

Present Day Concepts on Promotion of Breastfeeding in India

This has reference to the Editorial entitled "Present day concepts on promotion of breastfeeding in India"(1)- The learned expert has remarked (para 1; lines 9-10) that "bottle-feeding pollutes our air, water and land." I doubt if a more absurd statement has ever been published in a scientific journal. Or, is the author, also an expert on

pollution and possesses a deeper knowledge, of which the ordinary reader of the Journal is ignorant? In the latter case, some explanation of how bottle-feeding pollutes our air, water and land (and perhaps our minds) would be of much interest.

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REFERENCE

1. Anand RK. Present day concepts on promotion of breastfeeding in India. *Indian Pediatr* 1994, 31: 369-376.

Reply

I thank Dr. Srivastava for his outburst because it gives me an opportunity to dilate upon the ecological impact of bottle-feeding discussed in more details elsewhere(1).

To bottle feed, one needs artificial milk, bottle, water and an energy source for milk processing, boiling the water and for sterilizing the bottle. While breastmilk remains a renewable resource, artificial baby milks are processed and are nonrenewable substitutes for this natural resource.

Most artificial baby milks are heat-treated animal milk. The energy required to reach the high temperatures and to create the mechanical procedures required in the

manufacturing process will cause air pollution as well as require natural resources in the form of fuel. Though milk or soya is the main ingredient in artificial baby milks, it is added to a cocktail of factory-processed substances. The milk often travels considerable distances before processing and the tin, paper, bottles, *etc.* also have to be transported. Considerable pollution is caused by such unnecessary transport. The baby milk tins have paper labels besides the large amounts of paper used to promote the product. While some of the tins may be reused, the majority are simply thrown away and rarely recycled. Bottles, teats and related equipment require plastic, glass, rubber and silicon. These are usually reused but rarely recycled at the end of their lives. All these products waste natural resources, cause pollution in their manufacture and that of packaging, and result in a waste disposal problem.