



RESEARCH AT-A-GLANCE

Fostering Respectful Maternity Care in India

Situation

Globally many women experience disrespect and abuse during childbirth. Disrespect and abuse are not only human rights violations but can also compromise clinical outcomes. While national policies in India include guidelines on provision of respectful maternity care, structural and social barriers within facilities and communities impede progress for provision of respectful maternity care across the country.

What We're Doing

USAID's Agency for All Project is testing strategies to shift the institutional and provider norms and practices that impact how pregnant women and newborns are treated by providers. Within communities, we are also working to increase knowledge of respectful maternity care among women, birth companions, and families, while shifting norms so that community members can advocate for respectful maternity care within facilities. This includes:

- **Conducting formative research** to understand provider norms, social networks, and the experiences and perceptions of women and their families.
- **Identifying intervention strategies** to promote changes in norms, behaviors, and social support among providers, while increasing awareness and changing norms around respectful maternity care within communities.
- **An evaluation study** that will include quantitative, pre-post surveys within facilities and communities, along with qualitative interviews to uncover the nuances of change over time.

What We're Learning

- Providers understand the importance of consent, privacy, providing information, and permitting birth companions as part of respectful maternity care. However, providers' understanding of what constitutes disrespect and abuse is mostly limited to shouting and hitting.
- Providers, women, and communities believe that disrespect and abuse is acceptable under certain circumstances.
- Community members lack awareness of respectful maternity care, and prevailing norms discourage them from challenging health care providers, advocating for better care, or raising grievances.

Impact

Intervention strategies must address provider attitudes and norms that impact the delivery of respectful maternity care, as well as community-level norms and awareness. Our results can inform strategies to enhance women's experiences of maternity care, ultimately leading to improved provision of respectful maternity care globally.

Snapshot

Location: India (Maharashtra—Jalna and Aurangabad, Telangana—Hyderabad, Jharkhand—Ranchi)

Duration: 2022–2027

Consortium Partners: Centre for Catalyzing Change (C3), Center on Gender Equity and Health, UC San Diego, Sambodhi

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