



- 1 Discover how PLA led VHSNC created the wave of change in Bilesari Village, Pratapgarh
- 2 Learn about importance of family for child care
- 3 Read about inspiring story of Dr. Pavan Kumar who ensured Ante Natal Care for all pregnant women

## A Story of Change



Sudhakar Dadhich,  
District Programme Manager,  
Pratapgarh



Vijay Patidar,  
Block Programme Manager,  
Pratapgarh City



ASHA Premlata, Jyoti and Sangeeta Raidas explaining the vicious cycle of malnutrition with the help of a visual poster during the community meeting for VHSNC-led-PLA in Bilesari

The Gram Sabha is the fulcrum of the Panchayati Raj and village development. This forum provides a platform for growth and making need-based plans for the village. On Gandhi Jayanti this year, special gram sabhas were held to spread awareness of health practices and popularise Chiranjeevi Scheme across Rajasthan. After the nutrition awareness campaigns of National Nutrition Month, the special gram sabha came in as another window to revisit and reflect upon the maternal and child health status in the presence of villagers, key stakeholders, field functionaries, and respected panchayat members. The RajPusht team leveraged this platform innovatively to deliver key nutrition messages through ASHA and spread the reach of cash transfer schemes like IGMPY and PMMVY across five project districts.

One gram sabha took place in Bilesari Village, located 30 km from the Pratapgarh district headquarters. The village houses a diverse population of 1050 that economically depends on agricultural labour. Their progressive attitude has been the key to success of any government intervention or scheme in the village.

### ASHA paving the path for development

The village observed the gram sabha & village health, sanitation and nutrition day in the presence of a fifteen-member, active committee of VHSNC headed by Ward Panch, Lalita Meena. The Committee Secretary ASHA Premlata Meena is another pillar of the committee who has demonstrated great determination in delivering community meetings, activities, and events. The villagers respect her work and respond with enthusiasm. She says that many community members have been interested since the advent of the Participatory Learning & Action (PLA) in community meetings.

"In the initial phase, I encountered many obstacles but eventually developed a good understanding of them. Now I feel that every word I say contributes to the community behaviour change. I am happy with my work. However, there is so much more to accomplish, and there is no time for breaks.", says ASHA Premlata while sharing her journey. She is determined to ensure village development with her work.

## Glimpses of VHSNC gram Sabha in Bilesari

According To ASHA Premlata, these VHSNC meetings have been a lynchpin for the village's development. The continuity of VHSNC meetings and the active participation of villagers has contributed to the appropriate implementation of family planning methods, reduction in child wasting, and improved maternal nutrition habits during pregnancy in the village.

VHSNC meeting with the PLA provides a platform for community participation, understanding, learning, behaviour change and problem-solving at the community level. During VHSNC meetings, villager's knowledge about health care is enhanced, and then with their active participation, problems related to mother and child nutrition and care are identified, explains ASHA Premlata. Issues are discussed with the help of innovative games. "Games are the best way to engage the community members to identify problems, strategise solutions and responsibility towards the community. It is a special feeling when committee members and participants accept social responsibilities at the community level in the presence of the villagers and PRI members", emphasises ASHA Premlata.

Six PLA VHSNC meetings have taken place since November 2021, leading to noticeable development in the village. Family planning decisions were highly impacted, leading to reduced PW registration at the AWC and increased usage of family planning methods, including female sterilisation, Copper-T, Mala N, Chaaya, and Condom. This milestone achievement was celebrated in the last VHSNC meeting. While on the other hand, surprised with these developments, health department officials re-evaluated the results. Due to the continuation of these meetings, other changes like adoption of family planning after 2 children, pregnancy after at least 2 years of marriage, 3 years gap from first child to second child, registration in the first trimester, improvement in vaccination of pregnant women and children can also be noticed.

Family Planning Method	Sept 2020-Oct 2021	Nov 2021-Oct 2022
Pregnancy Registration	25	20
Copper-T	12	9
Condom Usage	16	22
Mala-N	20	28
Chaya	9	16



Villagers attending gram sabha on 2nd October 2022, Village Bilesari

Credits for effective implementation of family planning goes to the health department officials including BCMO Dr. Jagdeep Kharadi for providing timely trainings and incentives, Primary Health Center Kulthana Medical Officer, PHS Mr. Gopaln Meghwal, PHS Mr. Vishnu Meena, and ANM Mrs. Rekha Parihar along with ASHA Mrs. Premlata Meena who have been at the forefront of this campaign for change, have contributed with their active participation in trainings and meetings.

## Opinions for the Change

*"Many changes can be noticed between earlier and now. This PLA led VHSNC has made it easier to explain my work to the community to some extent. The way people participated in large numbers in the community meeting has increased my confidence and I am convinced that more and more people of the village are with me for this change in the village."*

-ASHA Premlata Meena

*"I didn't know anything about VHSNC and my role in it after becoming Sarpanch, but when Asha told me, and I went to the meeting for the first time, I came to know that I am its chairman and this committee works with the villagers for the development and health of the village. Now I try my best to attend meeting every month to receive information about the health indicators of the village and to make people aware."*

-Ward Panch, Lalita Meena

*"Asha Premlata's hard work has paid off, creating a new story of change with the active support of the community."*

-PHS Gopal Meghwal

# Family for Child Care



Swati Mishra  
Qualitative Research & Knowledge Manager,  
RajPusht

Sanju and Mukesh from Awleshwar gram panchayat of Pratapgarh were pleased to find out that their 9-month-old girl child is 8.75 Kgs. Sanju gave birth to Himanshi, her second child in December 2021 in a government hospital. Her first child- Yogita was weak during birth and that was Sanju's concern since the birth of her second child. According to her "Everyone used to tell me that your child is weak, and she needs special attention from the parents, so my husband, mother-in-law and I took special care of both the children".

