State Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (SBT*i*)

Introduction

The BPNI is launching SBT*i* with the objectives is to assess the state of implementation of policy and programme of support to pregnant and lactating women for success in breastfeeding. This is being launched in three States of Tamil Nadu and UP, and Maharashtra and likely to be expanded to other States over the next 5-10 years.

Background

Despite strong health and economic benefits of breastfeeding, the infant and young child feeding indicators have not shown a consistent rise. The reasons are manifold; they include aggressive promotion of baby foods by commercial interests, lack of support to women in the family and at work places, inadequate health care support, and weak overall policy and programmes.

In 1981, the World Health Assembly (WHA) adopted an International Code of Marketing for Breast milk Substitutes. The WHA and the UNICEF Executive Board adopted the *Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding* in the year 2002. The *Global Strategy* has a framework of action on 10 indicators of policy and programmes to improve optimal breastfeeding and infant & young child feeding practices. It calls for urgent action by all Member States to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate a comprehensive policy and a plan of action on the *global strategy* to achieve a reduction in child malnutrition and mortality.

As a follow up India has launched several policy and guidelines. India enacted *Infant Milk Substitutes Feeding Bottles, and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act 1992, and Amendment Act 2003.* In 2017 India revised the Maternity Benefit Act 1961 to increase maternity leave benefits. India launched in National Guidelines on infant and young child feeding (2004), Mothers' Absolute Affection (MAA) programme (2016), Guidelines to establish lactation management centers (2017). The SBT*i* tools have been developed to assess these standards. The SBT*i* tool questions are based on WBT*i* tools, which are based on the World Health Organisation's *"Infant and Young Child Feeding: A tool for assessing national practices, policies and programmes*. BPNI team led the adaptation process to develop sub-national tools with inputs from the Core group members of two States where it is first launched and experts on programme management and infant and young child feeding. The Government of India in September 2019 launched a Breastfeeding and Infant and Young Child feeding Report card that provided Infant Feeding (IF) Scores to all Indian States, and ranked. The IF Score was based on three key indicators i.e. i) Initiation of breastfeeding within one hour of birth, ii) Exclusive breastfeeding for first six months and iii) Complementary feeding and continued breastfeeding from 6-9 months.

What is important is to make an assessment and document the current state of implementation and prepare baseline information on policy and programmes on breastfeeding and infant & young child feeding (IYCF) at the State level. This will assist the States to implement these programmes effectively by taking note of and bridging the gaps. With this background the Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI), has developed a programme titled State Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (SBT*i*). BPNI has developed a **guidebook** to assist the States how to do it.

Following set of activities are to be conducted under the overall banner of BPNI-SBTi.
1. Identification of the Coordinator and 7 Core group members.
2. Organization of the meeting of the core group in the first 2 months of assignment in which SBT*i* TOOLS of assessment and its process is shared and discussed in details.

3. Allocation of indicators of assessment. BPNI office will assist in this. (PPT is available).
4. Each member gets at least <u>One indicator to make an assessment</u>.
5. Conduct assessments of policy and programmes as per the tools *(2-3 months). Each* Member of the core group takes on this activity of finding out answers to the sub-set of questions in the indicators. He/she will analyze and present to the core group its findings. (PPT Template). While looking for a possible reference for a subset question the core member may explore it on internet on relevant portals, government websites etc. She/he may also may decide to file a RTI in case there is not enough information on the web. Meeting with the relevant officials and their testimonies can also be recorded and used as a reference.
6. All members share their findings in the second Core group meeting as decided. Members achieve consensus on findings and gaps and develop a set of recommendations for their State.
7. The coordinator of <u>the core group prepares a draft report for the State and shares with </u>the larger group of concerned partners in the State and seeks feedback on the draft report.
8. The Core group coordinator incorporates the feedback and develops the final report, his is more of a compilation of findings and put into a framework of the report.
9. The core group coordinator shares the draft final report with the SBT*i* Secretariat at BPNI who will do the checking and verification.
10. The report is finalized between two offices,(State and National SBT*i*)
11. Design, development and printing of final report and report card is done based on availability of resources.
12. Final dissemination meeting/event is organized.
13. Based on the findings a Call for action to bridge the gaps is developed. State Secretary Health and NHM/WCD could be invited here along with other sectors. It should be for all sectors for which assessments has been accomplished.
14. The report is used for advocacy for change and strengthening support to women for successful breastfeeding and adequate complementary feeding.

Terms of Reference for SBT*i* Coordinator:
The SBTi coordinator would:
*   Identify and screen the relevant core group members
*   Facilitate letter of agreement with core group members for the conducting the SBTi assessment
*   Facilitate the core group meetings
*   Facilitate the allocation of indicators to core group member based on their expertise
*   Coordinate and assist core group members in conducting the SBTi assessment
*   Organize the core group and relevant partners consensus building meeting
*   Assist core group members in finalize the report
*   Compile all the indicators and the final SBTi report
*   Organize the final report dissemination meeting with various stake holders
*   Make a PPT to share with the group.
*   Prepare call to action and facilitate advocacy efforts with BPNI team

TOR of the Member of the Core Group
*   Core group members attend the meetings of the core group4 times during the whole process, which may take one year.
*   Provide inputs into general discussion
*   Facilitate assessment of at least 1 indicator of SBT*i*, each core group member is expected to study the allotted indicator and its sub set questions and look for a possible source of information or reference.
*   Present the findings to the core group.
*   Core group member may take assistance to find information from SBTi secretariat as and when needed.