

**ORIGINAL RESEARCH****To investigate breast feeding routines, issues, and variables that impact postnatal mothers****Dr. Narinder Singh<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Priyanka Sharma<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Vandana Katoch<sup>3</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Aim:** The purpose of this research is to investigate breast feeding routines, issues, and variables that impact postnatal mothers.

**Material and methods:** One thousand postnatal mothers in the age range of less than one year and of both sexes participated in the research. Excluded from participation in the interview were women who were hesitant to offer their agreement for the survey, as well as infants who suffered from mental problems or chronic illnesses. A questionnaire with a semi-structured format and a total of 32 items was developed. The research looked at information on exclusive breastfeeding, early commencement of breastfeeding, and popular techniques of babies feeding habits.

**Results:** 63% of infants received exclusive breast-feeding. 61% of the infants received breast milk on demand basis and 39% thought that breastfeeding should be given at scheduled time. Majority (74%) cases have an opinion that exclusive breastfeeding should be continued up to 6 months of age. 39% of the cases initiated breastfeeding within 1 hour of delivery, 30% after 4 hours and 12% on the 1<sup>st</sup> day. Majority of mothers (88%) fed their children with colostrums. It was shown that 76% of the mothers who were breastfeeding did not believe in providing pre-lacteal meals to their babies. Honey was the primary pre-lacteal diet utilized by 14% of women, followed by cow's milk.

**Conclusion:** It is generally agreed that breast milk is the best meal option for newborns, and it has been noted that breastfeeding is practiced throughout in the research region. There is not a lot of evidence to suggest that the level of education of women has an influence on breastfeeding behaviors. Breastfeeding is an important activity that has a tremendous impact on both the mother and the newborn.

**Keywords:** Breastfeeding, Issues, Postnatal mothers

**Introduction**

Breast milk is the first natural food that a newborn consumes. It supplies an infant with all of the energy and essential nutrients that they need for the first six months of their life, half of the nutritive requirement for the next six months, and thereon one-third of the requirement until they are two years old. This ensures that the infant's body is able to grow and develop in a healthy manner.<sup>1-3</sup> The term "Exclusive Breastfeeding" (EBF) refers to the practice of providing the infant with nothing other than breast milk during the first six months of his or her existence.<sup>3</sup> The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that all newborns get their first six months of nutrition solely from breastfeeding.<sup>4</sup> In addition to supplying nourishment, energy, and sufficient sensory and cognitive development, breast-feeding also protects the kid against a variety of infectious illnesses as well as

chronic conditions such as obesity, type 1/2 diabetes, leukemia, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).<sup>5</sup> It is estimated by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) that if mothers exclusively breastfeed their infants for the first six months of their child's life, the mortality rate for children under the age of five in poor countries may be reduced by 13%.<sup>6</sup> By improving breastfeeding techniques, there is the potential to save 15,000 of India's 24,000,000 annual infant fatalities.<sup>2,7</sup>

In addition to the advantages for the infant, nursing mothers have a significantly reduced risk of postpartum hemorrhage, ovarian and breast cancer, retained gestational weight gain, type 2 diabetes, myocardial infarction, and a variety of metabolic syndromes. nursing mothers also have a lower chance of developing metabolic syndromes.<sup>1,5,7,8</sup> According to the NHFS - 4 study (which was conducted in 2015-2016), however, only 54.9% of newborns in India and 45.5% of babies in Puducherry are exclusively breast-fed.<sup>9</sup> The cultural, social, and religious aspects that are widespread in our nation, such as the practice of extra lacteal feeding and the usage of foods so soon after such as sugar water or honey, all have a detrimental influence on the feeding practices that are used.<sup>10-12</sup> It has been suggested that inadequate eating habits and socio-demographic features are the primary reasons why underdeveloped nations have such poor health results.<sup>10-12</sup> There are a number of organizations located in different parts of the globe that are dedicated to advancing the cause of breastfeeding. Breast-Feeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) was established in 1991 with the purpose of protecting, promoting, and providing support for breastfeeding.<sup>12</sup> By evaluating the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of nursing mothers with respect to the feeding of their children, it is possible to get a general understanding of the aspects of the situation that need improvement, and as a result, specific intervention methods may be developed to address these issues.

