



A STUDY OF IMPACT OF BREAST FEEDING AWARENESS INTERVENTION ON LACTATING MOTHERS IN SELECTED VILLAGES IN MULSHI BLOCK OF PUNE DISTRICT.

Dr. Bharati Chavan

**Associate Professor in Psychiatric Social Work,
Institute of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, Bambolim Goa.**

ABSTRACT:

Breastfeeding is recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a key measure to ensure the health of mothers and children. In 2002, WHO updated the breastfeeding guidelines and recommended "all infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life, and receive nutritionally adequate and safe complementary foods while breastfeeding continues for up to two years of age or beyond"

Need identification and assessment study was carried out for creating awareness and education about infant and child-feeding practices amongst mothers from villages in Mulshi block of Pune district. Intervention was done with the objective of educating and creating awareness about breast feeding practices amongst lactating mothers. The current paper tries to examine the impact of awareness programs conducted and to assess the level of improvement of knowledge, skills, attitude and practices of mothers regarding breast feeding and their current feeding practices.



KEY WORDS: *Breast feeding, lactating mother, infant, nutrition, awareness, intervention.*

1.INTRODUCTION:

Breastfeeding is one of the most important ways to improve the children health and a basic strategy in providing the child growth and survival. For years, the positive effects of breastfeeding on child development and growth as well as maternal health have been well documented. The global recommendation of World Health Organization (WHO) before 2001 was exclusive breastfeeding between 4 and 6 months after birth. In 2002 a systematic review on exclusive breastfeeding showed that infants who breastfed for 4 months had more morbidity and mortality than those with 6 months. Therefore the WHO recommended exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months after birth. Many studies have been done on exclusive breastfeeding that show that the exclusive breastfeeding is still far away from the recommendations of the WHO.

In India there are many programmes that provide food and nutrient supplements as well as health and nutrition education, including the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) of the Government of India and others run by various voluntary agencies. Most of these programmes attempt to monitor immunization, morbidity, mortality, growth, and other parameters of health.

Social Science Centre, Bharati Vidyapeeth University, Pune conducted an assessment study and identified the need for creating awareness and education about infant and child-feeding practices amongst mothers from villages in Mulshi block of Pune district. Intervention was done with the objective of educating and creating awareness about breast feeding practices amongst lactating mothers having children between the age group of 0 to 2 years. Accordingly a study was undertaken to examine the impact of awareness programmes conducted and to assess the level of improvement of knowledge, skills, attitude and practices of mothers regarding breast feeding and their current feeding practices.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the project are as follows;

- a) To create awareness among lactating mothers about the knowledge, skill and attitude about breast feeding and weaning practices
- b) To study the impact of awareness program amongst the lactating mothers in feeding practices

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF INTERVENTION

Feeding practices during infant age are of critical importance to growth and development of children. Breast feeding practices are influenced to a great extent by the socio-economic status, education, religion, knowledge, attitude and beliefs of mother about childcare.

Continuous efforts in awareness and education are required if behavior change in breast feeding is to be influenced. Positive effects can be achieved by sustained counseling on Breast feeding practices. It is only through sustained intervention, that one can influence the attitude, beliefs and practice of the target population.

4. STRATEGY OF INTERVENTION

Students of Social Science Centre, Bharati Vidyapeeth, Pune through field work activity implemented breast feeding awareness and education programme for lactating mothers.. The target population was lactating mothers having children between the agegroup of 0 to 2 years, located in selected villages of Mulshi block of Pune. These programmes were conducted at Pomgaon, Sambhave, Male, MulshiKhurd, Vand्रे, Bhambarde etc. on various occasions including International Breast Feeding Week.

METHODOLOGY USED:

The methods used for creating awareness were more of informal types

- Pictorial aids
- Films and Documentary
- Group discussion
- Experience sharing

5. SAMPLE SIZE

A study was conducted to understand the impact of breast feeding awareness and education programme. For this purpose a sample of 20 lactating mothers, having children in the age group of 0 to 2 years, was selected from four Gram Panchayats viz. Pomgaon, Vand्रे, MulshiKhurd and Sambhave.

Village wise distribution of respondents

Sr. No.	Village	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	MulshiKhurd	6	30
2	Pomgaon	5	25
3	Sambhave	5	25
4	Vandre	4	20
	Total	20	100

6.DATA COLLECTION

A structured interview schedule was designed consisting of 3 sections. Section one deals with the personal information of respondents, second section is related to knowledge level of respondent and third and last section is related to practices of respondents about breast feeding. Female investigators interviewed the respondents from above mentioned four Gram Panchayats. The data collected is processed and presented in tabular form for the analysis.

7. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**I] Profile of respondents****i) Age of respondents (lactating Mothers)****Age wise distribution of respondents (Lactating Mothers)**

Sr. No.	Age of respondent (Years)	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	21	1	5
2	24	6	30
3	25	6	30
4	26	4	20
5	27	1	5
6	30	2	10
	Total	20	100

Out of 20 total sample of respondents, 13 (65%) respondents are in the range of 21 years to 25 years. 20% respondents are of 26 years age and 2 respondents are of 30 years age.

ii) Number of children of respondents**No. Of Children of Respondents**

Sr. No.	No. of Children	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	1	5	25
2	2	11	55
3	3	3	15
4	4	1	5
	Total	20	100

Above table shows that 55% lactating mothers in sample have 2 children followed by 25% respondents with 1 children. 15% and 5% respondents have 3 children and 4 children respectively. This means 80% women are restricting their family to 2 children.

II] Knowledge about breastfeeding

i) Investigation of the time between delivering the baby and the breast feeding to the baby.

Time between delivering the baby and first breastfeeding

Sr. No.	Time between delivering the baby and first breastfeeding	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	Immediately	19	95
2	After 3-4 days	1	5
3	Never	0	0
	Total	20	100

In response, majority of lactating mothers (95%) stated that they immediately breast feed the baby after the delivery of baby. Only one respondent informed that she breastfed the baby after two days. No respondent answered negatively for this question.

ii) Similarly investigation was also made to find out whether colostrums is fed to the new born baby by their mothers.

Practice of feeding colostrums to baby after the delivery

Sr. No.	Feed Colostrums	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	Yes	19	95
2	No	1	5
	Total	20	100

Majority of lactating mothers (95%) responded that , they fed colostrums to new born child. This indicated that lactating women gained good level of knowledge about breast feeding practices.

iii) Following table shows the period of exclusive breast feeding by the lactating mothers

Period of exclusive breast feeding (months)

Sr. No.	Period of exclusive breast feeding (months)	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	3	2	10
2	4	1	05
3	5	6	30
4	6	4	20
5	8	1	05
6	9	5	25
7	Not applicable	1	05
	Total	20	100

Exclusive breast feeding is practiced for more than 5 months by 85% of the total respondents. 5% respondents do exclusive breast feeding for 4 months followed by 10% respondents for 3 months. One respondents could not answer the question as her child was very small (few days).

iv) Information was sought from mothers about the weaning practice from breast feeding to complementary food.

Period of Weaning Practice from breast feeding to complementary food

Sr. No.	Time (months)	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	3	2	10
2	4	1	5
3	5	5	25
4	6	6	30
5	9	2	10
6	Not applicable	4	20
	Total	20	100

Maximum i.e. 65% mothers informed that they start complementary food along with breast feeding after 5 months. 15% respondents start complementary food after less than 4 months. 20% mothers could not respond because their children are very small and have not attained the age of 3 months.

v) Information collected from respondents about kind of complementary food consumed by the infants along with the breast feeding.

Complimentary food along with breast feeding for infants

Sr. No.	Complimentary food along with breast feeding	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	No response (infant)	4	20
2	Cow Milk	10	50
3	Dal Rice (VaranBhat)	5	25
4	Rice Gruel (Pej)	9	10
5	Chapati	3	15
6	Fruits	1	5
7	Vegetables	1	5
8	Eggs	1	5

Quarter (25%) of the respondents stated that they give combination of rice and pulses to children along with the breast feeding. Cow milk is another option, stated 50% respondents. Rice Gruel (Pej) is consumed by 10% children and soft chapatti is fed to children by 15% respondents. Fruits, vegetables and eggs are also given to children along with the breast feeding, informed 5% respondents each.

vi) Nutritious food is also important for the lactating mothers, information was taken from lactating mothers about their food eating habits during the lactating period.

Food consumed by Lactating Mothers

Sr. No.	Lactating Mother's food	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	Rice	20	100
2	Vegetables (Green, local, Leafy, fruit vegetables, sprouted)	15	75
3	Chapati/ Bhakri (Bajari, Nachani)	9	45
4	Non vegetarian food (Chicken, Fish, Mutton)	9	45
5	Milk	5	25
6	Pulses	7	35
7	Laddoos (Methi, dry fruits)	2	10
8	All	3	15

All the respondents (100%) eat rice and majority of them (75%) consume all types of vegetables on regular basis during the lactating period. 45% lactating mothers eat non vegetarian food items like chicken, fish, mutton etc. Apart from rice 45% lactating mothers prefer to eat chapatti and/or bhakari of Bajari or Nachani. Pulse are consumed by 35% respondents and milk by 25% respondents. Few respondents eat laddoos of dry fruits and methi.

