

Breastfeeding

The Best Investment

*B*reastfeeding has been the most natural response of a mother to satisfy the emotional and nutritional needs of her infant. This natural food has proved to be the complete and protective food for the baby. That this can even save us money, is perhaps not thought of. It becomes important because health programmes have interpreted breastfeeding as a preventive and promotive measure, without highlighting that money spent and efforts made in this area can be an effective investment opportunity to achieve savings on other health care spendings and healthy returns for the nation.

Unfortunately efforts have not been made to look into the potentials of investments to be made in this area with wider scope of savings and returns not only in monetary and economic terms but also in terms of building a healthy nation with wide ranging progress avenues being opened up.

The Infant Mortality Rate and Under 5 Mortality Rate are largely the determining factors for the planning of spendings to be made on preventive and curative services to be provided by the government. The protective effect of breastfeeding is silent and is done by the regular supply of breastmilk to the child from the day she/he is born. The goodness and effectivity of the breastmilk has long been established for reducing diarrhoea, pneumonia, improved child nutrition and development along with its potentials in child spacing.

World Breastfeeding Week
1 - 7 August, 1998

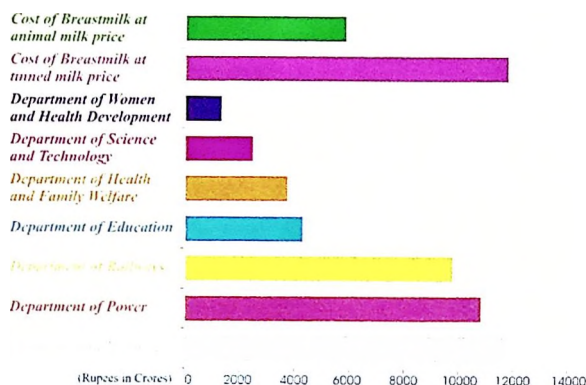


Breastfeeding as a national resource

Breastfeeding is a natural resource that is frequently overlooked. In some countries investing in its promotion has proven to be the most cost-effective intervention for child survival, equal to conventional practices such as immunizations and vitamin A supplementation and surpassing oral rehydration therapy. Breastfeeding is 'priceless'. Advocacy of exclusive breastfeeding requires an appreciation of its full importance by all sections of society. Economic measurements cannot put a value on any expression of love or altruism.

However, placing human milk on food balance sheets could increase its perceived value. While the value of manufactured baby foods is included in the calculation of the Gross National Product (GNP), the value of breastmilk is not. Seeing the real size of this contribution in terms of the food supply to a nation is impressive and demonstrates to responsible policy makers the importance of this activity in terms that they can more easily relate to.

Plan outlays as compared to cost of breastmilk.



The Economic value of breastmilk has been calculated to be Rs.5916 or 11832 crores when priced at animal or tinned milk respectively. It can be compared with outlays of various developmental sectors in the Central Plan outlay of Government of India, (1998-99). The value of breastmilk produced in India is equal to the plan outlay of Departments of Industry and Department of Power, more than the allocation for Railways and three times that of Department of Education and Department of Health and Family Welfare. It is almost 10 times the allocation for Department of Women and Child Development.

This makes it a perfect case for a planned investment to be made for the promotion of breastfeeding and the provision of the support system required to augment this activity. Investments made on the cause of breastfeeding and related activities are bound to reduce the expenditures in the other health care sector and provide better returns.

AIMS OF WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK-1998

World Breastfeeding Week 1998 aims to initiate actions to protect, promote and support breastfeeding as one of the best investments in the health of a nation. This year's goals are to :

- * Raise public awareness on the economic value of breastfeeding and the high cost of bottle feeding.
- * Provide concrete data on the economic advantages of breastfeeding for public advocacy.
- * Help governments to appreciate the full economic value of breastfeeding and recognise the need to include support for breastfeeding promotion programmes in the national health budget.



BREASTFEEDING A Life Time Investment



Investor

Corporate Sector



Investment

- In Breastfeeding Promotion.
- Installing healthy breastfed baby award for the employees.
- Setting up creches in the workplace.

Savings

- Less expenditure on medical care.
- Reduced work absenteeism.
- Reduced expenditure on health care.

Returns

- Greater workplace loyalty among employees.
- Humane policies of the organization attract media and publicity, improve companies public relation.
- Increased work output by the satisfied employees.

Other/multiple benefits

- Organizational acknowledgment at the national and international level.
- Improved public relation.

Government



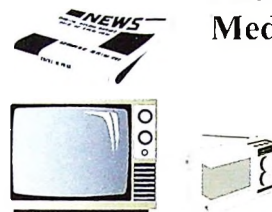
- Establishment of creches at workplace.
- Provision of adequate maternity benefits.
- Monitoring and evaluation of policy for promotion of breastfeeding.
- Provision of breastfeeding time during working hours.

- Reduced expenses on health problems during infancy.
- Less time spent away from workplace by the employees.
- Reduced budget for Health and Family Welfare programmes.

- Increased availability of breastmilk.
- Reduced birth rate.
- Reduced infant mortality and under 5 mortality.
- Reduced malnutrition in children.
- Better work output.
- Spare budget for other programmes.
- Contributes to food security plan.

- Savings on natural resources.
- Reduction in problem of disposal of waste products.
- National savings in energy and fuel.

Mass Media



- Promote breastfeeding and appropriate infant feeding at all given opportunities.
- Publicise and make use of events and activities that promote and protect breastfeeding.

- Time, and money spent on market research for a harmful product.

- More creative time available for promoting healthier and natural products.
- Increased business with socially conscious corporates and individuals.

