

Mothers of Young Children in Nepal Prefer *Poshan Nanglo* (Nutrition Tray) for Nutrition Social Behaviour Change Communication

Authors: Sophiya Uprety, Anjita Khadka and Dhruva Shrestha

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

It is necessary to significantly accelerate the progress for optimal young child feeding practices to attain global nutrition goals and targets. Innovative and compelling communication approaches should be explored and tested to change social behaviours towards nutrition. A concept promoted in Nepal known as *Poshan Nanglo* (Nutrition Tray), is an interactive demonstration of locally available and nutritiously diverse foods. It is important to generate evidence to advocate for uptake and proliferation of the *Poshan Nanglo* approach.

OBJECTIVE

To understand the preferences and perceptions of *Poshan Nanglo* among mothers of young children, a key intended target of the nutrition social behaviour change communication.

METHODS

We conducted a mixed-method study based at Siddhi Memorial Hospital for Women and Children in Nepal. The study site was chosen since services offering nutrition counselling services using *Poshan Nanglo* had been started at the hospital from August 2019 and it also provided a platform to reach out to the intended participants. Non-probability convenience sampling was used to select participants for the study. Mothers of children aged 6-23 months living in urban/peri-urban areas and visiting the hospital along with their children for regular immunization services were invited to participate. Ethical approval was received from Siddhi Memorial Hospital and Nepal Health Research Council. Informed consent was also obtained from participants prior to data collection.

A total of 305 mothers of children aged 6 to 23 months were interviewed from September 2019 to January 2020. This study adopted the phenomenology method to understand preferences and perceptions of *Poshan Nanglo* among the mothers of young children.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face, asking open-ended questions and using unplanned probes as necessary. The overall interview approach was designed to give the participants an opportunity to speak their mind. The interview was conducted in the Nepali language by health care personnel trained on the research methods. Each interview took half an hour on average and was recorded and later transcribed into English.



Figure 1: A participating mother receiving IYCF counselling using the demonstrated *Poshan Nanglo*

A code frame was developed manually using the language and expression of the participants. Answers were then manually coded accordingly, after which common themes and emerging patterns were identified and compiled. Based on the evidence generated from the data, assertions, i.e., declarative statements of summative synthesis, were developed.

RESULTS

Out of total 305 mothers interviewed, 283 (92.8%) reported preference for *Poshan Nanglo* over the printed IEC materials.

Table 1: Background characteristics of participating mothers

Mother's Characteristics	N	%
Formal education		
Primary (0-5 years of school)	28	9.2
Secondary (6-10 years of school)	103	33.8
Higher secondary (11-12 years of school)	81	26.6
Bachelor's degree	61	20
Master's degree	19	6.2
None (never attended school)	13	4.3
Mother's occupation		
Homemaker	208	68.2
Engaged in income generation	96	31.5
NA	1	0.3

Figure 2: Three themes reported by participating mothers on their preference for *Poshan Nanglo*



Common responses under the theme 'simplicity for learning:' 'easy to see and understand, 'can see clearly, 'easy even for those unable to read or write, 'different food groups to be fed to children are displayed 'and 'can learn about different foods for child feeding at once.'

Common responses under the theme 'real foods easier to understand:' 'use of real/natural foods are better', 'real foods are more attractive and grab attention, 'and 'shows the real nutritious foods to feed children.'

Common responses under the theme 'a practical approach:' 'ability to touch and feel the foods gives different perception,' 'easy to re-member', 'more practical and effective learning' and 'can think of foods at home.

CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

Mothers of young children clearly prefer *Poshan Nanglo* over the printed IEC materials. As a simple and sustainable way to communicate about dietary diversity and good nutrition, this approach may have global relevance and potential. Locally available nutritious foods in any given context can be utilized and promoted whilst implementing nutrition interventions. It will also be a minimal cost and environmentally sustainable approach. Hence, it can be taken forward as a concept necessary for change to achieve the SDGs.

Further qualitative and quantitative studies research should be conducted in varied locations and settings to generate further evidence.