



# WELLBEING FOR ALL

*Health Workers in Amrita SeRve Villages*

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**101 VILLAGE PROJECT**

*Mata Amritanandamayi Math*

# THE WAY TO FULL HEALTH

*Living in a state of physical, mental and social wellbeing*

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Health is the most important aspect of Amrita SeRVe's work in villages, as without it very little else can be achieved. This means complete physical, mental, and social health in addition to the absence of illness. We are developing a vision for the holistic wellbeing of all.

We start by training one person from each village to become a health worker. They visit homes to gather basic information from families about their health histories and needs.

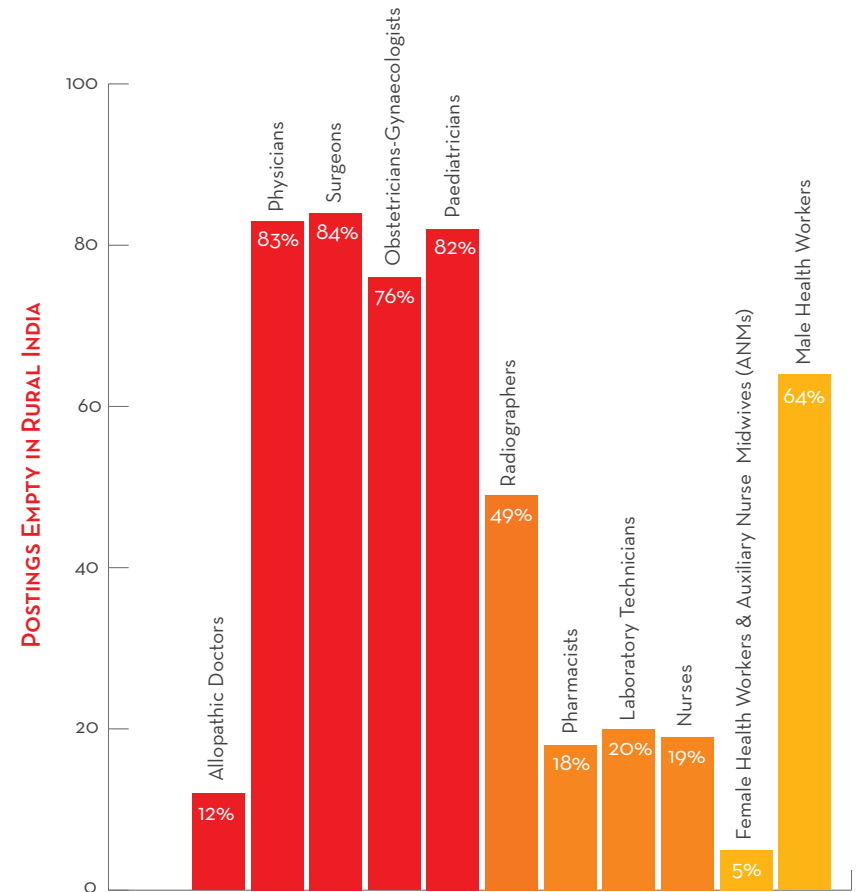
The health workers are then responsible for organising a wide range of activities such as medical clinics by visiting physicians, regular health checkups, care of pregnant women and children, immunisation drives, health education sessions, yoga classes and kitchen garden cultivation.

Their tasks are not simple. The health conditions in India's villages face many grim realities. Malnutrition, water scarcity, substance abuse and discrimination against women can be common daily experiences.

The key to the work, though, is education—sharing the knowledge that will heal these wounds and lead the way to a better future.

## AN URGENT SITUATION

The need for health care workers in Rural India is pressing. Although 69% of India's 1.3 billion people live there, access to health care is staggeringly low. These are some of the numbers, according to a 2015 report by the Government of India's *National Rural Health Mission*:





Organise visiting medical clinics to bring doctors, nurses and pharmacists to villages where access is limited. When emergencies happen, accompany the patient to hospital.



Trained to conduct home births, as hospitals are often too distant. Also carry out testing and treatment of pregnant women and foetuses as well as care of new mothers and babies.



Work with *Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs)* to give immunisations and vaccinations to children and pregnant women—especially for polio, tetanus, measles and vitamin supplements.



Teach children the need for and steps to hand washing and proper body care. The practices of self-cleanliness can especially prevent life-threatening illnesses like diarrhoea and pneumonia.

Hold education sessions on the topics of smoking, tobacco chewing and substance abuse. Prevention work is crucial as resources for treatment and recovery can be scarce in villages.

Instruct village women and school children how to make oral rehydration salts (ORS). *ORS Therapy* is a simple way to treat dehydration, especially due to diarrhoea.

Show villagers how to grow kitchen gardens for their own nutritional needs. Many cannot afford to buy healthy produce, so finding a good source for vitamins and minerals is essential.

Teach simple yoga practices for children and adults to improve physical, mental and spiritual health. Our beginner programme includes asanas and meditation and can be completed in 30 minutes.



4 - COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS



AMRITA SERVE - 5

HEALTH WORKERS IN ACTION



## MAKING REGULAR HOME VISITS

*Amrita SeRVe Health Workers* communicate care to villagers in a forward looking way. Each day, they visit homes to check in with families about what is going on. Like this, illnesses have a better chance of being detected early and actions for holistic wellbeing can be better encouraged.

A minimum of eight homes is visited per day. Of course, overall health is always examined. The health workers explain home remedies and preventive measures. They also helping to identify the vital signs of pneumonia, severe diarrhoea, anaemia, and vitamin deficiencies.

The next steps are tracking child immunisations, care of pregnant women, kitchen gardens, family planning registers, anganwadi visits, health centre and hospital visits, and yoga attendance.

The practice helps provide better health and wellbeing for the villagers and strengthens their relationship with the *Amrita SeRVe Health Workers*.



## ONE CHILD'S LIFE SAVED

A one-month-old baby who was at risk of death in our village in Deurbal, Chattisgarh was taken to hospital in time.

When health worker Jamuna visited the home, the mother told her the baby had stopped taking breast milk. A stressful situation. Jamuna remembered that this is a sign of pneumonia, as per her health training.

She got the baby and parents immediately assembled and they went to hospital. Pneumonia was, in fact, the doctor's diagnosis. In

fact, he said it was caught just in time to prevent a life-threatening circumstance.

After the start of treatment, the baby's condition quickly improved and to the relief of all, the baby began taking mother's breast milk again.

One of the key points of *Amrita SeRVe's* health training is how to recognise the signs of impending health conditions so that treatment can happen in time. Hospitals, doctors, and health care centres are often hours away.



**A** *mrita SeRve* has projects underway in 21 states across rural India. The goal is to empower India's villages so they can be self-reliant once again. Our focus areas are health, water & sanitation, education, agriculture, income generation, eco-friendly infrastructure and self empowerment.



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