



Better health through Community based health centre

Although the national health policy document stipulates universal access to primary health services, in a number of instances it still eludes communities in remote areas. The village of Bandhwari is one such village. It is located on the Gurugram-Faridabad highway, 18 kms away from Gurugram with a population of about 5000. The residents of this village, particularly those belonging to the socially underprivileged sections visited quacks in the absence of appropriate medical facility in the village. The closest government health centre is located 10 km away. The poor connectivity and virtually non-existent transportation makes accessibility to this centre very difficult. A few private facilities that do exist around the village are unaffordable to a majority of the households.

In order to provide the community with a viable option of accessible health care services a small health centre is being run with the support of Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) and Incentive Destinations.

The goal of the Bandhwari health centre is to increase awareness and improve the overall health status of the Bandhwari gram panchayat. A qualified medical practitioner visits the centre and provides free consultation to the community members five days a week. In order to strengthen community participation, four community health workers have been selected and trained from the village. These health workers act as a conduit between the center and the needy families. They not only bring in those requiring medical help to the health centre but also follow-up with the patients during the course of their treatment. To specifically address the issues of woman's health, visits of female specialist doctor are scheduled twice in a month. Apart from medical services, health education and awareness is being imparted on a regular basis on nutrition, sanitation and other community health concerns.

In order to develop the community stake and participation and also to make the program self sustaining, a small user friendly fees of Rs.10/- is levied from the patients for the consultation. The fund generated as such is being used to cover partly the cost of running the centre.

Outcome

- More than 70% of the patients paid the user friendly fees of Rs.10 in the health centre.
- Counseling and one to one interaction was conducted with at least 50 % of the patients visiting the clinic. One to one counseling on health has led to improvement in the levels of personnel hygiene in the community.
- Increase in awareness levels regarding good health, nutrition, safe drinking water, sanitation, immunization and antenatal care.
- There has been an increase in health seeking behavior in the community.

Facilitating and empowering village Development Committee

Community participation and ownership is a key to overall sustainable village development. In order to encourage community participation Sukarya facilitates promotion of village level development committee. This committee serves as a platform to discuss village level issues and creates a space for the community to be involved in implementation of village development activities. Sukarya initiated this process in village Bandhwari, where a village development committee functions as a community based institution dealing with different community based issues of concern in the development of the village. The committee has ten members.

The process of forming the village development committee was a challenge requiring continuous community mobilization to motivate community members to work together for their own development. The community was aware of the problems but needed external facilitation to help them work around it. This much needed push was provided by Sukarya.