



**mSakhi**<sup>®</sup>

## A Mobile Health Revolution in Jhansi





## WHAT IS mSAKHI?

It's a treasure trove of information. A friend to frontline health workers. A digital tool that makes health care possible even in the hardest-to-reach places. mSakhi is a free, easy-to-use, Android-based app designed for frontline health workers who provide much-needed care in India's remotest villages. It can be used as a job aid, a counseling tool, a client register, and much more. mSakhi means better nutrition and health services for moms, babies, and families—and healthier, more prosperous communities for the long haul.



## MEET JHANSI'S mHEALTH MAVENS

Read on to meet just a few of the frontline health workers who are using mSakhi to reach clients in Jhansi's last mile. They're working for a healthier India, one family at a time.

# Rachna

Owning a mobile phone was like a dream for Rachna. She had never even seen a smartphone before the three-day training that now allows her to use mSakhi as part of her job as an accredited social health activist (ASHA). Today, she uses the app with confidence to register pregnant women and newborns, track their health services, and upload their records and data in real-time through the Internet. She also uses mSakhi's multimedia messages to counsel pregnant women and mothers and encourage healthy behaviors.

"This mobile, which was once like a wonder to me, is now my strength," Rachna says. "Now, I am the *Mobile wali ASHA bahanji*"—or elder sister with a mobile—"of my village."

And her clients agree. "Rachna is an inspiration for us and for the young women of our village," client Sangeeta Devi of Laxmanpura village told government health officials in September 2017. "She operates the mobile very easily and also motivates us to use government health services."





# Jyoti

When Jyoti's husband died in 2015, they had spent most of their savings on treatment for his undiagnosed illness. And when her in-laws turned her out of the house, Jyoti was left to care for her two-year-old son alone. She was shattered, without hope. Then, through her work as an Anganwadi worker (a type of frontline health worker), she met the mSakhi project team, who brought with them something that seemed inconsequential at the time: the mSakhi app.

Over time, the team helped Jyoti divert her energies to work, and mSakhi gave her a fresh focus on helping others and giving a good life to her son. She practiced hard, quickly learning how to use all the app's modules. Jyoti got through the most difficult time in her life by helping other women and children in her village. mSakhi empowered her to become not only a more effective health worker, but also an example of women's grit in the face of adversity.

Today, Jyoti takes her son along to the Anganwadi center and on home visits. Her dedication to the women and children in her village has earned her the respect of neighbors and local health officials alike.

# Ramjanki

Ramjanki learned of a woman named Manisha and her new baby about a month after Manisha returned to Madora village from her maternal home, where she'd gone to give birth. While using mSakhi's newborn assessment tool on her mobile phone, Ramjanki found that the baby was underweight. Manisha was not comfortable visiting health facilities, she learned, and had missed out on some crucial antenatal care while away at her maternal home.

Ramjanki used mSakhi's embedded messages and videos to counsel Manisha—along with her mother-in-law, husband, and sisters-in-law—on how to care for the new mother and baby. Ramjanki's support—along with that of auxiliary nurse midwife Madhubala Bhargava and Anganwadi worker Kusuma—helped Manisha's baby gain strength. Today, little Sunaina is running and playing in her courtyard, and thriving.





# Lata

Before becoming an Anganwadi worker for the world's largest food distribution program, Lata was living a life that is all too familiar for rural Indian women. Confined to her home in Jauri, under the conservative eyes of her in-laws, she was not even allowed to step out of the house alone or unveiled. She wanted more from life—to become an independent woman with her own identity, in addition to being a wife and mother. So she became a frontline health worker, and that's where she met mSakhi.

Now she uses her smartphone—a device that used to frighten her—during at-home counseling sessions with women in her village, where they talk about healthy behaviors during pregnancy. And she uses the mSakhi app to make sure no pregnant women or children are left without the health services they need.

"In the beginning, it was difficult to convince my family to let me join as an Anganwadi," Lata says. "But later they agreed. Using the smartphone and trainings, I feel very knowledgeable and independent now. I work for a living and feel more respected."

# Geeta Bhargava

Monitoring children's growth is one of the most effective ways to identify possible cases of malnutrition, and one of the most important functions of India's Anganwadi workers. But more than half of Anganwadi workers are unable to chart a child's growth manually. And many, like Geeta Bhargava, sometimes struggle to memorize the myriad health facts they must share with their clients—information on supplementary nutrition, check-ups, immunizations, referral services, and more. Today, mSakhi helps Geeta deliver accurate, up-to-date information to her clients and easily generate children's growth charts—all at the click of a button.

"My systematic training at my own pace and convenience by IntraHealth staff has not just made me a more informed person," Geeta says, "it has also given me the courage to take corrective health-related actions for pregnant women and children."

Access to technology empowers women like Geeta to do their best work—and builds their skills and independence. When Geeta's husband died over 20 years ago, she was confined to her home by her in-laws. Today she is tech-savvy and serving her community with confidence while also supporting her sons, who are proud of their mother's career.



# Rajkumari

It was not easy to overcome the taboo around weighing children in Harijan Basti. The leaflets Anganwadi worker Rajkumari carried with her on her visits were useless in convincing elderly women—many of whom were illiterate—to let her weigh children in their families, as they believed it would cause a child's health to deteriorate. But she knew it was crucial to improving child survival in this rural area. Then the Qualcomm-supported mSakhi scale-up project put a smartphone into Rajkumari's hands, and trained her to use it.

Today Rajkumari uses the app to register births, provide prenatal and postnatal counseling, and conduct newborn assessments—including weighing. mSakhi's audio and visual features help her assure elderly women in her community that her services are good for the women and babies in their households. And the app helps her generate growth charts for children in her community, identify malnourished children, and encourage their families to consume the food she distributes during Anganwadi sessions.

Now villagers say, "Mobile wali didi, Lucknow ke Doctor sahib ka sandesh le ke aa gayin"—"Sister comes with her mobile and the message from the doctor in Lucknow."



## **THE mSAKHI ADVANTAGE:**

- Provides higher-quality health services and counseling for women and children
- Reaches clients who are unable to read with multimedia messages
- Boosts client trust in frontline health workers
- Empowers frontline health workers to better serve their communities
- Equips more women with life-changing technology
- Improves client counseling and systematic message delivery
- Reduces the burden of registers and flipbooks
- Allows real-time monitoring of frontline workers by their supervisors
- Promotes information sharing and teamwork among frontline health workers

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