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**IMMUNISE INDIA:** Learnings from COVID-19 to prevent another pandemic and curb other vaccine preventable diseases

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# Until India sees professional midwifery as a separate entity, it will struggle to gain the autonomy it deserves: Inderjeet Kaur

*Direct entry curriculum for midwifery in India's healthcare system should be considered as not everyone needs to train as a nurse to become a midwife. Several other countries have been successful in the model.*

Shahid Akhter ETHealthWorld Updated: September 28, 2021, 08:34 IST



Shahid Akhter, editor, ETHealthworld, spoke to **Inderjeet Kaur**, Director, **Midwifery Services**, Fernandez Foundation, to know more about the status of professional midwives and their services offered in India.

**Your views on India still not explicitly recognising independent midwifery.**

India has taken tremendous strides towards understanding the need for professional midwives and produced a guidance on roll out and strengthening of [midwifery service in India](#) in 2019. However, the country still looks at midwifery under the nursing arm. Until India sees professional midwifery as a separate entity, midwifery will struggle to gain the autonomy it deserves, which is caring for women without any medical complications. Direct entry curriculum for midwifery in India's healthcare system should be considered as not everyone needs to train as a nurse to become a midwife. Several other countries have been successful in the model.

**Recently, the top health panel recommended bringing the [National Nursing and Midwifery Commission Bill](#) for regulation and development of nursing and midwifery services in the country. Do you think such a step will help build professional midwifery?**

The National Nursing and Midwifery Commission (NNMC) Bill 2020 is meant to replace the INC Act 1947. It is currently in the public domain and the Ministry is seeking feedback from various quarters. The Bill aims to standardise entry and exit of nursing professionals through the National Nursing and Midwifery Entrance Test and the National Exit Test. It is directed towards professionalising the nursing and midwifery services. This is a start to ensure that midwifery is raised on the agenda and would support build-up of midwifery services through this recognition. The Bill will need to have a clear plan on how to integrate midwifery services into the existing healthcare system.

**[C Sections](#) have become the norm these days because women find it easier. How do you address this?**

The National Family Health Surveys show the number of people opting for C-sections across India. C section rates in India increased from 8.5% to 17.2% between 2005–06 and 2015–16. The NFHS data clearly shows the C section rate in different states in India is higher than the WHO-recommended limit. WHO is also urging nations to focus on the importance of understanding that each woman's need during pregnancy and childbirth is unique.

The media should play a huge role in explaining the benefits of a normal birth. Empowering women and raising awareness of the benefits of a normal birth and implications of C sections with facts is the need of the hour. Women are three times more likely to die during a C section delivery than during a vaginal birth. The most common causes of maternal deaths during C section are due to anaesthesia, bleeding and infection.

A baby who is delivered vaginally will be able to breastfeed sooner than one delivered via a C-section. During a vaginal delivery, muscles involved in the process are more likely to squeeze out the fluid in a newborn's lungs, which is beneficial because it makes babies less likely to suffer breathing problems at birth. Birth preparation classes are ideal environments to share such information.

Women need to be empowered with the right knowledge based on evidence to make informed choices.

For some women, the C Section may be the only safe option and may need to be done immediately to help prevent further complications. However, there are still practices which offer unindicated CS's.

### **How has the pandemic affected pregnant women's health?**

Pregnant women have been through intense stress during the pandemic. They were afraid of becoming infected in the time of their pregnancy and childbirth. Their deepest fear was the effect of COVID 19 on the health of the baby in-utero.,,

Pregnancy makes women more vulnerable.. Some hospitals stopped birth companions and women were birthing alone among strangers. The fear and trauma of birthing under such circumstances, led to a higher risk of postpartum depression. The CS rates also increased during the pandemic.

Women were not accessing care due to fear of contracting COVID in health care facilities. In some places, hospitals were closed and women did not have access to care. Most women also did not want to attend antenatal reviews alone. Reviews were also reduced to limit face to face contact which caused more anxiety as they required longer time frames to receive support and reassurance from providers. We will never know the true extent of the impact of the pandemic on women's health until the near future when more outcomes would be revealed following studies of the impact of the pandemic.

