



## EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING PRACTICES OF WORKING LACTATING MOTHERS: A KAP STUDY

### Nutritional Science

**M. Ahong**

Department of Food, Nutrition & Dietetics, Assam downtown University, Assam, 781026

**C. Baruah\***

Department of Food, Nutrition & Dietetics, Assam downtown University, Assam, 781026  
\*Corresponding Author

### ABSTRACT

World Health Organization in 2001 declares that exclusive breast feeding (EBF) for 6 months is best for overall growth and development of babies. But with increase in women empowerment and involvement of women in workforce, exclusive breast feeding becomes a challenge for lactating mothers due to lack of feeding facility in workplace. The present study revealed that 60.00% of the mothers finds work is the biggest hindrance in EBF due to lack of feeding facilities. Study also revealed that 50.00%, 52.50% and 45.00% have poor knowledge, attitude and practice about EBF which was improved drastically after providing nutrition education.

### KEYWORDS

Exclusive breastfeeding, lactation, KAP, nutrition education

### INTRODUCTION

Mother's milk is considered to be the best milk for infants. It is a perfect mixture of all the essential nutrients required during the first six months of life, including fat, carbohydrates, protein, vitamins, minerals and water (WHO, 2018). IgA present in mother's breast milk protects the nose, throat, ears, and digestive tract of the infant and reduces the intensity of respiratory tract infections, gastrointestinal infections, bacterial meningitis and urinary tract infection (Fisk et al., 2011). Therefore, World Health Organization (WHO) sturdily recommends exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) for the first 6 months of life and continued till 2 years along with appropriate complementary foods (WHO, 2018).

EBF means feeding infants with breast milk only with no addition of other foods/drinks, as well as water. EBF has reduced infant deaths in developing countries by lowering the risk of diarrhea and infectious diseases (WHO, 2018). Besides, breastfeeding mothers are less likely to suffer from hypertension, breast cancer and postpartum migraine in later life (Lupton et al., 2013). Despite of many advantages of exclusive breastfeeding for the infant as well as the mother, the District Level Household Survey-3 (DLHS-3) reveals the percentage of exclusively breastfed varies from 63% for <2 months old infants to 49% under 3 months and 32% under 5 months old (Kishore, 2014).

Many factors are considered to be negatively related to exclusive breast feeding practices including mother's poor nutritional knowledge and lack of confidence, difficulty in managing common problems like insufficient breast milk, breast enlargement, etc., and improper infant feeding practices (Kannaiah et al., 2019). Beside all these factors, with increasing female literacy rate to 65.46% and growing rate of women in the labour force, EBF become a challenge to the working mothers. It was estimated that about 50% of working women returned to work within one year of delivery and most workplaces does not provide opportunity for mothers to breastfeed (Labour bureau, 2013). Keeping in mind the growing rate of women workforce in India the present study was conducted to assess the KAP (Knowledge, Attitude and Practices) of working women on breastfeeding practices in Manipur, India.

### METHODOLOGY

#### Selection of sample

The present study was a cross sectional study, carried out in Imphal, Manipur. A total number of one hundred twenty (n=100) lactating mothers working under private, government and semi government sectors were purposively selected for this study based on their willingness to participate. Demographic profile of the participants was obtained by using a standardized pretested questionnaire consisting of relevant questions.

#### Assessment of nutritional status

The nutritional status of working breastfeed mothers were assessed in terms of height, weight, BMI and dietary intake (Food Frequency questionnaire). Height and weight of the participants were taken by the method stated by Jellifee (1966) with the help of anthropometric rod and weighing scale. Body mass index (BMI) was calculated by

dividing weight in kg by height in meter square and expressed in units of  $\text{kg/m}^2$ . The results were categorized according to WHO classification.

#### Assessing KAP of working breastfeed mothers

A three-point KAP scale was adopted as suggested by FAO to analyze the breastfeeding Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of working mothers (FAO, 2014). The scale was organized into three sections breastfeeding knowledge, attitude and practices with 10 sets of statements under each. For evaluation a score between 0 and 10 was used with a correct answer considered as 1 while an incorrect answer or a "do not know" was regarded as 0. The score was then converted to its equivalent on a basis of 10 = 100. A score less than 50 was considered as poor, 50 to 75 as median (average) and more than 75 as good breastfeeding KAP. The KAP scores were collected before and after providing nutrition education on breastfeeding and retention of KAP was calculated.

