A person wearing a dark suit jacket and a white collared shirt has a large, crumpled brown paper bag placed over their head, completely obscuring their face. The bag is tied at the bottom with a brown strap. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Infant Deaths.
Impaired development.
Diabetes.
Hypertension.
Cancer.
Cardiac diseases.

How long do we ignore the price
of not breastfeeding babies?

THE NEED TO **INVEST**
IN BABIES

A REPORT BY
The International Baby Food
Action Network (IBFAN)'s
World Breastfeeding
Costing Initiative (WBC*i*)

DID YOU KNOW...

THAT TRILLIONS OF DOLLARS WILL BE SPENT IN THE NEXT THREE DECADES

to combat diseases caused by formula feeding - diarrhoea, pneumonia, neonatal infections, maternal cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, hypertension and other noncommunicable diseases in adulthood.

THAT THE RISK OF NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES CAN BE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED

by a simple practice - of mothers optimally breastfeeding their babies.

THAT MOTHER'S MILK IS UNIQUE IN HAVING THOUSANDS OF LIVE IMMUNE CELLS AND ENZYMES which protect babies from all kinds of disease. This cannot be matched by any other milk.

THAT IF 90% MOTHERS IN USA OPTIMALLY BREASTFEED THEIR BABIES,

the US will save USD 13 billion annually in treating diseases such as necrotising enterocolitis, otitis media, gastroenteritis, lower respiratory tract infections, atopic dermatitis, sudden infant death syndrome, childhood leukaemia, type-1 diabetes, etc. (Bartick MJ et al, 2010)

THAT IF 90% MOTHERS IN AUSTRALIA OPTIMALLY BREASTFEED THEIR BABIES,

Australia will save between USD 55.8 to 111.7 million annually on the treatment of gastrointestinal illness, respiratory and ear infections, eczema and neonatal necrotising enterocolitis. (Smith J et al, 2002)



THE NEED TO INVEST IN BABIES

This is a research and advocacy paper initiated by International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)-Asia as part of the World Breastfeeding Costing Initiative. It presents sobering facts and figures to showcase **the price countries pay by not supporting the practice of optimal breastfeeding**. The report also recommends what can still be done—at policy, funding and implementation levels—to save the high price paid in suffering, in medical expenses and in needless loss of lives of newborns and adults.

WHAT IS OPTIMAL BREASTFEEDING

- **MOTHERS** breastfeed within one hour of birth.
- **BABIES** are only breastfed for the first six months of life. No water or food supplements.
- **CONTINUED** breastfeeding for two years and beyond along with nutritionally adequate and safe complementary food starting after six months.



WHY INVEST IN BREASTFEEDING

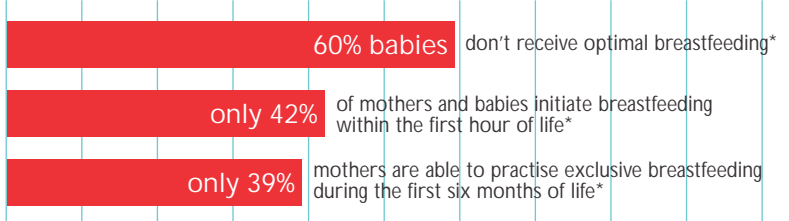


The WHO champions optimal breastfeeding as one of the most effective ways to ensure fundamental health and development of children. Breastfeeding reduces diarrhoea, pneumonia, and newborn disease and deaths. BREASTFEEDING ALSO CONTRIBUTES TO THE REDUCTION OF DIABETES, CANCER, HYPERTENSION and other noncommunicable diseases in adulthood.

Yet, breastfeeding is amongst the most UNDER-FUNDED nutrition interventions in the world. Very few countries have developed a policy for improving breastfeeding or even allocate a specific budget for this.

Suboptimal Breastfeeding

The Scenario Today



*From WHO/UNICEF



According to WHO breastfeeding can enhance intelligence in childhood and adolescence by 3.5 points.



Formula fed infants have an increased risk of severe lower respiratory infections* and leukaemia** compared to babies exclusively breastfed for at least four months.

* (Ip S et al, 2007; Bachrach VR, Schwarz E, Bachrach LR, 2003)
** (Kwan ML et al, 2004)

A WOMAN'S CAPACITY TO BREASTFEED IS A NATIONAL ASSET...

... in it is the DNA for a healthy people. And it is time countries respect, protect, support and promote breastfeeding practices with the same political will and financial vigour with which they champion nation building initiatives such as universalising elementary education, infrastructure development and skill building.



The Price of Suboptimal Breastfeeding

- More than 800,000 infant deaths caused by childhood infections of pneumonia, diarrhoea, etc. related to formula or mixed feeding.
- Alarming increase in the use of infant formula despite the health risks such food has for an infant. The global sales of baby food are projected to grow by 37% (USD11.5 billion) to USD 42.7 billion from 2008 to 2013 (Euromonitor).
- Increase in incidences of diabetes, obesity, cancer, leukaemia, hypertension and other noncommunicable diseases for babies who were not optimally breastfed (WHO).

ENABLING MOTHERS TO BREASTFEED WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

Based on the *Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding* adopted by WHO/UNICEF, THE NEED TO INVEST IN BABIES identifies what governments and funders must do to protect, promote and support the practice of breastfeeding:

- Develop policies and plans and coordinate their implementation
- Set up a health and nutrition care system: The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative + training of health workers
- Provide community services and support to breastfeed
- Promote messages and practices of optimal breastfeeding through media
- Offer maternity protection
- Implement the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent World Health Assembly resolutions
- Monitor and evaluate the progress of the initiatives listed above, targeted at achieving the practice of optimal breastfeeding by at least 90% mothers in the country.

How Much To Invest?

LESS THAN THE COST OF 2 WARSHIPS!*

Globally, about **USD 17.5 billion needs to be invested annually** to put in place a package of interventions to create an enabling environment for breastfeeding.



This estimate assumes

- Every woman has a right to protection, access to unbiased information and support for optimal breastfeeding.
- Interventions for creating this enabling environment need to be scaled up 100% and implemented concurrently.
- Women below the poverty line need financial assistance as maternity benefit in lieu of wages, to enable them to keep their infants with them for exclusive breastfeeding.
- Services to be provided by existing personnel from the health services, labour departments, legal departments, social welfare departments, etc., with additional capacity building.

*A US 100,000 ton CVN warship costs approx. USD 10.4 billion

MAKE YOUR OWN ESTIMATE

For every country to arrive at its very own cost figure, the **WORLD BREASTFEEDING COSTING INITIATIVE** provides a 'financial planning tool' to assist governments to plan and prioritise actions that will enable all mothers to breastfeed their babies effectively, optimally and healthfully.

This tool is available at
www.bpni.org/wbci.html

**BREASTFEEDING BUILDS
THE HEALTH OF A NATION.
IT SAVES LIVES.
IT SAVES MONEY.**

Help this knowledge reach policy makers and programme managers so that breastfeeding is restored to its rightful place in the growth of a country.



IBFAN
defending breastfeeding



bpni
putting child nutrition
at the forefront
of social change

International Baby Food
Action Network (IBFAN) Asia

Breastfeeding Promotion
Network of India (BPNI)

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