

## Knowledge, Attitude and Practices of Breastfeeding among Mothers in Rural Field Practice of Chitradurga

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### Abstract

**Background:** Breastfeeding is also called as nursing, is the feeding of babies and young children with milk from a woman's breast. Health professionals recommended that breastfeeding begin within the first hour of a baby's life and continue as often and as much as the baby needs. Babies who are breastfed exclusively for the first six months, without any formula, have fewer respiratory illnesses, ear infections, and bouts of diarrhea. This study was undertaken to study the infant feeding practices, knowledge and attitude towards breast feeding among rural mothers. **Methodology:** A cross-sectional study was undertaken among mothers who visited primary health care centre between the month of January 2020 to March 2020, Chitradurga in order to study the knowledge, attitude and practices of breastfeeding. **Result:** Most of them belong to the age group of 20–25 yrs. Most of the mothers (80%) were breastfeeding their infants, merely 32% of the mothers were exclusive breast feeders and 54% initiated breastfeeding within an hour of delivery. Most of the mothers (80%) were breastfeeding their infants, merely 32% of the mothers are exclusive breast feeders and 54% initiated breastfeeding within an hour of delivery. **Conclusion:** The present study concludes that the mothers have a very good knowledge towards breast feeding. Our findings also stated that the many of the mothers initiated breast feeding after 1 hour of delivery. Thus, it's important to supply prenatal education to mothers on nursing. We also recommend strengthening the general public health education campaigns to promote breastfeeding.

**Keywords:** Breastfeeding; Infants; Knowledge; Mothers.

### Introduction

Breastfeeding is also called as nursing, is the feeding of babies and young children with milk from a woman's breast.<sup>1</sup> Breastfeeding is the best gift that mother can give her baby. It contains all the nutrients for normal growth and development of a baby from the time of birth to the first six months of life. Exclusive breastfeeding for first 6 months has a potential to reduce under-5 mortality rate by 13%. Health professionals recommended that breastfeeding begin within the first hour of a baby's life and continue as often and as much as the

baby needs.<sup>2,3</sup> During the primary few weeks of life, babies may nurse roughly every two to three hours, and therefore the duration of a feeding is typically ten to fifteen minutes on each breast.<sup>4</sup> Breastfeeding has a number of benefits to both mother and baby, which infant formula lacks.<sup>3,5</sup>

Deaths of an estimated 820,000 children under the age of five could be prevented globally every year with increased breastfeeding.<sup>6</sup> Mothers may feel pressure to breastfeed, but in the developed world children generally grow up normally when bottle fed.<sup>7</sup> Breastfeeding is less expensive than infant formula.<sup>8,9</sup>

Globally, 38% of infants are only breastfed during their first six months of life.<sup>2</sup> According to the National Family and Health Survey-4, on average only 56% of Indian mothers practiced exclusive breast feeding and in Karnataka 58.2% of rural mothers practiced exclusively breastfeeding.<sup>10</sup> While, a number of studies have assessed knowledge, attitude and practice of breastfeeding in different parts of the world; such studies are limited among Indian mothers. Thus the present study was developed to study the infant feeding practices, knowledge and attitude towards breast feeding among rural mothers.

## Material and Methods

A cross sectional study was conducted among mothers who visited the rural health centre area of chitradurga for two months. A total 100 mothers who visited primary health centre between January 2020 to march 2020 and who are willing to participate in the study were included. Clearance from institution ethics committee was take before the study was started. An informed consent was obtained from all the participants. The subjects aged more than 18 years were included in the study. The subjects not giving consent to participate in the study were excluded from the study. A pre-designed, pre-tested and self administered proforma was used to collect the data regarding knowledge, attitude and practices of breastfeeding among rural field practice area of chitradurga. The data thus obtained was compiled and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Services (vs 20).

