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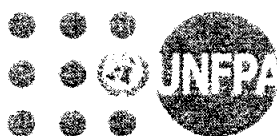
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# NEWSLETTER

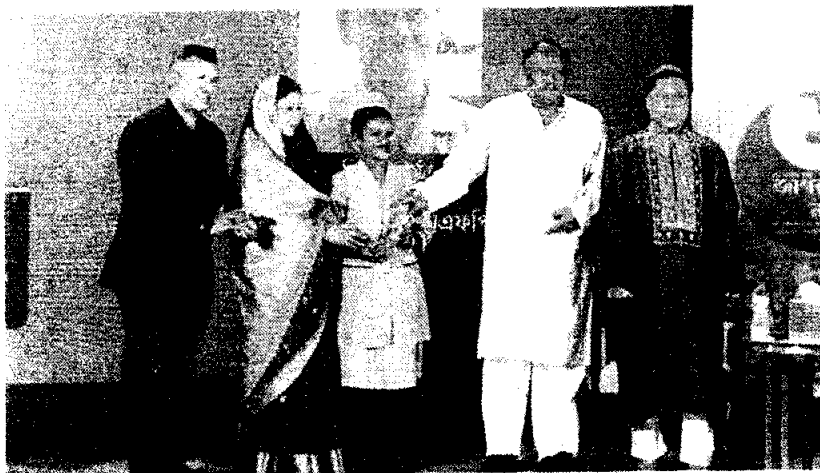
STRENGTHENING NATIONAL MIDWIFERY  
PROGRAMME - SNMP THROUGH DGNM



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## MIDWIFE MINOTI MURMU RECEIVED "WOMEN'S EXCELLENCE AWARD" ON THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2023



*As a result of Minoti Murmu's services, healthcare awareness in the Santal community is rising fast.*



*Minoti is expressing her feelings after receiving the award.*

Midwife Minoti Murmu received "Jagorone Nari- Women's Excellence Award 2023 by ATN News" on the International Women's Day this year, for her outstanding midwifery services and contribution to the society. Mr Tipu Munshi, the Minister of Commerce in Bangladesh, handed the award to her.

The story of Minoti's struggle is unique and inspirational. She belongs to the Santal community of North Bengal, one of Bangladesh's indigenous and marginalized groups. Santals are extremely poor and backward. Their struggle to meet the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing is so tough that they consider the rights to good health and education as luxury or nonessential. So, the majority of them do not go to hospitals to receive healthcare services even when they are sick, and they do not attend schools even to pursue their primary level education.

As said by Minoti Murmu, the usual age of marriage for a girl in her community is ten to twelve and the majority of people have no idea about family planning. So, adolescent pregnancies are a common scenario in the ethnic society that often lead to painful deaths of young mothers and newborns. Moreover, Minoti said that since her

childhood she never saw trained attendants during the deliveries of pregnant women in her community. Local *Dai*- traditional birth attendants, especially old women, used to perform deliveries of Santal mothers adopting risky rituals or traditional methods that caused harm to mothers and newborns. The delivery process was considered unholy, so the laboring mothers were taken to some isolated slummy places outside their houses. They delivered babies lying on straws or dry grasses in the absence of their family members. The mothers and newborn babies were prohibited from entering their houses for seven to forty days after birth.

Watching the women of her community suffer unbearably, Minoti decided to be a professional midwife. She wanted to provide necessary maternal and sexual health services to save lives. As girls' education was not thought to be important in her underprivileged community, she completed her schooling overcoming many obstacles. After completing the higher secondary degree, midwifery education seemed like the perfect opportunity to make her dream come true.

In 2019, completing the three-year midwifery diploma supported by UNFPA, Minoti took licensing examination and succeeded in becoming a registered midwife. She joined Sapmara Union Health and Family Welfare Center (UHFWC) in her own district, Gaibandha, in 2020. Since then she has been working hard to ensure safe normal deliveries to reduce maternal and newborn deaths, and to improve SRHR services among the Santal community. She is raising awareness against child-marriages and adolescent pregnancies in her community.

