# Respectful birthing: Skilled midwives to bring down Csection rates in Telangana

The first batch of this 18-month course, constituting 30 trained midwives, graduated on May 5, observed as International day for Midwives.



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Minister Etela Rajender poses with a batch of midwives on International Midwife Day in Hyderabad on Sunday (Photo | EPS)

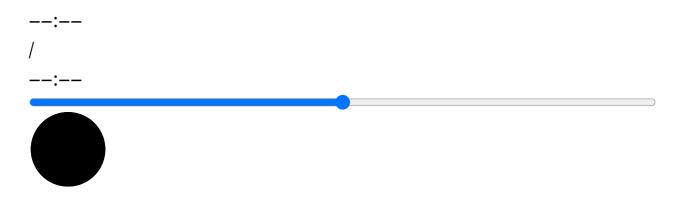
## By Express News Service

HYDERABAD: In a bid to tackle the increase in cesarean (C-section) births in the State, the Telangana government had come up with a visionary scheme — to initiate a midwifery training course for staff nurses. Now, the vision is well on its way to realisation. The first batch of this 18-month course, constituting 30 trained midwives, graduated on May 5, observed as International day for Midwives.

According to Yogita Rana, commissioner of Health & Family Welfare, these 30 trained midwives were identified from government health facilities. They would now be sent back to 12 identified healthcare centres across the State, where there is a high load of C-section births.

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"The aim of this project is to train and mentor the midwives in such a way that the service will encourage more women to opt for natural birth. This will not only lead to the reduction in maternal deaths, but also neo-natal deaths. The scheme was previously implemented in Medak district in the year 2000 as well. The results of the training can still be seen in Sangareddy, that records one of the highest rate of natural births in the State," she added. Midwives, trained to the standards of the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM), would be posted at identified healthcare centres within a week.



According to the National Family Health Survey of 2014-15, 40.3 per cent of births in the public hospitals of Telangana are C-sections. It may be noted that this percentage is way beyond the World Health Organisation's guideline of maximum 10-15% C-section births in a country. The specially designed 18-month programme is conducted by Fernandez Hospital, with the support of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Telangana and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) under the National Health Mission Scheme.

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Speaking to Express, Dr Evita Fernandez, chairperson of Fernandez Foundation, explained, "The midwives have been trained to provide pregnant women with a respectful and dignified birthing process. The first six weeks they were simply counselled regarding issues of privacy and consent. Eventually, they were mentored to treat a pregnant woman's birthing procedure as a landmark in the latter's life than just a medical procedure."

In terms of technical training, she added, these midwives would be with a pregnant mother from when the latter realises she is pregnant to 42 days after the delivery has happened. "She will even be accompanying the mother for tests," she stated.

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