

# Chapter-13

## KNOWLEDGE ATTITUDE AND PRACTICES (KAP) OF MOTHERS WITH CHILDREN LESS THAN TWENTY-FOUR MONTHS REGARDING EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING AND COMPLIMENTARY FEEDING IN URBAN POPULATION OF SABARKANTHA DISTRICT, GUJARAT

<sup>1</sup>Janmejaya Meher

<sup>1</sup>Student, IIHMR University

<sup>2</sup>Dr. Anoop Khanna

<sup>2</sup>Professor, IIHMR University

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Nutrition significantly contributes to the typical growth and development of a child. The timeframe spanning from birth to two years is commonly acknowledged as a "critical window" crucial for promoting ideal growth, health, and behavioral development. After the age of two, malnutrition can result in permanent physical and psychological damage. In instances where a child experiences severe consequences due to malnutrition, accountability lies with the mother, the family, and the community. Addressing factors such as pre-lacteal feeding, emphasizing the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding, timely introduction of complementary feeding, and adopting proper dietary practices becomes essential [3].

Currently, malnutrition and diet rank as the primary risk factors contributing significantly to the global burden of disease. India faces challenges with diseases marked by prevalent nutritional deficiencies, with Protein Energy Malnutrition (PEM) emerging as a noteworthy nutritional and health concern. PEM leads to stunted growth and heightened mortality rates among children aged 12 to 24 months, accounting for a substantial 30% of deaths among children under five. Notably, at least 12 out of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals encompass indicators highly pertinent to nutrition, emphasizing nutrition's central role in sustainable development [1,2].

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

To evaluate the knowledge, attitude, and practices of mothers with children under twenty-four months concerning exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding in the urban population of Sabarkantha District, Gujarat.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study employed a Cross-Sectional Descriptive design and was conducted in the urban areas of Sabarkantha district, Gujarat, specifically in Himmatnagar, Prantij, Idar, Vadali, and Khedbrahma. The duration of the study spanned three months, from February 5th to May 5th, 2018, with a sample size of 100 participants. Purposive sampling

was utilized to select mothers residing in the urban areas of Sabarkantha District, Gujarat, who had children under the age of 24 months.

Data collection was carried out through a Semi-Structured questionnaire, and the analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel 2016. The questionnaire included sections on demographic information, such as age, educational status, and occupation, as well as segments assessing knowledge, attitude, and practices related to breastfeeding. The study population consisted of mothers with children less than twenty-four months residing in the urban areas of Sabarkantha District, Gujarat.

## **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

A mother's understanding of breastfeeding held paramount importance for the child's health. The significance of breastfeeding in providing essential nutrition to infants, preventing morbidity and mortality in early childhood, and mitigating the risk of chronic diseases was well-established. In this study, 50 percent of participants demonstrated accurate knowledge regarding the optimal time to initiate breastfeeding. However, only 39 percent exhibited appropriate knowledge about exclusive breastfeeding, in contrast to NFHS4 data for Sabarkantha's rural area, where 63.3 percent adhered to exclusive breastfeeding practices. The variation could have stemmed from a lack of awareness in slum populations regarding the recommended duration for exclusive breastfeeding.

Examining breastfeeding initiation practices, the data indicated that 65 percent of mothers-initiated breastfeeding within one hour. This contrasted with NFHS4 data for Sabarkantha's rural areas, where 47.8 percent of mothers with children under three initiated breastfeeding within the first hour. The disparity could be attributed to better health services and the presence of healthcare staff guiding urban mothers. Concerning the attitude of mothers toward the cost of nutritional food, 90 percent of respondents strongly agreed that nutritional foods were expensive.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study identified gaps in knowledge and practices related to breastfeeding and complementary feeding. Among the 100 mothers surveyed, only 50 percent had accurate knowledge that breastfeeding should commence within one hour of birth, and 39 percent were aware of the correct duration for exclusive breastfeeding. Regarding actual practices, only 41 percent of the 86 mothers who participated in the survey breastfed their babies for more than six months. The main reasons cited for discontinuing breastfeeding were work-related commitments and perceived insufficient milk supply. Additionally, 90 percent of the participants expressed the belief that nutritious foods are expensive. Consequently, there was a clear need to enhance the knowledge of the urban population regarding exclusive and complementary breastfeeding, which could be achieved through the guidance of healthcare staff.

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