## Results

**Table 1:** Sociodemographic Charectristics.

Variables	N(%)
<b>Age in years</b>	
18-20	20
21 -25	49
26 -30	22
> 31	9
<b>Religion</b>	
Hindu	76
Muslim	24
<b>Socioeconomic status</b>	
Class I	25
Class II	37
Class III	17
Class IV	21
Class V	0

Variables	N(%)
<b>Education</b>	
Profession / Honours	4
Graduate / Post - graduate	5
Intermediate / Post High school diploma	12
High school certificate.	21
Middle school certificate	24
Primary school certificate	2
Illiterate.	32
<b>Occupation</b>	
Profession	8
Semi - Profession	9
Clerical, Shop - owner, farmer.	17
Skilled worker	5
Semi-skilled worker	10
Homemakers	51
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	
Normal	30
Cesarean	70
<b>Gravid</b>	
Primipara	65
Multipara	35
<b>Current breastfeeding practices</b>	
Yes	80
No	20

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristic of study subjects and here most of them are belong to the age group of 20-25yrs. Majority of them are hindus by religion and from rural background. 37% of the participants are belong to class II type of socioeconomic status according to modified BG prasad classification. 32% of mothers are illiterate and merely half of the participants are homemakers (51%). 70% of the delivery are cesarean and in that 65% of them are primipara. Although most of the mothers (80%) were breastfeeding their infants.

**Table 2:** Knowledge About Breastfeeding.

Variables	%
<b>Exclusive breastfeeding</b>	
Yes	32
No	68
<b>Breastfeeding initiation within hour</b>	
Yes	54
No	46
<b>Food or fluids recommended to under 6 months child</b>	
Yes	72
No	28
<b>Is prelactal feed needed</b>	
Yes	61
No	39
<b>Breast milk alone is enough for infant &lt;6 month of life</b>	
Yes	79
No	21

Variables	%
<b>Exclusive breastfeeding prevents diarrheal and respiratory diseases</b>	
Yes	73
No	27

Table 2 shows that, 32% of the mothers were exclusive breast feeders and 54% of them initiated breastfeeding within an hour of delivery. Majority of the mothers (79%) responded that breast milk alone is enough for infant less than 6 months. merely 73% of mothers knew that exclusive breastfeeding prevents diarrheal and respiratory diseases.

**Table 3:** Attitude About Breastfeeding.

Variables	Agree	Disagree
Colostrum is first breast milk	75	25
Colostrum is important for the baby to maintain immunity	71	29
Burping should be done after each feed	89	9
Breastfeeding should be continued up to 2yrs	38	62
Exclusive breastfeeding can be given during first 6 months	87	23
Lactating mother should take healthy food to improve secretion of milk	98	2
During breastfeeding the mother should sit comfortably	100	0
During breastfeeding the mother should maintain eye to eye contact	100	0
Wash each breast with warm water before breastfeeding	69	31
Awakening the baby while breastfeeding	27	73
Breastfeeding helps in mother and child bonding	92	8
Breastfeeding can prevent diseases affecting breast	38	62
Breastfeeding affect the beauty of feeding mothers	68	32
Mothers should not feed the child when she has diarrhea	43	57
Stop breastfeeding when u start weaning	37	63

Table 3 shows the mothers attitude towards breastfeeding. The majority of the mothers agreed that colostrums is first breast milk (75%) and is important to maintain the immunity of the baby (71%). Only 38% stated that breastfeeding should be continued up to 2 years. Similarly most of the mothers were aware of importance of the burping after each feed (89%), importance of taking healthy food (98%) and breast feeding helps in mother and child bonding (92%). All the mothers stated that mothers should sit comfortably during breastfeeding. However, 68% of the mothers opined that breast feed can affect the beauty of the feeding mothers and 37% stated that breastfeeding should be stopped when they start weaning the baby.

**Table 4:** Practices About Breastfeeding.

Variables	Agree	Disagree
The benefits of breast milk last only as long as the baby is breast feed	78	22
Formula feeding is more convenient than breastfeeding	36	64
Breastfeeding increases mother infant bonding	87	13
Breastfeeding is lacking in iron	34	66
Formula feed babies are more likely to be overfeed than breastfeeding babies	23	77
Formula feeding is better choice if the mother plans to go back to work	79	21
Mothers who formula feed miss one of the greatest joy of motherhood	82	18
Women's should not feeding in public places such as restaurants	75	25
Breastfeeding babies are healthier than formula fed babies	100	0
Breastfeeding babies are more likely to be overfed than formula fed babies	21	79
Fathers feel left out if a mother breast feeds	19	81
Breast milk is the ideal food for babies	100	
Breast milk is more easily digested than formula	84	16
Formula is as healthy for an infant as breast milk	26	74
A mother who occasionally drinks alcohol should not breastfeed her baby	76	24

