A new dawn

A preloaded mobile application 'mSehat' focuses on supporting client based tracking by recording maternal and infant data in real-time, reinforcing learning, and strengthening counseling efforts during home visits by FLHWs.
Frontline Health Workers (FLHWs) are essentially the first point of contact that a community has with the health system. They being a critical interface between the community and the public health system, play an important role in convincing families to adopt life-saving health practices and linking the community to the broader health system. The state of Uttar Pradesh, equipped with a large network of about 23,000 Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) and over 150,000 Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), has an enormous potential to improve the reach and utilization of Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A) services in the State.

Yet, for a more effective delivery and improved program outcomes, there seemed to be a need to strengthen and support the FLHWs by unburdening them of the complex and difficult to carry manuals, registers, and other job aids. The introduction of mSehat mobile application has done just that, empowering the frontline health workers with an integrated mSehat service delivery platform leading to improved performance through effective planning, management and execution of their day-to-day work.

The goal of mSehat is to accelerate the reduction of maternal, neonatal, child mortality and total fertility rate in Uttar Pradesh by empowering frontline health workers. Different applications are customized to support different cadres viz ASHA application runs in mobiles provided to ASHAs while the ANM application is for the ANMs to interface and the third application is for program leadership at block, district and state levels, which can be viewed on their tablets and computers. The fourth module is to generate reminder and alerts for beneficiaries on their registered mobile. The initiative has been rolled out in five districts namely Bareilly, Kannauj, Mirzapur, Sitapur and Faizabad covering 10000 ASHAs, 2000 ANMs and 300 MOs/MOICs.
VOICES FROM THE FIELD:

Sudhawati: ASHA Sangini from village Rumpura, Block Chibramau, District Kannauj

Sudhawati had just completed her high school and had barely turned 17 when she was married off, marriage thwarting the dreams of a young girl so passionate about education. Her desire for knowledge intensified as she floundered through the pressures of a marital life from an age so early. Impressed by her determination and commitment, it was her husband who supported her in finishing her studies and helped her gain a B.Com degree amidst all familial pressures. Inspite of her education, she was prevented by her in-laws from securing a job. Giving up, Sudhawati continued with her family duties.

Her desire for acquiring an occupation was kindled again, when in the year 2005, the process of selection of Accredited Social Health worker (ASHA) began in her village under the National Health Mission. She was not permitted by her in laws to apply. Feeling very drawn to it, her moment came in 2007, when the ASHA of her village resigned. This time, Sudhawati approached the village pradhan who, seeing her qualifications, recommended her to the position of ASHA in January 2007. Sudhawati is 41 years of age today and with her hard work and perseverance has been elected as ASHA Sangini for catchment area of subcentre Khojipur of village Rumpura, efficiently supervising and supporting fifteen ASHAs under her able guidance.

Another high point in Sudhawati’s life was the introduction of mSehat mobile application, a pre-loaded mobile application focusing on supporting client based tracking by recording maternal and infant data in real-time, reinforcing learning, and strengthening counseling efforts during home visits by FLHWs, unburdening them of the complex and difficult to carry manuals, registers, and other job aids. Eager to learn new things, dreaming to scale new heights, the forward-looking ASHA Sangini Sudhawati was elated to have received a mobile phone that would make her technically efficient, empowering her to work smart.
In Sudhawati's words:

"Initially I was not aware of the purpose with which the mobile phone had been provided to us, but mSehat orientation training cleared it all."

To her relief and to the relief of all other ASHAs, no heavy registers or job aids were to be carried around any longer. Just one smart phone that would help in registration, tracking, counseling, reporting, screening, referrals of the beneficiaries and so on. After the training Sudhawati not only successfully completed the data entry of 235 families, 125 children (0-5 years) and 13 pregnant women within a month but also helped other ASHAs to complete their survey.

Says a beaming
SUDHAWATI

“Now everything seems so easy! Visiting different villages has also become easy, not having to carry registers, manuals and other job aids like we had to earlier. For any information on any family, we proudly look into our mobile phones and provide each and every information asked for. Surprised and impressed by our efficiency, people have started giving us a lot of importance”