

Government yet to finalise rules and regulations

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ISLAMABAD - The Ministry of Health in a seminar here on Wednesday came under fire for delaying the final approval of the much-awaited rules and regulation prepared for effective implementation of the "Protection of Breast-feeding and Child Nutrition Ordinance 2002".

It was expected that the Director General Health Dr Rasheed Jooma would announce the approval of the rules and regulations. But surprisingly referring to some loopholes in the draft of the proposed law, DG Health informed that after removing these flaws, the rules would be notified.

He said, "Earlier Secretary Health Kushnood Lashari approved the rules but later after consultations with experts, the decision of notifying the proposed rules was reverted.

"As the proposed law did not had a strong implementation mechanism without which it could not be effective" he continued.

The symposium titled "Breast-feeding: A Key Element to Achieve MDGs and Save Lives in Emergencies" was organised by the TheNetwork, Secretariat of National Alliance as a part of the Breast-feeding Week celebrations 2009.

The objectives of the seminar were to highlight the importance of breast-feeding in achieving MDGs, life saving role of breast-feeding in emergencies and to advocate for notification of rules and regulations of BF Ordinance 2002.

Speaking on the occasion, Country Representatives UNICEF, Martin Mogwanja urged the government to finalise the rules and regulation as soon as possible.

While referring to the theme he said, "it highlights

the greater need for us to work even harder to protect, promote and support breast-feeding practices in emergencies to promote infant and young child survival, health.

He said in Pakistan's context, optimal; infant-feeding practices would contribute directly to the achievements of the MDGS. As infant feeding practices can help Pakistan to achieve the goal no 1, which is related to eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.

It can also help in accomplishing the goal no 4, which is linked to reduce under five mortality by tow-third

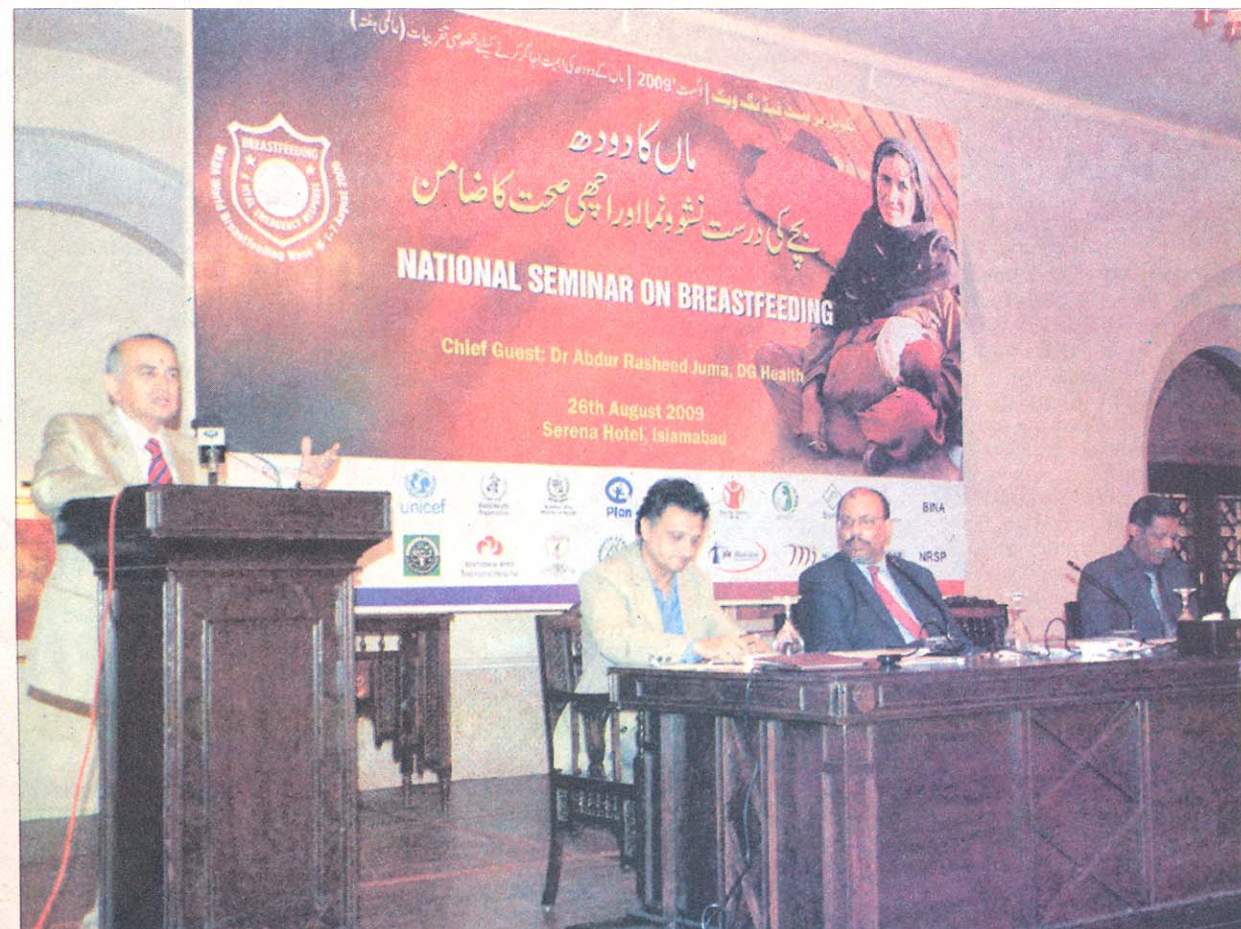
While highlighting the current Breast-feeding practices in Pakistan. He said, "The Exclusive Breast-feeding rate in Pakistan is the lowest among South Asian region, which is 37.1 percent only.

These indications are

very thought-provoking for the health professionals as this is our responsibility to create awareness and set ourselves as role model for others".

Speaking on the occasion Dr Arif Azad Executive Officer TheNetwork expressed extreme disappointment over holdup of the rules and regulations. He opined that delay in approving the proposed rules for another time would damage the efforts of the civil society regarding promotion and protection of breast-feeding practices in Pakistan.

It is worth mentioning here that the Ministry of Health has kept its lips sealed over the notification of the rules and regulations of the Protection of Breast Feeding and Child Nutrition Ordinance 2002 for a long time without which the said ordinance has proven a law without teeth.



ISLAMABAD: Director General Health Dr Abdur Rasheed Jooma addressing during a seminar on 'Breast-feeding: A key element to achieve MDGs and save lives in emergencies' on Wednesday.—Staff photo by Syed Mehdi