

# **MILESTONES 1991-2011**

## **Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI)**

# BPNI IS BORN

## **BPNI born as an organised front for advocacy on breastfeeding**

On **3rd December 1991**, the last day of the “Super-Trainer Workshop on Recent Advances in Human Lactation and Breastfeeding Management” being held at Wardha in Maharashtra, the participants unanimously recommended the creation of the Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.

# WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK LAUNCHED IN INDIA

**1992** - BPNI launched action in India for the first ever World Breastfeeding Week (1-7 August), conceived of and initiated by the *World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA)*. The theme for the first year was *Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative*.

The World Breastfeeding Week is held every year in the first week of August, and BPNI initiates action in India for the Week.

# IMS ACT COMES INTO FORCE

**1993** - On 1st August,  
the *Infant Milk Substitutes,  
Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods  
(Regulation of Production, Supply and  
Distribution) Act 1992* came into force.

The Act was  
the result of years of advocacy by  
several organisations and individuals  
working on child survival and health  
including many founder members of BPNI.

# CRIMINAL CASE FILED AGAINST NESTLE

**1994** - Acting on behalf of Association of Consumer Action on Safety and Health (ACASH) Dr. Arun Gupta, National Coordinator of BPNI, filed a criminal complaint against Nestle for violating the IMS Act.

While this case is still continuing in Court, ACASH has successfully forced companies like Johnson & Johnson, Lintas and retail chains like Shoppers Stop to adhere to the IMS Act.

# NESTLE SUMMONED TO COURT

**1995** - The Court took cognizance of Nestle's violation of the IMS Act and summoned the baby food manufacturer to court. This was a historic recognition of a violation of the Act as a crime. This was widely reported in the print media.

# BPNI APPOINTED MONITORING AGENCY FOR IMS ACT

**1995** - Through a gazette notification BPNI was officially appointed as one of the four agencies to monitor the IMS Act, joining ACASH, Central Social Welfare Board and Indian Council for Child Welfare, who had been appointed similarly in 1994.

# BPNI RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL AWARD

**1996** - BPNI was among the twelve persons/organisations to receive an international award from WABA “for strong regional advocacy role for WABA and effort of protecting the Code nationally”. WABA later nominated BPNI as its regional focal point for South Asia.

# NATIONAL BREASTFEEDING COMMITTEE CONSTITUTED

**1997** - The National Breastfeeding Committee was constituted to take policy decisions with regard to breastfeeding, to meet with requirements of the Innocenti Declaration of 1995.

BPNI was nominated a member of the Committee.

# BPNI TAKES ON SOUTH ASIA

**1998** - The close links between BPNI and the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) were formalised. BPNI became the Regional Coordinating Office (RCO) for IBFAN South Asia.

# BABY FOOD ADS BANNED ON CABLE TELEVISION

**2000** - The Cable TV Networks (Regulations) Act was amended in September, to ban advertisements of infant milks and foods on the cable service.

This amendment was the result of the Minister for Information and Broadcasting having attended BPNi's Media Workshop in 1998 as an Opposition Party Member of Parliament.

# BPNI TAKES ON ALL OF ASIA

**2002** - BPNI was chosen by IBFAN to become the Regional Coordinating Office for all of Asia, and Dr. Arun Gupta nominated as the Regional Coordinator.

For ease of functioning, the region was divided into three specific groups - South Asia, East Asia and Southeast Asia. The overall coordination of all three regional groups rests with BPNI.

# ASIA PACIFIC CONFERENCE ON BREASTFEEDING

**2003** - APCON, which brought together more than 500 participants from 38 countries, including government representatives from the region, focused national and international attention on breastfeeding.

The Delhi Declaration on Infant and Young Child Feeding—a call for urgent action for child survival, issued by the participants, was the first international call to governments to take action to promote breastfeeding.

# IMS ACT AMENDED AND SCOPE ENLARGED

**2003** - The IMS Act was amended to ban promotion of baby milks and foods for children under two years of age. The amended IMS Act also protects pregnant women and new mothers from being targeted by companies through their direct and indirect advertising.

The amendment was the culmination of years of advocacy by BPNI.

# SOUTH ASIA BREASTFEEDING PARTNERS FORUM FORMED

**2004** - The first *South Asia Breastfeeding Partners' Forum* was held in Bangladesh.

The Forum became an annual feature first of the South Asian region and then of all of Asia as the *One Asia Breastfeeding Partners Forum*. So far, Forums have been held in Nepal, Afghanistan, India, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Mongolia.

Each Forum also issues a Declaration to highlight important concerns of the country in which it is being held and global concerns.

