



# Leveraging mHealth

## for Continued Learning of Skilled Birth Attendants to Deliver Quality Care

Promoting use of the Safe Delivery App (SDA) for Capacity Building of Skilled Birth Attendants has enhanced competence and confidence to provide safer births for mothers and newborns.

### BACKGROUND

As many as 90% maternal and newborn deaths are preventable with the presence of a skilled birth attendant during delivery. Considerable investments have been made to create a workforce of skilled birth attendants through traditional training approaches. While these enhance knowledge and competencies of service providers, retention and practice diminish with time. In low income settings quality of care is constrained by lack of continuing education. Technology is transforming lives with tools that enable prompt recall of critical and complex information. These solutions when applied to maternal and newborn care have potential to bring about rapid and sustained improvement in quality of care.

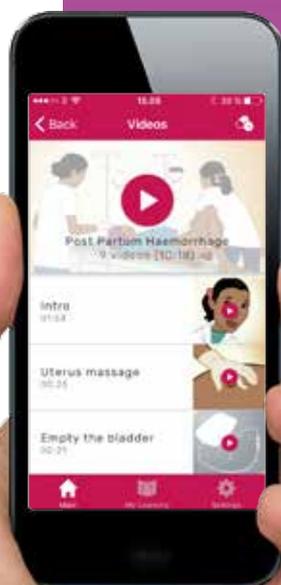
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The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India has prioritized quality of care for mothers and newborns through its National Flagship program LaQshya. The initiative targets the period around birth by institutionalizing standard protocols for Labor Rooms (LR) and maternal operating theatres. Quality improvement processes and tools have been developed for adoption by delivery points across the nation. Technology and mHealth options have been explored and the Safe Delivery App has been accepted as a quality improvement tool under LaQshya.

**The app leverages the growing ubiquity of mobile phones to provide life-saving information and guidance. SDA has a self-assessment module that records the progress made by each learner. The training is modular and certification for each module progresses from familiar to proficient to expert depending on the user's proficiency. Those who achieve expert level in all the modules become champions.**

However, despite being included in the LaQshya package the app was not being widely used. *Vridhhi*, mandated to strengthen MoHFW LaQshya Quality Improvement initiative collaborated

with the Maternity Foundation to facilitate scale up the use of the SDA by service providers in LaQshya facilities in 7 project states (Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab).



## SAFE DELIVERY APP

The Safe Delivery App developed by the Maternity Foundation is a smartphone application that provides instant access to clinical guidelines on Basic Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care (BEmONC). The App serves as a training and reference tool for Skill Birth Attendants. The training is modular and certification for each module progresses from familiar to proficient to expert. Those achieving expert level in all the modules become champions.

## ADVANTAGES OF SDA

- Is free to download
- Does not need internet coverage after it is installed on the mobile device
- Offers tutorials and step-by-step narration (In local language) of maternal and newborn care procedures
- Lists out essential obstetric drugs and equipment.
- Sends push messages to remind users to keep learning
- Supports users to self-assess its through e-learning platform 'MyLearning'
- Can be used in a training as well as on-the-job in the wards
- Promotes incremental learning
- Equips birth attendants with a reference tool

## THE INTERVENTION

Health service providers from LaQshya facilities in the 7 project states were oriented and encouraged to download the SDA for self-study and to enroll as learners. The goal for all staff nurses was to achieve the safe delivery champion's certificate and improve their Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) scores through regular hands on trainings.

## THE PROCESS

The journey of health workers from downloading the App to becoming learners and progressing to various levels of proficiency was facilitated through various supportive processes outlined below.



**Building a Facilitative Environment:** This was achieved by sensitizing stakeholders at all levels, through high level advocacy meetings in each state, and the orientation of district level officials preparatory to launch of the App in the state. After the launch of the SDA, these stakeholders were given regular feedback of the growing users and their experiences – to ensure continued support for the program.



**Embedding within the System:** The intervention was implemented in LaQshya facilities, and used the training and mentoring systems created for LaQshya. Facility level mentors oriented the facility staff on the Safe Delivery App and certification process, alongside their regular duties of hands-on training on key labor room practices. Quality Improvement (QI) circle meetings were



used to follow up on progress on certification of staff nurses as well as on practice of key skills.

