



# Midwifery Newsletter in Bangladesh

Strengthening National Midwifery Programme (SNMP)



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Directorate General of Nursing and Midwifery



## Editorial



Bangladesh is a developing country. The changes of our country did not happen in one day. Every person is aware about Midwives and Midwifery Profession or Midwifery Education. Midwifery profession is totally different from any other medical profession. This profession is only about practicing Maternal and New born health and including all aspects of Sexual and Reproductive Health. With the support of the Government of Bangladesh, UNFPA is giving training for prepare professional Midwives.

DGNM is implementing the project “Strengthening the National Midwifery Program (SNMP) through DGNM)” with the technical support of UNFPA for preparing trained Midwives.

This newsletter is published for ‘Midwifery’ programme with the support of UNFPA. In this newsletter we summarized the activities of Midwifery. I hope that this series of newsletter will be continued in the upcoming days.

Finally, we are extending our big thanks to everyone who are involved in publishing this newsletter.

Siddika Akter

Director General & Line Director

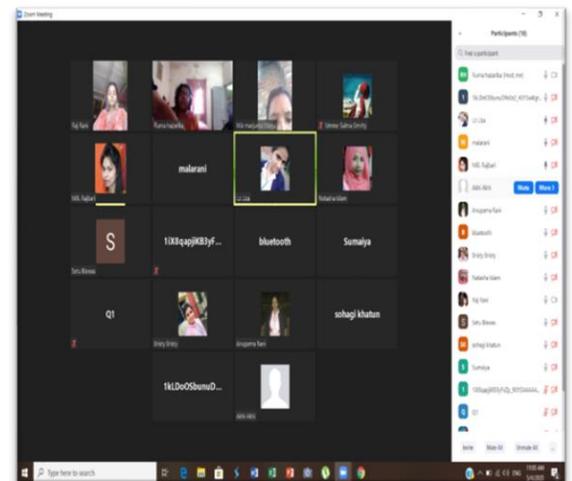
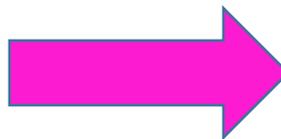
Director General of Nursing & Midwifery

## 1. Midwifery education from class to online during Covid-19

Since March 2020 all educational institutions in the country including midwifery are closed due to COVID-19 pandemic. As it was uncertain to reopen the institution, DGNM and BNMC were agreed to start the remote education through using social media specifically face book, messenger, Skype and zoom link to continue support the students to study at home. The objectives of this remote education are to engage students to continue their education, create an opportunity for students and teachers to interact online and continue teach subjects in the curriculum. To make it happen successfully the DGNM and BNMC were arranged a virtual orientation meeting on the model of remote education for all the midwifery faculties of public institutions.

Midwifery students are guided by the midwifery faculty for their self-development and responsibility towards the remote education and also the faculty were maintaining the dashboard to monitor the student's progress.

However, some students are facing challenges to access the facility due to unavailability of appropriate devices, poor internet connectivity and access to the learning materials and the role of faculty to adapt "Teaching Facts" to "Facilitating students" to think critically are also challenges as well. But faculty and students reflected that the both of them are benefited from this remote learning process. It has been developing their competencies on using devices, technology and self-inspiration to adapt with the new system. Students are easy to access to their expert teachers even this lockdown situation.



*Online Midwifery education during Covid - 19*

## 2. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the Midwives

The Director General, Directorate General of Nursing and Midwifery (DGNM) concern about the safety and security of midwives in their working place. With the support of UNFPA, DGNM has procured and distributed Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) among midwives who are working at the UHCs and USCs.



*PPE distributed by DGNM*

The (DG, DGNM) appreciated the UNFPA for taking initiative to support the DGNM in this challenging situation. She expressed thanks to midwives for their crucial roles to provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care in this critical moment to safe

mother and newborns life. She added that we need to protect our frontline health workers, pregnant women, newborn and the wider community. We can't effectively do this without the right equipment and enough of it. In addition, DGNM provided the guideline on how to use PPE and ensure the available PPE for midwives across the country.

## 3. Sharing information on COVID-19 to the nurses, midwives and Faculty

DGNM is concern for everyone access to accurate information and avoid harmful practice to prevent COVID-19 infection. DGNM regularly shared updated information on Covid-19 to the midwives and midwifery faculty through the different channel including DGNM web site, Face Book page and also using personal email. These resources will help to all the midwives to provide continue maternal care, ANC and PNC, Family Planning, breastfeed the baby and parenting during COVID 19.