Table 4 shows practices about breastfeeding among mothers, here all the mothers (100%) felt that breastfeeding babies are more healthier than formula feed babies and that is the ideal food for babies and also increases mother's infant bonding (87%). While 34% of mothers stated that breastfeed is lacking in iron and 79% of mothers opined that formula feed is better choice if mother goes to the work. Of the mothers, 82% agreed that formula feed miss one of the great joys of motherhood. Nearly one fourths of the participants agreed that the women can breastfeed in public places such as restaurants (25%). More than three fourth (76%) of the mothers felt that the mother who occasionally drinks alcohol should not breast-feed the baby.

**Discussion**

In the present study, majority (80%) of the mothers are breastfeeding their infants and 32% of mothers are exclusive breast feeders. The low prevalence of exclusive breast feeding at six month of age in our study (32%) which higher than a recent studies from India (7.8% and 16.5%) New Guinea (17%), and Nigeria.<sup>11,12</sup> Further, studies indicate the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding at six months is generally

low in low resource countries and varies from 9%<sup>14</sup> to 40%.<sup>14</sup>

The majority of the mothers started supplementary feed at 4–5 months of age and the reasons given by them are insufficient milk, to calm down the baby and believed that breast milk alone is insufficient for a growing baby. This finding was similar to those found in other studies.<sup>15,16</sup> Exclusive breast feeding for six months was considered as one of the most effective interventions to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDG-4).<sup>14</sup> Breastfeeding promotion interventions in the developing countries have results in a six fold increase in the exclusive breastfeeding rates at six months.<sup>17</sup>

According to Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF, 2013) guidelines, the Government of India recommends that initiation of breastfeeding should begin immediately after birth, preferably within one hour including those who born by caesarean section.<sup>18</sup> Though, majority of the mothers delivered by caesarean section (70%) and in the hospital, only 54% of the mothers stated that they had initiated breastfeeding within an hour. Most common reasons for delay in initiation of breastfeeding as cited by the mothers were; delay in shifting the mothers from labor room, babies were in neonatal ICU, Caesarean section and family restriction and also thinks that colostrum is not pure thus supporting the general perception in the study area that, the mother's milk is not pure and therefore could harm the infant. This is higher than the studies conducted from different parts of the world ranging from 6.3% to 31%.<sup>19,20,21,22</sup> On the contrary, few studies demonstrated higher rate of breastfeeding initiation 38%,<sup>23</sup> 53%<sup>24</sup> and 72.2%.<sup>20</sup> However, the data in various studies in India shows that initiation rates vary from 16 to 54.5%.<sup>25</sup> These findings indicates that the health professionals to be made aware about the importance of early initiation of breastfeeding.

In the present study, 87% of the mothers were aware of exclusive breast feeding. This finding is consistent with previous study by oche et al., that lactating mothers from developing countries have good knowledge of exclusive breast feeding.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, 38% mothers in the current study felt that they should continue breastfeeding till the age of 2 years. In a other study conducted by Chaudhary RN, Shah T, Raja S found that 75% mothers were aware that they should continue breastfeeding till the age of 2 years 22. On the other hand, study conducted by Mbada EC AE., et al most of the mothers in this study agrees that breastfeeding promotes mother-

baby bonding.<sup>26</sup> Most mothers had a low attitude scores towards formula fed babies are more likely to be overfed than breastfed babies and mother who occasionally drinks alcohol shouldn't breastfeed her baby and indicates that future promotion program should improve to overcome these knowledge and attitudes.

## Conclusion

The present study concludes that the mothers have a very good knowledge towards breast feeding. Our findings also stated that the many of the mothers initiated breast feeding after 1 hour of delivery. Thus, it's important to supply prenatal education to mothers on nursing. We also recommend strengthening the general public health education campaigns to promote breastfeeding.

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