

A cross sectional study on breastfeeding and weaning practices among pregnant and lactating women

Swayam Siddha¹

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies, Faridabad, India

Abstract - The present cross-sectional study was conducted on breastfeeding and weaning practices among pregnant and lactating women. The study was conducted to assess the knowledge and attitude on breastfeeding and weaning practices among mothers in rural and urban areas and to create awareness regarding breastfeeding and weaning practices. The areas chosen for survey were Pulbangash as rural area and Gulabi Bagh as urban area in New Delhi. A total of 100 mothers of children less than 36 months old were included in the study. A closed ended structured questionnaire was prepared for data collection. The terms and definitions for Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices were according to National Guidelines on Infant and Young Child Feeding. The information regarding appropriate breastfeeding practices in the initial six months and weaning practices, initiation & time interval between every breastfeed, importance of colostrum, exclusive breastfeeding was taken. The result of the study revealed that the 100 % mother have knowledge about breastfeeding. They accepted that a mother should breastfeed the child. Out of the rural and urban mothers 34% of the mothers replied that there are various advantages of breastfeeding. 80% samples had knowledge about colostrums while 20% were unaware about colostrums. 38% of the women's answered that a mother if suffering from any disease should not breastfeed the child. Overall it is interpreted that women of rural and urban area have knowledge about breastfeeding and weaning practices.

Key Words: breastfeeding and weaning practices, pregnant and lactating women

1. INTRODUCTION

Child health in developing countries is a serious concern with a large number of children still suffering from malnourishment. There are various factors that lead to high prevalence of malnutrition in children and among them infant feeding practices is one of the most important reasons. Appropriate feeding is crucial for the healthy growth and development of the infant. Breast milk is the natural first food for babies. It continues to provide up to half or more of the child's nutritional needs during the second half of the first year, and up to one third during the second year of life.

Breast feeding is the safest, least allergic and best infant feeding method. It has nutritional, immunological, behavioral and economic benefits and also provide desirable mother infant bonding. World Health Organization (WHO) also recommends that children should be exclusively breastfed for first 6 months of life as breast milk alone is sufficient to meet the nutritional requirements of children. It is now established that the breast feeding practices adopted in terms of duration, frequency and exclusiveness is essential for our understanding of impact of breast feeding on complete physical, mental and psycho-social development of the child. Despite the demonstrated benefits of breastfeeding, breastfeeding prevalence and duration in many countries are still lower than the international recommendation of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life (WHO, 2002)

Weaning an infant from breast feeding to complementary food is a common cultural practice followed by Indian people, which plays vital role in the child's milestone for growth and development. The right practice of weaning is necessary to prevent from various health related complications like allergy, diarrhea and choking (Cameron et al., 2012) further more delayed weaning may result in nutritional deficiency, protein energy malnutrition (Gupta et al., 2010) and, childhood illness, developmental delay (Wadgave et al. 2012) stunting (Padmadas et al., 2002) and sometimes even death. Weaning is often advantageous in reducing early infant mortality death. Although timing of weaning varies across societies but is always determined by the mother's characteristics, choices, knowledge and perceptions about child's health or cultural beliefs related to feeding (Bohler, 1996). Additionally, mothers hold the overall responsibilities for the child's health and mothers' knowledge can be the barrier for weaning practice (Dandeker et al., 2014).