#### Statistical analysis

All the collected data were statistically analyzed using Microsoft Excel Sheet 2013.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of eighty (80) lactating working mothers were surveyed from different places of Imphal viz., Uripok, Tera, Thangmeiband, and Sagolband. The demographic results (Fig 1.) revealed that 75% of the respondents belong to the age group of 25-35 years. Similar studies were also reported by Randhawa et al., 2021 as it is considered as the most fertile period of women life. Present study also showed that all the mothers had completed their high school degree. Educational status of a mother plays a key role in ensuring proper breastfeeding practices. Studies reveal that mother with higher education tends to early initiation of breastfeeding compared to uneducated mothers who showed worst breastfeeding practices (Neves et al., 2021). The job profile of the respondents depicts that more than half of the respondents were involved in private and semi-government sector. Anbarasi et al., 2019 stated that stress level was more in non-government employees because of high work load and less job security which may affect EBF practices and may also lead to depression and heart attacks, stroke, ulcers etc. (Bruce & Robert, 2006). 75.00% of the respondents living in a nuclear family which clearly indicates the influence of modernization. Regarding the factors affecting EBF 60.00% mothers said their job as prime factor followed by cultural practices (27.50%). Hasan et al. (2020) also reported that EBF is difficult for working mothers due to excess work pressure, inadequate breastfeeding facilities at work etc. Another study conducted by Wanjohi et al. (2016) emphasized the role of cultural practices as a hindrance in EBF.

#### Nutritional status of the respondents

The nutritional status of the working lactating mothers (Fig 2.) was calculated on the basis of their BMI. Though 53.75% of the lactating working mothers have normal BMI but 23.75% were still underweight, which is a matter of concern. Study conducted by Haillassie et al. 2013 also revealed similar findings where 31% of the

lactating mothers were underweight.

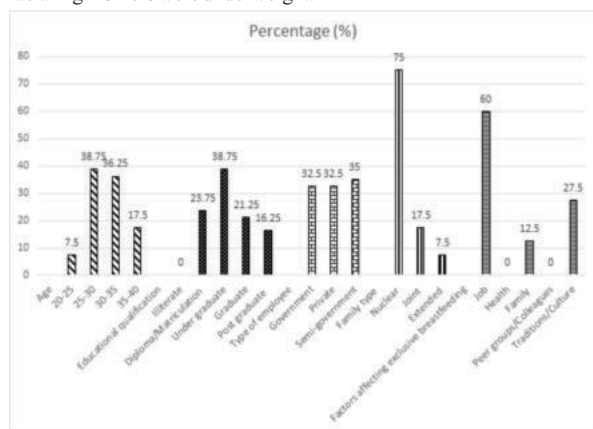


Fig 1. Percentage distribution of the respondents according to demographic parameters

Nutritional knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) of the respondents. The nutritional knowledge, attitude and practices on EBF of the working breastfeeding mothers was presented in Table 1. It was

Table 1. Percentage distribution of the respondents according to breastfeeding knowledge, attitude and practice pre and post nutrition education program (NEP)

Knowledge	Initial	After NEP	Post 15 days of NEP	Post 30 days of NEP	Retention of good knowledge post 15 days of NEP	Retention of good knowledge post 30 days of NEP
Poor (<50)	40 (50.00%)	08 (10.00%)	9 (11.25%)	10 (12.50%)	95.24%	85.71%
Average (50-75)	12 (15.00%)	9 (11.25%)	11 (13.75%)	16 (20.00%)		
Good (>75)	28 (35.00%)	63 (78.75%)	60 (75.00%)	54 (67.50%)		
Attitude	Initial	After NEP	Post 15 days of NEP	Post 30 days of NEP	Retention of good Attitude post 15 days of NEP	Retention of good Attitude post 30 days of NEP
Poor (<50)	42 (52.50%)	05 (6.25%)	8 (10.00%)	15 (18.75%)	92.31%	84.62%
Average (50-75)	19 (23.75%)	10 (12.50%)	12 (15.00%)	10 (12.50%)		
Good (>75)	19 (23.75%)	65 (81.25%)	60 (75.00%)	55 (68.75%)		
Practice	Initial	After NEP	Post 15 days of NEP	Post 30 days of NEP	Retention of good Practices post 15 days of NEP	Retention of good Practices post 30 days of NEP
Poor (<50)	36 (45.00%)	4 (5.00%)	07 (8.75%)	11 (13.75%)	88.06%	80.60%
Average (50-75)	38 (47.50%)	9 (11.25%)	14 (17.50%)	15 (18.75%)		
Good (>75)	6 (7.50%)	67 (83.75%)	59 (73.75%)	54 (67.50%)		

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the present study revealed that EBF is still a challenge for working mothers especially due to lack of breast feeding facilities in work places. A properly planned nutrition education program showed positive impact thus helps in improving and adopting better breast feeding practices which was successfully retained till 1 month and may be for rest of their lives.