**Sharing information during Covid-19**

## 4. Celebration of International Midwife Day (IDM)

May 5th International Midwife Day is celebrated every year on international level to celebrate and increase the awareness about the contribution of the midwives towards the women and newborn all over the world. The theme for 2020 is **‘Midwives with women: celebrate, demonstrate, mobilize, unite - our time is NOW!’** Promote the midwifery profession as well as to fulfill the increasing needs of more midwives all over the world driven by one strong, collective voice. In Bangladesh midwifery is a new profession and its big demand to strengthening midwifery education and services through creating more posts in different level, including higher education in midwifery and development career path.

UNFPA works at the global, regional and national level to scale up midwifery services, supporting training efforts and providing supplies and materials to midwifery institutions. This year International Day of the Midwife was celebrated in different way along with International Day of Nurses as the World Health Organization (WHO) has designated 2020 as the “International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife,” in honor of the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale’s birth.



On the occasion of this day, Ms. Siddika Akter, DG, DGNM published message in different newspapers to celebrate the event. She acknowledged midwives' contribution to provide their excellent care in remote and hard to reach community during Covid-19 outbreak and also humanitarian setting. She emphasized to create enabling environment, capacity building, creation of more posts and quality education and services. It will increase the motivation and commitment of midwives to provide dedicated SRHR services. She expressed her appreciation to the UNFPA as a leading organization to support midwifery profession in Bangladesh and also thankful to other organization for their contribution.

মাকসুদা খাতুন  
মিডওয়াইফ  
উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য কমপ্লেক্স, রানীনগর, নওগাঁ।



### নার্স ও মিডওয়াইফ বর্ষ - ২০২০

করোনা মহামারীর এই দূর্যোগময় পরিস্থিতিতে গত ৭ই এপ্রিল পালিত হয়ে গেল বিশ্ব স্বাস্থ্য দিবস-২০২০। এবছর দিবসের প্রতিপাদ্য "নার্স ও মিডওয়াইফদের সহায়তা করুন"(Support Nurses and Midwives). ধন্যবাদ জানাই, বিশ্ব স্বাস্থ্য সংস্থা কে এরকম প্রতিপাদ্য কে সামনে রেখে স্বাস্থ্য ব্যবস্থা কে সামনে এগিয়ে নেওয়ার প্রত্যয় ব্যক্ত করার জন্য। কারণ এতে মিডওয়াইফারি সেবা আরো বেগবান হবে বলে মনে করি। বিখ্যাত গ্রীক দার্শনিক প্লেটো বলেছেন, " **The greatest privilege of a human life is to become a midwife to the awakening of the soul in another person**" অথচ বাংলাদেশের প্রেক্ষাপটে গর্ভবতী মায়েদের সুস্থতা ও সুস্থ সন্তান জন্মদানে যারা শহর থেকে প্রত্যন্ত অঞ্চলে নিরলস কাজ করে যাচ্ছেন তারা হয়তোবা পর্দার আড়ালেই থেকে যাচ্ছেন।

বাংলাদেশের মত উন্নয়নশীল দেশে মানুষের অসচেতনতা, অজ্ঞতা, সামাজিক কুসংস্কার, অর্থনৈতিক অপ্রতুলতা, গর্ভকালীন সময়ে সঠিক পরিকল্পনা ও পরিচর্যার অভাবে সন্তান জন্মদানের আগে ও পরে মারাত্মক স্বাস্থ্য ঝুঁকির সম্মুখীন হচ্ছেন। এর ফলে ব্যহত হচ্ছে সুস্থ সন্তান জন্মদানের ক্ষমতা। এর একটি অন্যতম কারণ বাংলাদেশে মিডওয়াইফদের স্বল্পতা ও মিডওয়াইফারি পেশাটি সম্পর্কে না জানা। কারণ গর্ভকালীন, প্রসবকালীন এবং প্রসব পরবর্তী সময়ে যে পরিচর্যাগুলো রয়েছে, সেগুলো একজন দক্ষ মিডওয়াইফ সঠিক এবং সুন্দর ভাবে দিতে সক্ষম। যদি পর্যাপ্ত সংখ্যক মিডওয়াইফ নিয়োগ উচ্চতর প্রশিক্ষণ দেওয়া হয় তাহলে বাংলাদেশের সর্বস্তরে এই সেবা পৌঁছে দেওয়া সম্ভব।