vii) Following table shows the length of time (months) of breast feeding along with the complimentary food.

length of time (months) of breast feeding along with the complimentary food

Sr. No.	Length of time (in months)	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	12	4	20
2	18	2	10
3	24	7	35
4	30	1	5
5	36	1	5
6	Not applicable (infants < 3 months)	5	25
	Total	20	100

Lactating mothers breast feed their children for more than 24 months along with the complimentary food, stated 45% respondents while 10% mothers breast feed their children for 18 months. 20% mothers found to be breast feeding their children for 12 months along with the complimentary food. 25% respondents could not answer the question as their children were below 3 months of age and they were only breast feeding the children.

viii) Knowledge of lactating mothers about relation of breast feeding with child health protection was investigated and has been presented in the following table.

Relation of Breast Feeding with Child Health Protection

Sr. No.	Relation of Breast Feeding with Child Health Protection	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	Don't Know	15	75
2	Prevents from diseases	2	10
3	Increases immune power	3	15
4	Total	20	100

Lactating mothers who were aware about the benefits of breast feeding for their child's health are 25%. Out of these 10% mothers were aware that breast feeding prevents child from diseases and 15% mothers replied that breast feeding increases the immune power of the child. 75% lactating mothers are not aware of benefits of breast feeding as far as child's health is concerned.

ix) Information about the action taken to avoid problem of vomiting after the breast feeding has been provided in the following table.

Action taken to avoid problem of vomiting after the breast feeding

Sr. No.	Action taken to avoid problem of vomiting after the breast feeding	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	Hold baby straight immediately after breast feeding	5	25
2	Hold baby straight and make baby burp	15	75
	Total	20	100

All the lactating mothers have knowledge to prevent baby from vomiting immediately after breast feeding. Majority of mothers replied that they hold baby straight on their shoulders and make baby burp while 25% mothers informed that they hold baby straight to avoid vomiting after breast feeding.

III] Practices in Breast Feeding

i) Following table displays how lactating women took care of their nipples during the pregnancy.

Breast NippleCare during Pregnancy

Sr. No.	Breast Nipple Care during Pregnancy	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	Cleanliness	15	75
2	Don't know	2	10
3	Nothing	3	15
	Total	20	100

Majority of the respondents (75%), stated they maintain cleanliness of breast nipples and have regular bath during the pregnancy. 15% respondents stated that they do nothing special for care of nipples while 10% respondents are not aware about nipple care during the pregnancy.

ii) Information about the practice of mothers to recognize the signs of hungry child was asked, the details of which have been mentioned in the following table.

Signs of Hungry Baby

Sr. No.	Symptoms of Hungry Baby	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	Crying	18	90
2	Crying, maintain schedule	1	5
3	Crying & Puts finger in mouth	1	5
	Total	20	100

All the mothers stated that 'crying' is the major sign to recognize that child is hungry. Additionally 5% respondents informed that they maintain schedule of breast feeding and complimentary food and don't wait for baby to cry. Another sign 5% respondents stated that baby puts finger in own mouth when he or she is hungry.

iii) Information collected from lactating mothers about frequency of breast feeding in the span of 12 hours has been presented in the following table.

Frequency of breast feeding in 12 hours

Sr. No.	Frequency of breast feeding in 12 hours	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	3 to 4 times	10	50
2	5 to 6 times	7	35
3	More than 6 times	3	15
	Total	20	100

Half of the lactating mothers breast feed their children 3 to 4 times in span of 12 hours. 35% mothers breast feed their children 5 to 6 times while 15% mothers breast feed their children more than 6 times in 12 hours.

iv) Breast feeding also protect mother's health, to understand the awareness about this practice, details were sought from the lactating mothers.

Breast feeding for health protection of mother

Sr. No.	Breast feeding for health protection of mother	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	Don't Know	17	85
2	Nothing	1	5
3	Prevents lumps, good health	1	5
4	Reduces fat	1	5
	Total	20	100

Majority of lactating mothers (90%) are not aware that breast feeding also helps mother for health protection. 2% mothers stated that breast feeding reduces extra fat in mother's body and also prevents from formation of milk lumps in breasts.

v) Awareness about breast feeding as a contraceptive was investigated from the lactating mothers.

Awareness about breast feeding as a contraceptive

Sr. No.	Awareness about breast feeding as a contraceptive	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	Yes	2	10
2	No	18	90
	Total	20	100

Few mothers (10%) are aware about the breast feeding practice works as a good contraceptive. Majority of respondents are not aware about this fact.

vi) To understand the fact about practice of giving complimentary food to children between the age of 6 months to 9 months along with the breast feeding, following responses were gathered.

