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Government of India
Ministry of Women & Child Development
Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-110001
Website : <http://www.wcd.nic.in>

D.O. No. 4/3/2011/ND/I&E

2nd August 2011

Dear Shri Chaudhary,

As you are aware, nutrition is an important agenda of the Government for child survival and development. As part of that, infant and young child feeding practices are being accorded priority as they have the potential not only to reduce child mortality but also help in healthy and balanced growth of the child in the early years of life. IYCF practices are already an integral part of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme and emphasis is often laid by the States/UTs for its promotion.

The first week of August is celebrated globally as World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) each year. Our Ministry has actively engaged in such celebrations each year. This year, the celebration becomes even more significant because of the priority that is being accorded to enhancing breastfeeding rates through 'communication'.

The theme for WBW 2011 is "Talk to Me", stressing on the importance of communication. Women need to know why optimal breastfeeding is important, where can they get counseling if they have problems during breastfeeding, what maternity entitlements are due to them e.g. the newly launched IGMSY scheme. and how breastfeeding is protected in India through the IMS Act. Ineffective or inadequate communication allows commercial baby food manufacturers to step in and promote their products. The WBW theme gives us a valuable opportunity to reach women and talk to them.

In this context, I will urge you to take the following action:


- a) Initiate and mobilize action on World Breastfeeding Week 2011: The Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) is working with the Ministry at the Centre and in several States/UTs to enhance breastfeeding rates. Discussions are on with BPNI regarding the creation of an institutional mechanism to address this issue, IYCF resource centers up to the block level, where BPNI can be asked to assist in skilled training on IYCF to the nutrition and health workers and offer counseling to women on breastfeeding and link it to growth monitoring. BPNI has been spearheading activities on the World Breastfeeding Week since 1992, and other activities to promote optimal IYCF. It can be contacted for

information and assistance in planning WBW activities around this year's theme as well as in future consultations on this important area of work. (bpni@bpni.org). We are committed to make effective use of mother and child protection card, which can be used as a tool to promote breastfeeding.

- b) Disseminate the provisions of IMS Act: Please take action to let all functionaries know the key provisions of the IMS Act. If you come across any violation, please inform us with a copy to BPNI. BPNI has been nominated under Section 21(1) (c) of the IMS Act and in the Gazette of India to report the violations of the IMS Act to the Court.
- c) Initiate discussion by constituting a special State Group to mainstream IYCF skill training and capacity development. As major thrust on capacity development on infant and young child feeding will be required, we are asking BPNI for identification of training curriculum.

With regards,

Yours sincerely



(D.K. Sikri)

Shri Sushil K. Chaudhary
Chief Secretary
Government of Jharkhand
Ranchi.