

## Cross-Sectional Study on Knowledge and Practices Related to Infant & Young Child Feeding among Mothers Reporting to RHTC of ANMMCH, Gaya

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### Abstract

Optimal infant feeding practices are essential to ensure survival and growth of children. The present descriptive study was conducted to find the knowledge and practices of infant & young child feeding among mothers attending RHTC of ANMMCH, Gaya. It was seen that 97.3% children were breastfed, early initiation was seen in 7.6% cases, 34.4% were exclusively breastfed, 45.9% were given complementary foods timely and 11.6% with diversified diets. Infant feeding practices need much improvement

**Keywords:** Infant Feeding, Gaya, Rural Mothers, Breastfeeding, Complementary Feeding

### Introduction

It has been found that optimal infant and young child feeding is the most effective single intervention to improve child health. It prevents malnutrition, reduces neonatal, infant and child mortality and reduces the risk of infectious diseases like diarrhoea and pneumonia substantially [1]. Breastfeeding may also enhance the effect of some vaccines. Improvements of complementary feeding could substantially reduce stunting and related burden of disease. Thus, effective interventions to improve infant and young child feeding will have positive effects on child morbidity and mortality, as well as adult human capital [2].

It has been found by various researchers that infant feeding practices in India are far from ideal and have impact on child survival and morbidity.

Infant feeding has been important research area and has been assessed in various studies including NFHS surveys [3]. However, independent and repeated studies are needed to monitor the trends and plan for effective measures. Hence, this study was conducted to find the situation in rural area of Gaya.

**Aims & Objectives-**The present study was conducted to assess the knowledge and practices of infant & young child feeding among mothers attending RHTC of ANMMCH, Gaya.

### Materials and Methods

The present study was cross-sectional descriptive in nature conducted between November 2015 to January 2016. Study subjects included children between six months to two years of age reporting to RHTC of ANMMCH, Gaya. These children

visited the center for immunization, seeing a doctor or accompanied their parents or siblings. Children not belonging to area of RHTC and those who were seriously ill were excluded from the study.

In the study conducted by Premata *et al* (2014) [4], it was observed that 40% mothers were practicing exclusive breastfeeding. Using 10% absolute precision and non-response rate of 10%, the sample size was calculated as below-

Sample size =  $(Z^2 \times p \times q / d^2) \times 1.1 = 105$ . A total of 105 mothers participated in this study.

The data collection was done by personal interview using semi-structured pre-tested questions containing open and closed ended questions. Detailed information was collected regarding knowledge of participants related to infant feeding as well as socio-demographic profile of and practices being followed. This was followed by group counselling of mothers regarding infant feeding practices. Informed consent was obtained from all the respondents.

The data was coded and entered in Microsoft Excel 2007, cleaned and analyzed by using SPSS version 16.0. Categorical variables were summarized as percentage while continuous variables were presented as Mean  $\pm$  SD.

### Results and Discussion

The present cross-sectional study included 105 mothers of children coming to RHTC of ANMMCH, Gaya. Mean age of respondents was  $23.7 \pm 3.9$  years. 87.1% mothers were Hindu, 23.9% belonged to nuclear family, 43.7% were BPL, 61.3% were illiterate and 93.2% were housewives. Socio-demographic profile of respondents is shown in table-1.

**Table 1:** showing socio-demographic profile of respondents (n=105)

Characteristics	Groups	No.	(%)
Age	Mean age= 23.7 ± 3.9 years		
Religion	Hindu	91	87.1
	Muslim	14	12.9
Type of family	Nuclear	25	23.9
	Joint	80	76.1
SES	APL	62	59.2
	BPL	46	43.7
Education	Illiterate	64	61.3
	Literate	31	29.8
	Primary	2	2.3
	Secondary and above	7	6.6
Occupation	Housewife	98	93.2
	Working	7	6.8

It was observed that 64.8% mothers were aware that breastfeeding should be on demand. Premlata *et al.* [4] also found it to be 57%. Beneficial effects of colostrums were known to 74.3% mothers as also was seen by Premlata *et al.* [4] and Choudhary *et al.*[5] as 86%. Period of exclusive breastfeeding was known to 37.1% mothers. Premlata *et al.* [4] found it to be 33.9% and Choudhary *et al.* [5] as 86%. However, age up to which breastfeeding is to be continued was known to only 29.5% mothers as also observed by Premlata *et al.* [4] and Choudhary *et al.* [5] as 62.1%.

In the present study, it was observed that 97.3% children were breastfed which indicates good practice. Breastfeeding has been integral part of culture in this part of the country. Shaili *et al.* [6] found this rate to be 93.6% in Uttarakhand. This finding is also in line with NFHS-3 [3].

In our study, early initiation was seen in only 7.6% mothers. This is a very poor indicator. NFHS-3 for Bihar has also found it to be 4% [3]. Kumar *et al.* [7] found it to be 51.3% in another part of Bihar. This situation is in the background of the fact that institutional delivery rate has improved

considerably and emphasizes about strengthening IYCF component. However, Shaili *et al.* [6] found it to be 21%. Premlata *et al.* [4] found that 37.6% children were put to breast within 2 hours of birth.

