

A Promise of Improvement in Health Seeking Behaviour

By Misbah Jatoi

Mohabbat Khan Jalbani is a village located approximately 20 kilometers south of Dadu city, in Union Council Khudabad. A non-LHW covered locality, Mohabbat Khan Jalbani is devoid of basic health facilities. The people of the area are indirectly controlled by their feudal lord who is very rigid and conservative. The community is also very restrictive, and women living there have no say in their own lives.

Hameeda, second wife of Mushtaque Ali, has been married for almost 11 years, has 4 children; 3 boys and a girl. Her youngest child is a boy of 3 years and since his birth she had been using family planning methods.



Her husband, Mushtaque Ali, is a primary school graduate and general secretary of one of the three clusters in Mohabbat Khan Jalbani. Mushtaque works on daily wages and barely makes ends meet. He claims that

although he had heard of maternal health care before, he never considered it important, nor had there been any health seeking practices in his family which he could follow. He believed that childbirth and its associated issues are best left under nature's control.

Hameeda had never had an antenatal check-up except for once, during her last pregnancy, and this too was an incomplete check-up. When asked why she hadn't availed ante-natal care services earlier, she said that she had never considered it. And despite being a physically weak woman who is underweight, of short stature, and unstable blood pressure she delivered all her children at home with the help of a traditional birth attendant.

Hameeda had attended one group meeting organized by project CRPs on ante-natal care, where she learned the importance of these check-ups and received information about services available at the health facilities. A female CRP referred her to the MCH center in Khudabad for her first ante-natal check up, where she went with her brother. There, during her last month of pregnancy through an ultra sound, she found out that she will be having twins, that they are underweight, and that one the babies is not positioned correctly. She learned that one of the babies is a girl while the



gender of other the baby is still unknown because of its improper position. She was also given her first Tetanus Toxoid Vaccine, prescribed iron and folic acid tablets, and recommended healthy food and rest. Her doctor identified the risk associated with Hameeda's low weight, weakness and short stature, and the malpositioning of one of the babies, and recommended that Hameeda have an institutional delivery this time.

Mushtaque Ali agreed to have his wife's delivery at Civil Hospital Dadu. Hameeda was taken to District Hospital Dadu where she gave birth to twins on 19th May 2012. As a member of the VHC, Mushtaque had attended the training and was aware of the transportation support provided by the VHC. Regarding the project, he said that he is grateful to RAF for helping him and his family realize the importance of maternal and neonatal health and added that he wishes to have community support to make this project successful. He believes that this project is for the benefit of the whole society and so he wishes to help bring about a positive change.

