

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To,

Shri Narendra Modi  
The Honorable Prime Minister of India  
South Block, Raisina Hill,  
New Delhi.

## **Allocate dedicated budget for breastfeeding interventions and save infant lives**

It's the 25<sup>th</sup> year of celebrating the World Breastfeeding Week worldwide. The theme for this year's World Breastfeeding Week is "**Sustaining Breastfeeding - Building alliances without conflicts of interest**"; which asserts the importance of working together for the common good of sustaining breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding can drastically **reduce DIARRHEA** by **50%** and **RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS** by **1/3<sup>rd</sup>**, contributing hugely to child health & survival, potentially saving a large proportion of children under five years. For the mother among other many benefits it can reduce 7% of total deaths occurring due to **BREAST CANCER** annually.

Further, breastfeeding can significantly contribute to maternal health and can **prevent type 2 Diabetes (1 in 3 new cases)** and **Obesity by 26%**. It also **increases IQ of all children rich or poor by 3 points**. (Lancet, 2016)

Thus, Breastfeeding can play a major role in achieving SDGs for maternal & health, nutrition, poverty, education, economic growth and reducing inequalities by 2030.

**We the undersigned citizens of India demand to allocate dedicated budget lines for the following interventions for protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding:**

1. Intensify the nationwide breastfeeding promotion programme by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare "MAA-Mother's Absolute Affection" by appointing dedicated lactation counselors in all health facilities, both public and private, who would educate and provide skilled practical help to mothers.
2. Appoint a block level team of at least 4 women counselors cum mentors in the community, who will in-turn train and support village level family counselors.
3. Universalize unconditional Maternity Entitlements to all women.
4. Enforce the Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles, and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act 1992, and Amendment Act 2003 (IMS Act) effectively.

**Signed By:**