

HEALTH RESEARCH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM (HERD)

Progression

A HERD Tri-monthly Newsletter



EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING: A STEP TOWARDS CHILD'S GOOD HEALTH



Ganga Karki, 23 of Kavre is expecting her second child. Karki who is currently residing at Hadigaun gave birth to a baby boy four years ago. She used to work as a housemaid but left it from the seventh month of pregnancy

thinking it was the best decision for her child. She did exclusive breastfeeding for more than six months and then started providing other supplements.

Sharing her experience she said, "Initially I was worried that the decision would harm us economically as me and my husband didn't make much money then but now I feel that was the correct move. It wasn't just good for his health it was helpful economically as well, the powder milk costs a lot". She started working in the house nearby when her son turned one, so that she can earn some money and spend time with her son. As her son was fit and healthy and they started earning well Karki planned for another child as she thought the gapping was perfect.

Pramuna Dahal, 22 of Ramechhap who is currently residing at Pulchowk, Lalitpur is still breastfeeding her 1 year old son. Dahal says that she does not provide other supplements as the milk is adequate for him. She says she won't work if she doesn't get a good job as she feels keeping her child's health at risk for little income will be stupidity and she doesn't want to de-

pend upon others for her child's health. She said, "I am lucky that my husband has been earning enough for us but for those who aren't economically stable they do not have any option. I make sure that my child gets all the nutrients so for that I also eat lots of nutritional food".

She added, "Even with a small amount of money and food products available at home, we can manage to provide nutritious food like leeto. If someone thinks like this, no mother will be forced to work outside". While talking to some of the fathers at '*Prasuti Griha*', they seemed unaware about how the child is being fed and if they are getting adequate care or not. All of them responded, "We go out to work, the baby stays with their mother and she takes care of him/her so I have no idea about it."

The scenario of exclusive breastfeeding in urban and rural area is different. Experts opine that the low level of knowledge and awareness is also the reason for lack of adequate breastfeeding. In rural areas, although mothers spend most of the time with their child due to lack of sufficient knowledge regarding the matter, they do not carry out exclusive breastfeeding. Same is the scenario of non-working mothers in urban areas.

Even though various mothers are leaving their job behind to feed the child, many stop breastfeeding in two months. Mostly in the urban areas the mothers do not get to breastfeed their child as they do not get enough maternity leave. There is also no provision of child care centres at the offices which would have eased the problem of working mothers. It can also be said that government and non-government organizations in Nepal are yet to be mother friendly.

According to WHO, *Exclusive Breastfeeding Week* is

recognized in more than 170 countries to encourage breastfeeding and improve the health of babies around the world.

Every year the first week of August i.e. (1-7 August) is marked as World Exclusive Breastfeeding Week globally. The theme for this year is: "Breastfeeding and Work: Let's Make It Work".

The week is being observed in Nepal by organising awareness programmes at primary health centres, district development committees, VDCs, municipalities and public places. The Nepal Demographic Health Survey-2011 shows that 45 percent babies are breastfed within the first hour of birth and 85 percent within a day. Exclusive breastfeeding is carried out till 3.4 months in urban areas while in rural areas it is carried out until 4.3 months.

According to National Household Survey 2012 (conducted by HERD with the support from Nepal Health Sector Support Programme), four-fifths of infants from the Terai (80%) were exclusively breastfed, compared to less than half from mountain districts (47%). Significant differences in exclusive breastfeeding between caste/ethnic groups were also observed, with Muslims (92%) more likely to breastfeed exclusively than Brahmins/Chhetris (55%). The Comprehensive District Assessment on Maternal and Child Health in Mugu (conducted recently by HERD with the support from KOICA) reveals that among the women, with under-5 children, 74.4% women in the in the six VDCs nearby the district headquarter and 62.2% in two VDCs far from the district headquarter reported that they exclusively breastfed their child.



MEDIA MONITORING OF #NEPALEARTHQUAKE

Nepal was hit by a massive earthquake of 7.8 magnitude in the afternoon of April 25. Research Uptake and Communications Unit at HERD conducted a daily media monitoring of media coverage of events and issues from April 30 to May 22 surrounding the dreadful devastation of Nepal due to a massive earthquake.

In order to track the stories reported during the period through mainstream media as well as social media, HERD began media monitoring of the major news agencies such as BBC, CNN, Aljazeera, ekantipur.com, The Himalayan Times, onlinekhabar.com, Setopati, Pahilopost, Ratopati, myrepublica.com, swasthyakhabar.com, Indian Express, ABC News, Twitter and Facebook.

Monitoring was conducted on the basis of real time recording of the news/articles in an MS Excel file. News on various issues was tracked down by the team. The stories were categorized into different issues such as public health care, economic impact, government efforts, sanitation, management of food,

drugs and supplies, rescue efforts and public reactions. A summary report has been published of the analysis done by the team synthesizing key observations from the daily reports.



