



Breastfeeding during Pandemic – Awareness through Radio Bundelkhand

Organiser: Radio Bundelkhand by Development Alternatives

IN the middle of the debate over the third wave of COVID-19's possible effects on children, it is important to remember that mothers who breastfeed their children at the appropriate time and in the correct manner do not have to worry too much about the health of their children. Breastfeeding provides a child the strength to fight many infections and infectious diseases including the corona virus. Every year, from 1–7 August, World Breastfeeding Week is celebrated to raise awareness and encourage action on the issues linked to breastfeeding. This year, Radio Bundelkhand celebrated Breastfeeding Week with the theme "Breastfeeding- a Shared Responsibility During Pandemic" with the community of the Bundelkhand region. The aim was to support breastfeeding rights and boost breastfeeding promotion and protection efforts.

Radio Bundelkhand organised a live conversation with a doctor and community women in Gram Radhapur during the programme "Baatein humari tumhari". A total of 20 women participated and discussed about the importance of breastfeeding especially during pandemic and a child's fundamental right towards it. The importance of mother's milk in the mental and physical development of a child cannot be overstated. It also safeguards the newborn against many diseases. As a result, within an hour of delivery, the infant must be fed with the mother's first yellow condensed milk, as it provides them the immunity to the infant, which is why it is also known as the child's first vaccine. Mother's milk is a good source of water as well as nutrients for the newborn.

The expert and the community women also discussed on how to store breast milk and what precautions to be taken while breastfeeding during pandemic. Because working mothers at times produce less milk, therefore, it can be stored for up to eight hours at room temperature and it can be fed to a newborn in a bowl or a cup. Breastfeeding must be done in accordance with all protocols for the COVID-19 treated and potential mother. Prior to breast-feeding, she should properly wash her hands and only breastfeed while wearing a mask over her nose and mouth. Depriving a child of breastmilk can have long-term consequences.

Whether or not they or their newborns have suspected, probable, or confirmed COVID-19 virus infection, mothers and infants should be encouraged to stay together and practise skin-to-skin contact.