

**The launch of the “Arrested Development” , a report on the
4th assessment of India’s Policies and Programmes on Infant and Young Child Feeding
The World’s Breastfeeding Trends Initiative 2015**

The launch of the report “Arrested Development” on the findings of the 4th assessment of India’s policies and programmes on infant and young child feeding; accomplished by BPNI and PHRN under the World’s Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi), 2015- was held on 1st September 2015.

The report was launched by Ms. Nutan Guha Biswas, Addl Secretary-Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. The event was attended by 61 participants from civil society, professionals, government/ministries, UNICEF, academicians, and media.

Dr.Arun Gupta welcomed the participants and gave an overview on the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi) and its objectives. He also shared the process of the current WBTi India Assessment 2015. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84Fcfw_jQ8Y)

Dr.Vandana Prasad, National Convener, Public Health Resource Network, **shared the findings** from the WBTi India Assessment 2015 and also the way forward to generate action to bridge the gaps thus found. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHyjna7LTvM>)



(In the picture from left to right-Dr.Vandana Prasad-PHRN, Dr.Saba Mebrahtu-UNICEF, Dr.Rachita Gupta-WHO, Dr.Arun Gupta-BPNI/IBFAN Asia, Ms. Nutan Guha Biswas-Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, Dr.Ajay Khera-Ministry of Health, Government of India, Ms. Deepika Srivastava-Planning Commission, Dr.Onkar Sharma, Ministry of Labor, Government of India)

This presentation was followed by a **Panel Discussion on the way forward**, chaired by Ms.Nutan Guha Biswas & facilitated by Dr.Arun Gupta.

Dr. Ajay Khera of MOHFW- He mentioned that IYCF is an important intervention under the National Health Mission Programme to improve health of children but what is lacking is priority. It is due to overriding priorities that take over. He mentioned that Ministry of Health has taken steps to improve IYCF in the recent past which have been updated in the report like the developing of the operational guidelines on optimal IYCF practices, and funds have been allocated for capacity building of people. Seeing the importance of counselling, we have provided with counsellors in high

load facilities where lot of deliveries are taking place. BFHI as a term maybe is lost but actions to make the hospitals breastfeeding friendly have been taking place like capacity building of health professionals and institutional deliveries going up from 40% to 80% goes to show efforts are on. He mentioned that Ministry needs to look into IYCF in emergency situation which seems to be a missing link. He felt IMS Act is not getting its due and many health care providers are not aware of the details of the law. He suggested along with doing assessment and looking at trends if some kind of audit of why the situation persists which could help programme managers <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsh8d9egCqE>

Ms. Deepika Srivastava- The report is very timely and coming up at the juncture of National Nutrition Mission and midterm assessment of 12th five year Plan. There have been some improvements but still we do need to reflect what we need to do at family and community level. Can we think of state IYCF committees? The last NBC recommended that IMS Act should not be repealed. Secondly is the recent actions taken by government, can we have a national plan of action with various initiatives by both the ministries. It could be built on the state plan of action. The intent to do something is there but one needs suggestions on how to go about taking action. We need to see how IYCF monitorable outcomes and components get reflected in National and State programme implementation plans as well as ICDS implementation plans. Suggested having a adapted state breastfeeding trends initiative which maps the progress of states and districts in area of IYCF which could pave way for future policy and programme development <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDKuHN72gjY>

Dr.Saba Mebrahtu-UNICEF would be to contribute towards the low hanging fruits specially initiation of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding. Important area to work on is why the gap with such high institutional delivery and what role BFHI can play in implementing 10 steps. Would work with Ministry of Health to improve on BFHI as major focus area. Another challenge is Complementary Feeding, need to look at quantitative data, various factors contributing and qualitative to see the reasoning. Develop simple messages to be disseminated in community. Second area on standard package, harmonize package looking at providing knowledge and skill. BPNI has developed 4 in enhancing communication and inter personal communication of community health workers. On partnerships requires many like professional & pediatric associations, Obs & Gynae, providing ante natal and post natal counselling. UNICEF is working with states to incorporate IYCF in their PIP. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_6zGjPQt8c

Dr.Ruchita Gupta- Optimal IYCF is most critical element to achieving the post 2015 sustainable development goals. WHO has developed with comprehensive implementation plan on maternal infant and young child feeding in 2014 endorsed by 65th WHA with priority action. She reiterated that there is need to convert guidelines into a policy and develop inter sectoral governance mechanism between key ministries for formulation and implementation of the policy. Another crucial thing is strengthening of our surveillance system and health facility to support mothers to feed. Need to monitor and enforce the IMS Act well. It is essential to guarantee 6 months maternity leave to ensure exclusive breastfeeding. Have a comprehensive program for capacity building and counselling. WHO recognizes the importance of first 1000 days ad committed to support initiative taken by the government. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TaWWkA0h4Go>

Dr.Onkar Sharma- Women employment should be child and mother friendly. There is provision in labor laws, like crèches at workplace. It is reflected in factories Act to provide reasonable braeks to feed the child. Another is Maternity Benefit Act, applicable to every establishment employing 10 or more women employees. The law needs to be revised as it provides for only 12 weeks maternity

leave. If women are deprived of leave it can amount to imprisonment for 3 months extended to one year to the employer. But such cases are not reported <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8pUMdRXe4E>

Ms.Nutan Guha Biswas made final remarks - Breastfeeding is not only important for child and also mother. We need more support from UNICEF as our counselling is weak. In both sector both Health and Women & Child mother is told about exclusive breastfeeding. What is required is closer collaboration between the two ministries. She shared her field experience, how at the local level ICDS has evolved means and ways to integrate local function into the programme eg godh bhara and anna prashan. Ministry of Women and Child Development has moved a proposal of enhancing 8 months maternity leave (1 month prior to delivery and 7 months after delivery) so that mothers can do exclusive breastfeeding and start complementary feeding. We are looking at revising the Maternity Benefit Act, Factories Act etc. There is a need to implement crèches. The deliberations which will come out of the workshop and we both ministries will ensure we take it forward. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEaUKXkTPRY>

After the panel discussions there were comments and suggestions from the floor.

This was followed by sharing of **Call to Action on Breastfeeding and Infant and young child feeding** with key recommendations emerging from the report itself. Participants read this and endorsed by signing it up.

It was informed to that this would be shared with relevant ministries of Government of India for taking actions to bridge the gaps found in the report.

The press conference was addressed by Dr.Arun Gupta, Dr.Vandana Prasad and Dr.J.P.Dadhich. A press release was given to them, and explained. Several questions were answered. Media people continued to interact till about 90 minutes. Media coverage can be seen at link <http://bpni.org/media/WBTi-%20coverage3.09.2015.pdf>

For the Full report, television, coverage and further information please see the link that houses everything about this report. <http://bpni.org/arrested-development-wbti-4th-assessment-of-india-s-policy-and-programmes-on-IYCF>