The mental health concerns faced by women in rural India are even more serious. Due to enforcement of lockdown and social distancing norms, it is not possible for local health workers to reach every woman. Antenatal care is provided in groups (usually 10 to 20 pregnant women at a unit) and as a result, many pregnant and lactating mothers are left without medical care.

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**Evita Fernandez**

Direct entry midwifery is the answer to help scale up midwifery training to meet India's needs. Women truly interested in midwifery will join the course. It is a focused, 3 yr degree programme. The Indian Nursing Council and the Ministry of Health should encourage Universities to offer this route. India is capable of meeting global standards.

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The company has entered into a voluntary license agreement with the Medicines Patent Pool to help expand access in 95 low- and middle-income countries that account for approximately 53% of the world's population, pending authorization or approval. If approved PAXLOVID™ (PF-07321332; ritonavir) would be the first oral antiviral of its kind, a 3CL protease inhibitor specifically designed to combat SARS-CoV-2

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Vacuum Assisted Breast Biopsy good for diagnosing benign lumps: Dr Rajeev Kumar



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Building Resilience and Combating with Parkinson's - The Way Forward



17:24

Decision to give booster shot to every adult currently not evidence-based: Prof. K. Srinath Reddy

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# Hold workplace Covid inoculation drives to improve coverage: Centre suggests states

*Besides these, the Union health ministry, as part of its strategies to nudge those who are to be vaccinated, also advised involving vaccinated influential figures and community leaders in districts or villages to motivate people to get anti-Covid shots.*

PTI

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## The challenges of tobacco regulation in India

*The traditional tobacco control movement as well as the WHO have lost sight of the big picture. Instead of broadening their focus to encompass improvements in public health, they remain fixated on narrow strategies that have questionable success – imagine if you are tobacco dependent, will pictorial warnings or ad bans affect your dependence in a major way?*

ETHealthWorld

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## Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal announces major initiatives to push AYUSH in northeast

*Participating in a programme at the North Eastern Institute of Ayurveda and Folk Medicine Research (NEIAFMR) at Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh, Sonowal announced an investment of Rs 53.72 crore to develop new infrastructure within the NEIAFMR campus*

Rajib Dutta TNN

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## Govt allows Serum Institute to export 50 lakh Covishield doses under COVAX to four nations

*SII will commence Covid vaccine export under the COVAX programme from November 23 and Nepal will receive the first lot of Covishield on November 24.*

PTI

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## Covid booster-dose policy likely by month end: NTAGI member

*Dr Samiran Panda said that in the discussion on booster doses or a third shot, it is essential that one does not get diverted from the public health programme of the two doses.*

Nisha Nambiar TNN

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## Tamil Nadu State Policy for Children 2021: TN prioritises child protection

*The policy says every child shall have access to quality healthcare and education and will be able to freely express his or her views on any issue concerning him/her.*

A Ragu Raman TNN

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## Vaccination of children not likely to happen anytime soon: Health minister Mandaviya

*The health minister refused to comment on whether vaccination could be allowed in January next year. "I cannot say when. But not right now," he said.*

Nidhi Sharma ET Bureau

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# Health experts stress need for Cov shot to kids at the earliest

*Inoculation of children against Covid-19 should be started at the earliest, feel health experts, especially now that schools have reopened for in-person classes.*

Sumati Yengkhom TNN

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# Confrontation, counselling, vaccination: Har Ghar Dastak teams set out to jab all

*Every alternate household presented a mix of apprehension, reluctance and adamant individuals refusing to get jabbed when the team visited them. Some relented following persuasion by the senior officers.*

Sarfaraz Ahmed TNN

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# Vaccination status likely to be on boarding passes

*Soon, you may have your Covid vaccination status printed on your flight boarding pass, making your travel hassle free and smooth.*

Sushmi Dey TNN

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