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National Health Mission in Assam and Piramal Foundation to monitor high-risk pregnancy cases

14 October 2023 | News

Piramal Foundation has developed customised, innovative mobile applications containing counselling content and guidelines



National Health Mission (NHM) Assam, in collaboration with Kamrup district authorities, has unveiled "Xushrukha" (meaning "Taking Care" in Assamese), an innovative 18-month research programme that will help reduce the rate of probable high-risk pregnancy (HRP) cases in the state.

This first of its kind initiative in Assam, supported by the Piramal Foundation, is aimed at addressing and reducing high-risk pregnancies in the state, with a focus on the Chaygaon, Nagerbera, and Rangia blocks of Kamrup district.

With Assam's Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) standing at a concerning 215 (Sample Registration System 2016-18), well above the national average, state health officials have made it a top priority to address this critical issue.

This research programme aims to assist state and district health authorities in reducing maternal mortality by proactively identifying and providing counseling for at-risk women in the eligible couple category. Approximately 1,26,000 women will participate in awareness sessions focused on adhering to the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommendations for preconception care, ultimately enhancing their pregnancy experiences.

The programme includes:

1. Early identification of probable and current high-risk pregnancies (HRPs) during Eligible Couple Registration by ASHAs
2. Targeted Counselling on family planning for identified high-risk beneficiaries by ASHAs
3. Care and counselling is provided through the entire 18 months cycle – starting with preconception upto a few months after the birth of the child

Within this initiative, the Foundation has developed innovative mobile applications containing counseling content and guidelines. These tools will empower the digital knowledge of 694 Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) to conduct door-to-door screenings and provide support to pregnant women facing high-risk situations.

At the project's conclusion, the Piramal Foundation will publish a comprehensive study in collaboration with NHM, Assam that will lay the groundwork for the expansion of this crucial programme across the entire state of Assam.