Complimentary food for 6 to 9 month child

Sr. No.	Complimentary food For 6 to 9 month baby	No. of Respondents	Percent	1 to 2 times	3 to 4 times	More than 4 times
1	Cow milk	7	35	2	4	1
2	Rice Gruel (pej)	8	40	3	4	1
3	Rice+Pulses (VaranBhat)	10	50	7	2	1
4	Extract of Nachani	1	5	1	-	-
5	Chapati	1	5	1	-	-

Half of the respondents give mixture of rice and pulses to children, 1 to 2 times or 3 to 4 times a day. 40% respondents prefer Rice Gruel (pej) as complimentary food which is consumed by majority (35%) children in 1 to 2 times. Cow milk is served to children by 35% mothers which is consumed 3 to 4 times by 20% children. Extract of nachani given by only 5% respondents, once in a day.

vii) After 9 months, mothers are expected to change the content and quantity of complimentary food. This aspect has been cross checked by gathering the information about complimentary food consumed by 9 to 18 month child.

Complimentary food for 9 to 18 month child

Sr. No.	Complimentary food for 9 to 18 month baby	No. of Respondents	Percent	1 to 2 times	3 to 4 times	More than 4 times
1	Cow milk	8	40	4	4	-
2	Rice Gruel (pej)	5	25	3	2	-
3	Rice+Pulses (VaranBhat)	8	40	6	2	-
4	Extract of Nachani	1	5	1	-	-
5	Chapati / Bhakri	5	25	5	-	-
6	Fruits	2	10	2	-	-
7	Mug dal	1	5	1	-	-

Few mothers (25%) prefer and shift to solid complimentary food such as chapatti or bhakari which is served once or twice in a day. 2% respondents give fruits 1 to 2 times a day and 5% respondents feed preparation of mug dal to children.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**Findings showing positive impact**

- 1) Majority of lactating mothers (95%) immediately breast feed the baby after the delivery of baby.
- 2) Majority of lactating mothers (95%) feed colostrums to new born child.
- 3) Exclusive breast feeding is practiced for more than 5 months by 85% of the lactating mothers.
- 4) Maximum (65%) mothers start complementary food along with breast feeding from 6 months.
- 5) 25% mothers give combination of rice and pulses to children along with the breast feeding. Cow milk is another option for 50% mothers. Rice Gruel (Pej) is consumed by 10% children and soft chapatti is fed to children by 15% mothers. Fruits, vegetables and eggs are also given to children along with the breast feeding but the percentage of such mothers are less.
- 6) All of the mothers eat rice and majority of them (75%) consume all types of vegetables on regular basis during the lactating period.
- 7) 45% lactating mothers breast feed children for more than 24 months along with the complimentary food while 10% mothers breast feed their children for 18 months.
- 8) All the lactating mothers have knowledge to prevent baby from vomiting immediately after breast feeding.

- 9) Majority of the respondents (75%), maintain cleanliness of breast nipples and have regular bath during the pregnancy. 15% mothers did nothing special for care of nipples during the pregnancy.
- 10) All the mothers stated that 'crying' is the major symptom to recognize that child is hungry.
- 11) Half of the lactating mothers breast feed their children 3 to 4 times in span of 12 hours. 35% mothers breast feed their children 5 to 6 times while 15% mothers breast feed their children more than 6 times in 12 hours.
- 12) After the growth of 9 months, mothers change the content and increase the quantity of complimentary food.

FINDINGS SHOWING NO IMPACT

- 13) 75% lactating mothers are not aware of benefits of breast feeding in increasing the immune power of child.
- 14) Majority of lactating mothers (90%) are not aware that breast feeding also helps mother to keep her health fit.
- 15) Few mothers (10%) are aware about the breast feeding practice is one of the method of natural contraceptive. Majority of respondents are not aware about this fact.

CONCLUSION

The breast feeding awareness and education program conducted by Social Science Centre, Bharati Vidyapeeth University, Pune, for lactating mothers from villages in Mulshiblock, has positively impacted. It is evident from the above findings that, the program has helped lactating women to gain knowledge and improve the practice of breast feeding. There are some areas where less improvement is noticed such as benefits of breast feeding as far as child's health is concerned, breast feeding help mother's for health protection and breast feeding acts as contraceptive.

SUGGESTIONS

Every facility providing maternity services and care for newborn infants should:

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all healthcare staff.
2. Train all healthcare staff in skills necessary to implement this policy.
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
4. Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within one hour of birth.
5. Show mothers how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation even if they should be separated from their infants.
6. Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breast milk, unless medically indicated.
7. Practice rooming-in: allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.
8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand.
9. Give no artificial nipples or pacifiers to breastfeeding infants.
10. Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital or clinic. _____

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