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Breast Feeding Movement to rope in a million

Kanwar Yogendra

BAROG (Himachal Pradesh): To prevent the seven million infant deaths every year due to poor breast feeding and other preventable causes the activists of World Breast Feeding Movement, including the International Baby Food Action Network and Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI), have given a global call to all peoples representatives to support women to prevent the childhood mal nutrition.

BPNI's national coordinator Dr. Arun Gupta disclosed this in a media workshop on infant nutrition, health, survival and development here on Sunday.

He said about 24 lakh infants die in India in the first year of their birth and majority of such deaths are preventable if small efforts like maintaining mother-child proximity, maternal diet, proper breastfeeding and adequate counselling are taken care of in the first few months of childbirth.

Dr. Gupta, whose organisation has fought a long battle against baby food manufacturers in India and abroad, said the petition would be addressed to various heads of States and more than a million signatures would be collected for supporting women world over.

Issues concerning financial support, community interference and technical skill counselling to supplant breast feeding would be taken up in this petition, he said.

The BPNI in its nationwide drive is trying to develop strategies for raising and popularising the profile of breastfeeding and oral re-hydration therapies for infant survival and nutrition which jointly can check about 31 per cent of deaths in below six month children.

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