



National Neonatology Forum

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NNF Advisory for Sponsorship from IMS Act Companies

Dear NNF members,

Greetings from the NNF secretariat!

This is an established fact that breastfeeding is an unequalled way of providing optimum food and nutrition for the healthy growth and development of newborn babies. Breastmilk feeding is of particular importance for the sick and tiny neonates. Breastmilk imparts protection against several serious morbidities like neonatal sepsis, Necrotising Enterocolitis, Retinopathy of Prematurity etc.

However, predatory marketing practices of the formula companies undermine breastfeeding. To Protect, Promote and Support breastfeeding, the Government of India enacted a law i.e. the IMS Act, 1992, and amendment law 2003. The IMS Act regulates the marketing of the infant milk substitutes, infant foods and feeding bottles.

The Act has some specific provisions for the health care system and health workers. The Section 9 of the IMS Act prohibits infant milk substitute, infant foods and feeding bottle manufacturers, supplier, distributor, or seller to offer or give, directly or indirectly, financial inducement or gifts to a health worker or his family. They cannot offer or give any contribution or pecuniary benefit to a health worker or any association of health workers, including funding of seminar, meeting, conferences, educational course, contest, fellowship, research work or sponsorship.

This section (section 9) states:

(1) No person who produces, supplies, distributes or sells infant milk substitutes or feeding bottles or infant foods shall offer or give, directly or indirectly, any financial inducements or gifts to a health worker or to any member of his family for the purpose of promoting the use of such substitutes or bottles or foods.

(2) No producer, supplier or distributor referred to in sub-section (1), shall offer or give any contribution or pecuniary benefit to a health worker or any association of health workers, including funding of seminar, meeting, conferences, educational course, contest, fellowship, research work or sponsorship.

Being the custodian of the newborn health in India and recognising fully well the benefits of breastmilk/ breastfeeding for the health and development of the neonates and infants, NNF has always strived to observe the IMS Act in its letter and spirit. Therefore, we advise all the NNF members to abide by the provisions of the Act and avoid participation and avoid getting sponsorship or any other direct/indirect support from the companies coming under the purview of the IMS Act.

Some of such companies are, Nestle, Amul, Raptakos Brett, Danone Nutricia, Mead Johnson, Abbott India, British Life Science, Baby Staples, Medela, Bonne, Philips, Pigeon, Chicco etc.

You may like to see the complete text of the IMS Act at <https://bpni.org/IMS-ACT/The-IMS-Act-Law-Book.pdf>

Best Wishes,

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