EARLY INITIATION OF BREASTFEEDING DOES NOT,
BUT GENDER DOES INFLUENCE WEIGHT AND
LENGTH AT SIX MONTHS IN
SCHEDULED TRIBE INFANTS OF GUJARAT, INDIA.

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Background

- WHO recommendation early initiation of breastfeeding (EIBF) within one hour of birth, reduces newborn morbidity and mortality.
- However, its effect on weight and length at age ≥6M is not well explored.

Aim

- This study attempts to explore impact of EIBF and colostrum feeding on infants’ weight and length at ≥6M.

Methodology

- Secondary analysis was performed on data collected during implementation research project concerning Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices.
- Birth weight, EIBF and colostrum feeding practices were self-reported.
- Weight and length at ≥6M were assessed by research staff.
- Descriptive statistics and independent sample t-test were used to analyze data.
- Underweight** (weight-for-age) and **stunting** (height-for-age) were determined using WHO Growth Standard 2008 (igrowup).

Results

- Among infants 282 (52.5%) were males
- Of 537 infants,
 - 267 (**49.7%**) received EIBF and
 - 305 (**56.8%**) received colostrum.
- About 489 (91%) received some pre-lacteal during first three-days of life.
- Average birth weight was 2.69[0.5] kg.
- Mean birth weight was higher (2.71v/s2.61;p<0.05) in newborns with ≥2 birth order.
- At ~6 month,
 - Average weight was 6.18[1.03] kg and
 - Average length was 62.75[3.8] cm

Conclusion

- Gender differences were present for under-nutrition and stunting at ≥6M with male child being at **higher risk** than female child in scheduled tribe population of Gujarat.
- There was no difference in weight and length among those who received EIBF and colostrum compared to those who didn’t.
- Findings warrant population-specific investigation for gender-preference on IYCF practices, growth, morbidity and mortality for infants.

Table: Prevalence of Under-nutrition and Stunting in Infants (Study Data & NFHS-4)

	N	Under-nutrition	Stunting
Male (≥6M)	269	42.8%	49.1%
Female (≥6M)	248	35.5%	38.2%
Total (≥6M)	517	39.3%	43.8%
NFHS-4 (Dahod) (U5Y)		51.7%	44.9%

**National Family Health Survey (2015-16), India*

Table: Differences in Weight and Length for EIBF and Colostrum Feeding

Indicator	EIBF and Colostrum Feeding		p Value
	Received	Not Received	
Avg. Weight (in kg)	6.16	6.21	0.5
Avg. Length (in cm)	62.62	62.87	0.4