

HERD SPECIAL SERIES

AUGUST 2016



source:  
[WWW.MOSAICSCIENCE.COM](http://WWW.MOSAICSCIENCE.COM)

# WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK: A MEDIA MONITORING REPORT



**HERD**

SUDEEP UPRETY AND ASMITA PANTA

## Introduction

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) is celebrated each year from August 1 to 7 in more than 170 countries with the goal to promote exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life which yield tremendous health benefits, providing critical nutrients, protection from deadly diseases such as pneumonia and fostering growth and development.

*“Breastfeeding is not only the cornerstone of a child’s healthy development; it is also the foundation of a country’s development”, World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action*

This global event commenced with the signing of the declaration in August 1990 by government policy makers, WHO, UNICEF and other organizations to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.

WBW was first celebrated in 1992 by World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA). As a part of its action plan to facilitate and strengthen social mobilization for breastfeeding, WABA envisioned a global unifying breastfeeding promotion strategy. A day dedicated to breastfeeding was suggested to be marked in the calendar of international events but later the idea of a day celebration was extended up to a week.

Each year, WBW is celebrated with a different themes to enhance and promote breastfeeding with fresh sets of ideas and priorities realised by the stakeholders at the global level.

A media monitoring study was conducted to document and review the ongoing activities of World Breastfeeding Week 2016. Research Uptake and Communications Unit of Health Research and Social Development Forum (HERD) conducted the media monitoring of major online news portals from August 1 to 7, 2016 which is considered as World Breastfeeding Week.

## Methodology

We selected some of the major media outlets in Nepal namely Republica, Swasthyakhabar, The Himalayan Times, Nagarik and The Kathmandu Post as well as posts about the WBW in social media – Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. Random search was also carried out in the internet with the keywords 'breastfeeding' and 'World Breast feeding Week'. We then recorded data in a systematic manner based on the title of the articles, date published and its main content. Codes were generated which were then divided into broad themes. Microsoft Excel was used to record the data and organise the codes. The articles were then synthesised and analysed using the broader themes and codes to generate the media monitoring report.

## Findings

Like the previous years, this year's [World Breastfeeding Week 2016](#) was also celebrated with the theme on raising awareness of the links between breastfeeding and the Sustainable Development Goals. The objectives of WABA World Breastfeeding Week 2016 was to inform people about the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how they relate to each other; to firmly anchor breastfeeding as a key component of sustainable development; galvanise a variety of actions at all levels on breastfeeding; to engage and collaborate with a wider range of actors around promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding. There were various international and national press releases and articles published by various media houses and organizations about breastfeeding.

Major highlights from the media stories highlighted are as follows:

### Global Scenario

Breastfeeding is the normal way of providing young infants with the nutrients they need for healthy growth and development but in the poster published by WHO, it was reported that globally, only 38% of infants were exclusively breastfed and that suboptimal breastfeeding contributed to 800,000 infant's deaths.

According to WABA, under-nutrition, including sub-optimal breastfeeding underlined 45% of all deaths of children under 5 annually. The most prevalent form of malnutrition, nutritional stunting (low height for age), is already prevalent at birth and continues to increase sharply until 24 months of age. It was observed that not practicing breastfeeding is associated with economic losses of about \$302 billion annually or 0.49% of world gross national income.

### Breastfeeding within 1st hour saves millions of babies

Jhpiego made a statement that the breastfeeding within the first hour after birth can save over 8000,000 newborn lives. According to UNICEF data, of the 140 million life births in 2015, 77 million newborns had to wait too long to be put to breast. Only 45 percent of the newborns were put to the breast within the first hour of life.

UNICEF stated that placing newborn on the mother's breast within first hour of life is linked to lower risk of death and illness and can lead to successful breastfeeding practices. With breastfeeding, a mother shares element of her immune system, which helps protect babies from diseases as their immune systems, develops.

