



World Breastfeeding Week 2006

Theme

The IMS Act: Making it Known to People

Let people monitor the company behavior!



Each year World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) takes up an important theme to protect, promote and support breastfeeding. This year, World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) has decided to keep the focus of the Week on ways to protect breastfeeding by eliminating advertising and other harmful marketing practices for infant feeding products and has given the slogan of WBW 2006 as **“Code Watch: 25 Years of Protecting Breastfeeding”**.

India has implemented the Code by enacting **“Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1992 , as Amended in 2003”** (IMS Act). BPNI adapted the WBW theme in India as: **“The IMS Act: Making it known to people”**.



WABA's WBW 2006 theme **“Code Watch: 25 Years of Protecting Breastfeeding”**

Introduction

Breastfeeding is an unequalled way of providing ideal food for the healthy growth and development of infants. It provides biological and emotional basis for the healthy child development. The effect of breastfeeding on child spacing, on the health of the mother, on the family and on the national economy is well recognized. It becomes essential to protect and promote breastfeeding and to protect pregnant women and nursing mothers from any influence that could disrupt it.

Over the years, infant food manufacturers have invented clever slogans, striking images, free samples for supplies and all kinds of appealing gifts to persuade mothers and health workers that while 'breast is best', bottle feeding is almost as good as breastfeeding.

The promotion of infant milk substitutes and related products by manufacturers and distributors has been more extensive and pervasive leading to decline of breastfeeding and resulting in a health hazard. The international community, recognizing this negative influence started a movement in the 1960's to curb these promotions. This led to adoption of the International Code for Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (The Code) by the World Health Assembly (WHA) in 1981.

India became the 10th country to enact the Code into a law in 1992 when it enacted *'the Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1992'* known as The IMS Act. To make the Act more relevant to the present needs and to plug some loopholes, it was amended in the year 2003.

The theme of WBW 1994 was "Making the Act Work". During these years it was seen that there was rampant violation of the Act by infant food manufacturers and poor implementation by the authorities. A need was felt to have a renewed effort towards better implementation and focus on the Act by having it as a theme for WBW 2006.

Objectives of World Breastfeeding Week 2006

The aim of World Breastfeeding Week 2006 is:

- To raise awareness of the public, media, authorities and public representatives, about the IMS Act, its purpose and potential.
- To stimulate public, NGOs, professional bodies to monitor and enforce the Act.
- To advocate with policy makers in state and central governments for effective implementation of the Act.

WBW 2006 Awards

The only criteria for this year's WBW 2006 awards will be the number of people reached with information on IMS Act in the time frame of March-October 2006. These awards will be announced in December 2006.

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Some Action Ideas

- ☞ Gather as many email addresses as possible and let them know what is in IMS Act.
- ☞ Translate the IMS Act materials in your local language.
- ☞ Establish links with local organization of public interest, consumer groups, schools, and colleges, and gather their addresses.
- ☞ Make connections with local media, provide them with the knowledge of the IMS Act and strengthen your linkages with them for highlighting this issue throughout the year 2006.
- ☞ Monitor the companies behavior and make note of violations of the IMS Act and expose their deeds in the public seminar / meeting in August 2006.
- ☞ Hold public meetings or public seminars, give a radio talk, come on television.
- ☞ Seek endorsement of your actions from local MLA, MP, and government officers holding them responsible for IMS Act implementation and take these statements to 'public' & 'media'

"The IMS Act: Making it known to people"

Resources

- ☞ *Protecting Mothers and Children- Law to Protect, Promote and Support Breastfeeding: Information Sheet No. 2*
<http://www.bpni.org/cgi/protectingsheet2.pdf>
- ☞ *Breaking the Law and Undermining Breastfeeding-1* Information Sheet No. 10
- ☞ *Nestle Breaks the Law by Sponsoring Hoemopaths* Breaking the Law and Undermining Breastfeeding Series-2 (2005): Information Sheet No. 12
- ☞ *Say no to Sponsorships, IBFAN Asia Pacific*
- ☞ *Protecting Breastfeeding from Commercial Influence - IYCF Update 7*
<http://www.bpni.org/cgi/update7.pdf>
- ☞ *India Protects Breastfeeding - Raising the bar: India sets even higher standard for breastfeeding protection*
<http://www.bpni.org/cgi/indiaprotectsbreastfeeding.pdf>
- ☞ *The Law to protect, promote and support breastfeeding. BPNI 2004 (2nd ed.)*

The Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) is a registered, independent, non-profit, national organization that works towards protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding of infants & young children. BPNI believes that breastfeeding is the right of all mothers and children. BPNI works through advocacy, social mobilization, information sharing, education, research, training and monitoring the company compliance with the IMS Act.

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).