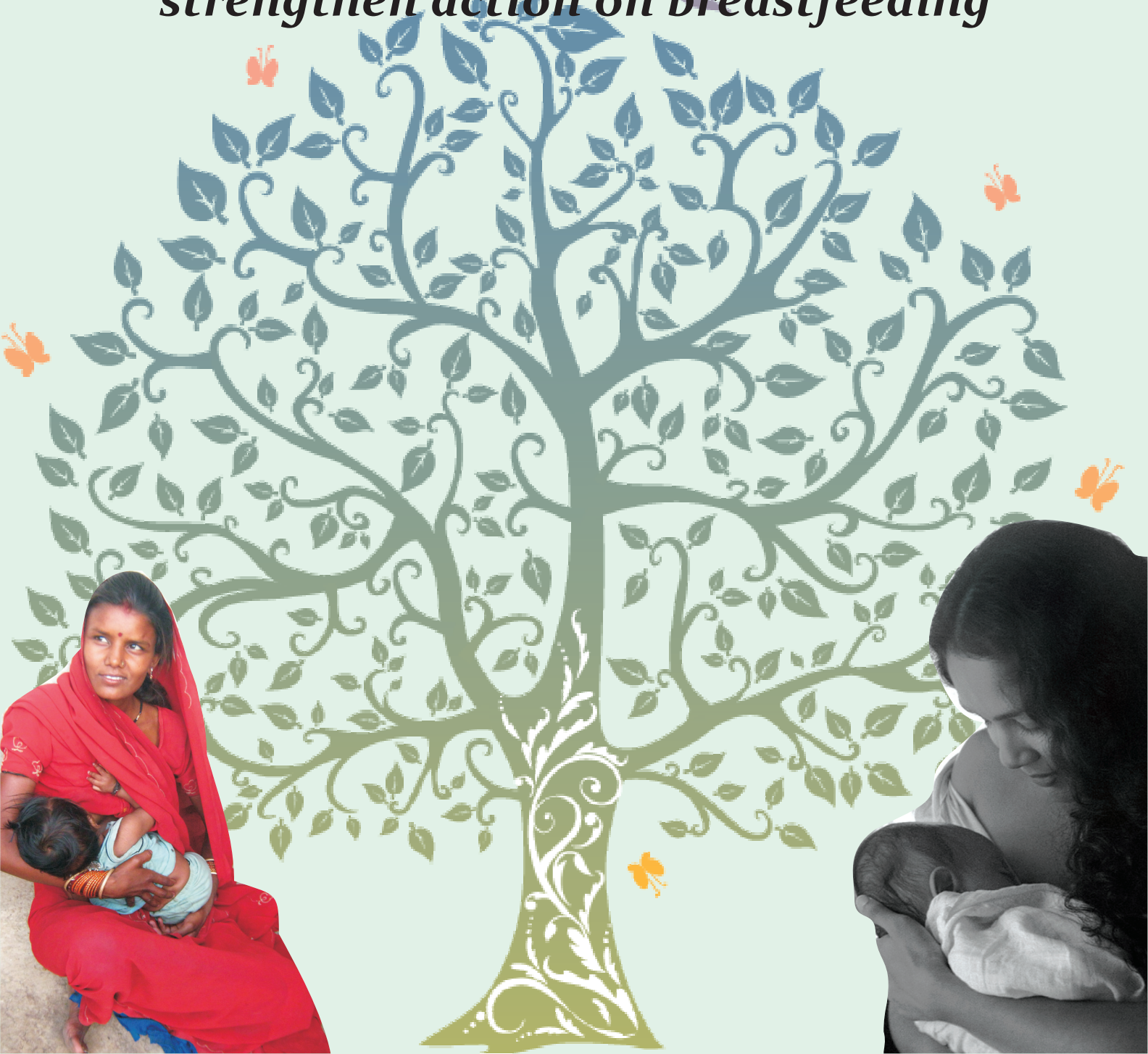


Support Breastfeeding for a Healthier Planet

*Covid-19 is an opportunity to
strengthen action on breastfeeding*



Objectives of WBW 2020

- 1 To generate awareness and action on detrimental effects of breastmilk substitutes (BMS) on the environment and the protective role of breastfeeding on the environment.
- 2 To involve groups for advocacy in different States to improve protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding especially to implement the *Infant Milk Substitutes Feeding Bottles, and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act 1992, and Amendment Act 2003*.