**Acknowledgement**

The authors would like to thank Assam down town University and the department of Food, Nutrition and Dietetics to provide all the necessary facilities to conduct the above study.

**REFERENCES**

- Anbarasi, R., Nambisan, J.P., & Zinna, A.A. (2019). Job Satisfaction and Perceived Stress among Government and Private Sector Employees. *IAHRW International Journal of Social Sciences Review*, 7, 228-233.
- Bruce, M. and Robert, S. (2006). Stress and Your Health. *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*, 91(2).
- Fisk, C.M., Crozier, S.R., Inskip, H.M., Godfrey, K.M., Cooper, C., Roberts, G.C., et al. (2011). Breastfeeding and reported morbidity during infancy: findings from the Southampton Women's Survey. *Maternal and Child Nutrition*, 7(1), 61-70.
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (2014). Guidelines for assessing nutrition related KAP, pp-78, Rome, Italy.
- Haileslassie, K., Mulugeta, A. & Girma, M. (2013). Feeding practices, nutritional status and associated factors of lactating women in Samre Woreda, South Eastern Zone of Tigray, Ethiopia. *Nutr J*, 12, 28.
- Hasan, A.M.R., Smith, G., Selim, M.A. et al. (2020). Work and breast milk feeding: a qualitative exploration of the experience of lactating mothers working in ready-made garments factories in urban Bangladesh. *Int Breastfeed J*, 15, 93.
- Jelliffe, D.B. (1966). *The Assessment of the Nutritional Status of the Community*. WHO Monograph Series No. 56, WHO, Geneva.
- Kannaiah, B., Radha Mohan, M., Snigdha, Sharada. (2019) Impact of Lactation Counseling To Mothers on Breast Feeding Practices. *IAIM*, 6(2), 13-22.
- Kishore, J. (2014). *National Health Programmes of India*. 11th ed. Century Publications, New Delhi, pp. 119-21.
- Labour bureau, ministry of labour and employment. (2013). *Statistical profile on women labour*, pp-103.
- Lupton, S.J., Chiu, C.L., Lujic, S., Hennessy, A., Lind, J.M. (2013). Association between parity and breastfeeding with maternal high blood pressure. *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 208(6), 454 e1-7.

observed that knowledge, attitude and practice of the mothers on EBF, was increased to 78.75%, 81.25% and 83.75% respectively after the successful implementation of nutrition education program (NEP). Though the KAP scores post 30 days decreased to 67.50%, 68.75%, 67.50% respectively but the percentage of retention of KAP among the respondents stands at 85.71%, 84.62% and 80.60% respectively post 30 days. It can be concluded that the nutrition education program was effective in improving the knowledge attitude and practices of the respondents. Similar findings were also reported by Talib et al., 2007 which revealed increase in KAP of respondents after implementation of NEP.

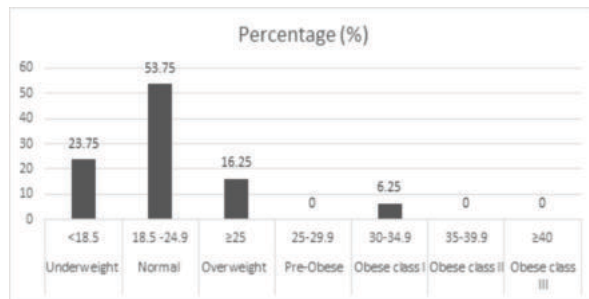


Fig 2. Body Mass Index (BMI) of the respondents

- Neves, P.A.R., Barros, A.J.D., Gatica-Domínguez, G. et al. (2021). Maternal education and equity in breastfeeding: trends and patterns in 81 low- and middle-income countries between 2000 and 2019. *Int J Equity Health*, 20.
- Randhawa, A., Chaudhary, N., Gill, B.S., Singh, A., Garg, V., Balgir, R.S. (2019). A population-based cross-sectional study to determine the practices of breastfeeding among the lactating mothers of Patiala city. *J Family Med Prim Care*, 8, 3207-13.
- Talib, R., Azdie, W. & Mohd. I. (2007). The effectiveness of nutrition education programme for primary school children. *Malaysian journal of nutrition*, 13, 45-54.
- Wanjohi, M., Griffiths, P., Wekesah, F. et al. (2016). Sociocultural factors influencing breastfeeding practices in two slums in Nairobi, Kenya. *Int Breastfeed J*, 12, 5.
- World Health Organization (2018). WHO global data Bank on infant and young child feeding. WHO nutrition for health and development, Available at: <http://www.who.int/nutrition/databases/infantfeeding/en> (accessed 24 Aug st, 2022).