



**Chaya Laxman Jadhav**

**38, Balapur Village, Palghar District, Maharashtra**

***“Being an Arogya Sakhi has made me confident and financially independent.”***

Arogya Sakhi Chaya Laxman Jadhav became an ASHA (frontline health worker) in 2007 and since then has been helping women with safe pregnancies and deliveries, and also supports them post childbirth. Chaya lived in a small village before marriage and belonged to a poor family background. Due to this she could only study till the 9th standard and got married at the age of 25, after which she moved to Balapur village in Palghar District, Maharashtra. Her husband is a farmer.

Her father-in-law was the sarpanch of the village and when the government announced vacancies for ASHAs, she was quick to jump in and take up the opportunity. She worked for a few months without pay but she soon got confirmation as a full time ASHA worker due to her excellent work.

She became an Arogya Sakhi in 2019 and has learned a lot. “As a ASHA worker, I could only register pregnant women and refer them to primary healthcare centres if they have any problem or take them to medical camps but as an Arogya Sakhi, I am able to conduct tests

for blood pressure, haemoglobin, diabetes and also use the fetal doppler. I have even learned to detect high risk cases. Being an Arogya Sakhi gives me inner fulfilment as I am able to help save lives of women and children by identifying the high risk symptoms at an early stage. I like to work with people and I am happy that I am able to help so many women through their pregnancies and also support them to experience safe motherhood. People respect me. These women trust me and come to me first for any opinion.”

One more feather is added to her cap as she was recognised on Women’s Day as best ASHA worker in Vikramgad, Maharashtra for her work in the year 2021-22.

Chaya lives with her husband and three children, two daughters and a son. She wants all her children to study well. “Being an Arogya Sakhi is helping us a lot financially too. I feel confident and motivated.”

*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. 87 Arogya Sakhis have been trained in Palghar District, Maharashtra as part of an ongoing project. This is one of their stories from the field.*