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organisation recommends healthy diet for infants and young children; it includes breastfeeding exclusively during the first 6 months of life, continued breastfeeding for 2 years and beyond, complimented with a variety of adequate, safe and nutrient-dense foods after 6 months of age. According to WHO¹: “In the first 2 years of a child's life, optimal nutrition fosters healthy growth and improves cognitive development. It also reduces the risk of becoming overweight or obese and developing NCDs later in life”

Breastfeeding is climate friendly and environmentally sustainable feeding method as it does not use our planet's scarce natural resources or raw materials. It in fact protects the environment and eliminates sources of waste and pollution. Scientific literature has grown over the past few years on breastfeeding's role to both the health of her baby and the planet.^{2,3,4,5}

Breastmilk substitutes (BMS) are ultra-processed foods generating substantial Green House Gases (GHG)⁶ at various stages of production, packaging, distribution, marketing and use. BMS is industrially manufactured and food industry does everything possible to replace breastfeeding with it adding to the existing burden of climate change. BMS use generates waste in the form of bottles and teats, tin containers and promotional material, which needs disposal.

Despite innumerable benefits of breastfeeding and disadvantages of using breastmilk substitutes, sale of powdered baby milks is increasing rapidly. It is largely driven by weak implementation of policies and programmes to support breastfeeding. Government action lags behind when it comes to regulation of marketing of commercial baby foods.^{7,8} According to a recent global report on the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, out of 194 countries, only 25 have enacted a national law, which substantially

In 2016, total sale of BMS in India was

26,900 tonnes

with a projected sale of

30,700 tonnes

in 2021 (a cumulative increase of 14%)

aligned with the Code.⁹ Global sales of breastmilk substitutes was US\$ 61.2 billion in 2018, with an expected compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of more than 10% between 2018 and 2025. Projected global sales is more than US\$ 119 billion in 2025.¹⁰ In 2016, total sales of BMS in India was 26,900 tonnes with a projected sales of 30,700 tonnes in 2021 (a cumulative increase of 14%). According to the euromonitor report, sales of standard infant formula (0-6 months) was about 12,000 tonnes in the year 2016.¹¹

On the other hand, status of breastfeeding practices in India needs immediate attention as rate of initiation of breastfeeding within one hour of birth is 57% while exclusive breastfeeding rate remains about 58%.¹²

Manufacturing of following associated products further produce GHG and puts additional burden on the planet:

- Tin/Card board for packing the formula
- Plastic for bottles and teats
- Labels and printing for marketing and distribution
- Sterilizers for sterilizing the bottles

Reference: Formula for Disaster⁴

HOW DID WE QUANTIFY IMPACT OF BMS?

There are very few studies on the extent of environmental degradation due to use of baby milk formula.

The Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) and International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) in collaboration with global experts developed an innovative method for calculating the average GHG emissions due to various categories of baby milk formula. The method looked into the composition of baby milk formula products, ascertaining contribution of each ingredient, and identifying GHG emissions due to the individual ingredients^{13,14}. Using this method, GHG emissions due to baby milk formula were calculated for India for the year 2016 and projection for the year 2021 were also estimated. (see figure 1 and 2)

Another study estimated carbon footprints of production and consumption of BMS in 4 producer countries and 4 consumer countries. The study found lower carbon footprints from breastfeeding in comparison to BMS use in all countries studied.¹⁵



Figure 1: India - Sales of BMS in 2016 and projected sales in 2021 ('000 tonnes)¹⁰

