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K E Y-Knowing and engaging for young child food and feeding: Leveraging a successful literacy initiative assessment approach

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ASER, an autonomous wing of Pratham- a non government organization uses simple yet rigorous methods to generate new evidence for action. One of ASER centre's recent efforts has been focused on nutrition, health and overall development in early childhood period. In keeping with ASER philosophy simple measurable-actionable indicators were compiled in formats which enabled involvement of care-givers in assessing young child's status and take necessary corrective actions if required. Local women volunteers of Pratham were trained on assessment formats and tool. Target sample for pilot selected after cluster census. Information was collected from caregivers of 90 <3year children from two urban clusters in Ahmedabad (intervention) and Baroda (comparison), Gujarat. Weekly home visits and monthly group meetings were carried out in community. An increased knowledge about special feeding (use of GLV's increased from 5.6 to 47.6% and use of ghee to improve energy density from 4.2 to 54.8%) for young children was observed among mothers in Ahmedabad. Mothers were observed to have 40% increase in level of awareness about breastfeeding and its benefits from baseline. Overall, there was an increase in awareness about health and feeding of children among intervention group. Simple methods to assess status of complementary feeding and identify gaps with respect to guidelines, may be a potential route for converting policy into practice for optimum infant and young child feeding and for other health indicators. By engaging ordinary people to generate evidence and understand gaps, such assessments have potential to be used to provide the basis for action at scale as well locally.

Biography

Karishma Vats has completed her MSc in Food and Nutrition from Delhi University. She is working as a Research Associate in Social Sector Unit of ASER Centre-Pratham for more than 2 years.

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