



## CASE STUDY: SAVING MOTHERS AND NEONATES

*How Dr Guna Raj Awasthi saved Ms. Kamala Tamata and her son*

### DR GUNA RAJ AWASTHI



When Dr Guna Raj Awasthi was posted as DHO to Baitadi, Far Western Region in 2011, he was frustrated by what he found. The district hospital lacked a comprehensive emergency obstetric and newborn care centre to manage complicated deliveries and many mothers and newborns were dying each year during delivery.

Driven on by a passion to serve people in remote and underserved areas, Dr Awasthi resolved to change this, recollecting *"I didn't want to see any mother or child die because of obstetric complications"*.

Dr. Awasthi then set out on a tireless campaign to bring services to the people. He lobbied and networked extensively with national and district stakeholders. He filled vacant staffing positions and persuaded the hospital management committee to adopt CEONC services as its top priority. He succeeded in securing essential equipment and supplies from the Ministry of Health and Population and the Prime Minister's Office.

Eighteen months on, the CEONC facility is now fully functioning and saving the lives of people like Kamala Tamata (see over).

Lessons learned? Personal leadership and a passion to serve can overcome even the most difficult of hurdles!

### CRITICAL STEPS

*It took Dr. Awasthi approximately nine months to establish CEONC services in Baitadi. Here are the main activities that helped him succeed:*

#### ADVOCACY

- ▶ An Appreciative Inquiry workshop on strengthening CEONC services, supported by FHD/NHSSP
- ▶ Community level participation and discussions
- ▶ Meetings with district level stakeholders (LDO, DDC, NGOs and political leaders)

#### CO-ORDINATION

- ▶ Co-ordination at district and central levels (GOs and EDPs)
- ▶ Written communication with Logistic Management Division and other divisions for equipment and supplies
- ▶ Written and verbal communication with the Office of the Prime Minister and the Health Secretary

#### CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

- ▶ Local contracting to fill vacant health posts
- ▶ Skilled Birth Attendant (SBA) training for two Staff Nurses
- ▶ Advanced SBA training to a Medical Officer
- ▶ Operation Theatre Management training to the Staff Nurse, Auxiliary Nurse Midwife and helper
- ▶ Anesthesia Assistant training to the Health Assistant

#### EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLY

- ▶ Central level support for equipment supply came directly from the Office of the Prime Minister and the Health Secretary

## MS. KAMALA TAMATA

Kamala Tamata (22) and her husband, Umesh Ram Tamata (24), are from the Dalit community, Dasharath in Chand Municipality and have been married for four years. Kamala lost her first baby in 2011 following severe bleeding. She was successfully treated at Baitadi Hospital, but the experience left both Kamala and Umesh Ram feeling highly concerned about the dangers of delivery.

Happily, Kamala underwent a successful delivery by caesarean section at Baitadi Hospital in July 2012. During pregnancy, she went to the local health post regularly for antenatal checkups where she was informed about the importance of institutional delivery.

When labour pains started, Umesh Ram took Kamala to the hospital. She had an obstructed labour and underwent surgery. As he noted: *"We came to the hospital to deliver our baby, and luckily this operation service was available. It saved the lives of my wife and baby. It also saved us money and time as we didn't have to go to India for the operation"*.

The couple were very satisfied with the care they received and the behaviour of the hospital staff, nurses and doctors. They also received NRs 1000 from the hospital as a part of the government's Aama incentive programme. They are thankful for the services provided and hope that Baitadi Hospital will continue its comprehensive obstetric services with doctors like Dr. Guna Raj Awasthi who are committed to serving poor people in remote areas. They concluded the interview by saying: *"We want Dr Awasthi to stay in Baitadi forever, to save the lives of mothers and children!"*

***Since establishing CEONC services in Baitadi, Dr. Awasthi has performed over 30 caesarean section operations, fulfilling his goal of saving women and children in remote areas of Nepal.***



Baitadi surgical team performing its first caesarean section on 7th June 2012 (25th Jestha 2069)



Umesh Ram with the baby and Kamala Tamata shortly following delivery



Durga Uprety interviewing Umesh Ram and Kamala, July 2012

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