

Dairy Giant Amul Accused of Violating the National Baby Food Law

New Delhi, May 19, 2025 : The Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) has filed a formal complaint with key authorities, including the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), against dairy giant Amul for allegedly promoting its newly launched liquid ready-to-feed infant formula. This action is said to violate India's Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1992, and its 2003 Amendment, known as the IMS Act.

Amul announced the launch of what it described as India's first liquid infant formula, receiving widespread media coverage that highlighted its convenience, particularly describing it as "ideal to carry" and "good for working mothers." Such framing directly positions the product as a substitute for breastfeeding and this action as promotion.

According to the IMS Act: https://www.indiacode.nic.in/handle/123456789/1958?view_type=browse
Sec 2 (g) "infant milk substitute" means any food being marketed or otherwise represented as a partial or total replacement for mother's milk for infant up to the age of two years;
(j) "promotion" means to employ directly or indirectly any method of encouraging any person to purchase or use infant milk substitute, feeding bottle or infant food.

Public health advocates argue that Amul's actions constitute a clear case of promotion of an infant milk substitute—an act explicitly prohibited under Section 3(c) of the IMS Act, which states: Sec 3-No person shall.. (c) take part in the promotion of infant milk substitutes, feeding bottles or infant foods.

In response, Amul has claimed on X that:

"Amulspray is one of India's oldest and most trusted infant milk food brands and is in complete compliance of the IMS Act..."

However, critics argue that these assurances do not justify the public messaging and promotion that accompanied the launch, especially when it may undermine breastfeeding.

The complaint further notes that Amul appears to have violated Section 6(2)(b) of the IMS Act, which states: Sec 6(2) says: No container or label referred to in sub-section (1) relating to the infant milk substitute or infant food shall-- (b) have pictures or other graphic material or phrases designed to increase the saleability of infant milk substitute or infant food;

Amul's use of a teddy bear graphic on the product's label could be considered a breach of this provision.

According to Ajay Kumar, Delhi High Court lawyer, “Launching a product with such advertising is a serious breach of a special law in India. It undermines the health and lives of infants. Swift action by government agencies is needed—or the judiciary may become the last resort. Government is empowered to issue executive direction itself or move competent courts criminal jurisdictions, to check violative acts of industry, in the larger interest of vulnerable young children.”

According to Dr Arun Gupta, founder of the Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI), “The IMS Act was enacted to protect breastfeeding from commercial influence and to ensure that infant milk substitutes are not inappropriately marketed. It is shocking to see a respected Indian dairy brand indulge in such unacceptable and harmful practices. We also need to verify if the product labelling complies with IMS

The complaint demands:

1. An official inquiry into Amul’s launch and associated media coverage
2. Immediate removal of the Graphics of Teddy bear from the product label.
3. Guidelines for media to ensure on IMS-compliant reporting
4. Strong enforcement of existing protections for breastfeeding via regular monitoring the compliance with IMS Act.

Ends

For more information contact:

Dr Arun Gupta

arun@bpni.org

9899676306

Dr Nupur Bidla

nupur@bpni.org

99581 63610