Vridhhi support included training of facility level mentors and facilitating discussion on the use of Safe Delivery App during weekly/QI meetings.



**Recognizing Progress Learning:** Progress on use of App including downloads, registering as learners, and attaining expert and champion levels, is shared regularly with facility, district and state officials. Those attaining certification were felicitated during meetings and some states also awarded certificates.

*“One reason for the successful roll out of this app is that it gives instant results to the user. This is a huge encouragement for the nurses. We also felicitate the champions at state level, and this motivates more and more facility staff to use the App and take the certificate exam.”*

– Dr. Avneet Kaur, Former Director  
Health and Family Welfare, Punjab



**Perceiving Value for Self:** The SDA has been widely accepted and acknowledged as an easy to use tool for learning and valuable reference resource. Users across have voiced these sentiments.

*“I have always worked in emergency OPD, recently I was shifted to the labor room, this app has been extremely beneficial as the learning modules are easy to understand. I use this app very often whenever I am stuck in my work.”*

– Mamta, Staff Nurse,  
Civil Hospital Mohali, Punjab



## ACHIEVEMENT

June 2019 to  
September 2020

USERS CREATED

**19,442**

Downloaded the App

**9,494**

Learners

CERTIFICATE EARNED

**2,209**

Experts

**1,572**

Champions

*“After using the SDA my knowledge & skills have improved. Now I confidently do Newborn Resuscitation & Aortic Compression to control bleeding during PPH management.”*

– Deepmala Notwani,  
Rural Health Officer-PHC  
Naari, District Dhamtari,  
Chhattisgarh

## BROADENING THE SCOPE OF SDA

To keep SDA aligned with latest MNH national guidelines, the project has supported Maternity Foundation to include new modules on care of small and sick newborns and promoting family participation. During COVID-19 pandemic, project provided financial and technical support to add the module on prevention of COVID-19 infection.

## SDA AND COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic brought an urgent need to devise a way to sensitize and educate the staff about the disease and steps on prevention and management of COVID-19 cases in Labor Room and Antenatal Care (ANC) area.

Responding to COVID-19 outbreak *Vridhhi* project supported the Maternity Foundation to develop a new COVID-19 module aligned with Indian Guidelines and standards. The new module was launched on April 20, 2020.



**Videos:** Steps to prevent COVID-19; Hand Hygiene including hand washing and rubbing, Environmental Infection Prevention, and Bio Medical Waste Management.

**Action Card:** Flow chart on assessment of pregnant women during pandemic.

**Practical Procedures:** This section contains all the necessary information needed in practice:

- Making an Alcohol based Hand rub
- Sign and Symptoms of COVID-19
- Preventing Spread of COVID-19 in Health Facility
- Donning and Doffing
- Pregnant women as at-Risk Group
- Vertical Transmission and Newborn Risk
- Care during Pregnancy and birth in COVID-19
- Breastfeeding and COVID-19
- Making 1% Hypochlorite Solution
- Bio Medical Waste Management in Facility

## SDA TO THE RESCUE DURING PANDEMIC

*“The only way to slowdown the spread of this deadly disease COVID-19 is infection prevention & social distancing. This has been made possible with the COVID-19 module in the App which covers major elements of prevention and management of COVID-19 cases in LR & ANC. The module is delivered to health workers through e-learning platforms and webinars. Health workers are trained to protect themselves and their clients.”*



– Dr. Nutan Bisht,  
LMO, CHC-Kichha,  
Block Rudrapur,  
District Udham  
Singh Nagar,  
Uttarakhand

### **Vridhhi: Scaling Up RMNCHA Interventions**

USAID's flagship project *Vridhhi* is mandated to scale-up high-impact RMNCH+A interventions. As a technical partner it supports the Government of India and seven state governments of Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Odisha and Chhattisgarh to achieve its objective. *Vridhhi* has designed multiple innovative approaches to address gaps in RMNCH+A continuum of care, generating implementation experience and learnings for contextual adaptation across the country. In an additional ten states of Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura it supports specific health systems strengthening initiatives for logistics management of the family planning program. Project interventions impact a population of 328 million across 15 states.