

# To Asses Knowledge on Complementary Feeding Practices among Mothers of Infants in a Selected Hospital in Pathanamthitta District

Nimisha Ann Alex<sup>1</sup>, Parvathy Raju<sup>2</sup>, Reshma Biju<sup>3</sup>, Roja Ann John<sup>4</sup>, Sameera Bijumon<sup>5</sup>, Shani Ashok<sup>6</sup>, Neethu Mariam Babu<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1-6</sup> College of Nursing Guru Education Trust, Kuttapuzha, Thiruvalla, Kerala, India

<sup>7</sup> Assistant Professor, College of Nursing Guru Education Trust, Kuttapuzha, Thiruvalla, Kerala, India

**Abstract:** *Nutrition plays a crucial role in children's development, especially during the first two years. Complementary feeding introduces solid foods to infants at six months, supplementing breast milk. This study assessed knowledge on complementary feeding practices among mothers of infants attending a pediatric OPD in Pathanamthitta district.<sup>1</sup>*

**Keywords:** Complementary feeding, Infants, Nutrition, Breastfeeding, Weaning, Malnutrition, Health education, Mothers' knowledge

## Abbreviation

WHO – World Health Organization

NFHS – National Family Health Survey

OPD – Outpatient Department

IQR – Interquartile Range

SPSS – Statistical Package for the Social Science

## 1. Introduction

Nutrition plays a very important role in physical, mental, social development of children and emphasis must be given to provide good nutrition to growing populations especially in two formative years of life. Complementary feeding is a process of introducing solid foods into the baby's diet in order to fulfil their growing nutritional needs. It is started at the age of six months of the child, because mother's milk alone is not sufficient to sustained growth beyond six months. Complementary feeding is a gradual process, extending from the time when baby is solely breast fed, until he/she is feeding entirely on the adult diet.<sup>1</sup>

WHO recommends a gradual weaning period from 6 months to 2 years and allows the child to receive the benefits of breast feeding, while also consuming the benefits of the necessary nutrients from the complementary foods.<sup>2</sup>

A survey study conducted to estimate the stats of complementary feeding and its associated factors among 6 – 23 months 13,972 breast fed infants and young children using secondary data from The China Nutritional Improvement project on children in poor areas in 2018. It revealed that nearly 83.6% of 6-8 months infants were introduced to solid or semisolid food. The study conclude that intense health education must be required to improve the complementary feeding practices among mothers of infants to prevent malnutrition of infants.<sup>3</sup>

### Need of the Study

After 6 months, breast milk alone does not provide all the nutrients that growing baby need, in particular iron and calories that solid foods provide. Hence, complementary feeding provides child a nutritional balance for proper growth and development. According to WHO and UNICEF, poor

infant feeding practices and their consequences are one of the world's major problem and serious obstacle to social and economic development.<sup>3</sup>

Under-nutrition is estimated to be associated with 2.7 million child deaths annually or 45% of all child deaths. Infant and young child feeding is a key area to improve child survival and promote healthy growth and development. The first 2 years of a child's life are particularly important, as optimal nutrition during this period lowers morbidity and mortality, reduces the risk of chronic disease, and fosters better development overall.<sup>4</sup>

### Statement of the Problem

A study to assess the knowledge regarding complementary feeding practices among mothers of infants attending in pediatric OPD of selected hospital at Pathanamthitta district with a view to develop and distribute an information booklet.

### Objectives

- To assess the knowledge regarding complementary feeding practices among mothers of infants.
- To determine the association between knowledge regarding complementary feeding practices among mothers of infants with selected socio demographic variables.
- To develop and distribute an information booklet regarding complementary feeding practices among mothers of infants.

### Operational Definitions

#### Assess:

In this study, it refers to estimate the knowledge level of mother of infants on complementary feeding practices.

**Knowledge:**

In this study it refers to the correct response or awareness by the mothers of infants about complementary feeding practices as measured by the structured knowledge questionnaire.

**Complementary feeding practices:**

It refers to introduction of complementary foods along with breast milk after 6 months of age.

**Mothers of infants:**

In this study it refers to mothers of infants belongs to 21-36 years age group.

**Information booklet:**

A booklet having information's about complementary feeding practices among mothers of infants.

**Hypothesis**

H1: There will be significant association between the level of knowledge regarding complementary feeding practices among mothers of infants with the selected socio demographic variables.