Minoti says that the work is not always easy. "Many pregnant women from her community continue to believe that they do not need to have medical check-ups during pregnancy.

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Due to the poor level of awareness, there exist many harmful practices. For example, women often do not eat nutritious food during pregnancy, because they are afraid that the baby will grow too big for the delivery," she explains. Minoti and her fellow Santal midwives are trying sincerely to eliminate these superstitions from their society. Sharing a common language and culture helps them build a strong bond with the Santal people.

Beginning from July 2020 to April 2023, midwife Minoti Murmu has conducted 106 normal vaginal deliveries at Sapmara UHFWC, among them 21 mothers were from indigenous community. She provided ANC service to 1493 pregnant women and PNC to 238 mothers; there were 156 ANC service receivers and 46 PNC service receivers who were indigenous women. Total 327 family counseling services have been provided by Minoti, among the receivers 36 families were indigenous.

As a result of Minoti Murmu's services, healthcare awareness in the Santal community is rising fast. The ethnic group is now inspired to take proper sexual and reproductive health services to reduce maternal and neonatal deaths in their community.

## ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON ALLIANCE TO IMPROVE MIDWIFERY EDUCATION (AIME)

A midwifery teacher from Dhaka Nursing College, a government midwife- who is also Bangladesh Midwifery Society's General Secretary, along with a national consultant of midwifery from UNFPA Bangladesh attended the Asia Pacific Regional Workshop on Alliance to Improve Midwifery Education in Bangkok, Thailand from 13th to 15th March 2023. The workshop was hosted by UNFPA and conducted by the Alliance to Improve Midwifery Education (AIME), a global alliance established by UNFPA, in partnership with ICM, WHO, UNICEF, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, Jhpiego, Laerdal Global Health, Burnet Institute, Maternity Foundation, and World Continuing Education Alliance and supported by the Johnson and Johnson Foundation.

The workshop brought together global, regional, and national partners working on midwifery education to exchange knowledge and unite on implementing a global 7-step action plan to strengthen midwifery education. The event highlighted successful initiatives and facilitated a critical exchange of ideas and



personal experiences among participants, which could be applied in their respective countries. Educators from 19 countries were introduced to new resources and programmes to enhance the quality of midwifery teaching for improved sexual and reproductive, maternal, newborn, and adolescent health services.

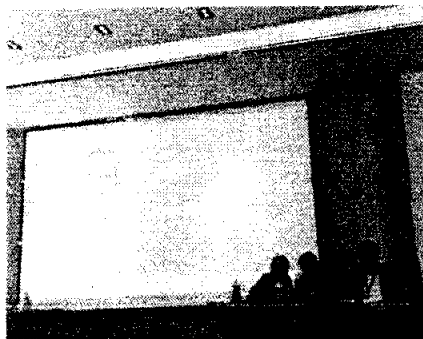
*"In Asia and the Pacific, ten women die every hour in pregnancy or birth. Our collective efforts to educate midwives according to international standards is a proven pathway to end this tragedy."*

These included the UNFPA Faculty Development Programme and Continued Professional Development Framework, designed in partnership with Burnet Institute, and a new World Health Organization (WHO) Midwifery Toolkit.

Participating midwifery educators also learnt about faculty development, the importance of continuing professional development, and how to use technology and innovation to enhance midwives' development. They received insights on resources they can use for instant access to evidence-based and current clinical guidelines.

