

Telangana › Midwifery programme to curb C-sections

Midwifery programme to curb C-sections

BY SRUTI VENUGOPAL



Dr Evita Fernandez during a training session for midwives who will be employed in Public Health Centres to provide necessary care and support to pregnant women.

Hyderabad: At a time when Caesarean section (C-section) childbirths are on the rise, the State government in partnership with Fernandez Foundation and UNICEF is propagating the idea of midwifery.

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Under an 18-month certificate training programme in midwifery, about 30 midwives were trained as part of the first cohort in 2017 and since then, two more cohorts have taken place. The plan is to train 1,500 midwives in Telangana.

These midwives will be employed in Public Health Centres (PHCs) to provide necessary care and support to pregnant women.

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“Professional midwifery care will be the vehicle to reduce maternal deaths. These midwives will play a crucial role in ensuring that pregnant women undergo safe and healthy pregnancy with dignity and care. I am proud of the State government that has taken up this initiative and is providing all support for the success of the programme,” says Dr Evita Fernandez, chairman, Fernandez Foundation.

Dr Fernandez is a staunch proponent of the concept of midwifery. The city-based hospital is known for promoting natural birth and is one of the few hospitals that offer an exclusive two-year in-house Professional Midwifery Education and Training programme, which began in 2011.

“Midwives not just help in natural birthing process but also help in providing mental support that a mother requires during delivery. They are trained to identify low-risk pregnant women and also take the right call when any complication develops. These midwives have helped in reducing unnecessary cesareans and the ripples have been felt in places like Kothagudem and Mancherial where people are now coming into area hospitals to birth,” Dr Fernandez informs.

Involvement of birthing partner

Another major change that the programme has brought about is the involvement of a birthing partner, mostly husbands, during delivery. These midwives are trained under the watchful eyes of midwives from London and Fernandez Hospital. Many senior nurses from different government hospitals were drawn for the training programme. While this programme does take care of PHCs, Dr Fernandez firmly believes private hospitals and clinics should also embrace the concept.

“About 60 per cent of deliveries in India are in the private sector. I believe that the role of midwives in deliveries will not just benefit pregnant women but also hospitals as they can now concentrate on high-risk and complicated cases,” she says.

Started from 2-bed clinic

Hailing from a family of doctors, becoming a doctor was always ingrained in Dr Fernandez’s mind and soul. Dr Fernandez’s parents Dr Leslie Fernandez and Dr Lourdes Fernandez started a two-bed clinic in 1948 which soon grew to a 300-bed hospital in the late 1980s.

“When I was eight-year-old, I made up my mind that I wanted to become a doctor. And at the age of 16, I decided I wanted to become a gynecologist as I had seen my parents witness the joy of birth. After completing my studies in India, my parents sent me to the UK to gain exposure. More than the course there, I learned a lot about life.” she says.

Dr Fernandez took over the reins of the hospital in 1985 and since then, the hospital has

become an icon for natural birthing with pregnant women from far-off districts also coming here for delivery.

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