বাংলাদেশের মত জনবহুল দেশে জনসংখ্যা অনুযায়ী প্রায় ৪০,০০০ জন মিডওয়াইফ প্রয়োজন, সেখানে মাত্র ১১৪৯ জন মিডওয়াইফ পদায়ন করা হয়েছে। এছাড়াও রয়েছে যন্ত্রপাতি ও সহযোগী কর্মীর স্বল্পতা। কারণ মিডওয়াইফারি সেবা প্রদানের জন্য প্রয়োজন একটি সুন্দর ও কর্ম উপযোগী পরিবেশ। যেখানে মায়েরা সেবা নিতে এসে স্বাচ্ছন্দ বোধ করবেন। সেই ক্ষেত্রে মিডওয়াইফদের সংখ্যা বৃদ্ধি, নিরাপদ কর্মপরিবেশ সৃষ্টি, সেবার প্রচার

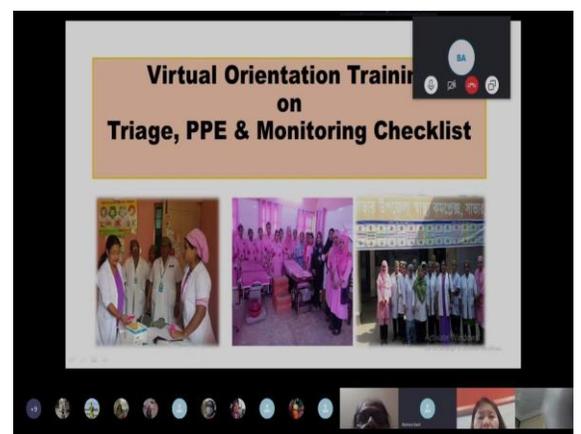
ও প্রসারতা বাড়াতে পারলে মিডওয়াইফদের কর্মস্পৃহা বৃদ্ধি পাবে এবং সেবার মান উত্তরোত্তর বৃদ্ধি পাবে।

আমরা "টেকসই উন্নয়ন অভিষ্ট" এর "জেন্ডার সমতা অর্জন ও সকল নারী ও মেয়েদের ক্ষমতায়ন" এর ক্ষেত্রে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করতে পারবো। যদিও মিডওয়াইফদের দক্ষতা, মানসম্মত শিক্ষা ও সেবার মান নিশ্চিত করতে বাংলাদেশ সরকার, নার্সিং ও মিডওয়াইফারি অধিদপ্তর সহ UNFPA নিরলস কাজ করে যাচ্ছে। বর্তমান সরকারের স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা বিভাগের যুগোপযোগী ও সঠিক নির্দেশনায় মাতৃ ও শিশু মৃত্যু অনেকাংশে হ্রাস পেয়েছে। তারপরও যদি আমাদের দেশ মিডওয়াইফদের স্বল্পতা মিটিয়ে বৃহৎ পরিসরে মিডওয়াইফারি সেবা নিশ্চিত করতে পারে তাহলে আমাদের দক্ষ মিডওয়াইফরা সেবা দান করার মাধ্যমে বিশেষ একটি ক্ষেত্র সঠিক ও সুন্দর ভাবে পরিচালনা করতে পারবে। ফলে কমবে মাতৃ ও শিশু মৃত্যুর হার এবং জাতি পাবে সুস্থ মা ও নবজাতক। পরিশেষে, এই করোনা মহামারী মোকাবেলা করে আমরা যেন পরিমিত মিডওয়াইফারি সেবা সকল গর্ভবতী মায়ের কাছে পৌঁছে দিতে পারি, এই প্রত্যাশাই আমাদের সবার। সবাই সুস্থ ও সুন্দর থাকবেন। ধন্যবাদ

## 5. Mentorship support: By the DPHN & DPHM for the midwives

Virtual orientation training had been conducted for the DPHN (District Public Health Nurse) & DPHM (District Public Health Midwife) to support the midwives in different Upazilla Health Complex of 19 Districts. The objectives of this orientation was to update the DPHN & DPHM on COVID- 19 prevention and management including proper use Personal Protective Equipment's (PPE), Triage and monitoring checklist. Through this orientation DPHN & DPHM are requested to visit the UHC regularly and provide support and supervise the midwives to provide midwifery services, safety measure of the midwives and introduce the monitoring Checklist to collect data on SRHR services during COVID-19 crisis. The information related to SRHR services during this COVID-19 situation will help to planning the program further to improve the midwifery service. The technical sessions were facilitated by the midwifery focal person of DGNM and UNFPA national and international technical expertise.

The DPHN and DPHM is the most important Officials to support and monitor the midwives in this critical moment when service providers are scared to deliver the services. Mentoring is a key component to strengthen the working relationship. It will ensure conducive working for the midwives to share their personal and professional challenges to provide midwifery care.



