We would like to applaud the author of ‘Child Malnutrition and Gender Discrimination in South Asia’ (March 11, 2006) for the completeness of the analysis, covering improvement in women’s health, education and caring capacity to ensure healthy development of the child.

However, we would like to contest the observations made on infant nutrition and the suggested policy implications, mainly that complementary foods must be provided within four months of birth.

(1) The author may have drawn his conclusions from a study, which has been found to be flawed internationally as well nationally. The study by Ravilla Anandaiah and Minja Kim Choe (‘Are the WHO/UNICEF Guidelines on Breastfeeding Appropriate for India?’ NFHS Bulletin, No 16, September 2000) had several fundamental problems. For instance, Sultana Khanum of WHO and Patrice Engle of UNICEF, in a joint reaction have said, “The conclusion of the study diverges radically from most scientific research on the physiology of the developing infant and the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding for around the first six months of life”.

(2) WHO took several years of expert consultation into account before recommending a duration of exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months, which was adopted by the World Health Assembly (Resolution 54.2). The recommendation of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months was only challenged by “market” forces and it took seven years of discussion at the WHA level before a consensus was reached.

(3) The scientific recommendation has been found to be feasible and the Infant Feeding Study group findings in Haryana proved that “Promotion of exclusive breastfeeding until the age of six months in a developing country through existing primary healthcare services is feasible, reduces the risk of diarrhoea, and does not lead to growth faltering.” This is now public policy in a majority of countries.

(4) The role of exclusive breastfeeding for child survival has been amply demonstrated in Lancet’s child survival series of 2003. Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months is viewed as the single-most effective intervention among other preventive interventions.

(5) Guidelines issued by the American Academy of Paediatrics in 2005 emphasise that children younger than six months require no other food or fluids beyond breast milk and recommend that breastfeeding continue after solid foods are introduced for at least the first year of life or longer, if the mother and child wish to continue. The WHO and UNICEF recommend breastfeeding for at least two years.

(6) Research suggests that milk production is relatively unaffected in quantity and quality except in extremely malnourished women (only 1 per cent of women). When women are malnourished it is the mother who suffers, not the infant. The solution to helping malnourished women and infants is to feed the mother, not the infant. By feeding her, you are helping both the mother and child and harming neither.

We expect the UN to promote these practices based on solid scientific facts. In light of these we feel that policy implications provided by the author do not stand the test of scrutiny.

Arun Gupta, Deeksha Sharma
Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India, New Delhi

Economic and Political Weekly
April 15, 2006
I was shocked to read a letter (May 18, 2005) signed by renowned economists, which criticised recent developments at the renowned Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune. The signatories should have realised that while they claim to be concerned about the institute, their letter may have damaged the reputation of GIPE.

The relationship between Gokhale institute and the Servants of India Society (SIS), the trustees of the institute, has been very cordial from the very inception of GIPE. The trustees have never interfered in the academic pursuits of the institute. Till now, the authority of the trustees, as per the memorandum of association and rules of the institute, was given due respect. It is for the first time, that the propriety of the SIS was put to an explicit challenge through a writ petition filed by the employees of GIPE. The petition was dismissed as baseless by the Bombay High Court.

I appeal to the renowned signatories that if they are really concerned about GIPE they should seriously think about their earlier letter and modify their stand if possible.

P R Dubhashi

Pune

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### Notes to Contributors

Here are some guidelines for authors who wish to make submissions to the journal.

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*EPW* welcomes original research papers in any of the social sciences.

- **Articles must be no more than 8,000 words**, including notes, references and tables. Longer articles will not be processed.
- **Contributions should be sent in a hard copy format accompanied by a floppy/CD version.** A soft copy can also be sent by email. Hard and soft copy versions of articles are essential for processing.
- **Special articles should be accompanied by an abstract of a maximum of 150-200 words.**
- **Papers should not have been simultaneously submitted for publication to another journal or newspaper.** If the paper has appeared earlier in a different version, we would appreciate a copy of this along with the submitted paper.
- **Graphs and charts prepared in MS Office (Word/Excel) or equivalent software are preferable to material prepared in jpeg or other formats.**
- **Every effort is taken to complete early processing of the papers we receive.** Since we receive more than 35 articles every week and adequate time has to be provided for internal reading and external refereeing. It can take up to four months for a final decision on whether the paper is accepted for publication.
- **Articles accepted for publication can take up to six to eight months from the date of acceptance to appear in the *EPW*.** Every effort will, however, be made to ensure early publication. Papers with immediate relevance for policy would be considered for early publication. Please note that this is a matter of editorial judgment.

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- **When there are major developments in the field of study after the first submission, authors can send a revised version.** *EPW* requests writers not to send revised versions based on stylistic changes/additions, deletions of references, minor changes, etc., as this poses challenges in processing.

- **All submissions will be acknowledged immediately on receipt with a reference number.** Quoting the reference number in inquiries will help.
- ***EPW* posts all published articles on its web site and may reproduce them on CDs.**

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### Article Title

In a very interesting editorial, *Central Banking: Changing Roles* (March 25, 2006) you gave a quote in its last para from an article (August 27, 2005) without citing the title of the article (‘Towards an Independent Federal Reserve Bank of India’) nor the name of its erudite author (Anand Chandavarkar). How I wish that you had followed in this editorial an admirable precedent you set in your editorial comment on a book *Development with Dignity* in the March 11 issue of the *EPW*.

DEENA KHATKHATE

Maryland, US
Dr Colin Michie, chairman of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health’s nutrition committee, said: “There have been many studies on the link between breastfeeding and IQ over the years with many having had their validity challenged. “This study however, looks at a number of other factors including education achievement and income at age 30 which, along with the high sample size, makes this study a very powerful one. “It is important to note that breastfeeding is one of many factors that can contribute to a child’s outcomes, however this study emphasises that health professionals recommend exclusive breastfeeding for six months, with a gradual introduction of appropriate family foods in the second six months and ongoing breastfeeding for two years or beyond. Babies show they are ready to start solids when they: Start showing interest when others are eating. Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia incorporating the Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers, 2003, National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Government. More information here. Confused about introducing solids?, Australian Breastfeeding Association. Breastfeeding is one of the most effective ways to ensure child health and survival. However, nearly 2 out of 3 infants are not exclusively breastfed for the recommended 6 months—a rate that has not improved in 2 decades. Breastmilk is the ideal food for infants. It is safe, clean and contains antibodies which help protect against many common childhood illnesses. Breastmilk provides all the energy and nutrients that the infant needs for the first months of life, and it continues to provide up to half or more of a child’s nutritional needs during the second half of the first year, and up to one Breastfeeding is good for both infants and mothers. Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for most infants. As an infant grows, breast milk changes to meet the infant’s nutritional needs. Breastfeeding can also help protect the infant and mother against certain illnesses and diseases: Benefits to Infants. For children older than 2 years (2 to 19 years of age) CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that health care providers use the CDC Growth Reference Charts. Visit the Growth Chart Training website for a set of self-directed, interactive training courses. Source: Grummer-Strawn LM, Reinold C, Krebs NF. Use of the World Health Organization and CDC growth charts for children aged 0 to 59 months in the United States. MMWR Recomm Rep. 2010;59(RR-9):1-15.