### Material and methods

This was a hospital-based cross-sectional research that took place in the Outpatient Department (OPD), and it was done with the agreement of the Institutional Ethics Committee. Convenience sampling was used to choose 1000 postnatal mothers who were receiving care at OPD for inclusion in this research. One hundred postnatal mothers in the age range of less than one year and of both sexes participated in the research. Excluded from participation in the interview were women who were hesitant to offer their agreement for the survey, as well as infants who suffered from mental problems or chronic illnesses. A questionnaire with a semi-structured format and a total of 32 items was developed. The research looked at information on exclusive breastfeeding, early commencement of breastfeeding, and popular techniques of babies feeding habits.

### Statistical analysis

The data was analysed using SPSS 24.0 to derive percentages, proportions and chi-square tests.

### Results

At the current research, which was conducted out at a District hospital, a total of one hundred lactating mothers with infants less than one year old participated. Seventy-seven percent of the mothers who were investigated belonged to the age bracket of 20-30 years.

**Table 1: Distribution of mother age**

Age of mothers (years)	Number	%
below 20	200	20
20-30	770	77
Above 30	30	3

The majority of those who participated in the research had completed at least one level of secondary education, with elementary school graduates coming in second place. The majority of the people in the research has completed at least secondary education, making up 90 percent of the total. Only 10% of mothers who were breastfeeding had any level of education. Only nine percent of the cases fall into the BPL and poor categories. In addition to this, 77% of the mothers are classified as having a high or upper middle class socioeconomic position. Only 39% of the people who participated in the study were from rural areas, while 61% came from urban areas.

**Table 2: Distribution of cases according to exclusive breastfeeding**

Exclusive breast feeding	Frequency	%
No	370	37
Yes	630	63

63% of infants received exclusive breast-feeding.

**Table 3: Distribution of cases according to type of feeding**

Type of feeding	Frequency	%
On demand	610	61
Scheduled	390	39

61% of the infants received breast milk on demand basis and 39% thought that breastfeeding should be given at scheduled time.

**Table 4: Distribution of cases on opinion on time of exclusive breastfeeding**

Time (in months)	Frequency	%
3	3	3
4	4	4
5	6	6
6	74	74
>6	13	13

Majority (74%) cases have an opinion that exclusive breastfeeding should be continued up to 6 months of age.

**Table 5: Distribution of cases on time of initiation of breastfeeding**

Time (in hours)	Frequency	%
1	39	39
4	30	30
24	12	12
48	11	11
72	4	4
>72	4	4

39% of the cases initiated breastfeeding within 1 hour of delivery, 30% after 4 hours and 12% on the 1<sup>st</sup> day.

**Table 6: Distribution showing whether mothers fed colostrum or not**

Colostrum feeding	Frequency	%
No	12	12
Yes	88	88

Majority of mothers (88%) fed their children with colostrums.

**Table 7: Distribution of cases based on type of pre-lacteal feeds**

Type	Frequency	%
No prelacteal feeds	76	76
Cow milk	4	4
Honey	14	14
Sugar water	2	2
Water	4	4

It was shown that 76% of the mothers who were breastfeeding did not believe in providing pre-lacteal meals to their babies. Honey was the primary pre-lacteal diet utilized by 14% of women, followed by cow's milk. The proportion of mothers who provided pre-lacteal feed was considerably higher among rural mothers compared to their counterparts who lived in urban areas. The majority of the instances (64% of them) began weaning techniques at six months of age, while 24% did so at one year of age. There is not much of a correlation between socioeconomic position and the manner in which weaning is performed.