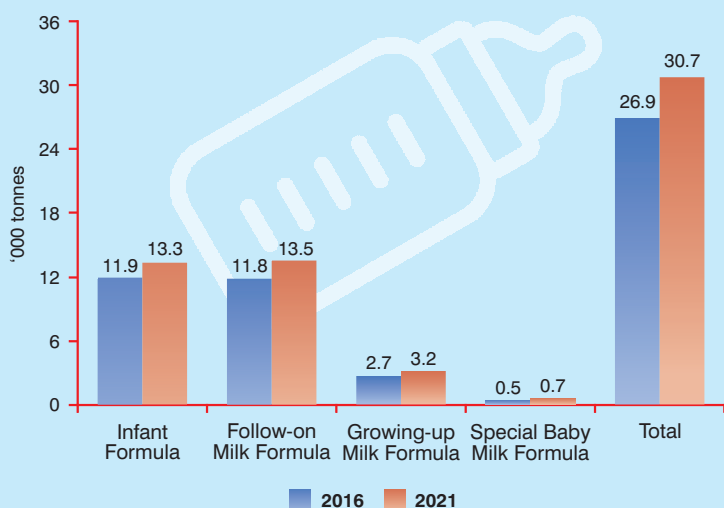
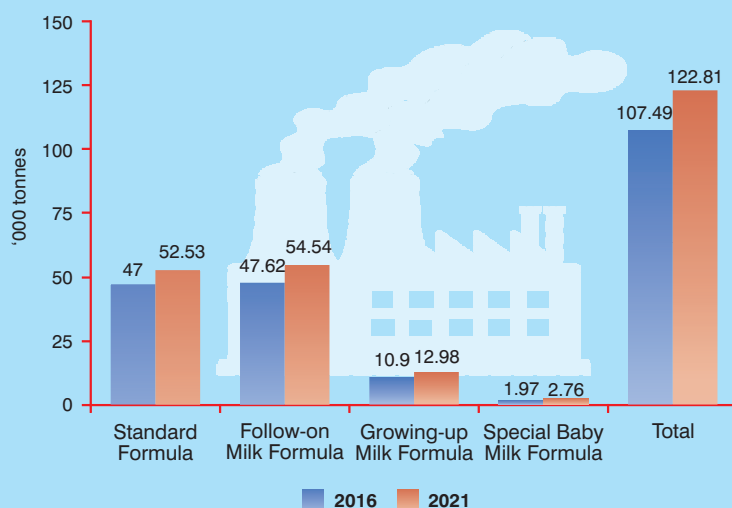


Figure 2: India - GHG Emissions due to BMS in 2016 and projected emissions in 2021 ('000 tonnes CO₂ eq.)^{10,14}



In India, total GHG emissions due to BMS in 2016 was 107,490 tonnes of CO₂ eq. out of which 10,900 tonnes was due to growing up milks, 47,000 tonnes was due to standard formula, 47,620 tonnes was due to follow-on formula, and 1,970 tonnes was due to special baby milk formula. Projected total GHG emissions in 2021 due to BMS is 122,810 tonnes, maximum contribution to it will come from the follow-on formula.

REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF BMS



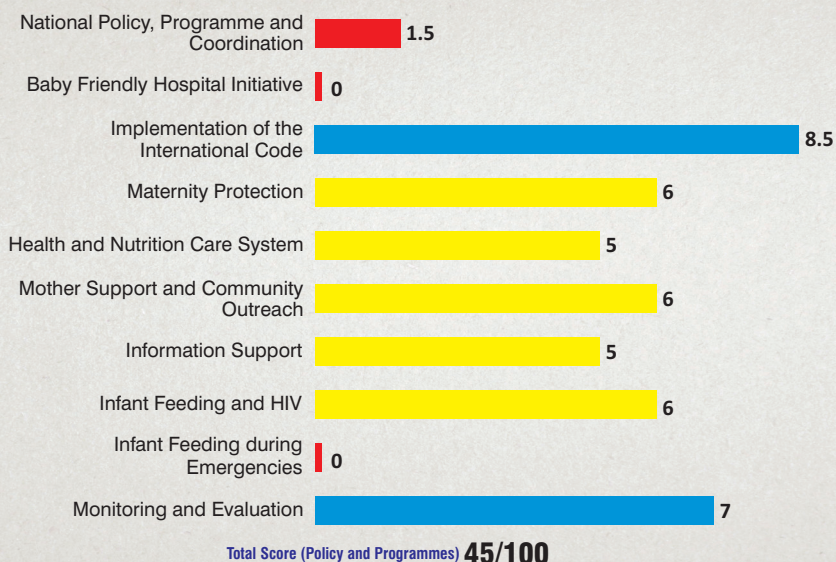
Environmental impact of the BMS can be curtailed by efforts that can reduce their consumption and enhance breastfeeding rates through good support systems for mothers and families. The Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding provides a policy framework for strengthening the policies and programmes on infant and young child feeding (IYCF). The World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi)¹⁶ led periodic monitoring of IYCF policies and programmes revealed glaring gaps in the implementation in India (Figure-3). Enhancing breastfeeding rates requires investments in

