

Quality of Maternal Health Services in Uttar Pradesh: A Public Hearing 31st August,09; Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh

Some Cases of Maternal Death and Maternal Health Negligence from different Districts of Uttar Pradesh¹

Vimla: Mirzapur [care delayed and denied, home delivery]

This was the 2nd pregnancy for 23 year old Vimla, a resident of **Mirzapur**. During pregnancy she had taken all the injections as well had her ante natal check up. For better care, she went to her mother's place as her sister-in-law was an ASHA. After the completion of 8th month, she had problem of burning sensation and stiffness in the body, so her family took her to the women's district hospital in Mirzapur. There they did her blood and urine tests and ultrasound. After seeing the report the doctor prescribed her some medicines and told her that the fetus is healthy and the rest would be taken care of by medicines.

On 8th July 2009, Vimla was having labor pains since morning. Her family took her to the CHC at 01:00pm, where the nurse without even examining told her that go back and said there is still time left for delivery to happen. The family requested the nurse to see Vimla and told her that her waters had broken and she is in severe pain. The nurse scolded them and said the water is going to come out for another 2-3 days, still it isn't time for delivery. On seeing her condition, the people in the PHC pressurized the nurse to admit her, she said ok and asked the family to lay Vimla on a stone outside as there were no empty beds and went inside. When her pains increased, her mother-in-law asked a dai who was present there to check her; the dai took her inside the hospital and told her that the cervix has opened a bit. At that moment, the nurse came and started scolding them that this is not the right way. Without examining, she said go from here, go to Mirzapur, the fetus is not normally positioned. The officers are coming here, nobody will listen to you.

The family went to the other ANM who resided nearby, but she also sent them away saying that don't touch me I am cooking food. The tired family came back home at around 03:00pm. When Vimla reached the door of her house, the fetus's head came out and it was delivered normally. By that time Vimla's sister-in-law had come back after administering polio drops. She telephoned the ANM and told her that Vimla has delivered the baby, come and cut the cord, but instead she asked her and Vimla to come to the center. The family called a dai from the neighborhood who cut the cord and cleaned Vimla and her baby. When Vimla's mother went to the center to ask for the JSY money, they refused by saying that she delivered at home. When her mother said that Vimla came to the hospital, you only sent her back, the senior doctor told her that we will think about it. They are still thinking and Vimla is yet to receive her money.

Sadhana Devi: Azamgarh [repeated referrals and a home delivery]

This was the 2nd pregnancy for 22 year old Sadhana, a resident of **Azamgarh**. During pregnancy she had taken all the injections as well as had her ante natal check up. On 1st June 2009, she had her labor pains

¹ The actual names of the persons and places have not been disclosed for confidentiality

at around 04:00am. Her family called the ASHA. ASHA examined her and said that you will have to take Sadhana to the CHC.

Her husband hired a vehicle for 700 rupees and took her to the CHC which was 10kms away. The ANM there examined her and said that the delivery will happen in the next two hours. She prescribed some medicines which cost about 400 rupees. After that Sadhana was given an injection and then a drip was given to her. After 2 hours when she didn't deliver and was having intense pains, the family informed the ANM. The ANM examined her again and said that delivery would need an operation so take her to Azamgarh.

The family again hired a vehicle for 500 rupees and decided to take her to a private hospital as they felt that there is too much negligence in the government hospitals and they don't provide good facilities. Her family admitted her to a private hospital where they deposited 1200 rupees. They prescribed some medicines and injections. Sadhana was given injections and drips. After examining her again, they said that operation needs to be done so deposit 15,000 rupees. Her husband agreed on seeing her condition but her mother-in-law refused as they were poor.

On 3rd June 2009, her family took her to another Community Health Centre, where the ANM after examining Sadhana said that it won't be possible over here. From there her family took her to her sister's village. There her family members called up a quack and a dai at home, who helped her delivering normally. Both Sadhana and her baby were healthy. The quack took 1000 rupees and the dai took 200 rupees. But her family spent a lot of money in taking her from one place to the other; as a result they are in huge debt now.

Rajni: Mirzapur [abusive treatment during labour]

This was the 2nd pregnancy for 20 year old Rajani of **Mirzapur**. During pregnancy she had taken all the injections as well had her ante natal check up. When she had her labor pains prior to the given date, her family took her to a private doctor. The doctor examined her and told her that there are 15 days left in delivery and prescribed some medicines to her.

On 30th March 2009, the third day, her pains increased and her family took her to the PHC at 08:30 am on a jeep hired for 500 rupees. The ANM there admitted her and prescribed some medicines. Rajani was having pains intermittently, so the ANM said, **"Cough forcefully then you will have pain"**. Whenever Rajani forced herself, she had severe pain and she cried and shouted out loud.