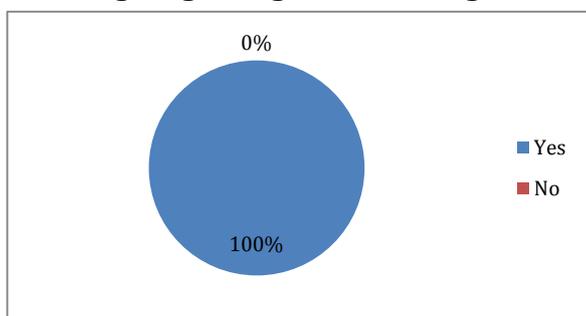
2. METHODOLOGY

The present cross-sectional study was conducted on breastfeeding and weaning practices among pregnant and lactating women. The study was conducted to assess the knowledge and attitude on breastfeeding and weaning practices among mothers in rural and urban areas and to create awareness regarding breastfeeding and weaning practices. The areas chosen for survey were Pulbangash as rural area and Gulabi Bagh as urban area in New Delhi. A total of 100 mothers of children less than 36 months old were included in the study. A closed ended structured questionnaire was prepared for data collection. A house to house survey was conducted and the researcher herself filled the pre-tested closed ended structured questionnaire. Informed verbal consent was taken from each of the participants. The terms and definitions for Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices were according to National Guidelines on Infant and Young Child Feeding. The information regarding appropriate breastfeeding practices in the initial six months and weaning practices, initiation & time interval between every breastfeed, importance of colostrum, exclusive breastfeeding was taken. The information thus obtained were compiled, tabulated and analyzed statistically to draw out observations and meaningful conclusions

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

For achieving the aim, present study enrolled total 100 pregnant and lactating mothers. Out of 100 subjects, 50% were people from rural area of Pulbangash and 50% were from urban area of Gulabi Bagh, New Delhi.

Table 1- Distribution of subject on the basis of knowledge regarding breastfeeding of child



The above table shows that 100% women agree that the child should be breastfed.

Table 2- Distribution of subject on the basis of knowledge regarding advantages of breastfeeding

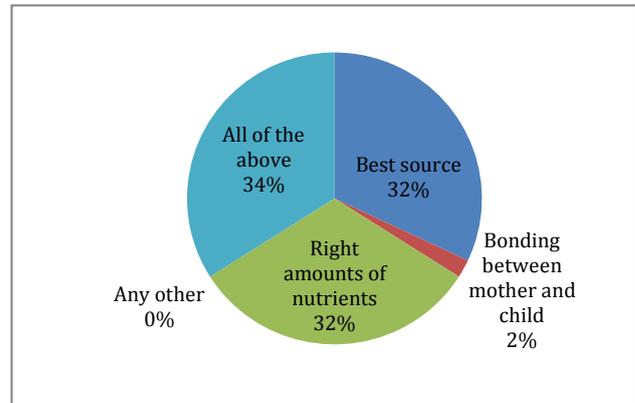


Table 2 shows that maximum subjects have knowledge regarding different advantages of breastfeeding.

Table 3- Distribution of subject on the basis of knowledge about colostrum

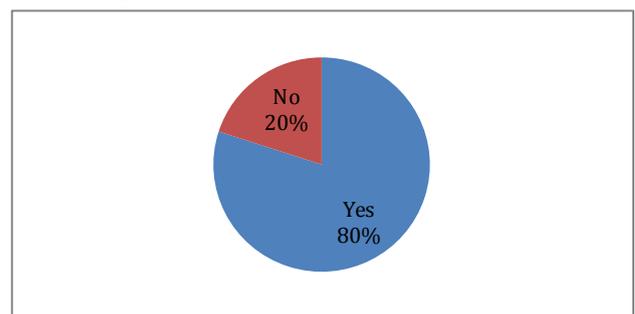


Table 3 shows that out of 100 samples, 80% women from rural and urban area knows about colostrum, whereas only 20% were unaware about colostrum

Table 4- Distribution of subject on the basis of knowledge about benefit of colostrum

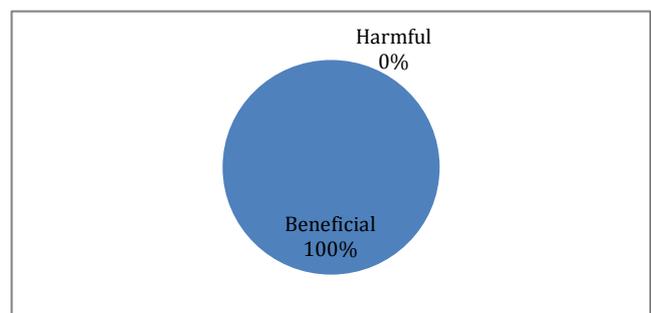


Table 4 shows that women's who had knowledge about colostrum also believes that colostrum is beneficial for the child