## Healthy Mother and Healthy Babies

WHO South-East Asia mentioned that breast milk has all nutrients that infant' needs for boosting the immunity and protecting from illness. It also mentioned that breastfeeding protects against illness like diarrhoea and pneumonia, leading causes of child mortality in the WHO South-East Asia Region. A poster by WHO also elaborated benefits of breastfeeding as a vaccine, perfect nutrition, and protection against various life-threatening ailments along with others non communicable diseases to a child. UNICEF also stated that breastfeeding gives babies their first vaccine and the healthiest nutrition at the start of life.

According to WABA, on average, babies who are breastfed have a 2.6 point higher intelligence quotient than non-breastfed babies, with larger differences for longer durations of breastfeeding. It has also mentioned that breastfeeding provides the foundation for lifelong health and wellbeing. Children and mothers who do not breastfeed are at greater risk for many conditions including acute and chronic illness for children, and breast and ovarian cancer for mother. It also focused that 823,000 children die annually due to sub-optimal infant feeding practices and 20,000 deaths due to breast cancer could be averted if mothers breastfed optimally. Thus, it urged to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.

“Breastfeeding reduces mom’s risk of postpartum hemorrhage, ovarian and breast cancer, type-2 diabetes and more. Breastfeeding isn’t only good for babies, it makes moms healthier too.”

JHPIEGO

## Correct Way of Breastfeeding

The article published in [The Himalayan Times](#) mainly discussed about the correct way of breast feeding and about providing adequate nutrition to the baby. [Swastha Khabar Patrika](#) on the occasion of World Breastfeeding Day mainly focused on the correct ways of breast feeding a child. It focused that the mother should be comfortably while breastfeeding and should make sure that the child is able to breastfeed easily. It also suggests the proper way of breast feeding twin children.

An article in [My Republica](#) explained that lactation of the mother depends on stress, environment and on the hormone. It elaborated the benefits of breastfeeding and also discusses the natural/traditional ingredients that help to lactate more.

## Exclusive Breastfeeding: Safe, Sound and Sustainable

It was also found that the adults who were breastfed exclusively as children were found to have higher incomes than those who were not breastfed. It was also mentioned that families worldwide



spend an estimated \$54 billion annually purchasing milk formula which were not safe for the children.

## Efforts to Promote Breastfeeding in Nepal

[UNICEF Nepal](#) in order to promote breastfeeding has been disseminating the key message on the importance of breastfeeding through mass media channels like radio, television and print. At community level, breastfeeding is being promoted through Village Facilitators, Community Mobilizers and Child Clubs in UNICEF supported districts. Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) are also promoting breastfeeding nationwide as part of their community sensitisation campaigns. CARE Nepal also organized a breastfeeding awareness rally in Mugu district along with other INGOs/ NGOs.



Posters in social media about the World Breastfeeding Week

## Case Study

HERD, in collaboration with [COMDIS-HSD](#), a research programme consortium based at University of Leeds, UK conducted a media intervention project on urban health in 2014-15. Through this project, journalists were trained and mentored to produce investigative articles on various issues including nutrition. **Amrita Anmol**, a journalist associated with *Kantipur* daily produced this investigative article on Breastfeeding and challenges of working women. Translated version of the article:

# स्तनपान : जागिरे आमाको बाध्यता



अमृता अनमोल

बुटवल, निजी बैंककी जागिरे बुटवलकी सुनिता शाक्य आफ्नी नवजात छोरीलाई स्तनपान गराउँदैनन्।  
नियमित गराउन नसके भएपछि उनले सुरुवातदेखि नै स्तनपान गराइन्। '२ महिनादेखि नै अफिस जानुपर्छ। दूध खुवाउन भन्दै बीचमा निस्कन पाउँदैन।' उनले बाध्यता सुनाइन्। बुटवलमा निजी स्कूलकी जागिरे शारदा क्षेत्रीले आफ्नो नवजात छोरीलाई स्तनपान त गराइन् ४५ दिनपछि स्कूल जानुपरेपछि नियमित भने भएन। बिहान ९ बजे घर छोडेको फर्कदा ५ बज्छ। निशाले भनिन् 'यसैले ४५ दिनपछि नै बच्चाको दूध खुवाउन थाले।'  
कानुनतः आमाको पूर्ण स्तनपान अर्थात् आमाको दूध खान पाउनु बालबालिकाको पहिलो अधिकार हो। महिला अधिकार पनि हो। चिकित्सकहरूका अनुसार आमाको दूध बच्चाका लागि अमृत समान हो, आमाको स्वास्थ्यका लागि पनि अचुक औषधि हो। जन्मेको ६ महिनासम्म आमाको दूधमात्र खुवाउनुपर्छ। कम्तीमा २ वर्षसम्म अन्य भोल र पोसिलो खानेकुरासहित दूध खुवाउनुपर्छ। आमाको दूधमा

