



Better Health Through Community Based Health Centre for Women and Children

Even though the government has made significant strides in increasing access to basic health services through Public Health Centers, there still exist many areas, especially the hard to reach and remote regions where health centers are not available within the villages or slums. The distances that people have to tread with limited public transport facilities, and the lack of confidence that they will find a health official waiting once they eventually get there push many people to seeking help from quacks or just suffering in silence.

Sukarya has been involved in reaching the underprivileged people living in the slums of urban *Gurugram* through community health centers, mobile health clinics and health camps. We started in 2005 by setting up a health center called **Sehat**, meaning “health” in English at the *Sukarya* office premises to reach people who had little access to any other health facilities. In 2007, we set up a centre in village *Bandhawri* and in 2011 we set up another center in village *Waliawas*.

Waliawas is a village located 10 kms from *Gurugram* on the *Gurugram Faridabad* highway. Literacy levels are low and the living conditions unhygienic. There are no government or private health facilities situated in the village. The nearest Public Health Clinic is located at 12 kms and the nearest private doctor 6 kms away from the village. The inhabitants are bereft of any reliable medical assistance.

With financial support from **Religare**, we set up a community health center in February 2011, to provide basic health care services to the doorstep of these people. In the year 2012 Aegis Global provided support for this project.

Providing Quality Health Care

Through the centre we provide comprehensive primary health care to the people of the village. The clinic runs five days a week for 4 hours and is equipped with the

latest diagnostic facilities. A qualified doctor and dispenser are available everyday providing comprehensive primary health care, ante natal and post-natal care, key immunizations and diagnostic facilities. For many people, the health center has been a huge blessing as through this they have been able to diagnose and treat their problems for which they were either suffering or were relying on quacks.

20-year-old Pooja suffered from low grade fever which appeared every evening. In the absence of a proper diagnosis, she suffered for a long time till our community health worker met her. Today, Pooja volunteers with us as a CHW, as she wants her community members to feel the change.

Jasmati, another woman from the village says, “with the center opening in the village, we do not need to plan and travel long distances to visit a doctor. He is available right here and we can go anytime, even if our husbands cannot find the time to take us.”

Building Awareness

The provision of diagnosis and treatment at the centre is supplemented by building awareness about key health issues at the community level. Community health workers belonging to the community, conduct door-to door visits disseminating information on key health issues, hygiene and sanitation, sending those who require treatment to the centre and following up those already undergoing treatment to ensure complete recovery. We conducted many group health awareness sessions providing young women and their mothers-in-law information on importance of antenatal care, institutional deliveries, breastfeeding, newborn care, nutrition, prevention of anemia and tuberculosis.

Ensuring Community Involvement

To ensure community ownership and involvement, Sukarya facilitated the formation of the Village Health and Sanitation Committee comprising of members from the *Panchayati Raj*, *Anganwadi* worker and ASHA workers headed by the *Sarpanch*. After several rounds of one-on-one discussions and group meetings, Sukarya was able to sensitize the members on the importance of the issues and their involvement. The committee played an active role in bringing many health issues plaguing the community to the forefront and seeking help in addressing them.