Table 5- Distribution of subject on the basis of knowledge regarding breastfeeding of child by sick mothers

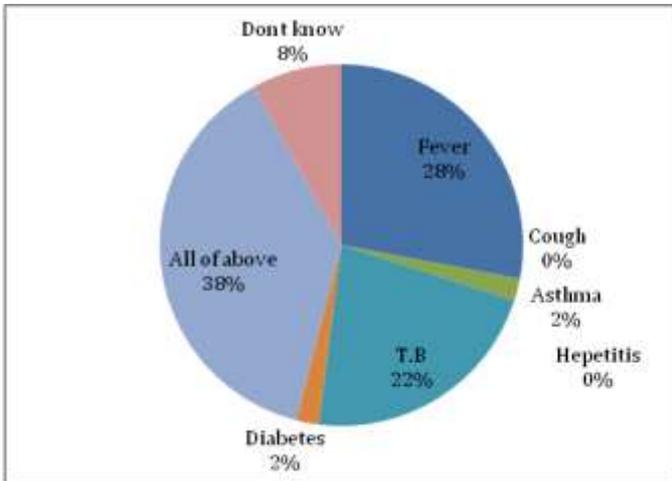


Table 5 shows that almost 38% women agree that a mother suffering from any disease should not breastfeed the child. While 28% and 22% subjects answered that mother suffering from fever and Tuberculosis should not breastfeed their child.

Table 7- Distribution of subject on the basis of knowledge regarding storage of breast milk

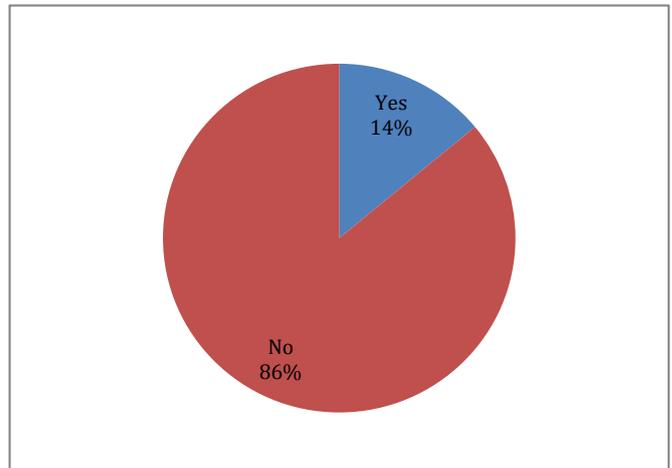
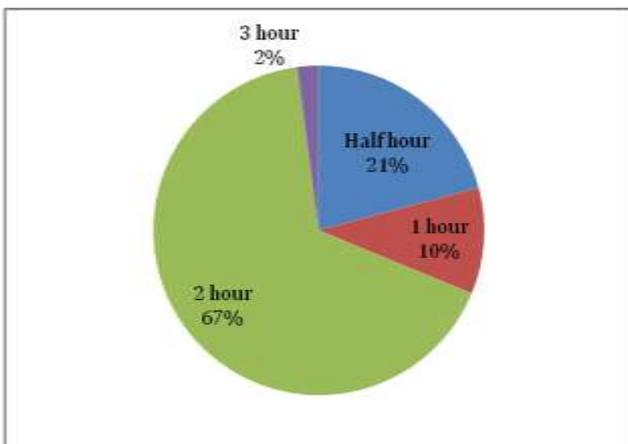


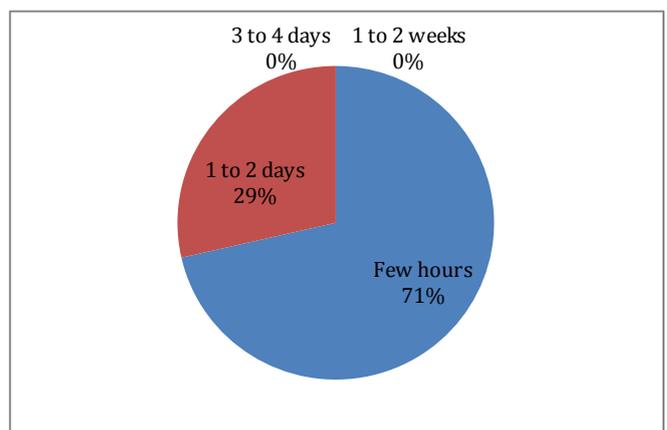
Table 7 shows that almost 86% women says that breast milk cannot be stored whereas only 14% says yes that milk can be stored