शिशुको उमेरअनुसार चाहिने पोषक तत्व हुन्छ। यसले शिशुलाई रोग र संक्रमणबाट बचाउँछ। नवजात शिशुले रोग प्रतिरोधात्मक शक्ति आमाको दूधबाट नै प्राप्त गर्छ। कृपोषण हुँदैन। आमा र शिशुबीचको भावनात्मक सम्बन्ध पनि बलियो बनाउँछ। आमाको दूध खान नपाएका तथा पूर्ण रूपमा स्तनपान नगरेका शिशुको प्रतिरोधात्मक शक्ति कम हुन्छ। उनीहरूमा विभिन्न सरुवा रोगको संक्रमण छिटो हुन्छ। श्वासप्रश्वासको समस्या बढी हुन्छ। कम तौलको, कम उचाइको, ख्याउटे, रक्तअल्पतालगायतमा समस्या पनि हुन सक्छन्। स्वास्थ्यका दृष्टिकोणले स्तनपान गराउंदा बच्चालाई मात्र होइन, आमालाई पनि फाइदा हुन्छ। स्तनपान गराउने आमाका स्तन र ओभरी क्यान्सर हुने सम्भावना कम हुन्छ। स्तनपान गराउने आमाका मानसिक तनाव र रक्तअल्पता हुँदैन। नियमित स्तनपान गराउने आमाका ६ महिनासम्म गर्भ रहने सम्भावना पनि अत्यन्तै न्यून हुन्छ। स्तनपान गराउंदा सुत्केरी महिलामा बढी मोटोपन हुन पनि दिँदैन। यस्तो जान्दाजान्दै पनि नेपालका धेरै जागिरे आमाहरू स्तनपान गराउने जिम्मेवारीबाट चूकेका छन्। सुत्केरी विदाको अभाव र कार्यालयमा शिशु स्याहार केन्द्र नहुँदा उनीहरू समस्यामा छन्। दिउँसो निस्कने समय वा कार्यालयमा स्तनपान गराउने स्थान नहुँदा पनि धेरै जागिरे आमाहरू आफ्ना शिशुलाई नियमित स्तनपान गराउन पाउँदैनन्। कानुनमा सुत्केरी महिलालाई २ महिनासम्म तलबी

विदा दिने नियम छ। उनले चाहेमा ६ महिनासम्म थप बेतलबी विदा लिन सक्ने व्यवस्था पनि छ। व्यस्त हुने सरकारी कार्यालयमा बेतलबी विदाको व्यवस्था भए पनि दिने चलन छैन। धेरै निजी कार्यालयले कानुन नै मानेका छैनन्। उनीहरू सुत्केरी महिलालाई २ महिना विदा दिँदैनन्। महिलाहरू कार्यरत बढी हुने क्षेत्र निजी स्कूल र निजी बैंकहरूमा नै यस्तो समस्या बढी छ। धेरैजसो निजी

**आमाको दूध बच्चाका लागि अमृत समान हो, आमाको स्वास्थ्यका लागि पनि अचुक औषधि हो।**

स्कूलमा ३५ देखि ४५ दिन विदा दिने चलन छ। २ महिना विदा दिइहाले पनि बेतलबी थप विदा दिने त चलन नै छैन। यसले गर्दा धेरै जागिरे महिला आफ्ना सन्तानलाई नियमित स्तनपान गराउनबाट वञ्चित भएका छन्। स्तनपान गराउन खोज्ने आमाहरू जागिरबाट बाहिरिन्छन्। नेपाल जनसांख्यिक तथा स्वास्थ्य सर्वेक्षण २०११ अनुसार देशका ५० प्रतिशतभन्दा कम आमाले मात्र पूर्ण स्तनपान गराएका छन्। पूर्ण स्तनपान भनेको ६ महिनासम्म आफ्नोमात्र स्तनपान गराउने र थप पूरक खानासँगै कम्तीमा २ वर्ष स्तनपानको अवसर दिनु हो। करिब ३५ प्रतिशत आमाले मात्रै जन्मेको १ घण्टाभित्र स्तनपान गराउँछन्। २५ प्रतिशत