With the massive earthquake in Nepal, various international organizations have been reflecting on its efforts towards disaster management in vulnerable countries and with the nature and scale of destruction, Nepal experience could be a good lesson learnt for effective disaster management. The days ahead are still challenging. It has been claimed that more

than 80 per cent of buildings are owner built and they employ masons not formally trained in building processes which has put forth a big question on necessity of managed reconstruction activities not only for mitigating this disaster but also planning ahead for being better prepared for other disasters in the future.

International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction (ICNR) 2015 was held on June 26 with the slogan, 'Towards a Resilient Nepal' with a huge gathering of foreign government representatives and donor agencies in order to raise money and hopes for Nepal's reconstruction. Despite the skepticisms, predictions and arguments about the fundraising initiative becoming a failure, the National Planning Commission through the PDNA report has highlighted upon short term as well as mid and long-term goals as strategies for Nepal's reconstruction. It is in our best of interests to build a strong mechanism to implement these priorities in the interest of Nepal's development.

Standing Desk Introduced at HERD

It is learnt that sitting all the time is bad for one's health. It increases the risk of overweight, cancer, depression, muscular problems as well as diabetes. Considering the impact on health by sitting at the same place for a long time while working, we have introduced what we call 'standing desks' at HERD.



Dr. Nipun Shrestha, Research Officer at HERD and his team at Cochrane Work study about the benefits of sitting less at work. *"Standing desk was introduced as many of us are unaware about the adverse effects of sitting as it increases risk of various diseases", he said.*

Inactivity has been regarded as a major killer than obesity. Human body is not meant to sit as much as we do. It is important we move our body regularly and frequently throughout the day. If we sit most of the time while working, it is a must to stand up in every 30 minutes. Dr David Agus, a leading cancer specialist have said that sitting

for five hours is the equivalent of smoking more than a packet of cigarettes.

It is necessary to stand up and move around for four to five minutes in every 30 minutes. When we move around, the body uses energy for the cells to carry out basic functions and movements and when we are sitting, the body is not using calories, fat keeps on building up, which makes it difficult to get off the chair and do something. HERD team has been using the standing desk and it has been proving fruitful.



Sumedha Rajbanshi, Research Officer

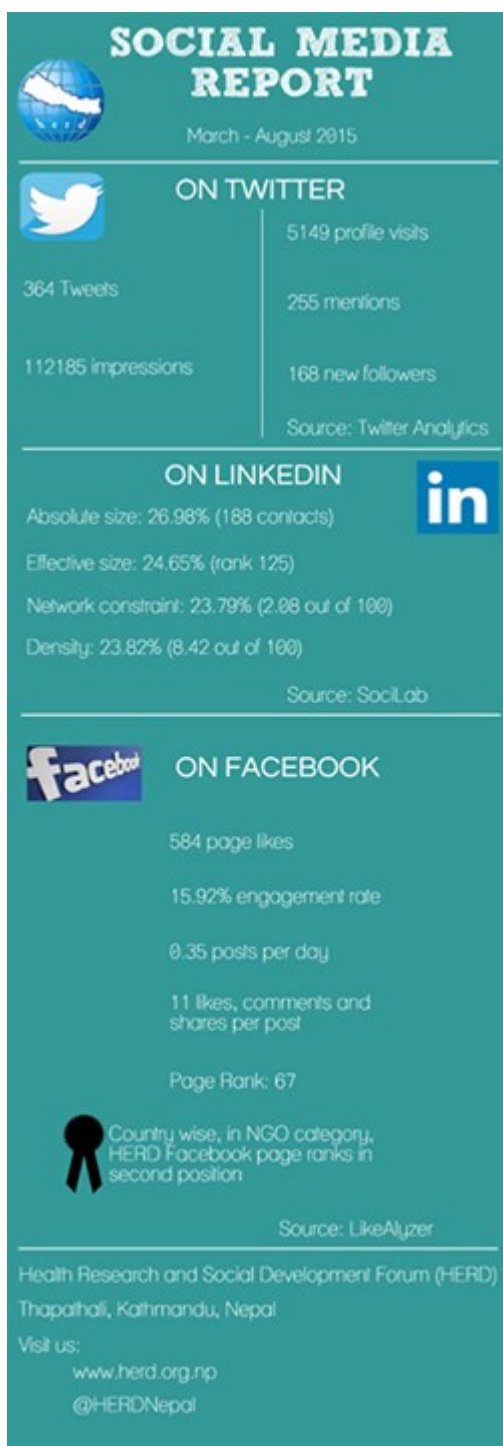
"I have been using the standing desk and it has been very useful. It has been helping us to discuss in small groups as the meeting hall is not available sometimes. Most importantly, it has been helping us to concentrate as we become monotonous sitting in the same place and working whole day, especially after lunch".





Social Media Visibility

A glimpse of our visibility in social media in the past six months - March to August 2015. We feel delighted to note that we rank in second position in the NGO category within Nepal in terms of visibility of our Facebook page.