The ANM got angry on this and started slapping and abusing her and said, **"I will leave you like this, and when you will have a big operation at the district hospital then you will realize."** The family members begged the ANM to save Rajani's life, and then the ANM gave her the injection to increase her labor pain.

After few hours, she delivered a baby normally. The ANM took 100 rupees and two soaps in lieu of it. The next day, Rajani's family brought her home. Rajani says that if so much physical abuse happens at the government hospital then why is it that everybody says that safe deliveries happen only in government hospitals.

Mohini Devi: Azamgarh [maternal death due to unsafe abortion]

This was the 6th pregnancy for Mohini of **Azamgarh**. She has three living daughter and have had two spontaneous abortions. According to her family, whenever she had a male fetus inside her, after 3-4 months she used to have a miscarriage. This time, after the third month she wanted a prenatal diagnosis of the sex of the fetus as she didn't want more girls. Due to the lack of money they were unable to do so.

In her fourth month, along with her husband she went to the PHC where her sister-in-law had got her abortion done in the sixth month of her pregnancy quite cheaply. On 17th June 2009, she went to the PHC and the ANM told her that the abortion would be easily done. ANM gave them two rates for the abortion – 800 rupees and 1000 rupees. Her husband said that if you can't bring down the cost, we have to get it done, but she shouldn't suffer in the process no matter how much money is required. The ANM took her inside and put some medicine in her uterus and told them she will have the abortion in the next 2-3 days and sent her home.

From the second day, Mohini started bleeding. But, on 19th June 2009 after abortion, she had severe abdominal pain, and started bleeding profusely. Mohini's husband and her sister-in-law took her to the same PHC on a motorcycle. Without even seeing her ANM said that the case is complicated now so take her to some other place.

The family hired a jeep for 700 rupees and took her to a private hospital. There the doctor immediately began her treatment. She was on a drip from 04:00pm to 02:00am. After seeing no improvement in her case, the doctor referred her to another private hospital and also gave a referral slip.

The family again hired a vehicle and took her to the hospital (private) at 03:30am. Since the family had already spent all their money in transferring her to one place to other, they were unable to admit her in the hospital as they had no money left. After many requests, they admitted Mohini, and the family began arranging for money. At about 11:00am the next day, her condition deteriorated. When Mohini's husband enquired about the doctor, the compounder said that he comes around 10:30am. Till this time, the compounder was attending her.

At about 11:00am the doctor came and examined Mohini and said that she needs blood for which 2500 rupees would be needed. After administering one bottle blood to Mohini, the next day also it was advised that she should be administered more blood. When her husband came back with arrangements for the blood, she was already dead. The family are under debt which they have not been able to repay yet.

Rohini Devi: Azamgarh [post-partum complication: a life saved]

This was the first pregnancy for 22 year old Rohini, a resident of **Azamgarh district**. During pregnancy she had taken all the injections as well had her ante natal check up. She was healthy during pregnancy. Her labor pains started at about 10:00am on 30th August 2008.

Her family took her on a handcart, to the CHC which was 5kms away, paying 140 rupees. They reached the hospital at around 12:00 noon and a male doctor examined her. He directed the ANM and the nurse to take her delivery. When she didn't deliver even by 02:00pm, the nurse prescribed an injection and told the family "Bring it fast, if the delivery is delayed we will miss our train, we have to catch a train for home at 03:00pm." Rohini was given the injection and at about 02:30pm, she delivered the baby. The baby was healthy and the nurse left.

But Rohini was continuously bleeding. After 30 minutes, she fell unconscious, and then the family members called the doctor who hadn't examined her earlier even once. On seeing her condition, the doctor telephoned a female doctor in Jaunpur. The female doctor asked her to immediately bring Rohini to her hospital.

The doctor immediately took her and her family in the CHC's ambulance to that female doctor and her treatment began there. Her condition improved after nearly 3 hours. The female doctor said that Rohini's internal blood vessel had been cut by some instrument and that is why she is bleeding. The doctor advised to admit Rohini for about 8 days. The family brought her to the CHC and she was admitted there for 8 days. After that her treatment continued for 3 months and every week she had to come to the hospital for check up. Her treatment used up more than 4500 rupees. Rohini is from a very poor family, they had to deposit their 10 biswa of field to get a loan of 4500 rupees, which the family had been unable to take back till date.

Rehana: Devariya District [care denied, forced to use private providers]

This was the first pregnancy for 20 year old Rehana, a resident of **Devariya district**. During pregnancy she had taken all the injections as well had her ante natal check up. She was completely healthy. Her labor pains started at about 03:00 am on 3rd April 09.

As there was no vehicle available in the neighborhood, by the time they were able to arrange it was 10:00am. At 11:00am, her family took her to the CHC by a jeep. They met a staff nurse in the CHC, who examined Rehana and asked her to come after a week and prescribed some medicines to her.

