

## Saving Mothers and Babies with Maternal Health Initiative

Maternal health has been long neglected in the rural areas of Pakistan. The poor access to healthcare services in Pakistan makes women and children the most susceptible segments of society in terms of health. As a result, the infant mortality rate is a shocking 86/1000 live births and the maternal mortality rate is 340/100,000 live births in Pakistan today. Most of these deaths can be avoided if there is a provision of properly trained birth attendants along with medical and transportation facilities at the time of birth.



OSDI aims to tackle this problem with an initiative on maternal health. Over the past year, we have trained 24 traditional birth attendants in Matiari and Khairpur districts who can aid expecting mothers at the time of birth. In addition to this OSDI has also started the provision of necessary medicines in Matiari district as well as health and hygiene sessions in order to educate women about possible risks, how to avoid them and the importance of pre natal and post natal visits to the doctor. As a result of these sessions, more women have become aware of health factors that can possibly affect them and their babies. Traditional birth attendants as well as lady health workers all are made to attend these sessions so they can help in case complications arise.

Emphasis has also been put on ultrasounds and inoculations from certain diseases. 53 women from Matiari were given Tetanus injections in their 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> trimesters. Between the months of March and June, 24 births have occurred out of which 18 have resulted in healthy infants. 16 of these women had professional doctors and 8 women have attended the post natal sessions at the clinic.



This awareness campaign by OSDI has also affected personal hygiene and dietary habits of the mothers. Small changes like frequent washing of hands supplemented with healthy, nutritious diets have resulted in healthier mothers and infants with fewer illnesses. The post natal referrals have also significantly benefited the women, especially those in danger of suffering from anemia. With this combination of awareness and

availability OSDI now aims to take further steps to improve the condition of maternal health in all its focus villages.