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Only 8% infants breastfed, says expert

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Only eight per cent infants below the age of eight months are exclusively breastfed in Pakistan, said Dr Siham Sikander on Tuesday while addressing a meeting of National Alliance for Promotion and Protection of Breastfeeding.

The meeting was held in connection with World Breastfeeding Week starting from August 1-7, organised by TheNetwork for Consumer Protection, said a press statement.

Sikander said illiteracy, lack of awareness, cultural practices, psychological distress and poor implementation of Breastfeeding Ordinance were the main causes of low rate of exclusive breastfeeding.

Global Breastfeeding Week is celebrated every year from August 1 to 7 in more than 120 countries to encourage breastfeeding.

Sheeba Afghani, UNICEF communication specialist, said focus should not remain on twin cities but should also be shifted to Mardan, Sawabi, Sawt and other such areas where the internally displaced persons (IDPs) were accommodated.

She said civil society should keep an eye on violations of Breastfeeding Ordinance. Yaqub Manzar Qureshi, Health Ministry education advisor, said mobilisation of lady health workers for promotion of breastfeeding was very crucial because they were delivery agents at household level.

He said rules and regulations regarding breastfeeding laws were pending with Law Ministry and after their approval, their implementation would be made sure.