

For Both Men and Women: A Positive Change in Attitudes toward Maternal Health

By Misbah Jatoi

Bibi Amna is 33 years old and a resident of village Nao Lakho of the Union Council Khudabad in District Dadu. The village is about 9 kilometers south of Dadu city and lacks basic health and sanitation facilities. The village is in a non-LHW covered area and thus, the married couples especially women are devoid of basic knowledge regarding pregnancy and related issues. There is only one primary school for both boys and girls in the village.

Bibi Amna, wife of Saifullah Shah, belongs to a conservative Syed family where women are generally not permitted to leave their home unaccompanied. The village is under the control and command of an influential landlord, and most villagers work on his land; as does Amna's husband.



Bibi Amna, despite having some cardiac problems, has 5 children but had never been outside her home for an antenatal checkup or to give birth. She was 6 months pregnant with twin babies when the RAF funded research project on emergency obstetric and neonatal care was initiated in Union Council Khudabad. Through the women CRP's group meetings conducted in the village she learned about importance of antenatal, natal and postnatal care and the high risks associated with the chronic disease.

She was referred by a female CRP to the BHU/MCH center for antenatal care, but later during a follow up visit she told the CRP about her family restrictions. To address this issue, a female CRP, male CRP and a social mobilizer talked to her husband. They explained the dangers his wife could encounter during her pregnancy because of her cardiac ailment and twin babies if she delivered at home with a TBA like all her previous deliveries. He was further mobilized to take his wife to a health facility for antenatal checkups and delivery and adopt some family planning method after the delivery, to which he agreed and took her to a private facility for a checkup twice.

Bibi Amna delivered her twin daughters at a private facility and then had a female sterilization surgery. She said that though her delivery at the hospital was a lot easier and safer she has enough children now and doesn't want to risk her life with more pregnancies, especially how that she has her husband's support. She was glad that she and her husband took the right decision for their family. She expressed her heartiest thanks to CRPs and to TRDP for launching this project that helped to save her from the threat of high risk pregnancies.