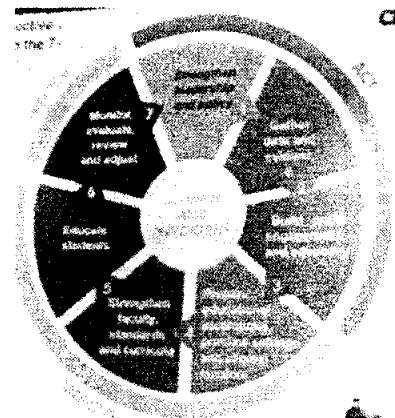
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## TRANSLATIONS



National Consultant, Midwifery of UNFPA Bangladesh presenting as a panelist

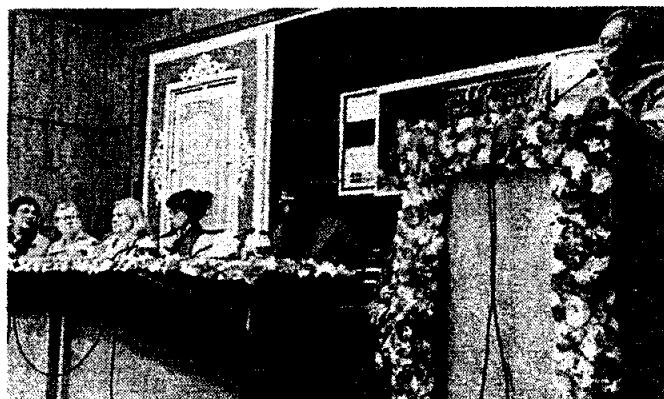
There were plenty of evidences, as partners and participants shared at the workshop, that investing in well-trained midwives can ensure better health outcomes for the women, newborns, and families. "In Asia and the Pacific, ten women die every hour in pregnancy or birth. Our collective efforts to educate midwives according to international standards is a proven pathway to end this tragedy," said UNFPA Regional Senior Advisor for SRHR, Catherine Breen Kamkong.



The 7-Step Action Plan

## MONITORING MISSION TO DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN PROGRAM SITES IN BANDARBAN

One high level monitoring mission by SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) delegates and UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) officials was held in Bandarban District from 5th to 7th March 2023. The SIDA team consisted of the Ambassador of Sweden to Bangladesh, the Head of Development, and the First Secretary and Program Specialist- Health Sectors at the Embassy of Sweden. UNFPA team had the Country Representative in Bangladesh, the Chief of Health, National Midwifery Consultant, Programme Analyst- SRHR, government officials, local leaders, and implementing partners.



The District Chairman delivering speech in the stakeholder meeting



Nia Shomabesh – an outreach meeting with indigenous mothers

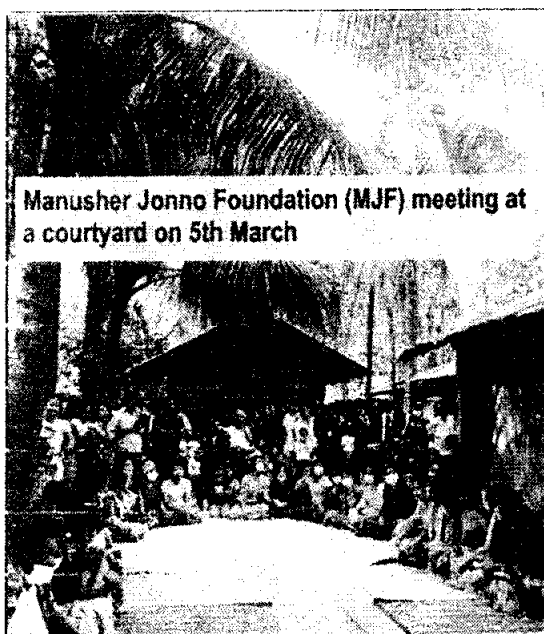
The objectives of the mission were to observe midwifery-led care and remote services through telemedicine including family planning services at the Mother & Child Welfare Centres (MCWC), to check Manusher Jonno Foundation's (MJF) activities supported by SIDA, to understand the SRHR Service's delivery mechanism at the Bolipara Midway Homes and for the community People at Ramri Para, Chimbhuk, and to observe the government nursing colleges to understand the midwifery pre-service education system. The visiting team observed the SRHR activities being provided in Bandarban District Hospital supported by SIDA. They attended a stakeholder meeting with the Civil Surgeon, Deputy Civil Surgeon, Hospital Superintendent, Residential Medical Officer, Gynae Consultant, Paediatrician, District Consultant (FP), 7 UH&FPOs, MO-clinic, MO-MCHFP, local leaders, journalists, and partner NGOs at the conference room of the Hill District Chairman.

