



putting child nutrition
at the forefront
of social change

**Breastfeeding
Promotion Network of India**

(Registered Under Societies Registration
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May 31, 2016

Shri Ram Naik
Hon'ble Governor, Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow.

Subject: Submission for Action on Nutrition especially on IMS Act

Respected Shri Ram Naik Ji,

We present the following before you,

1. About Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI)

Since its founding in 1991, BPNI spearheaded work on policy and programmes enabling women to be successful in breastfeeding. That first led to enactment of the *Infant Milk Substitutes Feeding Bottles, and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act 1992, Amendment Act 2003, (IMS Act) banning promotion* of all baby milks and foods for children under the age 2 and feeding bottles. BPNI's meticulous work on single issue inspired unprecedented mobilization of public and professional opinion. BPNI initiated campaigns captured by millions through World Breastfeeding Week year after year. Untiring advocacy efforts of BPNI have resulted in 6-month maternity leave (central government employees).

BPNI's advocacy resulted in major policy changes e.g. inclusion of exclusive breastfeeding promotion during first six months as an element of food security in the National Food Security Act and provision of cash support as wage compensation for poor women. Further BPNI has brought breastfeeding to the national discourse, helped checked decline of breastfeeding, which was noted in 70s and 80s and today, breastfeeding rates have begun to rise.

2. Your strong intervention brought enactment of the IMS Act.

You brought a private members Bill in 1992 and ruling party was forced to bring it as a law. Then in 2003, Amendment Bill, was moved by Sh. Murli Manohar Joshi, Minister of HRD/WCD at that time. This strong law restricted the growth of milk formula in India. From 2008 to 2012, sales grew from 24,428 to 27,783 Tonnes only. During the same period, in China, where the law is not that stringent, sales went up from 294,800 to 560,000 Tonnes. Twenty times higher sales in China is a reflection of future health issues in terms of diabetes and obesity.

From the recently launched Lancet Series 2016, other than benefits of universalizing breastfeeding, which are reducing diarrhea and pneumonia, 13% reduction in under- five mortality, India will have less diabetes and obesity in coming generations. In fact, 2015 data is already suggesting that India's under- five obesity is four times less than China. **This is a major long-term public health gain.**

As a policy, BPNI does not accept funds of any kind from the companies manufacturing baby
foods, feeding bottles etc. and organization/industry having conflict of interest.



When generation after generation don't see misleading images of bubbly little babies eating processed baby /cereal foods-That's lasting impact on public health in India.

According to this report, If India were to universalize breastfeeding in coming years, new evidence tells us that it could reduce 13% of all under-5 deaths (156,000 child deaths), 3,900,000 episodes of diarrhea, 3,436,560 episodes of pneumonia, 4915 deaths due to cancer breast annually. Over and above this it would add 4300 Crores to Indian economy, adding 3 points to IQ of all children, rich or poor.

What is the latest situation on Breastfeeding and infant feeding?

According to NFHS 4 data from 17 States, In India, 50.5% women are able to begin breastfeeding within one hour while 85% deliver in health facilities. About 57% women are able to exclusively breastfeed their babies during 0-6 months. Data from 16 states shows that 51% children do initiate complementary feeding at 6 months.

On policy and programmes there are many gaps. We are also hearing from the vested interests that IMS Act should be repealed.

When we take a look at adequacy of diet during 6-23 months it is very poor varying from 5 to 24 % across states. All these practices determine the nutritional status survival and development of the children of India, as you may be aware that 70% brain develops during first year of life.

Your Intervention at High Level can be Critical, as it can change things if you take action in the following two areas.

1. Protecting and Enforcing the IMS Act

What it required is a national programme to effectively enforce the IMS Act. In 2005/2006 proposals to repeal the IMS Act were made but it was saved. Since this Government has corruption free image, it should not allow any such vested interests to prevail and interfere with this health policy which is protecting millions of its people from diarrhea pneumonia, and later on obesity and diabetes.

2. Reaching all women with 'skilled support' to promote breastfeeding is beneficial to everyone

At policy level, there is National Food Security Act(NFSA) that guarantees a wage compensation of 1000 Rupees per month for 6 months to all lactating women for 0-6 months for promotion of exclusive breastfeeding. Currently it is being done through a scheme called IGMSY, applicable in only 52 Districts in the country and pending universalization. It has shown some positive results.

What we recommend that has been tested in tried is a unique model in the District of Lalitpur, UP has shown tremendous results. It led to huge success that has been sustained. Initiation of breastfeeding within one hour has gone up from 11 to 81.5%, Exclusive breastfeeding during first 6 months went up from 10% to 93.5%. <http://bpni.org/report/BFCHI.pdf>. This Video of Lalitpur shows it all. This could be replicated in ALL districts not only in the State of UP but whole of India. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGzLdjrUJss>

We would like to request you to intervene at the high level in the larger interest of women and children of India that has been close to your heart. You may desire to write to the Hon'ble Prime Minister in the regard.

Sincerely yours,

With Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arun', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

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