- Wider acknowledgment among social organizations and people at large.
- Improved public relation.

Educational Institutions



- To include knowledge and benefits about breastfeeding in the classroom teachings.
- Making students aware of possible dangers of use of infant formulas and bottle feeding.
- Organize activities with students that promote the cause of breastfeeding.
- Teach breastfeeding to medical students.

- Increased productivity and time of staff.
- Time and resources saved for the training of doctors.

- Increased girl participation in education.
- Socially responsible and more aware students.
- Better human resource generation.

- Wider acknowledgment of the institutions for carrying out social activities among the communities.
- Savings on special remedial education.
- Increased exclusive breastfeeding.

NGOs



- Efforts to promote breastfeeding in the community.
- Advocacy for creches and maternity benefits.
- Research and dissemination of information on appropriate infant feeding.
- Educational effort at grassroots level

- Time and money spent on promotional and curative health care of infants fed on artificial milk.

- Improved work efficiency and achievements through reduced morbidity and mortality in their work area.
- Increased community participation in the MCH programmes.
- Improved child spacing in their area of work.

- The organization achieves better health and development status.

Parents








- Care and nutrition of the breastfeeding mother and adolescent girl.

- Savings of time for child care. Reduced health care cost.
- Time spent on preparation of bottle feeds.
- Man days lost due to sickness of the child.
- Reduced tension (mental and physical).
- Saving of rupees three to six thousand in first six months if the child is not bottle fed.

- Better physical health of baby.
- Better bonding with the children.
- Improved nutritional status of children.
- Provides food security for young infants and good nutrition for children below two years.

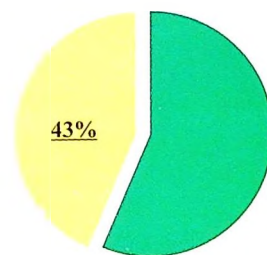
- Savings in energy and fuel.
- Reduced breast and ovarian cancer in women.
- Reduced post-partum bleeding and anaemia.

Cost of bottle feeding a child for first six months

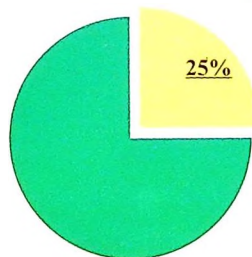
	First Month	Second Month	Third Month	Fourth Month	Fifth Month	Sixth Month	Total
 Bottle	76						
 Nipple	26	26	26	26	26	26	
 Fuel	20	20	20	20	20	20	
 Powder Milk	660	840	1020	1200	1200	1200	
 Total (Rupees)	782	924	1104	1284	1284	1284	6662

Cost to a family

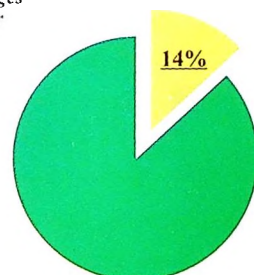
The cost of artificially feeding a child for the first 6 months is estimated to be an average of about Rs.1100 per month, which is equivalent to about 43% of minimum wages of a skilled worker, 25% salary of a class IV employee or 14% salary of a school teacher. This is significant enough to pinch the household budget of every family. With this amount at current prices, one can buy 220 kg wheat or 40 dozen oranges or 50 kg of vegetables for the family. This cost does not include the time cost to purchase, prepare and administer bottle-feeds and the cost of sickness that may occur.



43% of minimum wages of a skilled worker



25% of minimum salary of a class IV worker



14% of minimum salary of a School teacher



IDEAS FOR ACTION

- ✿ Organize community group discussions and presentations on the cost of formula feeding.
- ✿ Find ways through TV, Radio, Newspapers and other local / folk media to promote breastfeeding and give recognition to workplaces and activities that encourage breastfeeding.
- ✿ Give a copy of this folder to the people in government responsible for establishing maternity protection laws, labour regulations and health programmes.
- ✿ Give presentations and talks at schools, colleges, women's groups, business groups, clubs etc. about the real cost of not breastfeeding.
- ✿ Show how hospital costs can be reduced when breastfeeding increases. They realize savings in purchase of IV fluids, breastmilk substitutes, bottles, staff nursing time, reduced hospital days and medication for premature and newborns.
- ✿ Show the cost of artificial feeding increased by a family along with the possible costs increased for taking care of infections caused by the same. When a child is breastfed, the same costs become the savings, to be utilized for other needs of family.

Resource Material

Book

The law to protect and promote breastfeeding. A publication of BPNI to explain the provisions of the IMS Act
Rs. 40.00

Poster 12" X 18"

(Art paper, four colour, sticker type)
(in English & Hindi)
Rs. 5.00

Video (Maa ka pyar - Shishu ahar)

Language : Hindi & English
Rs. 250 per cassette

Book

Breastfeeding & Infant feeding
A Guide for parents
Rs. 10



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BPNI does not accept sponsorship of any kind from companies producing Infant Milk Substitutes, infant foods or related equipments. BPNI requests that all members and World Breastfeeding Week (WBBW) participants respect and follow these ethical guidelines.

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Useful Address

World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA)
P.O. Box number 1200,
10850, Penang, Malaysia

International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) Asia, P.O. Box number 19,
10700 Penang, Malaysia

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
73, Lodi Estate,
New Delhi - 110 003

Association for Consumers Action on Safety and Health (ACASH)
Servants of India Society Building,
2nd Floor, 417 Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Road, Mumbai - 400 004

Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD)
Government of India,
Shastri Bhawan,
New Delhi - 110 001

Department of MCH
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare,
Government of India,
Nirman Bhawan,
New Delhi - 110 001