

GoM urged not to repeal IMS Act

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The Ministry of Food Processing Industries proposes to make a recommendation to the Group of Ministers not to repeal the Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods Act (IMS Act), but only amend it.

The NHRC, health organisations and several NGOs, including the Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI) and the Breast Feeding Promotion Network of India, voiced concern over the move to include the Act in the Schedule 1 of the Food Safety and Standards Bill 2005, saying that it was a special Act to protect, promote and support breast-feeding. Allaying apprehensions that the repeal of the Act would lead to unethical marketing and promotional practices, which in turn would denigrate mother's milk and interfere with breast-feeding, the ministry, in a letter to the NHRC, said the concern was not well-founded and a regulation under the proposed Bill would take care of the concern.

The commission, in its letter to the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, while citing apprehensions expressed by NGOs and medical experts over the inclusion of the Act in Schedule 1 of the Food Safety and Standards Bill 2005 that deals with all legislation to be repealed, also requested it to send the Bill to the commission for its perusal.