# REPORT OF 49 DISTRICT STUDY RELEASED

**2004** - Sh. Jairam Ramesh released The Report of the 49 District Study on Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices. The study, conducted by BPNI network, was the first large-scale detailed study of its kind.

# NATIONAL GUIDELINES ON IYCF ISSUED

**2004** - The Ministry of Women and Child Development issued National Guidelines for Infant and Young Child Feeding, as part of the implementation of the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding.

The National Guidelines were amended in 2006 to include Infant Feeding and HIV.

# 3-IN-1 TRAINING COURSE DEVELOPED

**2004** - BPNI developed its 3-in-1 Training Programme - An integrated course on breastfeeding, complementary feeding and infant feeding and HIV. The cascade training programme not only creates national level Master Trainers, but also provides training right up to the village level. BPNI has used this course to create a cadre of Middle Level Trainers for NRHM in 10 districts of Punjab, and for the Department of Women and Child Development in Andhra Pradesh.

In 2011, the course has been renamed 4-in 1 Training Course with the inclusion of a module on growth monitoring.

# IMS ACT SAVED FROM REPEAL

**2005** - Several NGOs, activists and professionals came together to successfully campaign against a move to repeal the IMS Act, in order to bring it under the proposed Food Safety Bill. The campaigners sent joint protest letters to the President, the Prime Minister and the Group of Ministers on the Food Safety Bill headed by the Minister of Food and Agriculture.

# WBTi LAUNCHED

**2005** - IBFAN Asia launched the *World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi)* to assess how far countries had implemented the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. Eight South Asian countries completed national assessments by 2006. Since then WBTi has been used globally in 81 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America to identify gaps in implementation and promote consensus-based action to enhance optimal IYCF practices.

# 16 ORGANISATIONS SIGN JOINT STATEMENT ON IYCF

2006 - BPNI developed a *Joint Statement On Infant and Young Child Feeding with 16 professional and civil society organisations*, calling on the Government to recognise breastfeeding as a “core” intervention to reduce infant mortality and malnutrition.

The Statement was presented to the Prime Minister and the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of India.

# MEETING THE PM ON BREASTFEEDING

**2007** - A historical meeting of members of BPNI and professional organisations with the Prime Minister at his house resulted in official recognition of the importance of breastfeeding in his Address to the Nation on 15th August 2007.

# PM CONSTITUTES NUTRITION COUNCIL

**2008** - In response to continued advocacy on the need to reduce malnutrition, the *Prime Minister's Council on India's Nutrition Challenges* was constituted in 2008, of which Dr. Arun Gupta is a nominated member.

In 2010, the Council recommended multisectoral action, restructuring of the Integrated Child Development Scheme, creating Nutrition Awareness, and focus on under-2s, with special emphasis on breastfeeding, as major areas of action.

# “GAIN GO BACK!”

**2008** - On 15th April, BPNI, together with other civil society organisations and professionals protested against the initiative of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) to form a business government alliance with Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Ministry of Food Processing.

GAIN was partnering with food giants such as Groupe Danone, Unilever, and Cargill, to fight “hidden hunger” by building new “markets for nutritious foods”.

# LAUNCH OF ONE MILLION CAMPAIGN

**2009** - The *One Million Campaign Support women to breastfeed*, was launched on February 8th. The first petition, with over 100,000 signatures, calling upon countries to strictly implement the *International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes* and create support systems for women to breastfeed, was handed to the Chairperson of the World Health Assembly in May 2008. Subsequently, several petitions have been developed through the One Million Campaign.

# ALLIANCE AGAINST CONFLICT OF INTEREST LAUNCHED

**2010** - The *Alliance Against Conflict of Interest* (AACI) was launched in October at a meeting of interested professionals and activists to highlight conflict of interest in decision making in the food and health sectors.

AACI successfully prevented an international conference, being co-hosted by a premier medical college and Nestle Nutrition Institute.

AACI has issued statements which have appeared in the media, against the entry of the commercial food sector in nutrition education through PPPs with the government and the presence of conflict of interest in the National Vaccine Policy.

# BREASTFEEDING IN 12TH PLAN APPROACH PAPER

**2011** - Decades of advocacy finally resulted in breastfeeding being included in the Approach Paper to the 12th Plan. The Paper states that a major shift is needed towards family and community-based interventions, with “a strong emphasis on breastfeeding in particular”.



BPNI does not accept funds or sponsorship of any kind from the companies producing infant milk substitutes, feeding bottles, related equipments, or infant foods (cereal foods)

BPNI is registered as a society under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860, s 23144.

It is also registered under FCRA  
(FCRA No. 231650680).

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