

## **Press Release - September 21, 2000**

### **Welcome ban on advertisements of infant milk substitutes, feeding bottles and infant foods by I&B.**

The Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) welcomes this ban on direct or indirect promotion of infant milk substitutes , Feeding Bottle or Infant Foods , which became effective through an amendment to the Cable Televisions Network Regulation Act (1995) and its Rules that came into force on September 8.

“Information and Broadcasting Ministry has done an incredible job to protect infant health in the country,” says Dr. Arun Gupta, the National coordinator of BPNI. The much-appreciated effort of Smt. Sushma Swaraj, the then Information and Broadcasting Minister, who initiated this action in 1998, has brought its effect.

After amendment to this Act and its Rules through GSR 710(E) Dated 8th September, 2000, the section 6 of the Act read with Rule 7(2)(viii) (B), it now states as,

“No advertisements shall be permitted which-- promotes directly or indirectly production, sale, or consumption of--Infant milk substitutes, feeding bottle or infant foods”

The cable TV is already reached in 40 million homes in India after it started in 1992, and by taking this step, The Information and Broadcasting Ministry has created a history and deserves a big applause.

According to Dr GP Mathur, Task Force Coordinator of IMS Act, BPNI, “What is required now is strict enforcement and compliance of this Law’. Here comes the role of all TV channels particularly Doordarshan, SONY TV, ZEE TV etc. who used to advertise these products through their programmes, to follow the legal provisions. The “authorised officers” should also take active interest towards effective implementation of this law.

“Now that cable television network Rules and Act does not allow any direct or indirect promotion, all media persons including copy writers, advertising agencies and communication experts should take note of this law and should stop contributing to such advertisements, which violate the law of the land”, says Jessy George, Programme Officer at BPNI.

Further we would welcome any other steps to have such a ban in print media as well since companies are known to be involved in misguiding people on infant feeding decisions.

BPNI appreciates the role of media, as they have been supporting the cause and helping to protect infant health through their columns and other channels.