

## Verbal Autopsy...

### When A Mother Doesn't Remain A Mother....

\* Ratna Parmar

We can describe our life as one made up of incidences and happenings. We come across many situations in the course of our life, some we just forget as time passes but some incidences get so deeply imprinted upon the mind that it is impossible to forget them no matter how hard we try. They flash upon that inward eye whenever we are alone and transport us back in time to the moment it happened. I am going to share with you here one such experience, a horrifying but certainly a learning incidence of my life.

This happened two years ago, when I was working with an NGO, my first experience, with an objective to promote maternal and child health in rural areas and reduce maternal and neonatal mortality rate.

I feel we always learn our lessons of life through our experiences.

On that unforgettable day, I was on DOD (Direct Observation of Delivery) posting. One mother came to PHC with labour pains and she was a multi gravida. As soon as she delivered the baby, a girl, as is the routine the infant was given to the mother for initiation of breast feeding. Immediately the mother asked me the sex of the baby. When I replied that it was a female baby, the mother started crying and to my utter disbelief

she threw away the baby. Fortunately, at that precise moment I was standing in the same direction a little apart from her bed the baby it landed in my arms.

I was so shocked by this incidence that for few minutes the realization did not dawn on me that the baby was safe in my arms and that I had saved it. I simply could not believe that a Mother could be so callous, as to throw her new born away in such a manner. I burst out in anger, "how can you be so cruel, so stone hearted that you threw away your own baby?"

Then the mother replied crying bitterly, "I already have a girl and my husband has abandoned me because of that. And here again I am cursed by giving birth to a girl child. Tell me what else could I do?"

I felt a surge of sympathy for her and a growing anger within me for these obnoxious social conditions where, having a girl is considered as having committed a crime towards the family. I just asked her how she would have felt if her mother would have done the same thing to her.

In a larger perspective I ask where would the human civilization be if there would be no females left to procreate?

*\*M.Sc (N) Student, Choithram College of Nursing, Indore*