

Workshop on Implementation of Mothers' Milk Substitute Act of Nepal



Background of the workshop

The world health organisation (WHO) and the United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF) have for many years emphasised the importance of maintaining the practice of breast-feeding and of reviving the practice where it is in decline as a way to improve health and nutrition of infants and young children.

A variety of factors influence the prevalence and duration of breast-feeding. The twenty-seven World health assembly in 1974, noted the general decline in breast feeding in many parts of the world, related to sociocultural and other factors including the promotion of manufactured breast-milk substitutes and urged "member countries to review sales promotion activities on baby foods to introduce appropriate remedial measures, including advertisement codes and legislation where necessary"

After a series of meetings of World Health Assembly ((WHA) and drafts of the code, WHO came with the International Code of Marketing of infant formula and other Regulating Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes products used as breastmilk substitute in 1981. On 21 May 1981, the World Health Assembly (WHA) adopted the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk

Substitutes (the International Code) under Resolution no. 34.22, with 118 votes for, 1 against and 3 abstentions.

International code of mother's milk substitute

The Code applies to the marketing, and practices related thereto, of the following products: breastmilk substitutes, including infant formula; other milk products, foods and beverages, complementary foods, when marketed or otherwise represented to be suitable, with or without modification, for use as a partial or total replacement of breast milk; feeding bottles and teats. It also applies to their quality and availability, and to information concerning their use.

- 1) Code ensures information and education on infant and young child feeding to be based on scientific facts
- 2) Code Bans Donations
- 3) Code Bans Advertisement, samples, gifts or utensils for promotion of sale
- 4) Code Bans contacts of marketing people with mothers
- 5) Code Bans use of healthcare system for promotion of infant formula or other products
- 6) Code makes health worker responsible
- 7) Code makes manufacturers and their people responsible:
- 8) Code sets standard for labelling
- 9) Code puts responsibility of its implementation and monitoring of violations on Governments, NGOs, professional groups, consumer organizations and manufacturers
- 10) Code ensures system of reporting of status of implementation of code

Mother's Milk Substitute Act –Nepal

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 17 of the Mother's Milk Substitutes (Control of Sale and Distribution) Act, 1994 (2051), Government of Nepal has framed rules which is cited as "Mother's Milk Substitutes (Control of Sale and Distribution) Regulation, 1994 (2051)". Under the mother's milk substitute rules of Nepal, Nepal Government has formed a Breast Feeding protection and promotion Committee to supervise the compliance of this Act and to protect and promote Breast Feeding and for the regulation of sale and distribution of products. Functions, Duties and powers of the committee had been given under the approved policy of Nepal

Government. The Ministry, in consultation with the Committee, shall give permission to publicize the information and educational materials about infant food. The heads of Health Care Agencies, and National and Local health Officers should take appropriate measure in promoting the principles of this Act and in protecting and promoting breast feeding and they should impart appropriate information and advice to Health workers about their responsibilities, and the Health worker must be informed about the matters that is mentioned in this clause. This act had also identified appropriate way of advertising the product by the manufacturer and the distributor. This act had also made compulsory certification for feeding bottle and nipple from the central food research Laboratory for the certification of the product:

The Manufacturer or the Distributor should approve the labels of such products from the breast feeding promotion and protection committee before selling it in Nepal. While manufacturing, selling or distributing in other ways, the products should be of the standard quality prescribed or recommended by the Nepal Quality Standard Office. The Ministry, on the recommendations of the Committee that was formed to monitor and investigate the compliance of this Act or the rules framed under this Act by Manufacturers, Distributors, Monitoring, Agencies and Health Workers can appoint Monitors as per the requirements or Government employees can be deputed to work as monitors after obtaining the approval of the concerned departments of Nepal Government. As per the sub- Clause (2) of Clause 13, if any Manufacturer, Distributor, health Monitoring Agency or health Worker is found violating this Act or the rules framed under this Act in the reports, submitted by the Monitors, the Ministry, on the recommendations of the Committee, can write to concerned Department to suspend or cancel the License, permit or Authority letter given by Nepal Government or any other Department to carry their business or trade. Duties and the Rights of Monitor: Monitors will be having other directed duties and rights apart from the duties and rights mentioned in this Act.

In spite of extensively drafted Mother's Milk Substitute Act –Nepal, implementation of this act has never been done satisfactorily due to various reasons, the most important being a skilled manpower to monitor on the violation of this code. Hence, the workshop was organized with the aim to develop skill on the monitoring of Mother Milk Substitute code.

Workshop on BMS code at TUTH

Tribhuvan University Teaching hospital and Nepal Breast Feeding Promotion Forum (NEBROF)

with support from BPNI and IBFAN Asia organized a two days workshop on “Implementation of Mothers’ Milk Substitute Act of Nepal” at Kathmandu, Nepal on 13th and 14th of September 2014. It brought together 23 participants working in the various sectors related to childhood nutrition in Nepal. The participants included government officials, Nepal Pediatric society representatives, Consumer’s right protection forum, Pediatricians, representatives of civil society and various organizations from Nepal.