Virtual training on triage with DPHN & DPHM

## 6. Midwives' experiences for saving life during Covid-19 outbreak



PPE is very important, as it saves me as well as my patients from getting infection from COVID19. *“When I wear PPE, I feel safe and confident to provide care to the mother and newborn”* Ite Khatun, Midwife from Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

*“Training on COVID-19 prevention helps me to advise mothers about the importance of hand washing, physical distancing, and using masks to prevent COVID-19 infection”*



Midwives rendering services during the COVID19 pandemic *“No matter how difficult the situation gets, we will give our fullest support to pregnant mothers to save their lives”* Sultana, Midwife

Midwives can make difference. It was very essential to establish triage for the COVID-19 positive and suspected mother to prevent infection. We have succeeded to separate ANC corner, Delivery room and all necessary equipment with the cordial support of our UH&FPO. *“I feel proud that my advocacy make it happen”* Sanjiza Akter, Dhunot, Bogura, UHC.



## 7. Midwives: Savings lives of mothers and newborns during Covid-19 outbreak

The world is now in the grips of COVID-19 and the effects of this pandemic are threatening the lives of women and their babies. As the COVID-19 pandemic strains the availability of essential health-care services across the world, midwives are on the frontline care providers for saving lives. Behind the masks in many health care centers, hospitals and homes, we can see the faces of hundreds of midwives working tirelessly to prevent maternal deaths and deliver babies safely.

Midwives are the trusted companions of women throughout their pregnancy, birth, and the period following child birth. For centuries and through pandemics, midwives remain as a constant presence, playing a critical role in adverse working conditions and strained environments, from crippled health systems of maternal to sexual and reproductive health services, family planning services, information and counselling, and assist women to achieve healthy pregnancies and make pregnancy a positive experience including on gender-based violence.

Safe and effective midwifery care can prevent maternal deaths, stillbirths, and newborn deaths. Their dedication and fearless passion in supporting childbearing women in their most vulnerable moment and at the toughest times show the vital importance of midwives.

Hazera Parvin, Midwife, working at Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital (SSMCH) under the UNFPOA supported roaming midwives project under OGSB emphasized that, Dhaka is one of the first affected area with a lockdown imposed. When I opened the newspaper I have seen many hospitals are stop providing services to the clients in this critical situation, specially, the pregnant women. SSMCH is different from others hospitals. All health care providers are very much cooperative and providing tremendous support to the patients including pregnant mothers.



Twin delivery conducted by Midwife

Shimu, a pregnant women got admitted in the hospital with labour pain. It was her 3<sup>rd</sup> gravida and about 37+ week's pregnancy. She was very much afraid and tensed because it's twin pregnancy. Hazera (Midwife) helped Shimu and told that I am a midwife and I always keep beside you in your crisis moment. She encouraged Shimu for normal vaginal delivery. When Hazera examined and found her vital sign are stable. Hazera and her team maintain her partograph and counsel her for squatting delivery and she agreed with them. Shimu delivered two female babies. The midwife supported evidence based practice as skin-to-skin contact, gently assisting mother during breastfeed for the first time. She told, "It is a big challenge". *"I am scared but it is the work I have chosen to do, so I am always ready to help mothers and new borns"*.

Midwife Fense Ara, another roaming project midwife workings at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), Covid-19 unit. She is our national hero. She is fearless. She including other midwives are practicing evidence based care even in a crisis of Covid-19. A Covid positive mother admitted at Labour ward. The mother delivered a healthy female baby without episiotomy. Mother and baby's condition was good. Midwife ensures delayed cord clamping, immediate skin to skin contact and early breastfeeding. *"We cannot leave the mothers; we have to help them during Covid -19 I'm motivated to do this because I am a midwife and save lives of mothers,"* she said.



**Covid - 19 positive Mother conducted by Midwife**



**Midwife provided service during Covid - 19**

Midwife Shanta Akter is working at Chatkhil upazila health complex practicing evidence based care, maintain triage and providing health care to all Covid and Non-Covid infected mothers. A pregnant mother came to labour ward with labour pain. Midwife started and maintains partograph. The mother delivered a healthy male baby with squatting position. Midwife ensured delay cord clamping and skin to skin contact. When asked about her challenges during Covid-19, *she responded that she is not afraid of the infection, but feels happy when she sees the mother and baby is safe.*

With a clear understanding of the value of midwives, more women and girls will seek their services and enjoy healthier, happier reproductive lives – including during these difficult times of national lockdowns. We are proud of the way maternity teams have raised to this difficult challenges, adapting services and adopting new technology to ensure that mothers and babies continue to receive the same great care as they always have, in the safest possible way. Midwives have consistently supported women through labour and delivery.

*We salute all midwives and Health workers for your hard works and saving mothers and new-born lives during Covid -19.*

*Midwives with women: celebrate, demonstrate, mobilize, unite -  
our time is NOW!*

