





Rapid Assessment of HIV and Infant Feeding Work

Nepal

Report by:

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In cooperation with IBFAN Asia Pacific Working Group on Infant Feeding and HIV, and WABA, Nepal Breastfeeding Promotion Forum (NEBPROF), an NGO working exclusively on breastfeeding promotion in Nepal, recently organized a sensitization meeting with key stakeholders on June 8, 2005 in Kathmandu. The meeting was specific on Infant Feeding and HIV issue in Nepal. With the prime objective to sensitize the issue among the key stakeholders the half-a-day meeting was organized with different sessions including paper presentation, group work and group presentation followed by finalization of action plan.


In total 25 representatives from various concerned organizations took active participation as key stakeholders during the meeting. The participation was all sectors including government, non-government and international government organizations. Some of the key stakeholders were from UNFPA/Nepal, Save the Children Norway, Terre des Hommes, Nepal Nursing Council, Pro Public, Department of Health Services, NTAG, Aama Milan Kendra, Nepal Red Cross Society, Maiti Nepal, PSI/Nepal, Matrons from the Kathmandu Valley hospitals such as Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, Kanti Children's Hospital, Maternity Hospital, Patan Hospital and Infectious Diseases Hospital. There were others participants too from the organizations working for protection and support for PLWHAs.

The meeting was conducted with any formal inauguration by any national personalities so as not to distract the participants in other prevailing issues in Nepal. Secretary General of NEBPROF Mr. Ashok D. Pande opened the meeting with participants' introduction which was followed by paper presentation session.

In total three different papers were presented during the meeting viz.: HIV/AIDS: The Prevailing Situation in Nepal, National Policy and Guidelines on PMTCT and Infant Feeding and HIV in Nepal by prominent speakers namely Mr. Bhimsen Devkota, Dr. Bhim Acharya and Prof. Dr. Prakash S. Shrestha, respectively. A brief discussion was followed after each presentation.

After the paper presentation session all the participants were divided three working groups: policies on infant feeding and HIV and their implementation (policy recommendation), role of GOs, INGOs, NGOs and CBOs in Infant Feeding and HIV (implementation) and empowerment of health professionals and health activists (facilitation). All members vigorously participated during the group discussion session, which was followed by the group presentation. One group leader from each group presented the findings of the group discussions. The followings are the findings of the group discussions:

Group A – Policy Recommendation

- Develop a Situational Analysis/Baseline and Sharing/ Dissemination System
 - Develop a standard protocol or guideline on ANC, delivery, breastfeeding and replacement of commercial infant formula/humanized milk etc.
 - Develop a national policy on Infant Feeding and HIV, mandatory HIV screening of pregnant women with VCT at central hospitals as well as at least one referral facility at district level.
 - Implement and enforce the existing national and international code of marketing of BMS
 - Incorporate Infant Feeding and HIV messages into the formal and non-formal education curricula.
 - Advocacy at all levels, policy makers to communities
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- Develop a health hazard policy and PEP
- Improve service facility on Infant Feeding and HIV
- Revitalise Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative in the maternity services
- Develop the HMG/ Ministry of Health, Department of Health Services, Child Health Division as a focal point for PIME and strengthen the inter-sectoral coordination among the key stakeholders.
- Increase access and availability of drugs to HIV positive mothers and infants free of cost in phasewise manner.
- Build on capacity of the health professionals on Infant Feeding and HIV.
- Raise public awareness through all existing prevention programmes in the country.
- Make legal provision on Infant Feeding and HIV.
- Incorporate Infant Feeding in legal aspect of HIV.

Group B – Implementation


- Encourage exclusive breastfeeding after family/mother counseling/PSI product
- Sensitize/mobilize the existing setup:
 - Ministry of Health – Grass root to Central.
 - I/NGOs/CBOs including groups, mothers' groups, users' groups, schools, colleges and workplaces
 - Integration with development programs
 - Enhancement of capacity of stakeholders
 - Involvement of PLWHAs and other groups
- Involve/utilize mass media

Process of Implementation

- Utilise the existing setup and network
- Mobilise communities
- Provide training to key stakeholders
- Provide peer education
- Organise periodic review meetings among stakeholders
- Organise door to door visit with FCHVs, health workers and mothers' groups
- Manage event activities on World Days.

Group C – Facilitation

- Training of health workers:
 - TOT center to district or grass root
 - Develop guidelines/manuals focusing on counseling and universal precautions
 - Develop IEC materials
- Supplies:
 - Ensure regular supplies of
 - ARV
 - Accessories
 - Supplies for PEP
- ANC:
 - Pre-test counseling including opening of VCT clinics in big institutions
 - Post-test counseling to HIV positive mothers
 - ARV Therapy
 - Infant Feeding

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- Others:
 - PLWHA mother as advocates on awareness raising campaigns
 - Mothers' clubs in hospital settings/communities
 - Health hazard allowances.

With a great encouragement to further work in Infant Feeding and HIV issue, all the key stakeholders finalized the findings of the group discussions as the action plan for the future. Finally, Mr. Ashok Pande extended the participants sincere thanks on behalf of the organizer and sponsors of the meeting.

