

Promoting Exclusive Breast Feeding (EBF) among working mothers of Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector of Bangladesh to ensure proper nutrition for their children

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Abstract

According to Bangladesh Demographic Health Survey (BDHS 2014) only 55% infants aged 0-6 months are exclusively breastfed mainly due to traditional norms and lack of knowledge of mothers / family members about recommended practices (Formative Research Report, Ministry of Information & UNICEF, 2014). Moreover, according to the Bangladesh national labor force survey in 2010, around 3.2 million women are working in Garments sector. Most of them reside in urban slums where malnutrition rates are high. Despite having major contribution to the national growth, they have very limited access and rights to enjoy benefits like maternity leave, baby-friendly policies etc. Female workers in lactating stage often face challenges to ensure EBF. Through Mothers@Work initiative of UNICEF, BRAC is implementing this programme to improve EBF support and practice for working mothers in RMG factories by engaging public, private and civil society stakeholders.

The objective of the programme is to improve quality of breastfeeding counseling and support for pregnant and lactating mothers (PLW) during ANC and PNC as well as to improve EBF practices in the workplace.



This project aims to address the bottlenecks to practice EBF in workplaces. Two RMG factories were selected randomly of Dhaka district to implement seven minimum standards (such as maternity leave and benefits, day-care & breastfeeding centers, breastfeeding supportive environment, maternity health protection, breastfeeding breaks etc.) based on the Global and Bangladesh policy framework and guidelines to enhance breastfeeding support among working women through targeting senior, mid management and general workers of factories.

The project after running almost one and half years could increase EBF rates from 17% (October 2016) to 72% (August 2018) in both factories.

Biography:

Mithun Gupta has completed her Masters of Public Health from National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine (NIPSOM), Bangladesh. She has been working in public health since last seven years. She is now working as a Senior Sector Specialist and leading programmer focusing early childhood nutrition of Health, Nutrition and Population department of BRAC, which is world's number one development organization.

Speaker Publications:

1. Kramer MS, Kakuma R. The optimal duration of exclusive breastfeeding. Protecting infants through human milk: Springer; 2004. p. 63–77.
2. Zar JH. Biostatistical analysis: Pearson Education India; 1999.
3. Kawachi I, Berkman LF. Neighborhoods and health: Oxford University Press; 2003.

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