Table 6- Distribution of subject on the basis of knowledge regarding time interval between every breastfeed



The above chart shows that almost 67% women says that a 2 hours' time interval should be there between everyone breastfeed

Table 8- Distribution of subject on the basis of knowledge regarding duration of storage of breast milk



The above pie chart shows that 71% women says that breast milk can be stored for few hours

Table 9- Distribution of subject on the basis of knowledge regarding diet enhancing milk production

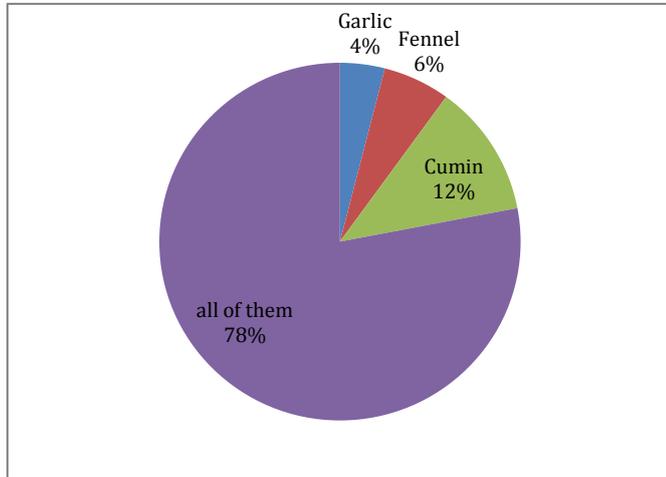
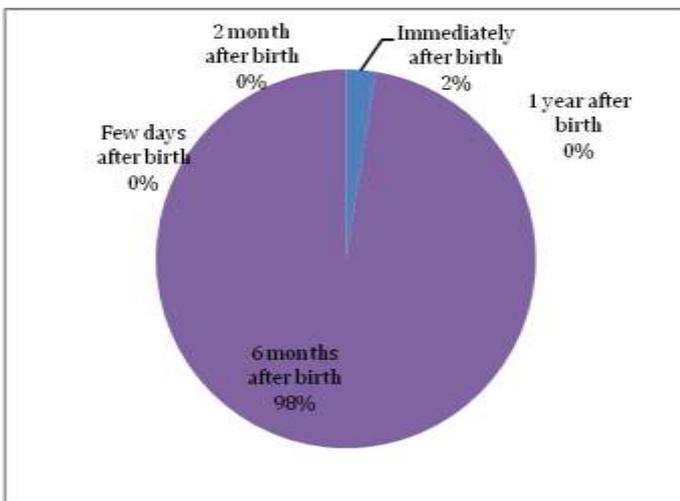


Table 9 shows that 78% subjects say that intake of garlic, fennel, cumin increase the milk production during lactation. Whereas on the other hand out of 100, 12% subjects believe that regular intake of cumin enhance the milk production.

Table 10- Distribution of subject on the basis of knowledge regarding introduction of weaning food



From Table 10 it can be interpreted that almost 98% of the mothers says weaning food or complementary food should be given after 6 months of birth.

