



Satnam Kaur with her daughter Simran.



I would not have breastfed my children had I not been working at WABA! That is the power of information that is useful, accurate, complete and timely. I had all these from WABA, and that is why I was able to succeed in breastfeeding exclusively and beyond for both my children.

Through my experience, while engaging in full time employment and nurturing my children, I can say that not all working mothers are able to succeed in their breastfeeding journey as they lack the support from their families, employers and society as a whole. Returning to work after three months maternity leave was a challenge, as nurturing a baby with exclusive breastfeeding is a full-time job in itself. But I was able to juggle a full-time job with a caregiver close by looking after my children while I was at work. In this way, I was able to continue to breastfeed them and complement their feeding with nutritious home-cooked meals from local produce.

My colleagues at WABA were able to go through this journey with me. This impacted us all, experiencing the reality of how important and crucial breastfeeding is, and how it is a challenge for a working mother to manage exclusive breastfeeding with full time employment. It strengthened my commitment to support working mothers I met, who are also juggling their nurturing role with their productive role. Working mothers need support from all sectors of society.

When I embarked on my journey for knowledge through the Masters in Public Administration process, for my final project paper I decided on the topic "How effective government policies can support a working mother to achieve work-life balance". It was crystal clear from the 200 project respondents I reached out to that most of them wanted better maternity entitlements so that they could breastfeed their babies, and that could provide them with the best possible nourishment and care. This is why WABA's work on Maternity Protection is so important, to ensure that mothers are able to balance their productive and reproductive roles.

As I returned this year (2016) from an international conference on women's and girls' issues, I was struck over and over again by the messages emerging from the conference. Two of the most poignant ones that relate to WABA's work are:

- Building of partnerships that need to be inclusive of men/public/private sector. It has to be a multi-sectorial partnership to be effective. We need to move away from transactional partnerships (where we work on an issue that brings a direct change for each partner) to transformational partnerships, where together we make the change based on a common vision.
- In our communication we should not solely target the masses but we should ensure that they understand it. We should move past solely reaching the masses to really look at who we have impacted. Our messaging needs to be organic and crafted by those working on these issues.

– Satnam Kaur, Director, Partnerships & Network Development