**Breast Milk Banks**

**Syllabus subtopic:** Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

**What are Breast Milk Banks?**

- They are known as Comprehensive Lactation Management Centres (CLMC) and Lactation Management Unit (LMU), depending on the level of health facilities where these units are established.


**Need for Milk Banks:**

- It is universally accepted that breast milk is the optimum exclusive source of nutrition for the first six months of life, and may remain part of the healthy infant diet for the first two years of life and beyond.

- UNICEF India mentions mothers, both in high- and low-income countries, face challenges such as poor healthcare and nutrition. Sometimes, families end up giving babies honey or sugared water as their first oral feed, referred to as prelacteal feed.

- Milk banks have a dedicated set of counsellors to answer such queries about lactation management and convince new mothers about the benefits of donating milk.

**Initiatives by India:**
- **MAA – “Mothers Absolute Affection”**: A nationwide programme of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to promote breastfeeding.

- **Vatsalya – Maatri Amrit Kosh**: Established in collaboration with the Norwegian government.