



NURTURING NEW LIFE IN THE EMERGING WORLD





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SAFE DELIVERY INITIATIVE THATTA – NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Dr.Aftab Iqbal (Naya Jeevan)

After setting up the logistics for the Safe Delivery Initiative in Hyderabad/Jomshoro, Naya Jeevan proceeded to move into phase two of the Safe Delivery Initiative in Thatta. Based on primary research it was found that HANDS was running a similar safe motherhood initiative in Thatta. The HANDS NARI project funded by the Packard Foundation is working on safe delivery in three districts (Thatta, Jacobabad, and Kashmore). Naya Jeevan decided to plug into this project rather than re-inventing the wheel.

The HANDS team in collaboration with Naya Jeevan will identify high risk pregnancies in the FLP camps and their neighboring villages. These pregnancies will be transported to two hospitals (and recently a third hospital run by the NGO HOPE).

1) Al Shafee Hospital, Thatta

2) Taluka Hospital, Sujjawal

Here these pregnancies can deliver in a safe environment. These pregnancies will be monitored and evaluated by Naya Jeevan, while the HANDS team will work on the ground to make sure these pregnant ladies are educated and know what to do when they are.

After signing a MOU with HANDS in mid January 2011 Naya Jeevan visited the FLP camp at Sujjawal Bund on 20th January, 2011 to collect demographic data and understand the needs of the community. Dr.Pir of HANDS also kindly came on less than half a day's notice with his field staff.

During that visit it was found that people still had tents set up, but in the mornings would move to their villages to start rebuilding their lives. Many were planting crops and some were rebuilding their houses. They told us that they were fishermen and farmers by profession. We spoke to the men and the women who expressed an interest in delivering at hospitals in a safe environment. There was also a neglected Hindu community on the end of the Bund. The families there were living in cramped tents when many of their Muslim brothers had more than one tent. We found a child with umbilical hernia and several pregnancies in this community.



Based on our survey of the people present we found 104 households, 619 residents, 413 children, 261 females and 11 pregnancies. Some people weren't in their tents and with the co-operation of HANDS, Naya Jeevan announced a medical camp and antenatal pregnancy registration on the coming Thursday 27th January, 2011 for this camp and the neighboring villages.

After the survey we were taken to the HANDS regional office in Thatta and the team had arranged a special lunch that included local fish. We learnt that the community that we just saw specialized in making fish. They would wrap the fish in a cloth after marinating it and would bury it under sand and steam cook it. We were amazed at how delicious the fish was and made a mental note that during the camp we would ask the women to give us the recipe ☺

The HANDS team described the situation when the floods struck and how they ran to work when they realized the floods were about to reach. It was heart breaking to hear how they worked while their own families were in danger and had to live in tents. One phrase that they used to describe the situation was "People saw the flood of water but no one thought about the flood of people". Then they went on to talk about the logistics of servicing such a large population since Thatta was all under water. The commitment and emotions of the local HANDS team was indescribable.

Unfortunately the next Thursday Naya Jeevan couldn't finish the logistics of medicine and transport and had to delay the camp by one day. The HANDS team very kindly went out and announced that the camp would be held on Friday the 28th, 2011 instead of Thursday the 27th, 2011.

Naya Jeevan team reached the campsite on 28th of January, 2011 at around 11 am. The HANDS team and a visiting UNICEF team was already there waiting. Within 15 minutes a medical camp was up & running.

Naya Jeevan doctors Dr.Aftab and Dr.Fahad started seeing patients and with the help of Naya Jeevan team members Faisal, Zeeshan and volunteer Arshad who took the role of delivering and counseling on medicine use. Naya Jeevan team member Ahmed helped Dr.Fahad translate and back translate in Sindhi. A HANDS team member helped Dr.Aftab with translation and logistics.

HANDS lady health workers and nurses helped Naya Jeevan doctor, Dr.Zahra, find and counsel pregnant ladies on how to avail free delivery service and counseled on potential complications of pregnancy. They also made sure the ladies received iron and folic acid supplementation and understood the importance. They also gathered the women and taught them the importance of hand washing, soap use and ORS. Soap and ORS was also distributed to the families. One lady bathed her son and brought him back in clean clothes within one hour. It was very exciting to see how the community was participating.

Over the course of the day Naya Jeevan doctors went on to diagnose cases such as rickets, suspected polio, severe malnutrition (marasmus), de-compensated liver disease, skin diseases such as impetigo(a contagious bacterial infection mainly involving the face of children), suspected leprosy, severe anemia, and a lot of respiratory tract infections. They also had the chance to see a young child

with umbilical hernia that had the potential to strangulate. Immunization status of children was asked and many of them had not had the full course of vaccination.

One high risk pregnancy struck us all. She was a lady that was seven months pregnant with her first child who had gone mute over the last month. She had also stopped eating properly and wasn't communicating to anybody. One of the differential diagnosis of this lady was post traumatic stress disorder due to the stress of delivering a child post floods in a limited resource setting. Naya Jeevan and HANDS have noted down the details of this pregnancy and would be ensuring that she is evaluated medically and psychologically so she delivers safely and remains in good health to raise her child.

The UNICEF team did a qualitative study on the problems of children and it would be interesting to see their results.

Towards the end of the day an American doctor with Sindhi roots Dr.Geet running a NGO by the name of LifeBridge came to visit. She talked with community members. Complicated cases such as decompensated liver disease were shared with her. She would be exploring avenues on how to ensure vaccination to these flood affected villagers with the help of local Government.

The Naya Jeevan saw patients till around 4 o'clock and then had to wrap up because of security concerns of travelling too late in the evening. It was an eye opener to the problems that existed within a 100 km of a major city like Karachi. If the situation was such here imagine the condition of the people in more remote areas. With this thought in mind the Naya Jeevan team returned to Karachi and hoped that these people would not be forgotten six months into the flood.

NAYA JEEVAN WOULD LIKE TO THANK

- a) The HANDS team for the ground support that they are providing for the safe delivery initiative.
- b) GlaxoSmithKline Pakistan for donation of important antibiotics and medicine for flood affected.
- c) Life Bridge and Dr.Geet for coming all the way from Karachi even though they are busy arranging a mobile camp in Dadu just to see how they can help this specific community.
- d) The Naya Jeevan supporters especially Google for funds to allow safe deliveries for these flood affected ladies.
- e) FLP for identification of these camps.







