

Annual Conference on

Women and Maternal Nutrition and Care

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Patron model : Positive attitude towards rights to maternal nutrition

Bangladesh garment sector is predominated by women comprising 85% of 4 million workforces. Largely migrants from rural areas and disadvantaged background, they carry a lot of misconception about reproductive health and don't consider leading a healthy life as their 'right'. A normal day work cycle of a worker starts at 7 am and ends at 7 pm, with no scope to avail GO/NGO health services. Factory medical staff are often poorly trained in relation to women RH-FP. The abstractly titled initiative was taken in a factory with 1000 workers. Trained nurses were placed inside factories who provided counseling on nutrition and well-being to pregnant and lactating mothers. Awareness sessions were organized for male workers to ensure that they also take lead in understanding and adhering to the nutritional requirements of their pregnant/lactating wives. The nutritional state was assessed at regular intervals and supplementary nutrition-rich food packages were provided. The trained nurse interacted with workers in their own dialect which aided in bringing the worker into confidence and adopting health practices. After a one-year period of compliance, the factory management confirmed that workers looked healthier than before and they could see improved performance at work and less absenteeism in comparison to before starting the initiative. In turn, the workers also benefitted from increased income as they are less absent from work. Another interesting change under the initiative is 'institutional deliveries' increased (which is not the usual practice) and all pregnant women accessed at least 4 ANC visit in the nearby clinic where a special arrangement was made

Biography

Farhtheeba Rahat Khan is a development professional with experience backed-up by private sector interventions and development sector working realities and challenges. As the lead of 'Private Sector Health project', Ms Khan undertook studies and worked on the policy front with Ministry of Health its directorates for the formulation of the policy framework, guidelines and accreditation systems in the health training and emphasized on avenues for women employed in the health sector. Currently, Ms Khan is the Team Leader for the 'Working with Women' project implemented by SNV where she is facilitating interventions in garment factories, to ensure health and well-being in a sustainable manner.

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