**2. Methodology**

**Research approach:** Quantitative Approach

**Research design:** Descriptive Research Design

**Population:** Mothers of Infants.

**Sampling technique:** Non Probability Purposive Sampling Technique

**Sample size:** 40 mothers of infants.

**Inclusion criteria**

- Mothers of infants belonging to the age group of 21-36 years
- Mothers of infants available at the time of data collection.
- Mothers of infants willing to participate in the study

**Exclusion criteria**

- Mothers of infants, who are not able to read in English and Malayalam.
- Mothers of infants who are not willing to participate in the study

**Instruments used for the study**

- TOOL 1- demographic variables.
- TOOL 2-knowledge questionnaire regarding complementary feeding practices.

**3. Analysis and Interpretation**

**Section 1:** Description of demographic characteristics of mothers of Infants

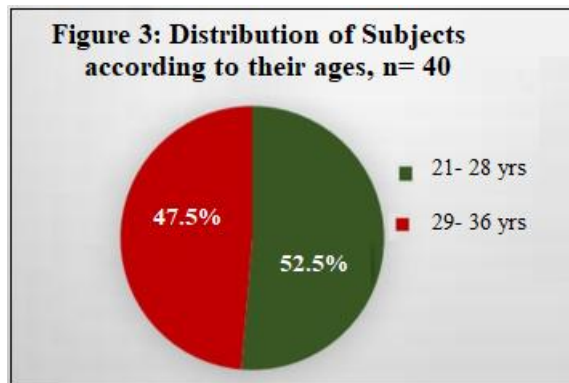


Figure 1: Distribution of subjects according to their Age

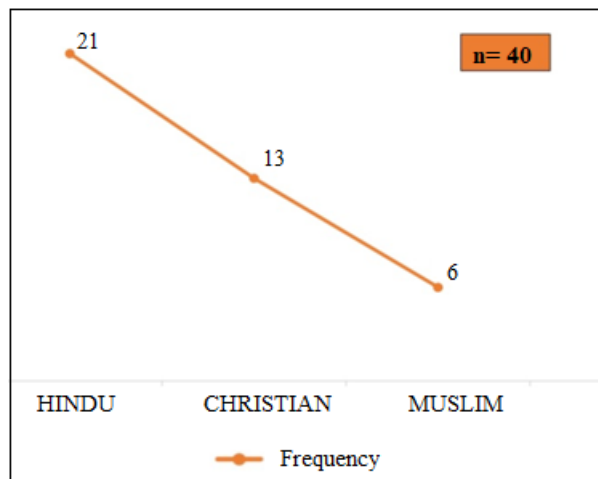


Figure 2: Distribution of subjects according to their Religion-

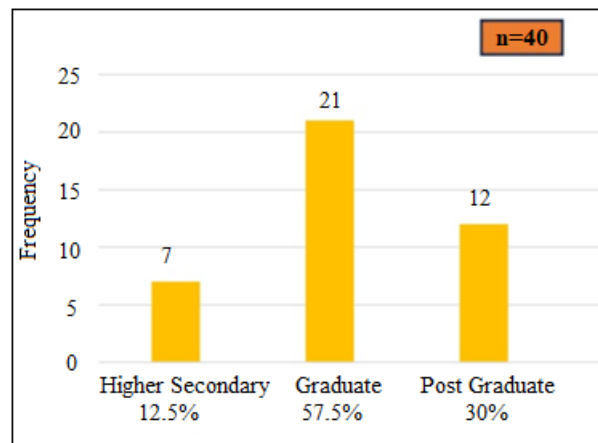


Figure 3: Distribution of subject according to education

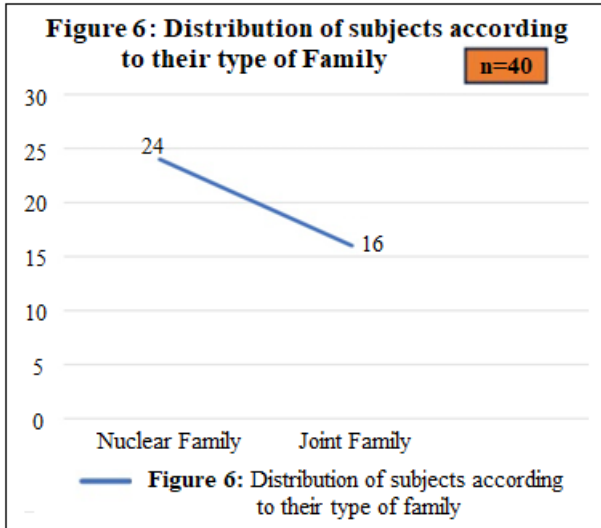


Figure 4: Distribution of subjects according to their type of family

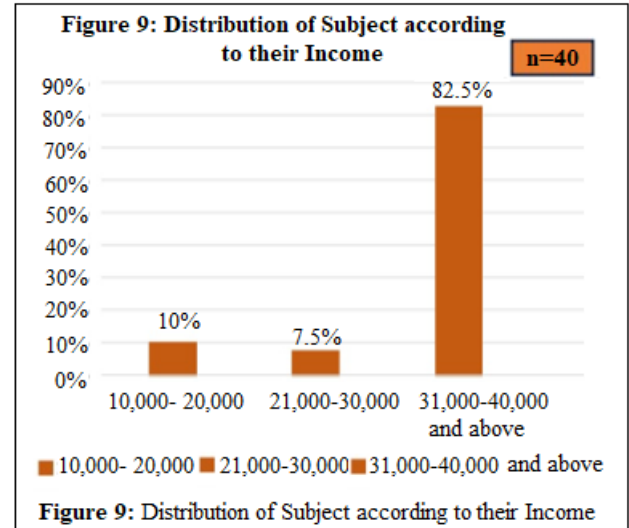


Figure 7: Distribution of subject according to their income

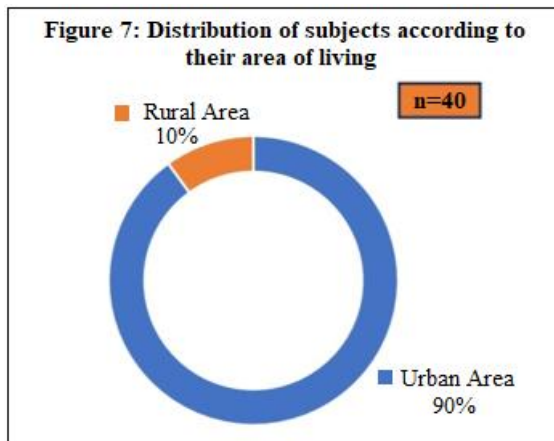


Figure 5: Distribution of subjects according to their area of living.

