



"A Study to Assess the level of knowledge on Exclusive Breastfeeding among Working Mothers at selected area, Thoothukudi."

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Exclusive breastfeeding is the practice of only feeding an infant breast milk for the first six months of their life, with the exception of oral rehydration solution, vitamins, minerals, or prescribed medicines. It's considered a cornerstone of child health and survival, and has many benefits for both the mother and baby. **Methodology:** Non –experimental descriptive research design was adopted for this study to assess the level of knowledge regarding exclusive breastfeeding among working mothers. 40 study participants were selected by non – probability purposive sampling technique. Demographic data and self structured knowledge questionnaire were used to collect the data. **Results:**The result revealed that, 21(52.5%)mothers were between the age group of 21-25years, 27 (67.5%)motherswere livingin nuclearfamily, 26 (65%) mothers have single child, 30 (75%) had moderately adequatelevel of knowledge ,10 (25%) had inadequate level of knowledge regarding exclusive breastfeeding. The mean and standard deviation is 18.3 ± 3.20 respectively and the demographic variable “Family monthly income” had significant association with exclusive breastfeeding ($\chi^2=5.88$) at $p<0.05$. **Conclusion:** The study concluded that none of the study participants had adequate knowledge regarding exclusive breastfeeding.

Keywords: Exclusive breastfeeding, level of Knowledge, working mothers

INTRODUCTION

Breast milk is the optimal nutrition for infants, providing essential nutrients, antibodies, and health benefits. Exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) for the first six months of life is recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Despite these recommendations, the prevalence of EBF remains low in many countries. Inadequate knowledge and misconceptions about breastfeeding among mothers are significant barriers to EBF. This study aims to assess the knowledge of mothers regarding EBF and identify the factors influencing their knowledge and practices.

NEEDS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) for the first six months of life is widely recognized as the optimal nutrition for infants. However, the prevalence of EBF remains low in many countries, including [Country/Region]. According

to the [Year] Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), the EBF rate in [Country/Region] was [Percentage]%, which is below the WHO's recommended target of 80%. Given the gaps in knowledge and practice, this study aims to assess the knowledge of mothers regarding EBF and identify the factors influencing their knowledge and practices. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for healthcare providers, policymakers, and community leaders to develop effective strategies to promote EBF and improve maternal and child health outcomes.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To assess the level of knowledge regarding exclusive breastfeeding among working mothers.
2. To associate the level of knowledge regarding exclusive breastfeeding with the selected demographic variables of working mothers.

Hypothesis:

H₁: There will be a significant association between the level of knowledge regarding exclusive breastfeeding among working mothers with their selected demographic variables.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

Research Approach

Quantitative research approach was used to conduct this study.

Research Design

Non-experimental descriptive research design was used for this study.

Variables of the Study

The research variable in this study is knowledge regarding exclusive breastfeeding.

Target Population

The target population for this study consists of working mothers in a selected area at Thoothukudi.

Sample

The sample for this study includes working mothers who meet the inclusion criteria and are willing to participate in the study.

Sample Size

A total of 40 working mothers will be included in the study. This sample size has been determined based on the availability of patients and their willingness to participate in the study.

Sampling Technique

Non probability purposive sampling technique was used for this study

Settings of the Study

The study will be conducted at a selected area at Thoothukudi

Instruments Used for the Study

Section- A: Demographic variables

Description of the Structured Knowledge Questionnaire

The tool will consist of 15 multiple-choice questions, with each question having four options, only one of which will be correct. Each correct answer will be assigned one point, for a total possible score of 15. The knowledge levels will be categorized as follows:

1. Poor Knowledge (1-5 marks)
2. Average Knowledge (6-10 marks)
3. Good Knowledge (11-15 marks)

Data Collection

Data will be collected using Google Forms, which will be shared with participants via WhatsApp groups to ensure easy access. The pre-test knowledge questionnaires will be sent through these WhatsApp groups. **Data Analysis**

The pre-test scores will be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Ethical Considerations

Approval will be obtained from the institutional ethics committee. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study. Participation will be voluntary, with the option to withdraw at any time.

Inclusion Criteria

- Mothers who are willing to participate in the study.

Exclusion Criteria

- Mothers who are critically ill or unable to participate due to their medical condition.

Results

Table 4.1 Frequency and percentage distribution of study participants based on level of knowledge exclusive breastfeeding n=40

S.No	Level of Knowledge	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Mean± Standard Deviation
1.	Inadequate Knowledge	10	25%	18.3 ± .20
2.	Moderately Adequate Knowledge	10	25%	
3.	Adequate Knowledge	10	25%	

Table 4.2 Association between the level of knowledge regarding exclusive breastfeeding among study participants with the selected demographic variables

n=40

S. No	Demographic variables	Level of knowledge				χ^2 value
		Moderate y adequate knowledge		Inadequate knowledge		
		f	%	f	%	
1	Age				$\chi^2=5.79$ d.f=2 p<0.05 NS	
	a)21-25yrs	19	47.5	2		5
	b)26-30yrs	9	22.5	7		17.5
	c)31-35yrs	2	5	1		2.5
2	Religion				$\chi^2=1.492$ d.f=2 p<0.05 NS	
	a)Hindu	15	37.5	7		17.5
	b)Christian	7	17.5	2		5
	c)Muslim	8	20	1		2.5
3	Education				$\chi^2=3.08$ d.f=3 p<0.05 NS	
	a)uneducated	0	0	1		2.5
	b)primaryeducation	0	0	0		0
	c)secondaryeducation	7	17.5	2		5
	d)Graduate	23	57.5	7		17.5
4	Occupation				$\chi^2=0.876$ d.f=3 p<0.05 NS	
	a)House wife	16	40	4		10
	b)Private	8	20	4		10
	c)Government	2	5	1		2.5
	d)self employed	4	10	1		2.5
5	Typeoffamily				$\chi^2=5.07$ d.f=2 p<0.05 NS	
	a)Nuclearfamily	19	47.5	8		20
	b)Jointfamily	11	27.5	1		2.5
	c)Extended family	0	0	1		2.5

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6	Family monthly income					$\chi^2=5.88$ d.f=1 p<0.05 S*
	a)<10,000	1	25	3	7.5	
	b)>10,000	29	72.5	7	17.5	
7	Area of residence					$\chi^2=4.85$ d.f=2 p<0.05 NS
	a)Rural area	3	7.5	3	7.5	
	b)urban area	26	65	7	17.5	
	c)semi-urban	0	0	1	2.5	
8	No. of children in family					$\chi^2=0.144$ d.f=3 p<0.05 NS
	a)1	20	50	6	15	
	b)2	10	25	4	10	
	c)3	0	0	0	0	
	d)4	0	0	0	0	

Note: S* (Significant at p<0.05)

It was observed from the table 4.3, the calculated chi-square value was higher in family monthly income (5.88) than the tabulated value (3.84) at the level of p<(0.05) . Hence it reveals that there was a significant association between the selected demographic variables family monthly income regarding exclusive breastfeeding at the level of knowledge among mothers. Hence H1 was retained only for the variable family monthly income.

Discussion

The result of the study revealed that none of the study participants has adequate knowledge regarding exclusive breastfeeding. There was a significant association between knowledge regarding exclusive breastfeeding with the selected demographic variables of mothers, therefore the formulated research hypothesis was retained. The goal is to reduce the underfive morbidity and mortality rate thereby bringing up healthy citizens.

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