



# World Breastfeeding Week 2023

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## Why in News?

On the occasion of [World Breastfeeding Week 2023](#), the [United Nations Children's Fund \(UNICEF\)](#) and the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) lauded the progress made by **several countries in increasing exclusive breastfeeding rates**, while also highlighting the potential for further advancements if breastfeeding is protected and supported, particularly in the workplace.

## What is World Breastfeeding Week?

- **World Breastfeeding Week**, observed annually during the first week of August in commemoration of the **1990 Innocenti Declaration**.
  - In 1990, the Innocenti Declaration was signed by government policymakers, UN health agencies, and other organisations **to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding**.
- In **1991**, the **World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA)** was formed as a global network, and since 1992, the world has marked **Breastfeeding Week, annually**.
  - Since 2016, WBW has been aligned with the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#).
    - Breastfeeding can help achieve many of the 17 SDGs, including goals on **poverty, hunger, health, education, gender equality, and sustainable consumption**.
- **Theme 2023: "Let's make breastfeeding at work, work"**.
  - **UNICEF and WHO** called on governments, donors, civil society and the private sector to step up efforts to help eliminate barriers women and families face to achieving their breastfeeding goals and **reach the global 2030 target of 70%**.

## What is the Progress in Exclusive Breastfeeding Rates?

- Exclusive breastfeeding involves **feeding babies only breast milk and excluding all other foods, liquids, infant formula**, or water, except for necessary medications or vitamin and mineral supplements.
- The practice of exclusive breastfeeding offers vital health benefits to infants, including **protection against common infectious diseases** and bolstering their immune systems, ensuring they receive essential nutrients for optimal growth and development.
  - Over the **past decade**, the global rate of exclusive breastfeeding has risen by an impressive 10% points, **reaching 48%**.

## What are the Indian Government Initiatives Relates to Breastfeeding?

- [MAA - "Mothers Absolute Affection"](#)
  - MAA is a nationwide programme of the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** to promote breastfeeding.
- [Vatsalya - Maatri Amrit Kosh](#)
  - Vatsalya, a **National Human Milk Bank and Lactation Counselling Centre** has been established in collaboration with the Norwegian government

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