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## Report examines infant, child feeding practices in 33 countries

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A [report](#) (.pdf), released Wednesday, on [breastfeeding](#) practices in 33 countries found that out of 78 million infants born each year, about 42 million do not receive an optimal amount of [breastfeeding](#), [IANS/Sify News](#) reports (12/22).

For the report, national groups in 33 countries conducted assessments of local infant [breastfeeding](#) and young child feeding programs and policies using guidelines from the World [Breastfeeding](#) Trends Initiative (WBTi) tool kit, a [press release](#) (.pdf) from WBTi states. Countries were placed in one of three categories based on performance. No countries scored in the highest category, while only nine scored in the middle category.

"The WBTi report clearly shows that policies and programmes are lagging behind in all the 10 areas of action highlighted in the WHO's Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding," according to the press release. "Most countries have not been able to raise their exclusive [breastfeeding](#) for the first six months rates because of weak or un-coordinated action on three of the most important interventions - having a national plan of action with a budget, good health care support facilities, and adequate maternity protection," the release adds (undated).

According to the Wall Street Journal's "[India Real Time](#)" blog, India did not score well "when compared to other developing nations. India stands 25th among the 33 countries from Asia, Latin America and Africa measured in the report. China is number 18, Brazil number 17. Sri Lanka is first ... Pakistan is number 11 and Bangladesh number 12," the blog notes.

"The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency jointly support" WBTi, "[India Real Time](#)" writes. "Speaking at the report's release Wednesday, Ann Ollestad, Norwegian ambassador to India, said: 'Being a mother I have [breastfed](#) my child, and I am very proud of that'" (Pokharel, 12/23). Ollestad also said the report findings are especially significant as the 2015 deadline for the Millennium Development Goals approaches, [IANS/Sify News](#) writes (12/22).

Based on the findings, the report includes a "set of general recommendations ... for donors, the global community, the U.N. and other international organizations ... Specific recommendations on policy and programmes are directed to national governments." According to the report, adoption of the recommendations "could rapidly achieve a high coverage of key [infant and young child-feeding] interventions" (undated).