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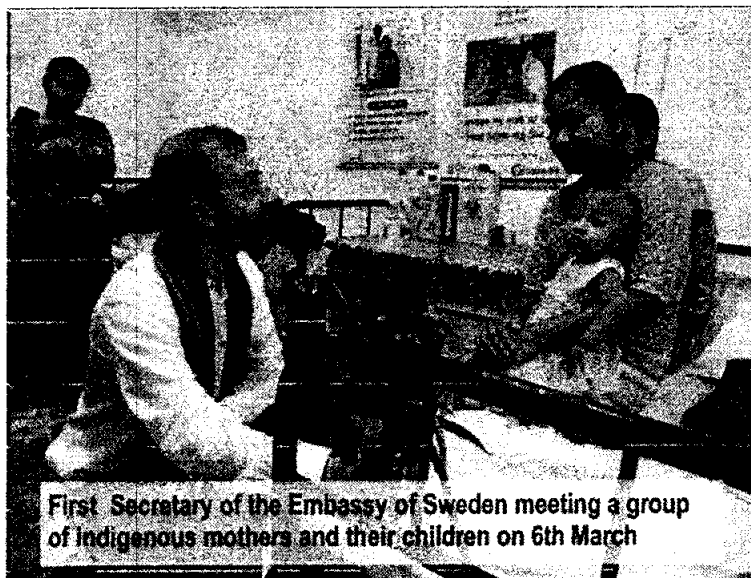
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The Health Department shared a presentation on EmoNC services, Ca-cervix, MPDSR, and HGBV services with a detailed comparative analysis for the period of last 3 years. The FP department showed some challenges and recommendations included Zero Home Delivery (Initiative), Home Stay Skill Delivery (UH&FWC) at 24/7 Model Clinic, Birth Centre (Initiative), Zero Unmet Need. The Chairman thanked the mission team for the Birthing Center initiative which is for hard to reach areas. He also focused on increased institutional delivery for maternal death reduction. The mission delegates were highly delighted to see the changes made by UNFPA in the remote district and provided some recommendations to continue further support.

### The mission in photos ...



**Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) meeting at a courtyard on 5th March**



**First Secretary of the Embassy of Sweden meeting a group of indigenous mothers and their children on 6th March**



**The mission team with a group of ethnic people of Hill Tracts on 7th March**



**Ambassador of Sweden and UNFPA Country Representative talking with midwifery students on 6th March**



## BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (BSc) IN MIDWIFERY: ORIENTATION OF THE FACULTY HELD

A day-long orientation program was held on Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Midwifery curriculum. A total of 36 teachers and the principal of the College of Nursing, Mohakhali, participated in the orientation program. This session was conducted to ensure that the faculty has in-depth knowledge and understanding of delivering standard and updated midwifery education and services, post-basic midwifery education, course curriculum, academic calendar, logbook, and available resources. This activity ensured capacity building of the faculty on effective implementation of the newly introduced BSc in Midwifery curriculum in Bangladesh.



## QUARTERLY PROGRESS REVIEW MEETING HELD ON 28TH MARCH 2023



A Quarterly Progress Review meeting was organized by DGNM in collaboration with DGHS and DGFP, supported by UNFPA, on 28th March 2023 at DGNM conference room to discuss about updates on project implementation, to identify the gaps, and to make mitigation plans. It was chaired by the DG, DGNM. Representatives from the Implementing Partner (IP) organizations: Directorate General of the Health Services (DGHS), Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP), Directorate General of Nursing and Midwifery (DGNM), Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council (BNMC), Bangladesh Midwifery Society (BMS), Save the Children International (SCI), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and UNFPA were present in the meeting. The discussants focused on the progress made in the Q4, 2022 and plans for the Q1, 2023.

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