Research suggests that parent's knowledge, belief and practice plays a vital role in overall development of the child. In the lifecycle of a child, mothers are the primary caregiver and husbands/ father/mother-in-law acts as the secondary caregiver. Ideally, a father's involvement in a child's upbringing begins after the child's birth; however, culturally, men do not play an active role leaving the responsibilities in the mother's hands. Sanju and Mukesh are breaking such age-old belief system. Sanju took proper care of herself during pregnancy and lactation period which is why her child had a good health. She said, "I was able to take care of my child because my husband and mother-in-law are extremely supportive. My husband used to come with me to the Aanganwadi centre for check-ups, brought green vegetables and fruits from the market, and serve me whenever I was not feeling well"

Mukesh is a farmer on a small land parcel outside the village. According to him, "I don't have a lot of land, so I work on other's land as well to earn more money. Most of my time I spent with my family and children after work. I feed both my children together with me thrice a day. Sometimes I help my wife in cooking as well."

Mukesh's mother is also equally involved in the child's care. According to Sanju, "My mother-in-law always helped me in household chores. She takes care of the elder child when I feed Himanshi which helps me a lot. I feel that every mother-in-law and husband should help the pregnant and lactating mothers in taking care of their children. This gives us sometime for ourselves as well. Mukesh and Sanju are one of those couples who pay equal attention to the child's growth.



Mukesh with his daughters Yogita and Himanshi



Himanshi, Mukesh and Sanju's second daughter



ASHA Ranjana Rawal leading  
VHSNC meeting in AWC Wakavada  
B, Partapur, Banswara



PLA led VSHNC training to ASHA's by  
BPM Rajendra Shrivastava, Pratapgarh



BPM Jagdish C. Prajapat counselling  
during VHSNC Meeting in Kherada  
Village, Galiyakot, Dungarpur



PC Parikshit Chaubisa giving  
information about PMMVY &  
IGMPY in a VHSNC meeting,  
Binder, Udaipur



BCMHO Dr. Mahesh Bhutani  
explains about balanced diet during  
PLA training, Baran

# Determined actions for results



Deepak Devda  
Block Programme Manager,  
Salumber (2), Udaipur

The health of future generations is primarily determined by the baby's growth and development within the womb. During these 270 days when child is in mother's wombs, the pregnant mother receives different services under Ante Natal Care (ANC) checkups including blood test, tetanus, weight monitoring, blood pressure monitoring, and distribution of iron folic acid tablets for at least 180 days.

Several schemes like Janani Suraksha Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) and Indira Gandhi Matritva Poshan Yojana (IGMPY) provide cash incentives to ensure optimal ANC checkups, appropriate nutrition, institutional delivery and care during pregnancy. To avail these services and schemes, early registration of pregnant mothers within the first trimester (120 days of Last Menstrual Period) is a must, but lack of awareness often leads to the problem of late or no registration for ANC.

At Bhabrana PHC in Udaipur a similar situation was observed by Medical Officer Dr. Pawan Kumar Sharma who has been working in the PHC for last few years. To resolve the problem of late registrations, he motivated respective ASHA & ANM to reach out pregnant women and counsel them to timely register for the ANC check-ups.

He also noticed issues in access and availability of medical supplies during the MCHN day which led to obstacles in rendering of ANC services. As an immediate solution to this issue he promoted Pradhan Mantri Matritva Suraksha Abhiyan (PMSMA) meetings conducted at the facility to monitor pregnant women's blood pressure, hemoglobin and weight at the time of ANC visit as most of the test do not take place at the AWC. His efforts were supported by BCMO Sampat Meena. As a result of his consistent efforts Dr. Pawan ensured that all eligible patients received PMMVY benefits which earlier lacked due to lack of ANC registration.

With improved and effective delivery of ANC services, most pregnancy complications are getting resolved at the facility on PMSMA day. These developments have motivated pregnant women in the area to get themselves timely registered for the ANC services. Currently, at Bhabrana PHC, more than 100 women are receiving ANC services and routinely being monitored for weight, BP and HB.

Bhabrana PHC ranks first for ANC registration in the district and second in the entire state. For his dedicated efforts to improve the delivery of ANC services at his facility, Dr. Pawan Kumar Sharma has received appreciation and award from National Health Mission, Rajasthan.



Dr. Pawan Kumar  
counselling PW during  
PMSMA session

Dr. Pawan Kumar  
receiving award for his  
excellent work from  
NHM



ASHA Pramila Yadav counselling  
during VHSNC Meeting in AWC  
Bichhiwara 1, Dungarpur



Pregnant Women counselling by  
PC Gautam Lal, Dariyawad,  
Pratapgarh



BPM Vishal Prajapat giving PLA  
training to ASHA with the help of  
training cards, Chikhli, Dungarpur



PC Anil counselling PW and Mother  
in Law about 5 key messages  
regarding institutional delivery and  
post delivery care, Kishanganj, Baran



BPM Mukesh Vaishnav informing  
PW about cash transfer schemes  
during Godbharai, Bhinder, Udaipur