Colostrum feeding was observed in 69.3% children. Kumar *et al.* [7] found it to be 81.3%. Shaili *et al.* [6] found it to be 87% as also by Parmar *et al.* [8] and Jha *et al.* [9]. Prolactal feeds were observed in 35.4% cases which were mainly due to customary practices. Shaili *et al.* [6] found it to be 66.03%.

Exclusive breastfeeding for six months was observed in only 34.4% children. NFHS-3 found that only 27.9% children were exclusively breastfed [3]. Shaili *et al.* [6] observed that only 5.13% children were breastfed exclusively where majority had received water as supplementary liquid.

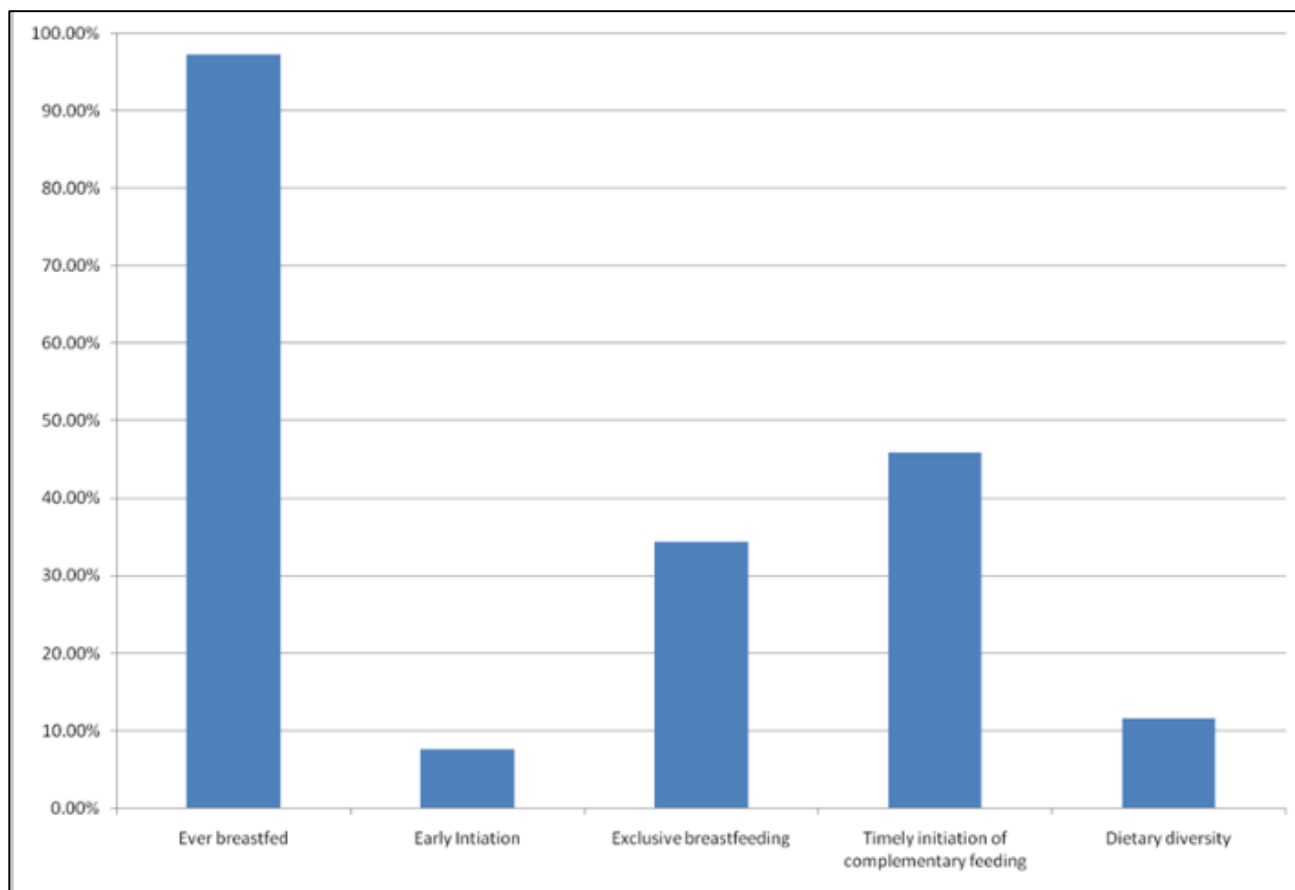
Timely initiation of complementary feeding was observed in 45.9% children. In contrast, NFHS-3 found that complementary feeding was started timely in 57.3% children [3]. Dietary diversity was seen in only 11.6% children which is very less and is in line with the findings of NFHS-3 [3].

**Table 2:** showing infant & young child feeding practices (n=105)

Characteristics	Groups	No.	(%)
Ever breastfed	Yes	102	97.3
	No	3	2.7
Early Initiation	Yes	8	7.6
	No	97	92.4
Exclusive breastfeeding	Yes	36	34.4
	No	69	65.6
Timely initiation of complementary feeding	Yes	48	45.9
	No	57	54.1
Dietary diversity	Yes	12	11.6
	No	93	88.4

It is apparent from the above discussion that though breastfeeding is integral to the culture in this area, there are misbeliefs which lead to improper practices. NFHS surveys across different years have shown trends which is not

encouraging and there is need for more reinforcement of IYCF related issues, especially in the background of remarkably improved institutional delivery rates.



**Fig 1: Showing infant feeding practices (n-1050)**

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