Workshop activities

Day 1

The workshop began with an introduction of participants after which Prof. Prakash Sundar Shrestha (President, NEBROF, and Professor IOM) highlighted on the objectives of the workshop. This was followed by expectations and challenges for the participants regarding the workshop.

The opening session was by Dr. JP Dadhich (BPNI/IBFAN Asia) who discussed about the importance of protecting breastfeeding from commercial influence. Dr. Srijana Basnet, (Assistant Professor, Institute of Medicine, Maharajganj, Kathmandu) then discussed about Infant and young child feeding ((IYCF), Health and Nutrition Indices of Nepal. This was followed by session on evolution of the International Code and subsequent action by Dr. JP Dadhich. Prof. Prakash Sundar Shrestha then discussed about the evolution and provisions of the Mother’s Milk Substitute Act of Nepal

This was followed by a group work on how to monitor the implementation of the Act for which participants were divided into three groups for three separate exercises of observing the container/packet of mother’s milk substitutes, complementary food and feeding bottle. Each of these groups was asked to point out all the possible ways of violations of the act by the manufacturer of mother’s milk substitutes, complementary food and feeding bottle. The day ended with the group work presentation by each of these groups.

Group 1: Filling forms for monitoring of Labelling on Infant Milk Substitute product Containers

Group 2: Filling forms for monitoring of Labelling on Infant foods product Containers

Group 3: Filling of forms for monitoring of advertisements

Day 2

The second day was started with the visit to the hospital where the participants were divided into three groups for three different exercises. The first group monitored health care facilities, second group interviewed with mothers, doctors and nursing staff and the third group interviewed with pharmacy/chemist shop owner. This is followed by group presentation.

At the end each group came out with the recommendation for the implementation of the act.

Discussions

Active participation and enthusiasm was noticed among all participants during the workshop. The exercises and the forms for the monitoring, given during the workshop simplified the difficult task of implementation of mothers' milk substitute act. Participants found those forms and exercises very useful in planning for programme implementation plan. Commitment for the immediate steps for the implementation of the act by the director general of Child Health Division of Health ministry and the government officials during the valedictory function of the workshop had made the workshop successful.

Recommendations

Recommendations for capacity building for monitoring and sensitization

- Strengthen current breastfeeding protection and promotion committee
 - Restructuring of nutrition institution in health system
 - Form a sub-committee under chairmanship of CHD Director
 - Recruit and select BMS code Monitors for each district under the committee
- Capacity building to monitor the implementation of the act
 - Training to BMS code monitors
 - Incorporation of the act in Medical, Nursing and Public Health curricula.

- Sensitization of the provisions of the act to health worker and general public
 - Awareness orientation to all primary health care workers
 - Awareness orientation to all health workers in hospitals
 - Each health facility should have visible display of the major provisions of the act.
 - Broadcast audio and video clips on provisions of the act regularly through the popular mass media.

Recommendations for Effective Implementation of BSM Act

- First meeting of BPPC
- Formation of BPPC Sub-Committee under the chairmanship of Director General, DoHS
- Recruitment of BMS act violation monitoring Inspectors (5 Regions + 1 for Kathmandu)
 - Subsequently recruitment on district basis
- Budgeting for BMS act monitoring (2 times/year) in AWPB of CHD

Awareness Generation about the Act

- Sensitization/Orientation meetings/workshops for policy makers and programme managers
- Strengthening of pre-service and in-service curriculum and sensitization workshops for the health workers
- Awareness generation using print, electronic and mobile telephony for the general public

List of facilitators

Name of Facilitator	Designation	Organisation
Dr. JP Dadhich		BPNI/IBFAN Asia
Prof. Prakash Sundar Shrestha	President	Nepal breast feeding Promotion Forum
Dr. Srijana Basnet	Assistant Professor	Institute of medicine

List of Participants

Name of Participant	Organisation
Dr Krishna Prasad Bista	Nepal Pediatrics society
Dr Merina Shrestha	Institute of medicine
Dr Kalpana Subedi	Kanti children hospital
Dr Kavita Kayal	Nepal pediatrics society
Ms Tulashi Adhikari	Maharajung Nursing college
Dr Sunil Raja Manadhar	Kathmandu Medical college
Dr Rameshwor shrestha	Civil Service hospital
Durga Prasad Pahari	Maharajgunj Medical Campus
Indra Prasad Sitaula	CAFODAT
Tara Pokhrel	Maharajgunj nursing campus
Aruna Upreti	UNICEF
Pramod Koirala	DFTOC
KP Lamsal	Consumer right protection Forum
Uttam Acharya	Child health division, Govt of Nepal
Indu Adhikari	Hellen Keller initiative
Basanta Adhikari	Child health Division/Government of Nepal
Dr Dhana Raj Aryal	Prasuti Griha Maternity Hospital

Dr Jyoti Ratna dhakwa	Nepal Pediatrics society
Meena Sharma	Perinatal society of Nepal
Ram Laxmi Dhaubadel	NEBROF
Smirti Bartaula	Child health division, Govt of Nepal
Prakash Chandra Joshi	Child health division, UNICEF
Pradiumna Dahal	UNICEF



Group exercise done during the workshop