- interventions to protect breastfeeding
- supporting mothers by providing face-to-face counselling
- maternity protection to all lactating mothers
- Promotion through all possible channels

Regulation of marketing and use of BMS is the key to protection. This becomes evident when sales of BMS are compared in India (National law substantially aligned with the Code) and China (National law with some provisions of the Code included). (See Figure 4 & 5)

**Figure 3: India WBTi assessment
Policies and Programme indicators score (2018)**

[Score out of 10]



Source: WBTi India Report 2018

Figure 4: India and China - Sales of BMS in 2016 and projected sales in 2021 ('000 Tonnes)

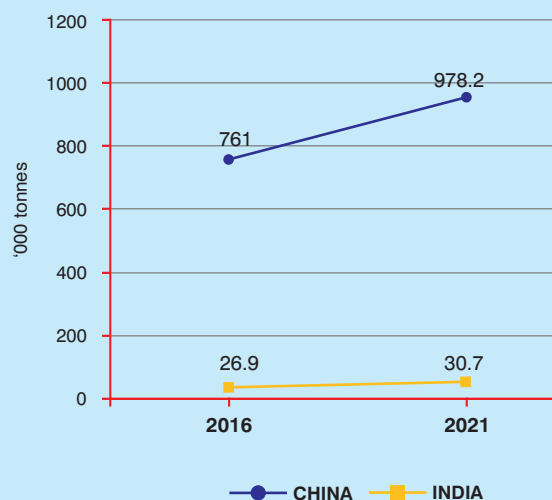
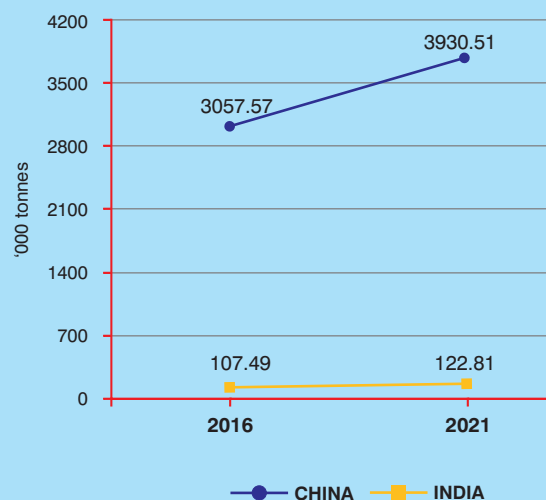


Figure 5: India and China - GHG Emissions due to BMS in 2016 and projected emissions in 2021 ('000 Tonnes CO₂)

