

# RESEARCH BRIEF



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## Nizamabad district shows progress on breastfeeding indicators!

Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India along with the Women Development and Child Welfare Dept., Government of Andhra Pradesh and UNICEF jointly planned to conduct a survey to assess the infant and young child feeding practices in the district of Nizamabad in the State of Andhra Pradesh. This was to help develop the training intervention as a key strategy for enhancing the capacity of health and nutrition care providers of health, ICDS, NGOs, private hospital staff at district, block and village levels.

As per District Level Health Survey-3 (2007-08) the infant and young child feeding indicators in Nizamabad show very dismal picture, with only 27.2% children having initiated breastfeeding within one hour of birth, 17.9% children are exclusively breastfed and 70.3% Children (6-24 months) receive solid or semi solid food along with breastfeeding.

The survey was conducted to assess the Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) of community health workers i.e. AWW/ASHA/ANMs regarding breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding practices using both quantitative and qualitative methods. We also studied factors affecting breastfeeding and IYCF practices in the community utilizing focus group discussions with mothers & mother-in-law groups & community leaders.

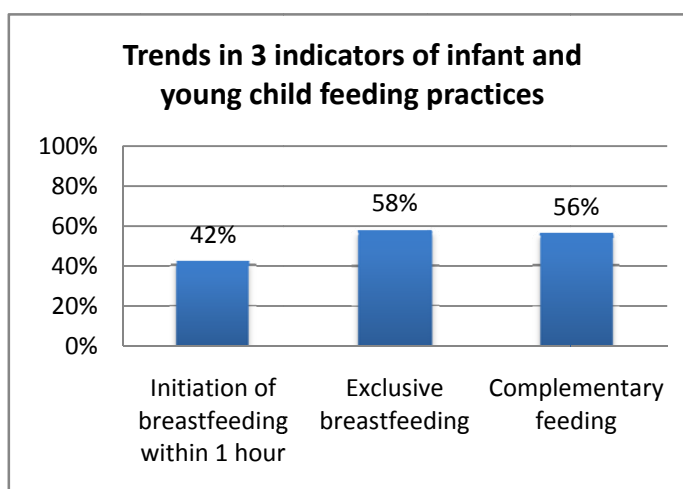
The survey was done in 3 blocks; Nizamabad (R), Banswada, and Domkonda of Nizamabad district, Andhra Pradesh selected using systematic random sampling. In each block 10 anaganwadi centers (AWC) were randomly selected. In each AWC 8 mothers with infants of 0-6 months and 11 mothers with infants of 7-12 months were interviewed to collect information for fixing benchmarks for IYCF parameters. A total of 548 mothers with infants 0-12 months (225 mothers with infants 0-6 months and 323 mothers with

infants 7-12 months) were covered in the survey in the 3 blocks of district Nizamabad, Andhra Pradesh.

The survey shows all mothers had breastfed their children. 42% initiated breastfeeding within one hour of birth. Majority of mothers were advised by community health workers regarding initiation of breastfeeding within one hour. Prelacteal feed in terms of honey and milk other than breastmilk during the first 3 days of life was common both in the case of a hospital delivery or a home delivery.

The survey showed 58% of mothers were exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) the infants upto 6 months of age. However the practice of exclusive breastfeeding declined from 72% upto one month to 58% upto 6 months of age. The median duration of breastfeeding was 4.19 months.

Majority of mothers (89%) in the study had started complementary feeding to their child. Timely initiation of complementary feeding was practiced by 56% mothers However early complementary feeding was reported by 41 percent mothers and delayed (after 9 months) by only 2 percent mothers.



The focus group discussions revealed lack of knowledge among the participants about initiation and quantity of complementary feeding. There is no fixed age for starting complementary feeding to the child. However, mothers and mother-in-law said that they start any complementary foods during 6-7 months or earlier in case they feel milk is less or insufficient and child is crying excessively. The child is fed from family kitchen and no separate food is prepared for the child. It was however interesting to note that 28 % mother gave commercially fortified baby foods such as 'Cerelac' or 'Farex' and other fruits and vegetables.

The interviews with community health workers revealed that they were aware of the advantages of

breastfeeding and had sufficient knowledge on infant and young child feeding but still a disparity was observed between their knowledge and practice.

**Based on the findings BPNI recommends:**

Careful planning to allow all community health workers to be trained and motivated with skilled training and counseling on breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding so as to implement this in the community. They are the first point of contact for the mother/family, and have faith in whatever is advised by them. This will go a long way in changing the behavior, thus improving the practices.

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BPNI is a registered, independent, non-profit, national organisation that works towards protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding of infants and young children. BPNI works through advocacy, social mobilization, information sharing, education, research, training and monitoring the company compliance with the IMS Act. BPNI is the Regional Focal Point for South Asia for the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) and Regional Coordinating Office for International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) Asia.

As a policy, BPNI does not accept funds of any kind from the companies producing infant milk substitute, feeding bottles, related equipments, or infant foods (cereal foods) or from those who have been ever found to violate the IMS Act or the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk-Substitute or from organization/ industry having conflict of interest.