

## ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study was to determine the knowledge, attitudes and practices of infant feeding among the urban slums and shanties of the Colombo Municipality. It also focused on the exclusive breast feeding practices of the aforesaid area.

The study group comprised of 652 mothers with infants of 0 to 9 months of age was selected using a multistage sampling technique. Majority of mothers were housewives.

The percentage of mothers exclusively breast feeding was 95.06% at completion of one month. Gradually the percentage declined to 59% by the end of the completion of four months.

Overall prevalence of breast feeding as at time of interview was 94.63%. There was a marked decline after 5 months of age.

All mothers had trained assistance at delivery. 50% had initiated breast feeding within 1 hour of delivery.

Income level of the family had a significant association with exclusive breast feeding whilst formal education and the age of the mother had no significant association with exclusive breast feeding.

The education level of mother, nationality, parity and the presence of a grandmother/mother-in-law had no significant association to the overall knowledge of the mother on breast feeding/complementary feeding. The presence of a grandmother however had a significant association with breast feeding practice.

The place of delivery had a highly significant association with initiation of breast feeding. Initiation was started very early in the municipal maternity homes in comparison to government and private hospitals.

30% of the mothers had introduced cunjee by the end of the fourth month, and 29.38% had introduced fruit juice by the end of the fourth month. This practice is incorrect. 50% of the mothers with babies under 5 months who had started on complementary food stated that they were advised to do so by the midwife and/or clinic.

