

## Efforts Towards Addressing Safe Motherhood

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Safe motherhood is a subject which has always remained a focus and may be going to remain a focus for all the service providers and the policy makers because it involves a decision which is need based and oriented to the mothers and the future child. The focus may differ as to the level of the care to be provided to the mothers as per the need and the resources.

The state of Uttarakhand was carved from the state of Uttar Pradesh which has got the maximum percentage of the population proportion as well as average or poor indicators. Despite of this fact there are certain factor which makes Uttarakhand a state with a scope to do and explore lot of resources and the uneven distribution of population in the plains and hills along with better indicators of health as compared to Uttar Pradesh. Government of Uttarakhand is making full effort towards addressing safe motherhood but still much more is needed for the same. The present article is designed to explore the various problems/difficulties or reasons for poor utilization of health services in the delivery of safe motherhood in Uttarakhand and possible solutions for the same.

It was decided to explore the need of delivery of safe motherhood services in the scattered population of the outreach areas (unserved and underserved areas) in the hills and plains of Uttarakhand State. As Himalayan Institute Hospital Trust (HIHT) has already been granted the status of Mother NGO or the Nodal NGO and being the only MNGO working through various smaller Field NGOs in the newly formed state, Uttarakhand experiences alot through HIHT.

HIHT has been working for the welfare of the people with special reference to their health and community upliftment for the past 16-17 years. The organization has rich experiences of working through various projects in the remote areas of difficult terrains of the hills of Uttarakhand. and better conception of

the problems of the people living in those unserved or underserved areas. So, the difficulties or reasons for poor utilization of health services (especially safe motherhood) elicited by HIHT and the recommendations for the possible solutions of the same will help or influence the better utilization of health services in addressing the safe motherhood.

The definite beneficiaries are all the mothers and children. This article addresses to the public health managers, health care providers, field workers and policy makers also. The main issues related to the clients include unavailability of the health services (specially safe motherhood) which was basically due to lack of availability of functional service centers, lack of skilled and well equipped staff and customs and beliefs etc. All of these problems need to be solved by making appropriate efforts, so that the purpose of addressing the safe motherhood can be fulfilled.

### *Various factors in Uttarakhand which affect the health of a mother directly or indirectly:*

- A difficult terrain of the hills which makes it is difficult for the services to be delivered or utilized.
- Lack of transport and poor transport facility.
- Women's health is not a priority in the villages.
- Gender bias still exists. Moreover the females of these areas are very hard working and they do not consider their health as a priority.
- Role of women in making decisions is almost nil.
- Lack of quality services reduces the chances of the proper utilization of the services.
- Social factors play a significant role in the health of the mothers as the social stigmas are more prevalent.
- Poverty

The institute (HIMS) had conducted various focus group discussions with the

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