



Peer Counselling Approach for Supporting Breastfeeding in Garment Factory Workers: Opportunities and Challenges in Bangladesh

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Outline

- Background
- Justification
- Objectives
- Methods
- Opportunities and Challenges

Background



About 4 million workers in the Ready Made Garment (RMG) sector, of whom 80% are women!

Background contd...

- No leave/insufficient leave after childbirth
- Fear of losing jobs - less time for child care
- Money shortage - milk and other essentials (Mridula and Khan, 2009).
- Long hours of separation from children
- Especially difficult during breastfeeding phase (War on Want, 2015).

Justification

- **Babies** - Frequently sick, undernourished, poor caring and feeding practices
- **Mothers** - distracted, absent from work, earnings spent on medical consultations, medicines
 - No access to correct health & infant feeding information
 - No organised support system in the community
- **Employers** - lose skilled workers

- Build upon TAHN's success with community-based peer counsellors



Primary Objective

To provide RMG employees with **correct information** and **support** for optimal breastfeeding, complementary feeding, and child caring practices





MoU Signing

Partial

Donors:

- BSRM &

IDLC

Adviser:

- BGMEA

Methods

- Selection of project area
- Training community-based women as peer counsellors
- Linking with health facilities in the RMG project area
- Individual household visits for peer counselling





Monitoring counselling of a pregnant RMG worker

.....And learning about their problems.....





Weight and height
measured in pregnancy,
With encouragement for
adequate care & diet



Mothers empowered with information and
hands-on skills for breastfeeding

Challenges

- Awareness grossly lacking (PLW & IYCN)
- Long working hours
- Discrepancies in maternity leave and payment
- Very few ANC visits - RMG workers lose money
- Absence of health facilities providing delivery services
- Women stressed about losing job/ finding another
- Scanty facilities for supporting breastfeeding at workplaces

Opportunities

- World Breastfeeding Week 2015 theme – *“Breastfeeding and Work: Lets make it work!”*
- Unicef, ILO and few stakeholders agreeable for advocacy meetings
- BGMEA receptive – and will participate
- Secretary, Ministry of Labour interested....
- Working women want to breastfeed!

Lets work together to make the most of these opportunities!



**Thank
You!**