Healthy Migrants for a Hopeful Future

An initiative was launched by International Organization for Migration (IOM) in March 2013 with a multi-country project in Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan titled, 'Strengthening Government's Capacity of Selected South Asian Countries to address the health of migrants through a multi-sector approach'. Under this project, HERD has been the national partner for Nepal to generate the national evidence regarding situation of health vulnerabilities of Nepali migrants with the study, 'Baseline Assessment of Health Vulnerabilities of Inbound and Outbound Migrants in Nepal'.



Based on the national report prepared by HERD with the support of IOM, a 3-year National Strategic Action Plan on Migration and Health (2015/16 to 2017/18) has been drafted by the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) with former MoHP Secretary, Dr Praveen Mishra, IOM's national consultant leading the action plan development process. National Consultation Meeting on Migration Health National Strategic Action Plan was held on September 1, 2015 at Hotel Himalaya, Kathmandu to share and discuss about the draft plan among national stakeholders.

Major Highlights of Draft National Strategic Plan

- With Ministry of Health and Population as focal point, getting various national agencies on board by forming an inter-ministerial committee represented by – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare
- Getting support from various External Development Partners and other national stakeholders
- Ensuring decent and productive employment conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity
- Ensuring health and wellbeing of migrants' families
- Ensuring support and creating of enabling environment for migrants during 3 phases of migration cycle: pre-departure, during travel, at destination and upon return.
- Developing and implementing comprehensive and standardized health assessment for outbound migrants at pre-departure stage
- Formalizing migrants' protection through bilateral agreements and memorandum of understanding
- Ensuring widespread access to pre-departure health related information through different government and non-government channels
- Offering voluntary health assessment for returnee migrants
- Providing physical and mental health support to migrants and their families
- Developing social protection mechanism for internal migrants
- Improving access to primary occupational health care to all internal migrant population
- Improving access to health information for internal migration through life course approach
- Strengthening and implementing system for monitoring, assessment and surveillance of migrants including conducting death audit



Endline Study on Maternal and Neonatal Intervention in Remote Area of Nepal (Taplejung)

A five day's training session was organized to highlight the objective of the project. Baseline survey and process monitoring of the project has already been completed and currently data collection phase has just been completed with data management analysis and report writing to follow.

The project implemented by NHSSP in Taplejung covering 960 households, 14 health facilities and 120 RDW has been introduced to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the RAMP in order to inform government decisions about the reliability and efficiency of the pilot, to measure the extent of achievement of the pilot study in terms of its intended outcomes and outputs, to measure the extent of increment in use and access to MNH services through supply side interventions and to understand whether the demand-side interventions complement the supply side interventions to work together to promote greater accessibility and use of MNH services and accountability in providing them.

End-User Monitoring of UNICEF Humanitarian Response in Nepal

With the purpose of monitoring the effectiveness of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) humanitarian response of 7 major components: Health, WASH, Nutrition, Education, Cash transfer, Child Protection, Communication 4 Development in earthquake affected districts, the project entitled 'End-User Monitoring of UNICEF Humanitarian Response in Nepal' has been initiated.

HERD is the implementing agency, responsible in conducting the real time monitoring of the humanitarian response actions conducted by UNICEF through its implementing partners from August, 2015 over a period of 6 months. A 5 day training session was organized from August 18-22 where total 24 field researchers were trained by UNICEF and HERD officials.

The objectives of the project are to: verify monitoring and progress reports submitted by UNICEF implementing partners; assess the quality of services as per the agreed standards; identify gaps in delivery of services (including supplies) and to identify any emerging issues related to the affected population which need urgent attention by UNICEF.

Journalists' Column

HERD has been closely working with the journalists under its COMDIS-HSD funded project, 'Strengthening Media's Response to Urban Health Issues in Nepal'. HERD has conducted seven media workshops in different parts of the country where about 120 journalists participated representing more than 30 national and regional newspapers. HERD has also been providing technical support to journalists on various investigative/research based articles.

⇒ HIV infected and poverty ridden single women struggling hard to survive

The article presents the plight of single women living with HIV. It has shown a clear picture of how minimal financial support has been affecting their treatment in Dadeldhura – a hill district of Mid-Western Nepal.

Read Full Article: <http://myrepublica.com/society/story/26286/hiv-infected-and-poverty-ridden-single-women-struggling-hard-to-survive.html>

Source: Republica, August 13, 2015/ **Reporter:** Barun Paneru



⇒ जन्माउने भन्दा गर्भपतन गराउने धेरै

The article has shown the increasing number of women preferring abortions in Ilam- a hill district in eastern Nepal. It has highlighted that the number has risen because of the expansion of birthing centres and trained health workers.

Read full article: <http://www.enayapatrika.com/2015/09/26704>

Source: Naya Patrika/ **Reporter:** Khyam Bhujel