**Table 8: Distribution of cases showing time of initiation of weaning**

Time (in months)	Frequency	%
<5	3	3
5	9	9
6	64	64
12	24	24

Lactation failure and unsatisfactory growth of baby were the main reasons for early weaning.

### Discussion

According to the findings of our research, the majority of mothers (68%) start breastfeeding their children between the ages of one and four hours. There is not much of a correlation between a person's literacy level and the age at which they begin nursing. It was not possible to find evidence of a significant relationship between socioeconomic class and the beginning of breastfeeding ( $p>0.05$ ). According to the findings of a research that MA Ansari and colleagues carried out in Aligarh, the majority of mothers began nursing their babies between 0.5 and 5 hours after delivery. Within the first twenty-four hours after giving birth, less than half of all mothers who were interviewed for the study by Alok Kumar and colleagues were able to start breastfeeding their babies. Literacy level was not a significant factor in whether or not mothers started breastfeeding, according to research that was carried out in Aligarh and published by Ansari MA et al.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, an early start was seen among mothers with a somewhat higher level of education. In their investigation, Alok Kumar and colleagues came to the same conclusions.<sup>11</sup>

It was determined in a research that was carried out in Faizabad by Tiwari V and his colleagues that the influence of socio-economic level on the beginning of breastfeeding could not be demonstrated to be significant ( $p<0.01$ ).<sup>12</sup>

According to the findings of our research, an overwhelming majority of mothers (88%) gave their infants colostrum, and more than 100% of women who had completed their educations also fed their children colostrum. Honey (14%) was shown to be the most pre-lacteal diet, followed by cow's milk (4%). In a study that was carried out in Faizabad by Tiwari V et al., the researchers found that the majority of mothers did not throw away colostrum and instead gave it to their newborn babies. In addition, the findings of the research revealed that an increase in maternal literacy may be useful in starting breastfeeding as early as feasible and in the practice of colostrum feeding by the mothers themselves.<sup>12</sup>

In their research, Mandal PK et al. came to the conclusion that pre-lacteal meals were administered to 71.7% of the babies. Honey made up the largest portion of pre-lacteal feedings (25 percent), followed by other substances like water (18 percent), etc.<sup>13</sup>

According to the findings of our research, the percentage of mothers who breastfed their babies exclusively was 88%. According to the findings of our research, 27% of mothers supplemented their children's diets with other foods in addition to nursing. In a research that was carried out in rural Karnataka by H.B. Mallikarjun et al., it was found that 25.6% of mothers had turned to top feeding for the 'better development of the kid' within the age range of 5-6 months.<sup>14</sup>

According to research conducted by Shiva F. and colleagues, the number of babies who were being exclusively breastfed dropped from around 90% at one month to approximately 83% at six months. According to NFHS-3, the percentage of children under the age of six months who are exclusively breastfed is just 46.4%.<sup>15</sup> According to the findings of our research, the majority of the babies that we examined had already begun weaning by the age of six months (64%). Only nine percent of the

mothers in our sample began weaning their children before the recommended age. Of those nine percent, five mothers (55.55 percent) gave inadequate growth of the child as the reason for early weaning, followed by failure of lactation (44.45 percent).

According to the findings of a research carried out by Shiva F et al., the majority of the babies tested had already begun the process of weaning by the time they were three months old.<sup>15</sup> It was found in a research conducted in rural West Bengal by Mandal PK and colleagues that "lactation failure" was the most prevalent cause (72%) for complementary feeding to be initiated by the mothers. This was followed by "unsatisfactory growth of the child," "Mothers illness," etc.

### Conclusion

It is generally agreed that breast milk is the best meal option for newborns, and it has been noted that breastfeeding is practiced throughout in the research region. There is not a lot of evidence to suggest that the level of education of women has an influence on breastfeeding behaviors. Breastfeeding is an important activity that has a tremendous impact on both the mother and the newborn.

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