

Infant Milk Substitutes (IMS) Act 2003 - Surrogate Promotion Continues

The Government of India, recognizing the need to protect and promote breastfeeding and to protect expectant and nursing mothers from adverse influences undermining the practice of exclusive breastfeeding; has amended the IMS act 1992 to make it more effective and eliminate all possible loopholes in this act. The new act, 'The Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Food (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Amendment Act 2003' was enacted on 2nd June 2003. In addition to the provision of the previous act prohibiting promotion of infant milk substitutes and feeding bottles, the modified act also prohibits promotion of these products on the pretext of distribution of educational or informational material. *Figure 1* shows a page from an article on 'HIV and infant feeding' in a quarterly newsletter published by a prominent baby care products

manufacturer. The article has a picture of a baby bottlefeeding, although this has no relation whatsoever with the content of the article. This thus constitutes promotion of bottlefeeding and is in contravention to the act.

This is one of multiple instances of promotion of bottlefeeding, intentional or unintentional, which are seen in the media and daily life but go unreported because of lack of active intervention on our part, e.g., TV advertisement of a famous engine oil manufacturer showing a car smiling after receiving the engine oil through a feeding bottle, or the print advertisement for 'Mrs. India 2003' contest showing the models posing with a feeding bottle, etc. All such violations of the act should be reported to the Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI).

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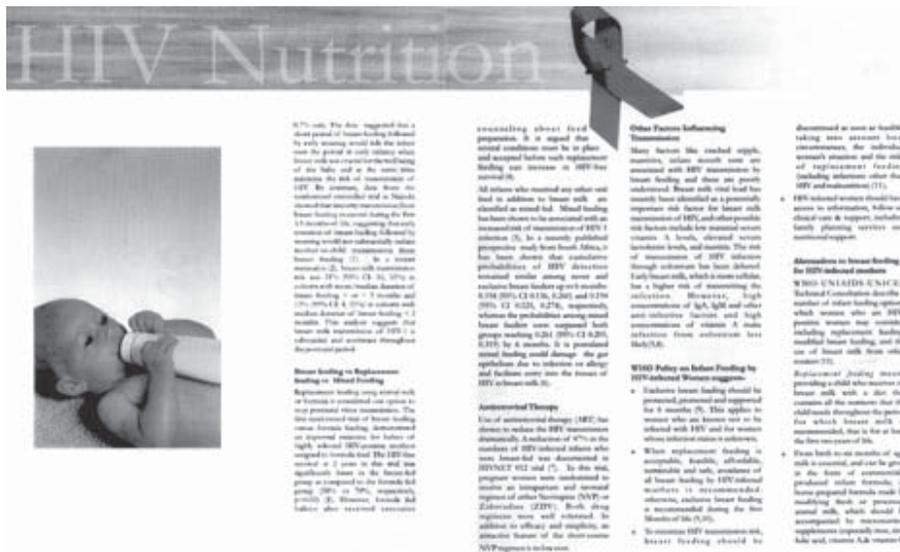


Fig. 1. Picture of a baby bottle feeding, accompanying an article on 'HIV and infant feeding'.