Table 11- Distribution of subject on the basis of knowledge regarding weaning food given to child

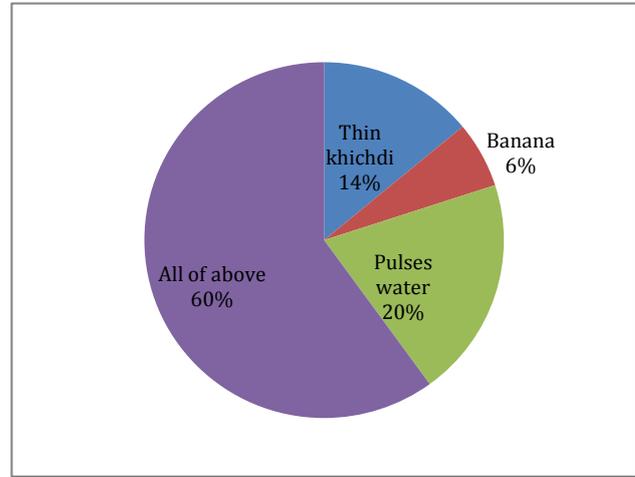


Table 11 shows that 60% of the mothers says that pulses, mashed banana and thin khichdi can be given as weaning food or complementary food the infants of or above 6 months.

Table 12- Distribution of subject on the basis of knowledge regarding food given when mother is not able to breast feed

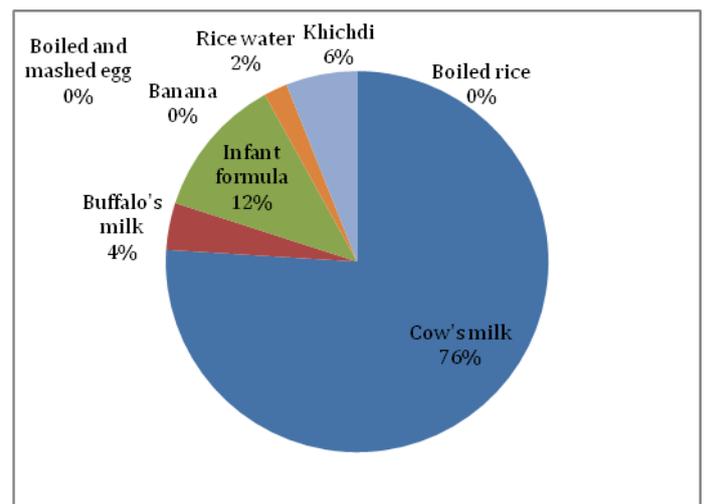


Table 12 shows that 76% women's says that milk can be given as substitute to the infant if mother is not able to breastfeed. 12% says that infant formulas can also be given as substitute.

Table 13- Distribution of subject on the basis of knowledge regarding food avoided at time of introduction of weaning food

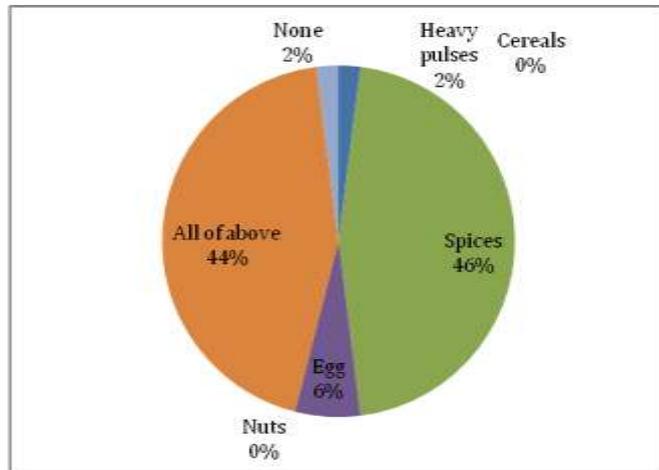
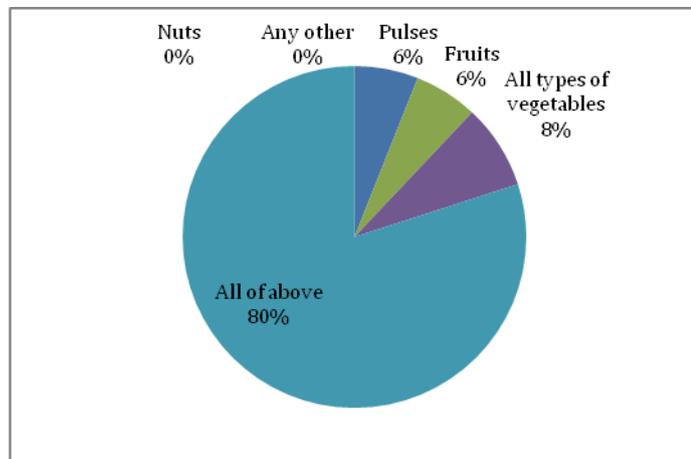


Table 13 shows that food items like spices, heavy pulses, cereals, eggs and nuts should be avoided at the time of introducing weaning food to the child.