The next day, due to severe pains, Rehana had to be brought back to the CHC again. At that time, both the doctor as well as the staff nurse was present. As soon as the nurse saw her, she said, "**Why do you bring her again and again**", and without even examining her turned her back. The doctor didn't say anything either. The worried family then took her to the mother and child center. The ANM at the center gave her some medicines, and Rehana was brought back home.

Next day when her pain increased, she was again taken to the center. The ANM said that its time for delivery now, so take her to the CHC. When the family reached the CHC, the staff nurse started scolding them. After many requests, she admitted Rehana. She took 100 rupees, prescribed some medicines from outside and left. Even after many requests, none of the CHC staff came to see Rehana. It was 04:30pm and they had been waiting since 07:00am.

When Rehana fell unconscious, her family took her to a private hospital in a jeep. She delivered the baby through operation. Her condition was very bad and she was unconscious for 4 days. About 24,000 rupees were spent on her treatment which was on for 3 months.

Devanti, Gorakhpur [failure of family planning and maternal death]

28 year old Devanti (imaginary name), a resident of Gorakhpur district had three children. Devanti's family survives on daily wage labour. Devanti and her husband decided that they did not want any more children and Devanti would go for a sterilization operation. On 15th September, 2008, Devanti along with the ASHA of her village went to a Primary Health Centre 15Km away to get her sterilization operation done.

Three months after the sterilization operation when Devanti's family members came to know that she had not had her menstruation for the last 3-4 months, they sent her to the Primary Health Centre with the ASHA. There she came to know after some tests that she was pregnant.

After 2-3 days she went to the same PHC with her husband and the ASHA to complain, but the ANM there scolded them and sent them away. After that Devanti got the required vaccination and ante natal check up done during her pregnancy.

In the eighth month, one evening, Devanti had some complications. The ASHA and *dai* told them that the mouth of the cervix had not opened yet, therefore there was no need to take her to the hospital. When the problem persisted, Devanti's brother-in-law went and called a nurse who lived close by and worked in a private hospital. She told them that the infant's head was coming out. They would have to take her to the hospital.

Devanti also complained of pain in the chest. Devanti's brother-in-law, husband and others hired an auto and took her to a private hospital 6 Km away at about 9:30 pm at night. It took them 20 to 35 minutes to reach there. After reaching there at about 10:00 pm in the night, the doctor told them that Devanti had expired. After this, Devanti's family members called up the ANM of the PHC, the clerk, the District Magistrate's office and the police station. The police's station's answer was that it was not a matter they dealt with. But they were assured that someone would come from the hospital. The family waited from 10:00pm in the night to 12:00 pm the next day for someone from the hospital to come. But nobody from the hospital turned up. In the end the Pradhan told them that they should get the *panchnama* and cremate the body.

Mahua: Chitrakoot [harassment for money, maternal death]

35 year old Mahua, a resident of Chitrakoot district has 5 children. This was her sixth pregnancy. Mahua had got all the required ante natal vaccination. However she had not been given iron tablets and she lived in a forest area she did not have any check-ups during her pregnancy.

On 15.08.09, Mahua started having slight labour pains from the morning. She did all the household chores. She cooked. After that she told her mother-in-law about the pain. Mahua along with her mother

in law and the ASHA walked 3Km to the main road. From there they took a bus to the Primary Health Centre and reached at about 11:00 am in the morning.

The ASHA got an admission slip made for admitting Mahua in the PHC. The staff nurse present there demanded Rs.2000 for admitting Mahua. Mahua's mother-in-law told her that she did not have that much money, and that she had only Rs.100 which they could if they wanted. Mahua was sent out of the hospital by the hospital staff for being unable to pay the amount demanded for. At that time it was raining hard and strong wind blowing outside. Mahua and her mother-in-law were both getting wet in the rain and Mahua started screaming and crying in pain.

The ASHA went to the doctor who is the MOIC there and requested saying Mahua would die, she was having severe pain. Then the staff nurse wrote the name of an injection and asked them to get it from outside. At around 6:00 pm in the evening the staff nurse administered the injection to Mahua. Within 20-25 minutes of administering the injection, Mahua complained to her mother-in-law that she was feeling uneasy and asked her mother-in-law to fan her.

After some time she lost consciousness. Her body started becoming yellowish and by 7:00 pm in the evening she lost her life. After Mahua's death all the present PHC staff locked the hospital and ran away. The ASHA also left them alone and went away. Mahua's mother-in-law hired a tractor and took Mahua's body back to the village. The villagers became agitated at the incident. Around 30-40 people carried Mahua's body to the main road and obstructed all traffic, demanding for legal action. After the public agitation, Mahua's family is facing constant pressure to reach a compromise. They have also been offered Rs.20,000, but the family wants to fight for justice.