आमाले आफ्नो दूध खुवाउनुअघि पानी, मह, घिउजस्ता खानेकुरा खुवाउँछन्। १० प्रतिशत आमाले विद्यौती दूध निचोरेर फाल्छन्। सोही सर्वेक्षणअनुसार कुपोषणका कारण ४९ प्रतिशत बालबालिका पुरका र २९ प्रतिशत उमेरअनुसार तौल नपुगेका छन्। रक्तअल्पता भएका ६ देखि ५९ महिनाका बालबालिका ४६ प्रतिशत छन्। पूर्ण स्तनपानको अवसर नपाएका धेरै बालबालिकामा यस्तो समस्या देखिएको सर्वेक्षणले बताएको छ।

पछिल्लो समयमा सुत्केरी आमाको अन्य काममा व्यस्तताले धेरै महिलाले स्तनपान गराएका छैनन्। केहीले मात्रै आमाको सौन्दर्य विग्रन्छ भन्ने गलत धारणा, स्तनपानबारे पूर्ण जानकारीको अभाव, आमाका पौष्टिकताको कमी, वर्षेदे सन्तान जन्माउने प्रचलनलगायतका कारण स्तनपान गराउँदैनन्। स्तनपान गराउंदा सौन्दर्य विग्रन्छ भन्ने गलत धारणा हटाउन र बर्सेन बच्चा जन्माउने अवस्था कम गर्न थुप्रै संघसंस्थाले चेतनामूलक कार्यक्रम थालेका छन्। जागिरे वा कामकाजी महिलालाई स्तनपान अधिकारका बारेमा भने धेरै मौन छन्। ५० जना महिला कार्यरत संघसंस्था वा कार्यालयमा मात्र शिशु स्याहार केन्द्र राख्ने देशको कानुनी व्यवस्था प्रभावकारी छैन। यसले धेरै संख्यामा काम गर्ने धेरै जागिरे महिला स्तनपान अधिकारबाट छुटेका छन्। बालबालिका स्तनपान गर्न पाउने अधिकारबाट वञ्चित भएका छन्। आफ्नो सन्तानलाई पूर्ण स्तनपान गराउने आमाले जागिरबाट हात धुनुपर्ने अवस्था छ।

## Breastfeeding: Woes of Working Mothers

*Sunita Shakya who works in private bank of Butwal does not breastfeed her newly born daughter. As she could not breastfeed regularly, she did not breastfeed her child from the initial period. She told her problem that "I had to go to the office after 2 months of delivery and even could not go out for breastfeeding during the office hours". Sharada Chettri, who works in private school of Butwal breastfed her newly born son but could not do it regularly as she had to go to school after 45 days of delivery. Nisha said, "After I leave home in 9am morning, I return back at 5pm so I switched on to formula milk after 45 days.*

*According to the law, breastfeeding of the mother is the primary right of the children and of the mothers too. According to the doctors, mother's milk is regarded as best baby food and the best medication for the mother's health. After the birth, the baby should only be fed with milk for 6*

months and at least should be fed with liquid and nutritious foods along with milk for two years. Mother's milk contains all the nutrients that are essentials for the children's growth which prevents them from diseases. A child gets its strength to fight against the diseases from the mother's milk and it also prevents malnutrition. It also helps in maintaining emotional relation between child and a mother. Children who has not breastfed their mother has less defensive capacity against diseases and are more prone to communicable diseases and have breathing problems. Such children can also have low weight, less height; skinny and can have various problems related to anemia. In terms of health, breastfeeding is not only beneficial to a child but is also beneficial for mother as it helps in reducing the risk of breast and ovary cancer. .

