



World Breastfeeding Week 2006



*Theme: The IMS Act: Making it Known to People
Let people monitor the company behavior!*

Dear friends in breastfeeding movement,

It is 15th year of BPNI as I begin to write this note to you. Incidentally it is 14th year of a landmark milestone in this movement, the enactment of "Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1992" (IMS Act) in 1992. It was well said by Chander Uday Singh, "It is a battle won of a bigger war". We won another battle in 2003, when the Parliament passed an amendment to give more teeth to IMS Act and finally on 1st day of 2004, it came into force. Exactly two years later, in early 2006, I take pleasure in writing to you that the theme of WBW 2006 is focused on effective implementation of the '**IMS Act: making it known to people**'.

India was one of the first countries to enact the IMS Act as a follow up of the 1981 World Health Assembly Resolution that adopted the 'International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes'. India won laurels from the global community for this step. Once again, India takes pride in leading the world community in harmonizing its legislative framework with the latest global recommendations.

That was about the 'silver lining', which continues to shine among 'dark clouds'. India was about to wilt under global pressures of globalization calling for deregulations. Government of India was about to repeal the IMS Act. But we fought another battle 3rd of this big war to protect breastfeeding and we won it again. The people of India got it back.

Much as we all take pride in our heroic acts, time has come to look ahead to win more 'battles' as we travel on roads that lead to 'people' we are a bit slow! Not to recall any reasons for this but let's move 'fast and forward' Let's be 'furious!' Let's be 'flexible' these 4 'Fs' will provide us means to reach people. Many of the actions that we do should include, 4 'Fs' in mind! Let's start now making a 2006 resolution to reach people and making the IMS Act known to them. Plan ahead what you will do during 1st week of August 2006!

I have some ideas

1. Hold public meetings or public seminars street shows / nukkad nataks but remain focused on talk about what IMS Act is and what it means to them. Let's do it in a way the people would like to hear.
 - Translate the IMS Act materials in your local language it may be a pamphlet, or a power-point presentation. (We have a core set of materials to share with you).
 - Make connections with local media, provide them with the knowledge of the IMS Act and strengthen your linkages with them for highlighting this in August 2006.
 - Look at what companies do to violate the IMS Act and expose their deeds in the public seminars / meetings.
2. Establish strategic links with peoples' groups, public health groups, professionals NGOs and others NOW!.
3. Seek endorsement of the IMS Act from local Panchayat, MLA, MP, government officers and Health Minister requesting them for the effective implementation of IMS Act. Take these statements to 'public' & 'media'.

Dr. Kuldip Khanna at the BPNI National Secretariat will be coordinating this work throughout 2006; you have the privilege to work with a highly dedicated and committed person in him (khanna.bpni@ibfan-asiapacific.org, tel 9811119097). We at BPNI will be honoured to provide any kind of support that may be required to succeed in our endeavors to "The IMS Act: making it known to people"!

Good luck with your work and preparations for WBW 2006!

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