

Save the Child, Save the World - symposium concluded at GPC



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Breast feeding reduces the risk of infant mortality, respiratory infection, diarrhoea, obesity, diabetes, asthma, childhood cancers, lower intelligence and even abnormal developments. Moreover, mothers who avoid breast feeding, are prone to breast and ovarian cancer, type II diabetes and other physical ailments. In India, where the goal of the 10th five year plan (2002-2007) was to achieve the target of 80% for exclusive breast feeding, the figure turned out to be only 46.4 %.

All the relevant information and subsequent scenario came alive during a symposium organized on the occasion of world breast feeding week 2008 by the North East Society for the Promotion of Youth and Masses (NESPYM) and Guwahati Press Club on August 6 last.

delivering the speech on promoting pro-active mother-newborn health, Dr Chiranjeeb Kakoty revealed that child malnutrition is associated with majority of infants' death. Most deaths of children under five occur during first year and two third of those during first month, due to newborn infections, diarrhoea and pneumonia.

Dr Kakoty, a consultant on hospital and health management, also emphasized on proper and effective legislations so as to help the infants to avail their rights for exclusive breastfeeding.

"Stringent implementation of Infant Meal Substitute (IMS) act is the need of the hour. Moreover, provision for paid maternity leave in the unorganized sector as well and the facility of crèches and feeding cubicles should be given due priorities" asserted Dr Kakoty.

Interacting with journalists, Dr Shabina Ahmed, a development paediatrician insisted on removing all kinds of myths and misconceptions relating to breast feeding in the society.

"As understood traditionally, the cow milk should not be taken as an alternative to breast milk. Because cow's milk has adverse consequences on the infants, which includes early diabetes, obesity and hypertension, and may also put excessive load on the kidneys," informed Dr Ahmed. She highlighted that breast feeding ensures emotional attachment of the infant with the mother, which is very crucial for the overall growth and personality development of an individual. After all deliberation and interactions it was brought into the purview by Dr Kakoty that glamorization of early and exclusive breast feeding remained an utmost need of the moment.

he symposium where 40 journalists and students participated, was also addressed by Dr Alaka Bhattacharyya, executive coordinator of NESPYM and Nava Thakuria, secretary of the press club.

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