Mothers involved in breastfeeding do not tend to have mental illness and anemia and if breastfed regularly for 6 months, it may reduce the risk of pregnancy as well. Breastfeeding helps in maintaining weight of the post-partum mother but still most of the working mothers are not able to breastfed their child as there is lack of postpartum leave and lack of child care center in their office .They are not being able to breastfed their child regularly as they cannot go out during their office hours and they do not even have a breastfeeding space in their office area.

According to the law, the postpartum mother should be provided paid leave for the period of 2 months and if they need then can also take unpaid leave for a period of 6 months. But in government offices with more workload, there is no provision of providing unpaid leave and most of the private offices do not obey the law as well. Such private offices like schools and private banks where there are more women staffs do not provide 2 months leave for the postpartum mothers which is also a big issue. In most of the schools, there is provision of 35-45 days leave. Even if they are provided with unpaid leave for 2 months, they do not get additional leave which is the reason why the mothers are not able to breastfeed their child regularly. The one who wants to breastfeed, ultimately have to leave their job.

According to Nepal Population and Health Survey 2011, less than 50% of the mothers are able to breastfeed their child exclusively which is feeding a child only with milk for the period of 6 months and at least breastfeeding for the period of 2 years with other additional supplements. Approximately only 35% mother's breastfeed their child within 1 hours of delivery, 25% feed their babies with water, honey and ghee before breastfeeding and 10% mothers throw away their colostrum. According to the same survey, due to under nutrition, there are 41% children with less height and 29% do not have weight according to their height. From 6 to 59 months, there are 46% of children that has suffered from anemia. However, the survey has shown that the children not being breastfed exclusively suffered from such deficiencies.

*Lately, due to work stress, postpartum mothers have not breastfed. Some have misconception that their body might be changed after breastfeeding, lack of adequate information about breastfeeding, lack of nutrition in mother, giving birth to child yearly are the reasons for not breastfeeding. Various awareness programs are being implemented by organization to make people aware that breastfeeding does not change their bodies and that it also decrease the tendency of child birth without spacing. In terms of breastfeeding rights of working women, there is not much voice made till date. The law of having a child care center in the organization having more than 50 women is also not being implemented which has led to deprivation of breastfeeding right of the women and has also deprived children from being breastfed. Mothers, who want to breastfeed their child exclusively, are losing their jobs.*

### **Issue of Concern**

The World Food Programme suggested that promoting exclusive breast feeding requires involving all sectors and engagement of government, development partners and private sector companies to help ensure the children have healthy start and better opportunities. It also provided recommended actions like limit formula marketing, support paid leave, strengthen health system and support mothers in order to strengthen exclusive breastfeeding.

### **Recommendations**

Led by UNICEF and WHO, in collaboration with many partners, the Breastfeeding Advocacy Initiative can also calls upon governments, donors and development partners to increasing funding, track the progress, strengthen links between health facilities and communities, improve access to skilled lactation counselling, improve breastfeeding practices in maternity facilities, enact paid family leave for mothers and discourage breast milk substitute. On the other hand, [PAHO/WHO](#) recommended increased political commitment and investment in breastfeeding as a means to promote children's health and development. Early investment in prevention of low birth weight, prevention of stunting, and early initiation of and exclusive breastfeeding are needed to contribute to reducing the risk of later obesity and chronic diseases.

### **Conclusion**

After the media monitoring of 7 days of World Breastfeeding Week, though important issues related to child nutrition are highlighted at the global level, sensitisation is required still at the beneficiary level. As illustrated in the case study, a media engagement to sensitise nutrition related issues could be the way forward for better awareness at the beneficiary level and broadened understanding at policy level. As the media stories suggest, there are various benefits of



breastfeeding including health benefits, economic benefits which ultimately contribute in attaining Sustainable Development Goals. Though there are numerous benefits, the challenge still persist due to lack of families, workplace and society support. Therefore collective action is required. By taking action now, we can come closer to realizing the aims of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**For Correspondence:**

Sudeep Uprety

[sudeep.uprety@herd.org.np](mailto:sudeep.uprety@herd.org.np)