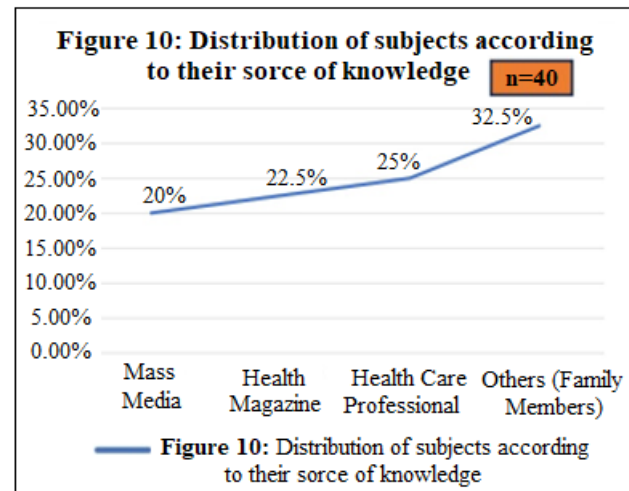


Figure 8: Distribution of subjects according to their source of knowledge

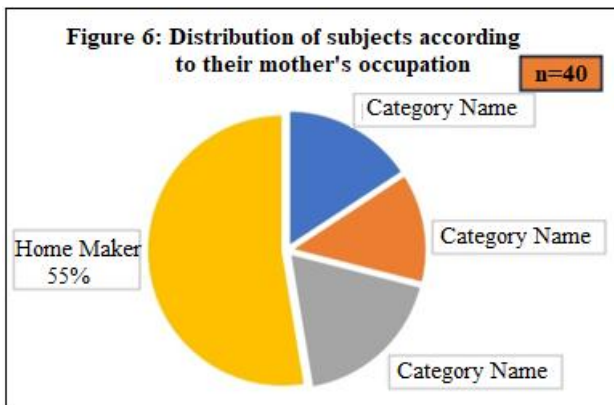


Figure 6: Distribution of subjects according to their mother's occupation

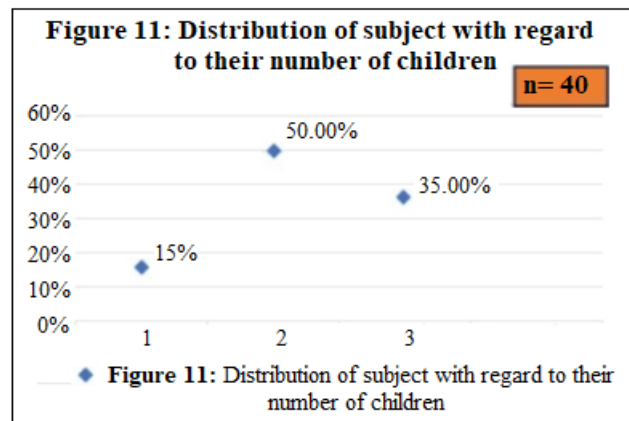
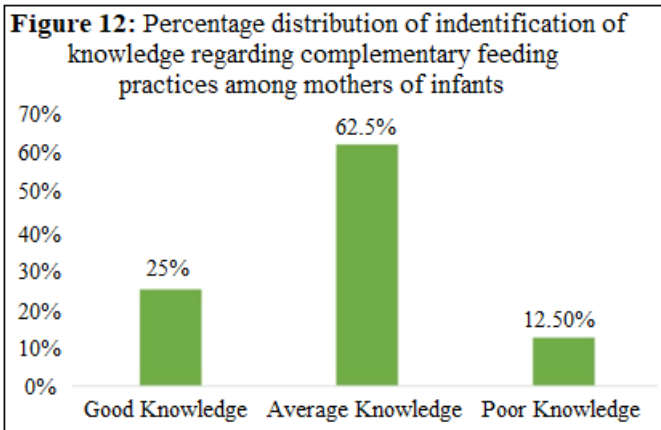


Figure 9: Distribution of subject with regard to their number of children

Section 2: Analysis of knowledge regarding complementary feeding practices among mothers of infants.



### Section 3: Association between the knowledge of mothers of infants and socio demographic variables

To test the significance between knowledge of mothers of infants and socio demographic variables, Chi-square test was computed. The hypothesis was stated as follows.

H<sub>0</sub>= There is no significant association between knowledge score of mothers of infants regarding complementary feeding practices and selected socio demographic variables as assessed by chi-square test at 0.05 level of significance.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant association between knowledge and selected demographic variables of mothers of infants as measured by chi-square test at 0.05 level of significance.

There is a significant association between age, occupation, area of living, income, number of children and there is no significant association between religion, education, type of family, source of knowledge.

### 4. Findings

Major findings are:

- The age group of the mothers of infants 21(52.5%) were aged between 29-36 years.

Year

- According to religion, 21(52.5%) were Hindu, 13(32.5%) was Christian and 6(15%) were Muslims.
- According to education, subjects 21(52.5%) were graduate.
- According to Type of family 24(60%) mothers of infants were from nuclear family.

Family

- According to occupation status of mothers of infants, most of them 22(55%) were home makers.
- According to distribution of subjects with regard to area of living 36(90%) were living in urban area.
- According to distribution of subjects with regard to their number of children 20(50%) have 2 children.
- According to distribution of subjects with regard to their income 33(82.5%) have monthly income of Rs. 31,000/- to 40,000/- and above.
- According to the distribution of subjects with regard to their source of knowledge that 13 (32.5%) gain knowledge from other sources (family members).

### 5. Recommendations

- The similar study can be conducted with a large sample size
- A comparative study can be conducted to assess the knowledge and attitude regarding complementary feeding practices among mothers of infants.

### 6. Suggestions of the Study

The researcher emphasis on the following suggestion

- The findings of the present study indicate the structured teaching program is more effective
- Regular teaching program like structured teaching for mothers regarding complementary feeding practices. This study also suggests that a health team should be set up in all hospitals and college of nursing including students.

They should be given proper education regarding complementary feeding practices

### 7. Conclusion

Knowledge is very essential to improve complementary feeding practices in infants. This study indicates that mothers of infants have average knowledge regarding complementary feeding practices. There is significant association between age, income, area of living, number of children and occupation among mothers of infants and there is no association between religion, education, type of family and source of knowledge.

### References

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