Table 14- Distribution of subject on the basis of knowledge regarding diet of lactating mother



According to the data in Table 14, it can be said the 80% women's know the type of diet intake required at the time of lactation.

Table 15- Distribution of subject on the basis of knowledge regarding breastfeeding of child by mother suffering from diarrhea

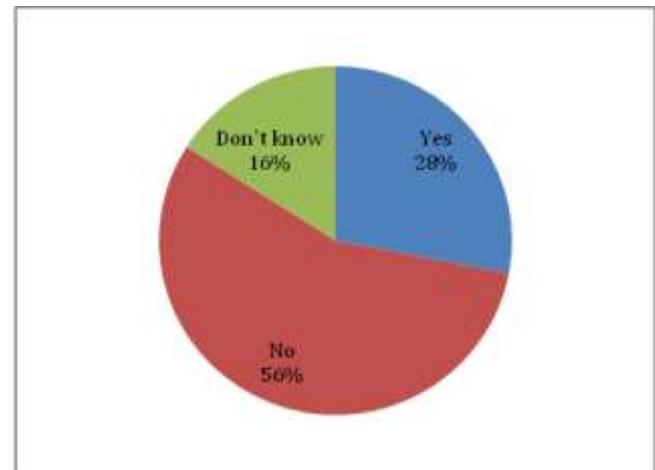


Table 15 shows that maximum subjects say that breastfeeding should not be done mothers suffering from diarrhea. Whereas only 16% subjects were unaware about the avoidance of feeding at the time of diarrhea

CONCLUSIONS

The above study was conducted to assess the knowledge and attitude of rural and urban pregnant and lactating mothers on breastfeeding and weaning practices. The information regarding appropriate breastfeeding practices in the initial six months and weaning practices, type of diet infant and mother consume, initiation & time interval between every breastfeed, importance of colostrum, exclusive breastfeeding etc were taken. After analysis of the data obtained, it can be analyzed that 100 % mother have knowledge about importance of breastfeeding. Women's of rural and urban area accepted that a mother should exclusively breastfeed the child for first six months. 34% of the mothers also said about the advantages of breastfeeding. When question was asked about colostrum and its importance, then almost 80% of the women's & their family had knowledge while 20% were unaware. Nutrition education was also provided to the pregnant & lactating mothers and their families.

REFERENCES

1. Bohler, E. and B. Ingstad 1996. The struggle of weaning: factors determining breastfeeding duration in East Bhutan. *Soc. Sci. Med.* 43:1805–1815.
2. Cameron, S.L., A-L. M. Heath and R.W. Taylor 2012. Health care professionals' and mothers' knowledge of, attitudes to and experiences with, Baby-Led Weaning: a content analysis study. *BMJ Open* (2):e001542.doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2012001542.
3. Dandekar, R.H., M. Shafee and R. Kumar 2014. Breastfeeding and weaning practices among literate mothers: a community based study in rural area of Perambalur taluk, Tamil Nadu. *The Health Agenda* 2(1):15-21.
4. Gupta R.K., R. Gupta and S. Mahajan 2010. Etiological factors of malnutrition among infants of migrant labor population. *Indian J. of Maternal and Child Health* 12 (2): 1-10.
5. Subba D, S. Bhattarai and R. Roy (2014). Knowledge among mothers regarding weaning practice of Jhangad community of Jhorahat V.D.C, Nepal. *Our Nature* 12 (1),54-59.
6. Sabu S Padmadas Inge Hutter Frans Willekens *Int J Epidemiol* (2002) 31 (4): 855-863.
7. Wadgave, H.V., D.P. Pore and G.M. Jatti (2012). Prevalence of high risk under-fives in urban area. *Indian J. of Maternal and Child Health* 14 (2):1-7.