-year old resident of **Muzaffarnagar** district was pregnant for the fifth time, but she didn't get any antenatal checkups and immunization, but she was completely healthy. She had completed 9 months of her pregnancy and on 26th April 09, she complained of pain and amniotic fluid coming out, so she went with her neighbor to the PHC. But, the doctor sent her back home telling her that she is fine, and still there is time for her delivery. On 03rd May 09, at about 08:00am, when her pains were stronger, her husband took her, the ASHA and a woman from the neighbor to the PHC. The nurse was present at the PHC, and she admitted N, but said both the mother and the child were in danger. She asked the husband to get the injection to increase the pain. At about 10:00am, a baby boy was born, who died within 5 minutes of birth. N's condition was deteriorating due to heavy bleeding and at about 07:00pm the doctor asked them to take her to district hospital. Her husband didn't have the money, but he had to hire a private vehicle to take her to the CHC and by the time they reached the CHC, she was already dead. The doctor at the CHC asked them to take her body away, because if there would be any enquiry, they will have to exhume the body in her grave for the post mortem.

NOTE:

- **In all the cases names have been removed protect the identity of the women**
- **In the seven cases of maternal death, postmortem has been done in only one case.**
- **None of the families or women possess any proof that they attended the health institution as they were not provided with the Admission Slip or prescriptions.**