



**Breastfeeding
Promotion Network of India**

(Registered Under Societies Registration
Act XXI of 1860, Delhi R.No. S-23144)

BP-33, Pitampura, Delhi-110 034

Tel: (91) 011-27343608, 42683059

Tel/Fax: (91) 011-27343606

Email: bpni@bpni.org

Website: www.bpni.org

BPNI/2014/457

November 20, 2014

**Shri Manish Thakur
Mission Director,
National Health Mission,
Department of Health & Family Welfare,
Guwahati-781005**

Subject: Regarding implementation of the IMS Act in Assam

Dear Sir,

I am sure, you are aware of the significance of optimal infant and young child feeding (IYCF) in improving child survival and preventing malnutrition in children. Optimal IYCF includes early initiation of breastfeeding within one hour of birth, exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and introduction of appropriate complementary feeding after the age of six months with continued breastfeeding till two years of age and beyond.

To make sure that mothers are able to successfully breastfeed, protection of breastfeeding from the commercial influence by baby food industry is essential. This requires regulation of marketing and promotion of Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods. Government of India has enacted a legislation "Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1992 and Amendment Act 2003 (IMS Act)" as a follow up action to the resolution of World Health Assembly on the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (1981).

The IMS Act requires authorisation of an officer not below the rank of class 1 who is a medical officer in-charge of health administration of a local area by general or special order by the Government for effective implementation of the Act. The state government may, by notification in the official gazette, define the local limits of jurisdiction of the authorised officers.

In a joint communication by the Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, written to the Chief Secretaries of all the states (D.O. No. 5-20/2010-ND/TECH dated 17th August, 2010), state governments were requested to authorise appropriate district level functionaries in their respective states.

Subsequent to this, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India developed Guidelines for Enhancing Optimal Infant and Young Child Feeding practices in the year 2013. These guidelines also stated that "A district level officer from the health department is recommended to be deputed for monitoring the implementation of IMS Act in his/her district" (please refer to page no. 26 of the attached copy of the report).

States like Haryana have already authorised health officials in the district through a government order. (a copy of the order is attached with this mail)

I, therefore request you to kindly take following actions for the effective implementation of the IMS Act in Assam:

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.

