



Arogya Sakhi Home-based Antenatal and Infancy Care Program creates women health entrepreneurs offering home-based counseling, diagnostic services, high-risk factor tracking and referrals during pregnancy and infancy. 60 Arogya Sakhis have been trained in Palghar as part of an ongoing project. This is one of their stories from the field.

When Vaishali Mokashi entered Priya Shirke's* house in Pipple village, Palghar district for a regular monthly visit, she found the 27-year old lying unconscious on the ground along with her wailing newborn girl. There was blood on the floor and Priya's mother-in-law sat helplessly beside her in a state of shock. No one else was at home as Priya's husband had gone running to the fields to search for the *dai* (midwife) as soon as her contractions had begun.

Vaishali didn't have the necessary equipment, but her instincts as an Arogya Sakhi and her training as a skilled birth attendant immediately kicked in as she used a plastic bag to create makeshift gloves and meticulously cut the baby's umbilical cord with a new blade. Once she'd wiped the baby and wrapped it in a clean piece of cloth, she ran out to call the neighbours. A vehicle was arranged to take Priya and her baby to the Primary Health Care centre 20km away in Nandgaon where they were given proper medical attention and later transferred to the government hospital in Jawhar.

Today, both mother and daughter are hale and hearty. Vaishali's quick-thinking and training as an Arogya Sakhi helped her to navigate the situation and save not one, but two lives. "The villagers respect and trust us even more now," says Vaishali. "They know that we will always be here for them."