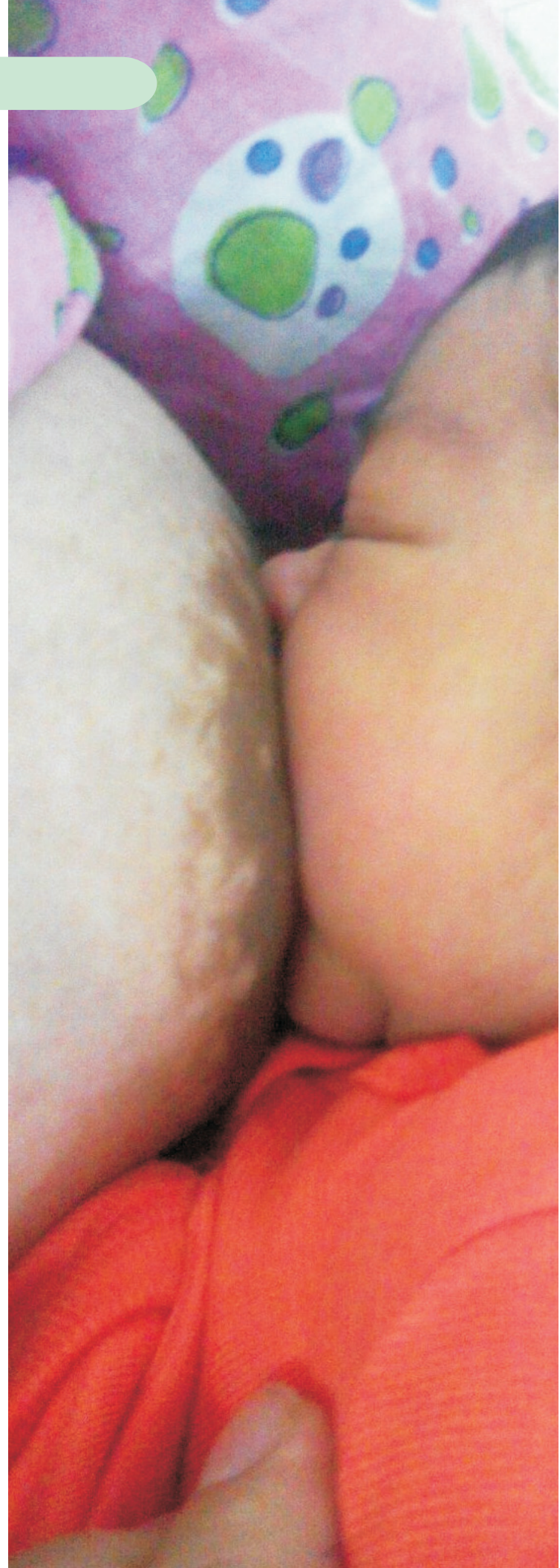


What can policy makers/ programme managers do at National and State level?

1. Launch a campaign to generate mass awareness about the environmental impact of BMS and environmental sustainability of breastfeeding among people and health workers
2. Bridge the gaps noted in the India's WBTi assessment report (2018); especially for enhancing the standards of care in the hospitals, both public and private.

What can civil society, and breastfeeding advocates do?

1. Find out about the policies and programmes on IYCF in the states by writing to different departments dealing with health and nutrition.
2. Raise awareness about inadequate policies and programme and breastfeeding practices in your area through media and social media.
3. Keep a watch on the direct and indirect promotional activities of the baby food and feeding bottle manufacturers like organising seminars, media campaigns, free distribution of baby foods, contacting mothers through social media etc. Report and resist.
4. Check the hospitals with maternity services for breastfeeding friendly practices like early initiation of breastfeeding, avoiding separation of baby and mother, not giving prelacteal feeds, practicing exclusive breastfeeding and using infant formula only if there is medical indication as suggested by WHO. Report if you find wrong practices.
5. Approach your Members of Parliament/ Legislative Assembly for breastfeeding friendly policies and support.
6. Share your activities during the World Breastfeeding Week with BPNI secretariat.



What can hospitals and doctors do?

1. Check if your hospital practices Ten Steps to successful breastfeeding. You can use the Tool developed by BPNI-WHO India-Government of India.
2. Minimise use of powdered infant formula for indications as prescribed by WHO.¹⁷
3. Support women with face to face counselling on breastfeeding during pregnancy, at birth and later till the mother and baby are discharged and comeback on follow-up visits..

What can Parents do?

1. Find out if the maternity facilities for delivery of baby have lactation support available or not. Choose a facility where this support is available.
2. Communicate to your doctors that you would want to practice skin to skin contact and not use formula for your baby.
3. Watch the film 'Tigers' on the Zee5 web portal to know predatory promotional behaviour of the baby food companies. See:
<https://www.zee5.com/movies/details/tigers/o-o-7599>

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<https://www.youtube.com/user/bpniindia>

About BPNI

The Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) is a 28 years old registered, independent, non-profit, national organisation that works towards protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding of infants and young children. BPNI works through policy analysis, advocacy, social mobilization, information sharing, education, research, training and monitoring the company compliance with the IMS Act. BPNI is the Regional Coordinating Office for International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), South Asia. BPNI also serves as the global secretariat for World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi) programme, that analyses policy & programmes and galvanises action at country level.

BPNI's Ethical Policy

BPNI does not accept funds or any support from the companies manufacturing baby foods, feeding bottles or infant feeding related equipments. BPNI does not associate with organizations having conflicts of interest. We request every one to follow this ethical stance while celebrating World Breastfeeding Week.

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